



**ASSESSMENT LEARN 2014  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE  
(FSI)**

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## ? STAKES TESTING

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Promotion
- Required proficiency on the job
- Incentive pay



# FSI LANGUAGE TESTING

## What and How we Test

- Speaking (103 languages)/Reading (87 languages)
- ~ 5,000 tests/year
- Face-to-face/DVC/Telephone
- Testing teams of 2: Examiner (~100)&Tester (~300)



## TESTING TEAM MEMBERS

- FSI Language Instructors
- Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish:  
LTU - based testing team members



# TESTING TEAM MEMBER RECRUITMENT

- Language section recommendation
- Equivalent to:
  - English Speaking 3 level for Examiners
    - Instructions in English
  - English Speaking 2 level for Testers
    - Native speakers



## TESTING TRAINING: TWO-WEEK INTRODUCTION



# TESTING TRAINING

- Mentored group or individual training:
  - Testing Manual
  - Observe and score tests
  - Practice tests
  - Mastery exercise
  - Official tests



# TESTING CERTIFICATION

- Valid 3 years
- Recertification:
  - Live observation(s)
  - Counseling
  - Brush-up training





# QUALITY CONTROL

- Video-recording with viewing consoles
- Ad-hoc observations
- Testing Mentors serve as examiners



# PREVIEW OF THE NEW SPEAKING TEST

JOINT EFFORT



## PREVIEW OF THE NEW SPEAKING TEST



# FSI SPEAKING TEST APPROACH

CURRENT:





# FSI SPEAKING TEST APPROACH

NEW:



# PREVIEW OF THE NEW SPEAKING TEST

## ➤ **New:**

- S Part I, **Social Conversation:**
  - More structured
- S Part II, **Work-Related Exchange:**
  - Focus on follow-up discussion



## PREVIEW OF THE NEW SPEAKING TEST

- **Unchanged:**
  - S Part III,  
**Interview**



## Part I, Social Conversation

1) WARM-UP– Familiar Information (3 min.)

*No spiral up. ≈*

2) DAILY LIFE SITUATION (5 min.)

*Spiral up to challenge the Examinee. ↗*

3) MORE COMPLEX CONVERSATION (5 min.)

A more complex topic such as: political, economic, or social issues.

*Spiral up. ↗*





## Challenges (for Testers)

1) **Conversation:** quick decisions on the next steps



## Part II, Work-Related Exchange

1) Work-related topic of choice (3-5 min.)

1. Consular
2. International Development
3. Management
4. Public Diplomacy
5. Political/Military
6. Economy/ESTH (Environment, Science, Technology, and Health)
7. Diplomatic Security



## Part II, Work-Related Exchange

2) Tester follows up (6-8 min.)

*Spiral up.* ↗



## Challenges (for Testers)

### 2) Work-Related Exchange:

- Lack of familiarity with certain topics
- Strategic planning, thinking on one's feet, and teamwork



# Assistance from the Language Testing Unit





## **Solutions/Testing Team Contributions:**

- 1) Stay informed
- 2) Develop a repertoire of cultural/historic references
- 3) Teamwork



