

# Self-Assessment Checklists for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

Adapted for use in Japan by Miriam Davis from checklists produced by Carol J. Orwig, SIL

## How to use these checklists.

1. Read each statement, and for each one circle the number which you feel best expresses how well you think you do *when actually using the target language in specific, real-life situations*.
2. If you feel that a statement describes something you would never want to do in the language, disregard it.
3. Go back and look at your answers for each level. For example, look at the *Intermediate Level* tasks. If you have marked yourself as at least *adequate* for nearly all of the items then you can assume that you have achieved that level of proficiency. If you have marked yourself as adequate for about half of the items, you may be in the upper range of the next lowest level.

**1 = not at all**  
**2 = barely**  
**3 = somewhat**

**4 = adequately**  
**5 = well**  
**6 = extremely well**

## Checklist for Listening

### Novice Level 0+

When someone is speaking the language:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can understand the names of common objects  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can understand the names of common food and drink items   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can understand the words for common actions   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can understand common greetings and farewell expressions  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can understand basic warnings and commands, such as <i>STOP!</i> , <i>Watch out!</i> , <i>Be careful!</i> |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can understand the most basic words describing the size, color, or age of a person or object              |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can understand simple questions and statements that use words from the above categories                   |

### Intermediate Level 1 to 1+

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can follow someone giving me basic directions on how to get somewhere  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can understand greetings and other very commonly occurring social routines   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can understand questions about my personal background, family, and why I'm here in the country   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can understand questions about my personal interests and activities, such as hobbies, sports, and subjects I know a lot about            |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can understand short, routine telephone conversations well enough to be able to take a simple message for someone                        |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can understand bits and pieces of radio or TV announcements and news reports dealing with familiar topics or events I already know about |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can understand the description of a place or a person  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. If making arrangements to meet somebody later, I can understand where and when to meet   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. In a shop, store, or market, I can understand the price, the amount of money   |

- I need to pay and questions the shopkeeper might ask me about exactly what I want
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 10. I can pick out familiar words in conversations between native speakers, and if the topic is familiar, get the main ideas (although I might not be able to understand all they are saying)
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 11. I can usually understand enough to carry on short conversations on concrete topics with friendly native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, if they make an effort to help me to understand

### **Advanced Level 2 to 2+**

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 1. I can understand someone talking about an event that happened in the past
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 2. I can understand someone talking about what they expect will happen in the future
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 3. I can understand someone describing a simple process
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 4. I can understand a brief summary of facts about a subject
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 5. I can understand oral instructions on how to do something
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 6. I can understand someone giving me advice
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. I can understand someone explaining the advantages and disadvantages of a course of action
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 8. I can understand someone describing a place I've never been to
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 9. I can understand someone comparing or contrasting two objects or places
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 10. I can understand things beyond my immediate situation on familiar topics
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 11. I can understand most news broadcasts and factual reports on TV and radio
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 12. I can understand what someone is asking me in an interview
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 13. I can understand short lectures on familiar topics

### **Superior Level 3**

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 1. I can understand the unspoken, emotional nuances of speakers in most communication situations
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 2. I can understand someone describing a complex object or procedure in detail
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 3. I can understand someone discussing an abstract, professional topic
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 4. I can understand people hypothesizing about what might happen in a certain situation
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 5. I can understand people debating an issue well enough to vote, if I had to
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 6. I can understand someone stating a personal point of view on a controversial subject
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. I can understand the reasons someone gives for deciding to act in a certain way
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 8. I can usually understand unspoken messages, as when people are hedging, evading an answer, or trying to get out of a commitment, but don't say so in so many words
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 9. I can understand speeches or academic lectures
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 10. I can understand the dialogue in films

### **Distinguished Level 4**

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 1. I can attend meetings of local government agencies, such as city or town councils, and understand the fine points of the issues being debated
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 2. I can attend dramatic presentations and not only follow the plot, but also appreciate the artistic merits of the script and the presentation
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 3. I can follow all the dialogue in a film, including slang
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 4. I can understand editorials on the radio or TV
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 5. I can attend symposia and understand the different points of view expressed
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 6. I can understand the different points of view in academic debates
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. I can understand Public Policy statements
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 8. I can understand most jokes and puns
- 1 2 3 4 5 6 9. I can understand any conversation I overhear between native speakers as long as it is not about a technical topic outside my experience or about some experience particular to the speakers

## Checklist for Speaking

### Novice Level 0+

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can greet people politely when I see them  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can thank people for doing something for me  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can order a cup of coffee, or food in a restaurant   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can count to 100   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can say good-bye politely  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can tell someone my name and where I'm from  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can name 10 or more concrete objects in each of the following areas: furniture, plants, animals, tools, machines, food items |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I know the names for various classes of people, such as men, women, boys, girls, babies  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I know the words for the major color distinctions in the target language   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can describe the size or age of objects and people, such as a big boat, or a small child                                    |

### Intermediate Level 1 to 1+

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can introduce myself, giving my name and basic personal information such as would be given at the first meeting                  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can give someone directions on how to get from one place to another  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can describe to a doctor or nurse the symptoms of health problems I have   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can talk about my family, giving their names and simple information about them, such as their occupations or what they look like |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can arrange to meet someone at a particular time and place and date in the near future   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can describe what I usually do on the weekend  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can request items, discuss prices and handle currency in a situation involving a purchase  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can ask questions about menu items, order food, and ask for and settle a bill at a restaurant                                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I can describe in detail a particular place, such as a school, park, or store  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can talk about things I like to do, such as leisure activities, favorite hobbies or pastimes                                    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 11. I can talk about things I expect to do in the future, such as a planned trip or activity  |

### Advanced Level 2 to 2+

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can describe a sequence of events that happened in the past—for example, last week  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can describe things that used to happen in the past, such as things I used to do when I was younger, or people and places I used to know or visit |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can compare and contrast two objects, customs or places   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can tell someone about my future plans or goals   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can explain a simple process I know how to do, such as making a cake  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can give clear instructions about what I would like someone to do, explaining the steps involved in carrying out an activity                      |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can give a brief, organized, factual summary of what happened in an event at which I was present  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can give advice to someone faced with making a decision, giving reasons for my advice   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I can lodge a complaint, giving the reasons and details of why I am dissatisfied  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can express personal apologies clearly and appropriately to someone I have offended  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 11. I can state the advantages and disadvantages of a situation (such as living in a big city) or a decision (such as whether to stay in school)       |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 12. I can tell someone what I would do in a hypothetical situation; for example, if I suddenly came into a lot of money                                |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 13. I can answer the telephone at home or at work  |

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 14. I can describe my job and the organization I work for |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 15. I can direct people to the right building or office   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 16. I can handle simple job-related inquiries             |

**Superior Level 3**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can persuade someone to do something he doesn't want to do or to stop doing something I don't like  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can describe a complex object, such as a car or bicycle or computer, in detail, using the correct vocabulary  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can present arguments on both sides of a familiar issue or topic and tell someone the merits of the arguments   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can discuss a professional topic at length and in detail  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can explain in detail a non-routine, complex issue such as a point of Christian doctrine  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can present a talk at a professional meeting  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can tell someone in detail what I think would be the possible consequences of a certain situation—for example, what I think would happen if the price of gasoline were to rise suddenly |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can express what I think might happen if something unexpected occurs  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. If there are at least two possible choices of action in a situation, I can propose a course of action and defend my proposal in such a way that people are persuaded to accept my idea    |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can state a personal point of view on a subject, including controversial issues, explaining why I hold my beliefs  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 11. I can handle formal business negotiations  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 12. I can talk to dignitaries or influential people  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 13. I can discuss most issues in the news  |

**Distinguished Level 4**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can do informal interpreting between my mother tongue and the target language  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can take part in mediating or negotiating between two disputing parties  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can discuss in-depth, highly abstract or unfamiliar topics   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can usually tailor the style and content of my presentation on the spur of the moment to an audience different from the one I had expected |

## Checklist for Reading

**Novice Level 0+**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can read hiragana and katakana and a few common Chinese characters(kanji) |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can read the items on most menus  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can identify some signs on the street                                     |

**Intermediate Level 1 to 1+**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can read 300 kanji in both Chinese and Japanese readings   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can read intermediate level readers for non native learners of Japanese.   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can use a Japanese map and cope with most road signs   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can read the main items on a church bulletin sheet including names of church members and can find my way around the Bible      |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can read some Bible passages well enough to know the main content provided there is furigana on the kanji                      |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can read articles in magazines for non native speakers of Japanese such as Nihongo Journal when there is furigana on the kanji |

### **Advanced Level 2 to 2+**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can read between 600 and 900 kanji in both Japanese and Chinese readings   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can read church bulletins with ease  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can read neighbourhood association kairanban (circulars) sufficiently to know the main content                                 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can read stories for Japanese children up to end 6 <sup>th</sup> grade   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can read personal letters although I may need to ask a Japanese for help   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can read articles in magazines for non native speakers of Japanese such as Nihongo Journal when there is furigana on the kanji |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can read advanced level reading materials for non native learners of Japanese.   |

### **Superior Level 3**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can read expository prose on a wide range of subjects, including some unfamiliar to me |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can read newspaper editorials  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can read any kind of personal or business correspondence                               |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can read technical reports   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can read political commentaries  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can read official documents  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can read academic texts  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can read professional papers   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I can read biographies   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can read Christian tracts, magazines or books   |

### **Distinguished Level 4**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can read sophisticated editorials  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can read specialized journal articles in my field                          |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can read novels and appreciate the style as well as understand the content |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can read plays   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can read poems and appreciate the imagery of the language                  |

## **Checklist for Writing**

**When assessing yourself in this section, assume that you have:**

- 1. Access to a dictionary (electronic or otherwise) to help you when you need to write.**
- 2. That you can write on a computer using a Japanese word program of some kind**

**This means that you do not have to be able to write kanji by hand necessarily or from memory. Even so most of us will never achieve more than an advanced level in Japanese writing unless we come from a country with a kanji background. So don't be discouraged!**

### **Novice Level 0+**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can fill out hotel registration forms          |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can fill out travel documents                  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can write words or sentences I know how to say |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can write dates and numbers                    |

### **Intermediate Level 1 to 1+**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can write short, simple personal letters about my personal preferences, daily routine |
|-------------|--|

- or everyday events
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can write down telephone messages  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can write postcards  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can write short synopses of something I have read  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can take class or lecture notes on familiar topics   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can write simple descriptions of things, people or places  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can write simple paraphrases of something I hear   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can write short essays about my life, testimony, work, or experience   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I can use about 300 kanji when I write even though I may need to check them in a dictionary and use furigana alongside |

**Advanced Level 2 to 2+**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can write routine social correspondence  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can write a discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can write a detailed summary and resume  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can write stories or anecdotes about things that have happened to me   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can write straightforward, informal business letters   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can write concrete facts about my special interests or fields of competence  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 7. I can take lecture notes   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 8. I can write cohesive summaries and resumes of things I have read or heard  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 9. I can write descriptions of persons, places, activities  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 10. I can write a testimony or sermon although correction and help may still be necessary   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 11. I can use up to between 600 and 900 kanji when I write even though I may need to check them in a dictionary first and more if I use furigana. |

**Superior Level 3**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can write any type of social and business correspondence                                     |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can write memos  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can write reports for a church annual general meeting  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can write statements of my position in areas of special interest or in my professional field |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can write a sermon without help  |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 6. I can use all the joyo kanji in regular use when I write without using furigana.               |

**Distinguished Level 4**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1. I can write letters to the editor              |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 2. I can write articles for professional journals |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 3. I can write a short story                      |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 4. I can write poetry or lyrics to a song         |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 5. I can write a play                             |