



A smarter way to test speaking skills

Versant[™] English Test

Can Do Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Relating Versant English Test Scores to Council of Europe (2001) Descriptors	4
Summary Table 1: Aligning General Level Descriptors and Test Scores	6
Summary Table 2: Relation of Versant English Test Overall Scores to Oral Interaction Descriptors Based on Council of Europe (2001) Framework	7
Detailed Tables.....	8
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 79 – 80	8
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 69 – 78	10
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 58 – 68	12
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 47 – 57	15
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 36 – 46	19
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 26 – 35	22
Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 20 – 25	23
References.....	24

Introduction

This *Versant English Test Can-Do Guide* allows users to form an idea of the spoken language tasks and interactions that average test takers scoring above a certain Versant English Test score are likely to be able to do. This information is based on the ratings given by experienced raters listening to candidates responding to the variety of prompts implemented in the Versant English Test, including responses to open questions that ask for personal opinions and views on different issues.

The information presented in this guide is based on the average ratings of large samples of test takers. It refers to the average test taker; individual test takers may perform at a slightly higher or lower level than indicated in this guide.

The score interpretations are based on samples of speakers representing a range of language backgrounds including Arabic, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Korean, Polish, Japanese, and Spanish. Male and female speakers were equally represented, and the age of test takers ranged from 12 to 65 with an average age of 25. The information presented here may not apply equally well to test takers from other language backgrounds or outside of the sampled age range.

The guide refers to the *Common European Framework for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001). Descriptors from this publication were used by the raters while listening to test takers' performances and deciding on their levels of competence.

Relating Versant English Test Scores to Council of Europe (2001) Descriptors

The data presented in this guide are based on two consecutive research studies. The first study was conducted in 1999 and involved three independent raters rating 120 students on two open questions each (Bernstein, De Jong, Pisoni, and Townshend, 2000).

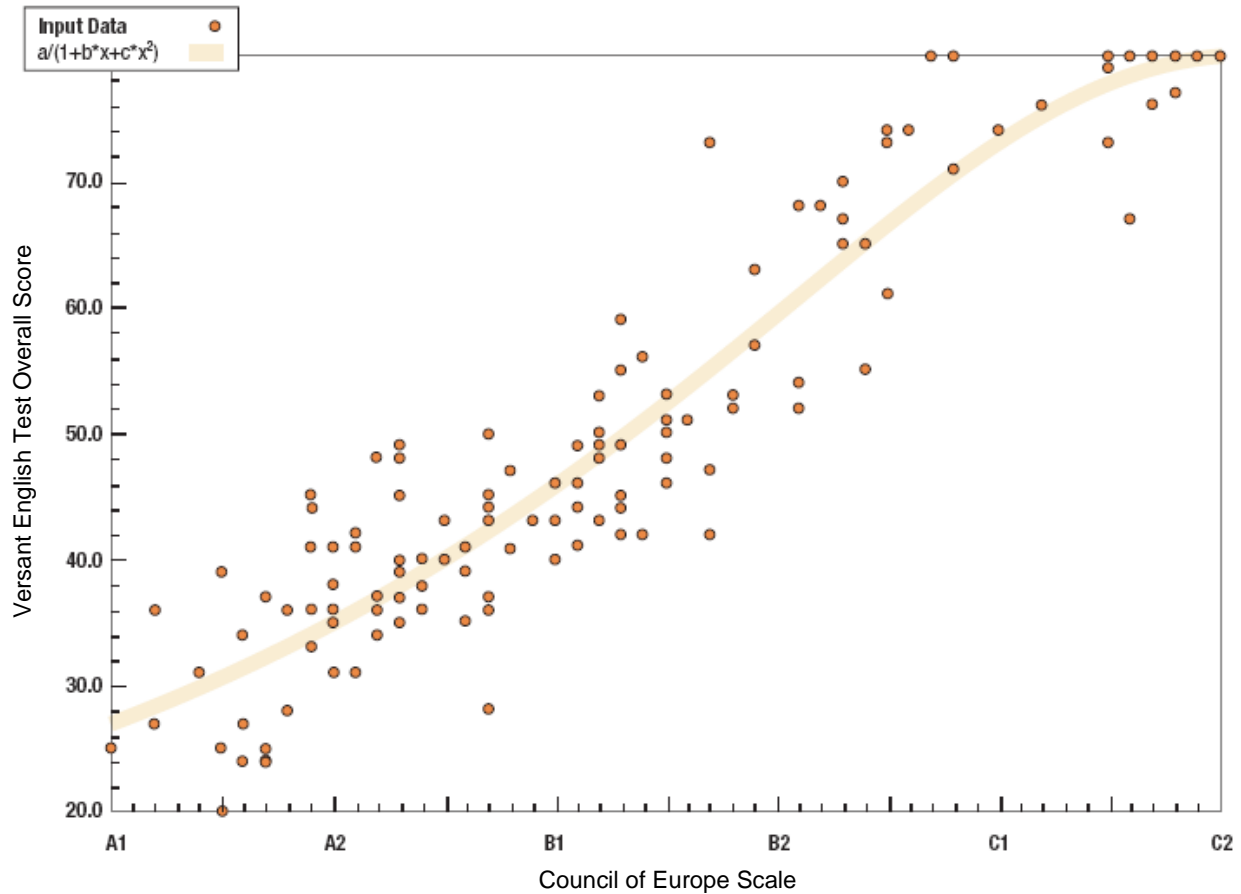
In order to cover the full range of potential development as well as a wide range of aspects of conversational skill, a scale of oral interactional proficiency according to the European Framework was constructed. The scale was based on the Overall Spoken Interaction scale, but was rewritten to incorporate elements from the specific Strategic, Pragmatic, and Linguistic scales. The scale was written to contain the six basic levels used in the European Framework: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (See Summary Table 2). Because the lowest level (A1) assumes some, albeit minimal, proficiency, a zero level was introduced to assign to subjects not reaching this minimal level or providing no evidence of proficiency at all (e.g., silence or avoiding behavior).

Three raters were contracted from three different European countries: the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK. All three raters were well acquainted with the Council of Europe Framework, and one rater was regularly involved as a professional rater in examinations of English as a foreign language. The raters were trained using two sets of examples. The first set consisted of video recordings of an oral task performed by subjects at each of the six levels of the European Framework. Thus raters were made aware of the meanings of the levels independent of the rating tasks to be performed in the experiment. The second set consisted of six digitized recordings of subjects performing one of the open-ended tasks (Part E) within the Versant English Test. Samples were selected to represent a range of levels, not all of them different. Raters played these samples using the Windows Media Player and were to rate them using the European Framework based scale that was developed for the project. After rating them independently, raters discussed their results via e-mail and negotiated on discrepancies, thus acquiring a common feeling for the distinctive elements to be taken into account in assigning European levels to subjects.

The rating sample for each rater consisted of 121 subjects responding to the open ended questions. To control for intra-rater consistency, raters were presented with about 30% of the samples twice. The intra-rater reliability was .96 and the interrater reliability was .95. The correlation with the Versant English Test Overall Score was .85.

Based on the ratings produced in the first study, a preliminary score transformation table from the Versant English Test scale to the Council of Europe levels was computed. It was felt, however, that basing judgments only on the open-ended questions would most likely result in an underestimation for the test takers' Council of Europe levels, especially at the lower end of the scale. This belief resulted from the fact that (1) test takers, knowing that the open-ended questions are not counted in the Versant English Test Overall Score, might tend to skip these questions or put less effort into responding to them, and (2) the open-ended questions might seem intrinsically too hard for test takers at the lower levels.

The second research study was conducted in 2002 and involved four raters and 150 subjects. Raters were from the USA and from the Netherlands. In addition to the open-ended questions rated on the Council of Europe Scale, raters also rated test takers on pronunciation and fluency as exhibited in responses to other items in the Versant English Test. In total, raters produced 11,090 independent ratings. Interrater reliability was .94 and the correlation of ratings with the Versant English Test Overall Score was .94. Ratings with subscores for fluency and pronunciation ranged over raters from .72 to .86.



Regression of Human Ratings on the Versant English Test

The results of the second study indeed showed that test takers with Versant English Test scores below 50 had been underestimated, and a new score transformation was computed. The Versant English Test Can-Do Guide is based on this new transformation. The best projection of Versant English Test Overall scores on the Council of Europe levels can be pictured as shown in the figure.

Two summary tables offer a quick reference for interpreting Versant English Test scores in terms of Council of Europe (2000) descriptors. Summary Table 1 presents an overview relating the Council of Europe global scale (Council of Europe, 2001:24) to Versant English Test scores. Summary Table 2 provides the more specific oral interaction scale of descriptors used in the studies mentioned above.

Summary Table 1: Aligning General Level Descriptors and Test Scores

Level		Council of Europe, 2001 Descriptor	Versant English Test Score
Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	79
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibility and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	69
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	58
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	47
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	36
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	26
			20

Summary Table 2: Relation of Versant English Test Overall Scores to Oral Interaction Descriptors Based on Council of Europe (2001) Framework

Versant English Test		Oral Interaction Descriptors Based on Council of Europe (2001)
80 79	C2	<p>Conveys finer shades of meaning precisely and naturally. Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow. Consistent grammatical and phonological control of a wide range of complex language, including appropriate use of connectors and other cohesive devices.</p>
78 69	C1	<p>Shows fluent, spontaneous expression in clear, well-structured speech. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly, with a smooth flow of language. Clear, natural pronunciation. Can vary intonation and stress for emphasis. High degree of accuracy; errors are rare. Controlled use of connectors and cohesive devices.</p>
68 58	B2	<p>Relates information and points of view clearly and without noticeable strain. Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; few noticeably long pauses. Clear pronunciation and intonation. Does not make errors that cause misunderstanding. Clear, coherent, linked discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness."</p>
57 47	B1	<p>Relates comprehensibly main points he/she wants to make on familiar matters. Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair may be very evident. Pronunciation is intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur. Reasonably accurate use of main repertoire associated with more predictable situations. Can link discrete, simple elements into a connected sequence.</p>
46 36	A2	<p>Relates basic information on, e.g., work, background, family, free time, etc. Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts, and reformulation are very evident. Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent. Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and," "but," and "because."</p>
35 26	A1	<p>Makes simple statements on personal details and very familiar topics. Can manage very short, isolated, mainly prepackaged utterances. Much pausing to search for expressions to articulate less familiar words. Pronunciation is very foreign.</p>
25 20	<A1	<p>Candidate performs below level defined as A1.</p>

Detailed Tables

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 79 – 80

<p>Listening</p>	<p>Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed.</p> <p>Can follow specialized lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage, or unfamiliar terminology.</p>
<p>Spoken Interaction</p>	<p>Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices.</p> <p>Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.</p> <p>Can understand any native speaker interlocutor, even on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond his/her own field, given an opportunity to adjust to a non-standard accent or dialect.</p> <p>Can converse comfortably and appropriately, unhampered by any linguistic limitations in conducting a full social and personal life.</p> <p>Can hold his/her own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to native speakers.</p> <p>Can keep up his/her side of the dialogue extremely well, structuring the talk and interacting authoritatively with complete fluency as interviewer or interviewee, at no disadvantage to a native speaker.</p>
<p>Spoken Production</p>	<p>Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.</p> <p>Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate, and often memorable descriptions.</p> <p>Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk flexibly to meet the audience's needs.</p> <p>Can handle difficult and even hostile questioning.</p>
<p>Strategies and Skills</p>	<p>Can substitute an equivalent term for a word he/she can't recall so smoothly that it is scarcely noticeable.</p> <p>Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.</p> <p>Is aware of the implications and allusions of what is said and can make notes on them as well as on the actual words used by the speaker.</p>

	<p>Can summarize information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation of the overall result.</p> <p>Can mediate effectively between speakers of the target language and that of his/her community of origin taking account of socio-cultural and sociolinguistic differences.</p>
<p>Language Quality</p>	<p>Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate, and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.</p> <p>Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g., in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).</p> <p>Consistently correct and appropriate use of vocabulary.</p> <p>Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and socio-cultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly.</p> <p>Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to give emphasis, to differentiate according to the situation, interlocutor, etc. and to eliminate ambiguity.</p> <p>Can create coherent and cohesive text making full and appropriate use of a variety of organizational patterns and a wide range of cohesive devices.</p> <p>Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (e.g., adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations).</p> <p>Can give emphasis, differentiate, and eliminate ambiguity.</p> <p>Can express him/herself at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right words to express his/her thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation.</p>

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 69 – 78

<p>Listening</p>	<p>Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts.</p> <p>Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly.</p> <p>Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Can follow most lectures, discussions, and debates with relative ease.</p> <p>Can extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, e.g., in a station, sports stadium, etc.</p> <p>Can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.</p> <p>Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast audio material, including some nonstandard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers.</p> <p>Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.</p>
<p>Spoken Interaction</p>	<p>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly.</p> <p>Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</p> <p>Can understand in detail speech on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive, and joking usage.</p> <p>Can easily follow and contribute to complex interactions between third parties in group discussion even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Can easily keep up with the debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Can argue a formal position convincingly, responding to questions and comments and answering complex lines of counterargument fluently, spontaneously, and appropriately.</p> <p>Can participate fully in an interview, as either interviewer or interviewee, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support,</p>

	and handling interjections well.
Spoken Production	<p>Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</p> <p>Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects.</p> <p>Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</p> <p>Can deliver announcements fluently, almost effortlessly, using stress and intonation to convey finer shades of meaning precisely.</p> <p>Can give a clear, well-structured presentation of a complex subject, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons, and relevant examples.</p> <p>Can handle interjections well, responding spontaneously and almost effortlessly.</p>
Strategies and Skills	<p>Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical, and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood, and intentions and anticipate what will come next.</p> <p>Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks appropriately in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor while thinking.</p> <p>Can relate own contribution skillfully to those of other speakers.</p> <p>Can backtrack when he/she encounters a difficulty and reformulate what he/she wants to say without fully interrupting the flow of speech.</p> <p>Can take detailed notes during a lecture on topics in his/her field of interest, recording the information so accurately and so close to the original that the notes could also be useful to other people.</p> <p>Can summarize long, demanding texts.</p>
Language Quality	<p>Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.</p> <p>Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.</p> <p>Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</p> <p>Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.</p> <p>Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms,</p>

	<p>appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</p> <p>Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.</p> <p>Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.</p> <p>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</p>
--	---

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 58 – 68

Listening	<p>Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic, or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure, and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand.</p> <p>Can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers.</p> <p>Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports, and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.</p> <p>Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.</p> <p>Can understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.</p> <p>Can understand most TV news and current affairs programs.</p> <p>Can understand documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays, and the majority of films in standard dialect.</p>
Spoken Interaction	<p>Can use the language fluently, accurately, and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational, or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas.</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.</p> <p>Can understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment.</p>

	<p>Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a noisy environment.</p> <p>Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker.</p> <p>Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.</p> <p>Can keep up with an animated discussion between native speakers.</p> <p>Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly.</p> <p>Can keep up with an animated discussion, identifying accurately arguments supporting and opposing points of view.</p> <p>Can understand detailed instructions reliably.</p> <p>Can help along the progress of the work by inviting others to join in, say what they think, etc.</p> <p>Can outline an issue or a problem clearly, speculating about causes or consequences, and weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.</p> <p>Can cope linguistically to negotiate a solution to a dispute like an undeserved traffic ticket, financial responsibility for damage in a flat, for blame regarding an accident.</p> <p>Can outline a case for compensation, using persuasive language to demand satisfaction and state clearly the limits to any concession he/she is prepared to make.</p> <p>Can understand and exchange complex information and advice on the full range of matters related to his/her occupational role.</p> <p>Can carry out an effective, fluent interview, departing spontaneously from prepared questions, following up and probing interesting replies.</p>
<p>Spoken Production</p>	<p>Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.</p> <p>Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest.</p> <p>Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting his/her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p> <p>Can construct a chain of reasoned argument.</p> <p>Can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p>

	<p>Can deliver announcements on most general topics with a degree of clarity, fluency, and spontaneity, which causes no strain or inconvenience to the listener.</p> <p>Can give a clear, systematically developed presentation, with highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail.</p> <p>Can depart spontaneously from a prepared text and follow up interesting points raised by members of the audience, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression.</p>
<p>Strategies and Skills</p>	<p>Can intervene appropriately in discussion, exploiting appropriate language to do so.</p> <p>Can initiate, maintain, and end discourse appropriately with effective turn taking.</p> <p>Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly.</p> <p>Can use stock phrases (e.g., "That's a difficult question to answer") to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what to say.</p> <p>Can give feedback on and follow up statements and inferences and so help the development of the discussion.</p> <p>Can ask follow-up questions to check that he/she has understood what a speaker intended to say, and get clarification of ambiguous points.</p> <p>Can plan what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient(s).</p> <p>Can use circumlocution and paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure.</p> <p>Can correct slips and errors if he/she becomes conscious of them or if they have led to misunderstandings.</p> <p>Can make a note of "favorite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for it/them.</p> <p>Can understand a clearly structured lecture on a familiar subject, and can take notes on points which strike him/her as important, even though he/she tends to concentrate on the words themselves and therefore to miss some information.</p> <p>Can summarize a wide range of factual and imaginative texts, commenting on and discussing contrasting points of view and the main themes.</p> <p>Can summarize extracts from news items, interviews, or documentaries containing opinions, argument and discussion.</p> <p>Can summarize the plot and sequence of events in a film or play.</p>
<p>Language Quality</p>	<p>Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.</p>

	<p>Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his/her field and most general topics.</p> <p>Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.</p> <p>Good grammatical control. Occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect.</p> <p>Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hindering communication.</p> <p>Has acquired a clear, natural pronunciation and intonation.</p> <p>Can express him/herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.</p> <p>Can adjust what he/she says and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient and adopt a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.</p> <p>Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting his/her main points with relevant supporting detail and examples.</p> <p>Can use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.</p> <p>Can pass on detailed information reliably.</p> <p>Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech.</p>
--	---

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 47 – 57

Listening	<p>Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.</p> <p>Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.</p> <p>Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.</p> <p>Can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.</p> <p>Can follow detailed directions.</p> <p>Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast</p>
------------------	--

	<p>audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.</p> <p>Can understand a large part of many TV programs on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.</p>
<p>Spoken Interaction</p>	<p>Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field.</p> <p>Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem.</p> <p>Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music, etc.</p> <p>Can follow clearly articulated speech directed at him/her in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.</p> <p>Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.</p> <p>Can maintain a conversation of discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to.</p> <p>Can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference.</p> <p>Can follow much of what is said around him/her on general topics and topics related to his/her field provided interlocutors avoid very idiomatic usage and articulate clearly.</p> <p>Can give brief comments on the views of others.</p> <p>Can put over a point of view clearly, but has difficulty engaging in debate.</p> <p>Can take part in routine formal discussion of familiar subjects which is conducted in clearly articulated speech in the standard dialect and which involves the exchange of factual information, receiving instructions or the discussion of solutions to practical problems.</p> <p>Can follow what is said, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition or clarification if the other people's talk is rapid or extended.</p> <p>Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives.</p> <p>Can deal with most transactions likely to arise while traveling, arranging travel or accommodation, or dealing with authorities during a foreign visit.</p> <p>Can cope with less routine situations in shops, post offices, banks, e.g., returning an unsatisfactory purchase.</p> <p>Can make a complaint.</p> <p>Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar</p>

	<p>routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.</p> <p>Can describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions.</p> <p>Can summarize and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail.</p> <p>Can provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation (e.g., describe symptoms to a doctor) but does so with limited precision.</p> <p>Can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended.</p>
<p>Spoken Production</p>	<p>Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</p> <p>Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.</p> <p>Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points</p> <p>Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.</p> <p>Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g., an accident.</p> <p>Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.</p> <p>Can describe dreams, hopes, and ambitions.</p> <p>Can describe events, real or imagined.</p> <p>Can narrate a story.</p> <p>Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans, and actions.</p> <p>Can deliver short, rehearsed announcements on a topic pertinent to everyday occurrences in his/her field which, despite possibly very foreign stress and intonation, are nevertheless clearly intelligible.</p> <p>Can give a prepared straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within his/her field which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision.</p> <p>Can take follow-up questions, but may have to ask for repetition if the speech was rapid.</p>
<p>Strategies and Skills</p>	<p>Can identify unfamiliar words from the context on topics related to his/her field and interests.</p> <p>Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar.</p>

	<p>Can initiate, maintain, and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.</p> <p>Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding and help keep the development of ideas on course.</p> <p>Can invite others into the discussion.</p> <p>Can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what he/she has just said.</p> <p>Can work out how to communicate the main point(s) he/she wants to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express.</p> <p>Can define the features of something concrete for which he/she can't remember the word.</p> <p>Can convey meaning by qualifying a word meaning something similar (e.g., a truck for people = bus).</p> <p>Can correct mix-ups with tenses or expressions which lead to misunderstandings provided the interlocutor indicates there is a problem.</p> <p>Can take notes as a list of key points during a straightforward lecture, provided the topic is familiar and the talk is both formulated in simple language and delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.</p> <p>Can collate short pieces of information from several sources and summarize them for somebody else.</p>
<p>Language Quality</p>	<p>Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</p> <p>Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.</p> <p>Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.</p> <p>Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.</p> <p>Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.</p> <p>Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.</p> <p>Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values, and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of his/her own.</p> <p>Can adapt his/her expression to deal with less routine, even difficult, situations.</p>

	<p>Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.</p> <p>Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across which point he/she feels is most important.</p> <p>Can express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly.</p> <p>Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.</p>
--	--

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 36 – 46

Listening	<p>Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.</p> <p>Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her when it is conducted slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.</p> <p>Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.</p> <p>Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters that are delivered slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents, etc. where the visual supports the commentary.</p>
Spoken Interaction	<p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.</p> <p>Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort.</p> <p>Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters directed at him/her, provided he/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.</p> <p>Can establish social contact: greetings and farewells; introductions; giving thanks.</p> <p>Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.</p>

	<p>Can express how he/she feels in simple terms and express thanks.</p> <p>Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her when it is conducted slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can discuss what to do in the evening, at the weekend.</p> <p>Can make and respond to suggestions.</p> <p>Can agree and disagree with others.</p> <p>Can generally follow changes of topic in formal discussion related to his/her field which is conducted slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can exchange relevant information and give his/her opinion on practical problems when asked directly, provided he/she receives some help with formulation and can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.</p> <p>Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand.</p> <p>Can deal with common aspects of everyday living such as travel, lodgings, eating, and shopping.</p> <p>Can get all the information needed from a tourist office, as long as it is of a straightforward, non-specialized nature.</p> <p>Can deal with practical everyday demands: finding out and passing on straightforward factual information.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about habits and routines.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about pastimes and past activities.</p> <p>Can give and follow simple directions and instructions, e.g., explain how to get somewhere.</p> <p>Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicate ideas and information on familiar topics, provided he/she can ask for clarification occasionally, and is given some help to express what he/she wants to.</p>
<p>Spoken Production</p>	<p>Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</p> <p>Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.</p> <p>Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g., people, places, a job or study experience.</p> <p>Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.</p> <p>Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences.</p>

	<p>Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.</p> <p>Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something.</p> <p>Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable, learned content which are intelligible to listeners who are prepared to concentrate.</p> <p>Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.</p> <p>Can answer straightforward follow-up questions if he/she can ask for repetition and if some help with the formulation of his/her reply is possible.</p>
<p>Strategies and Skills</p>	<p>Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words from the context.</p> <p>Can use simple techniques to start, maintain, or end a short conversation.</p> <p>Can initiate, maintain, and close simple, face-to-face conversation.</p> <p>Can indicate when he/she is following.</p> <p>Can ask very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand.</p> <p>Can ask for clarification about key words or phrases not understood using stock phrases.</p> <p>Can recall and rehearse an appropriate set of phrases from his/her repertoire.</p> <p>Can use an inadequate word from his/her repertoire and use gesture to clarify what he/she wants to say.</p>
<p>Language Quality</p>	<p>Has a repertoire of basic language, which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words.</p> <p>Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.</p> <p>Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – for example, tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.</p> <p>Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete everyday needs. Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.</p> <p>Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests, and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way.</p> <p>Can socialize simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.</p>

	<p>Can adapt well-rehearsed memorized simple phrases to particular circumstances through limited lexical substitution.</p> <p>Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.</p> <p>Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.</p> <p>Can communicate what he/she wants to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations he/she generally has to compromise the message.</p> <p>Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts, and reformulation are very evident.</p>
--	---

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 26 – 35

Listening	<p>Can follow speech that is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.</p> <p>Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.</p>
Spoken Interaction	<p>Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing, and repair.</p> <p>Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</p> <p>Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to him/her in clear, slow and repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker.</p> <p>Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.</p> <p>Can ask how people are and react to news.</p> <p>Can ask people for things and give people things.</p> <p>Can handle numbers, quantities, cost, and time.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about themselves and other people, where they live, people they know, things they have.</p> <p>Can indicate time by such phrases as next week, last Friday, in November, three o'clock.</p> <p>Can reply in an interview to simple direct questions spoken very slowly and clearly in direct non-idiomatic speech about personal details.</p>

Spoken Production	<p>Can produce simple, mainly isolated phrases about people and places.</p> <p>Can describe him/herself, what he/she does, and where he/she lives.</p> <p>Can read a very short, rehearsed statement, e.g., to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.</p>
Strategies and Skills	<p>Can say, "I don't know."</p> <p>Can say, "I don't understand."</p>
Language Quality	<p>Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type.</p> <p>Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations.</p> <p>Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.</p> <p>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases which can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.</p> <p>Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry etc.</p> <p>Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.</p> <p>Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.</p>

Versant English Test Overall Scores in the Range of 20 – 25

Listening	May be able to understand a few words when addressed directly and slowly.
Spoken Interaction	May be able to make simple purchases where pointing or other gestures can support the verbal reference.
Spoken Production	<p>May be able to ask and tell day, time of day, and date.</p> <p>May be able to use some basic greetings.</p>
Strategies and Skills	May be able to say yes, no, excuse me, please, thank you, sorry.
Language Quality	Language is generally very limited.

References

Bernstein, J., De Jong, J.H.A.L., Pisoni, D., and Townshend, B. (2000). "Two Experiments on Automatic Scoring of Spoken Language Proficiency." In: P. Delcloque(ed.), *Proceedings of InSTIL2000 (Integrating Speech Technology in Learning)*, University of Abertay Dundee, Scotland, August, 2000, pp. 57-61.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.