

Department of Romance and Comparative Literature

Descriptions of language course levels

These descriptions are based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which we use as the basis for our language curriculum. These descriptions apply to courses in French, Spanish, and Italian.

Level 10

Students who enroll in a 10-level course have no experience or only minimal experience studying the language. When they enter this course, students have essentially no ability to understand the spoken language beyond isolated words. They can speak in only isolated words or in high-frequency phrases. They can identify only isolated words or phrases in a text, and they can write only isolated words or high-frequency phrases.

Level 20

Students who enroll in a 20 course oftentimes have studied the language for one to three years in high school.

When they enter this course level, students can understand some simple face-to-face conversations and can initiate and minimally sustain basic face-to-face conversations. On a limited basis, they can ask and answer questions, and they can understand main ideas or facts from simple texts, such as public announcements, instructions dealing with public life, and so on. They can write short messages, take simple notes, and create simple statements and questions.

Level 30 (31-grammar / 32-conversation / 33-reading / 34-culture)

Students who enroll in a 30-level course oftentimes have studied the language for three to four years in high school.

When they enter this course level, students can understand spontaneous face-to-face conversations and beyond, such as telephone conversations and simple announcements. They can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations about themselves and family members, as well as topics related to daily life. They can understand short descriptions of persons, places, and things, and simple factual texts. They can write short, simple texts on topics related to their personal experiences, such as their daily routine and everyday events.

At the 30-level, students are encouraged to choose a course that focuses on an area that interests them. In all courses (31, 32, 33 and 34), students will read, write, speak, and listen to the language in a culturally authentic setting.

Level 104 (French only)

Students who enroll in a 104 course have completed the language requirement at Brandeis or they have earned an AP score of 4 or 5 or they have earned an SAT II score of 620 or above.

When they enter this course level, students can understand longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics pertaining to different times and places, although they may miss some details. They can perform successfully in many uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. They can read with full understanding fairly simple texts dealing with basic personal and social needs with which they have some experience, and they understand main ideas from texts featuring description and narration. They can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, and summaries of work and school experiences.

Level 105

Students who enroll in a 105 course have completed the language requirement at Brandeis or they have earned an AP score of 4 or 5 or they have earned an SAT II score of 620 or above. Students in French usually take 104 as a preparation for the 105 course.

Regardless of the language they study, when students enter this course level, they can understand long stretches of connected discourse on a variety of topics pertaining to different times and places. They can perform successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. They can read with full understanding texts dealing with basic personal and social needs, and they understand many ideas from texts featuring description and narration. They can write letters, synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, and summaries of work and school experiences.

Level 106

Students who enroll in a 106 course have completed the language requirement at Brandeis or they have earned an AP score of 4 or 5 or they have earned an SAT II score of 620 or above. Students in Spanish must take 105 before enrolling in 106. For students in French and Italian, we recommend that 105 be taken before 106.

When they enter this course, students can understand main ideas and some details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond one's immediate situation. They can perform successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Most students can read with full understanding texts dealing with basic personal and social needs, and they understand main ideas from more complex texts featuring description and narration. Some students are able to follow essential points in texts that address areas of special interest or knowledge. They can write letters, synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, simple stories, and summaries of work and school experiences. Some students are able to write routine social correspondence and slightly more complex discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics.