

Aspects of Testing Higher Level Language

Roles and Features of Vocabulary and Cultural References

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All Things Considered: What Are We Doing in Testing Higher Level Language?

- **I know fully well that...**
- **I know full well that...**
- **9 Items or less**
- **9 Items or fewer**
- **Can I take the fifth?**
- **Oh no... I prefer not to answer it.**

Roles and Features of Vocabulary and Cultural References: ILR Level Descriptions *What Are We Looking for!*

- **ILR S L3+:** ... *sophisticated* and demanding tasks, particular strength of fluency, with one or more of *breadth of lexicon, including low and medium frequency items, especially socio-linguistic cultural references and nuances of close synonyms*; structural precision...; discourse often matching a native speaker's strategic and organizational abilities.
- **ILR S L4:** ...*sophisticated* language tasks... on matters of disagreement, with *appropriate rhetorical devices, cultural references...* a high degree of *effectiveness, reliability and precision*... both *formally and in chance encounters*.
- **ILR S L4+:** ... functional rhetorical devices, *native cultural references and understanding*,... effectively applies social and circumstantial knowledge,... has *sophisticated control of vocabulary and phrasing that is rarely imprecise*.
- **ILR S L5:** ... uses the language with *complete flexibility and intuition*, including *breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms and pertinent cultural references*.

Roles and Features of Vocabulary and Cultural References

Samples: *Are These What We Are Looking for?* Yes and No.

- Literature was not promulgated by a pale and emasculated critical priesthood singing their litanies in empty churches-nor is it a game for the cloistered elect, the tinhorn mendicants of low calorie despair.
- I have nothing to offer but *blood, toil, tears and sweat!*
- I have nothing to offer but *vermeil, moiling, delacrimation and sudorification.*
- It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.
- Everybody knows that a rich man needs a wife.

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Samples: *precision of words, unique and definitive*

- But we have to be aware that a Chinese *suzerainty* in that region could *portend* a geopolitical rivalry.
- Are properly educated kids likely to say in the zoo, *a murder of crows, a sounder of swine, a leap of leopards, and a bevy of deer*?
- My grandma came over, arms *akimbo*, as if she was ready to strike a pose at the end of the runway.

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Samples: *proper nouns and names, loaded culturally*

- I flunked a test that day and then broke up with my boy friend; it's a combo of *Hindenburg* and *Chernobyl*! All I could do was listen to *the Bee Gees* and *Air Supply*.
- I want you to go back to *Margaret Thatcher* and tell her to play ball. She's gonna support the hemline issue, and any other issue that I bring up for the rest of the year. Otherwise I'll make her so ineffectual, and she'll make *Jimmy Carter* look like *Martin Sheen*--do you get me?
- I really believe there's a *Homer* and *Marge* in every household, and a *Springfield* in every State.

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Samples: *effectiveness, reliability and precision.*

- To be an American is about something more than what we look like, or what our last names are or how we worship.
- Let me say to y'all, loud and clear: Merry Christmas!
- On election night, TV's self-important pundits let loose a fusillade of *flatulent pontification.*
- He's been doing nothing but spewing *verbal diarrhea.*
- Can you imagine when *everything* starts to *hit the fan*, all at once?

Roles and Features of Vocabulary and Cultural References

Samples: *word, idioms, multiword phrases and creative power*

- I'll get you to the airport by noon, *come hell or high water!*
- Paying attention to the tweets of the local government on Harvey is literally *a choice between hell or high water.*
- We've been debating over *a moot point* all day long
- My proposal became *a moo point* in the boardroom, *even without a "t."*
- Americans prefer simplistic distortions that sustain our national myths about freedom, opportunity and democracy, and yet you can't grow into adulthood when you're fed *pablum.*
- It's war rhetoric: *two baby chairs with a pablum in between.*

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Samples: *foreign word usage for attention, particularity or style?*

- Park's relationship with the alleged *eminence grise* has gripped the Koreans.
- Immigration was never discussed nor debated in any campaign. It was served cold to Canadians as *a fait accompli*.
- He sent utility trucks and military to Florida, probably *quid pro quo*, but what does Puerto Rico get?

Roles and Features of Vocabulary and Cultural References

Samples: *sports-related metaphorical narrative; fusillade of persuasive argument*

- We did whatever a good *quarterback* does in the 4th quarter, down 3 pts, with 4 seconds to go. We threw *a Hail Mary pass*. It didn't work.
- Without me, she's nothing. Just another *power mad, insecure, friendless, dateless, highlightless loser* wandering around trying to make someone care that they exist at all, which by the way, no one does. I control the senior class. I'm also the leader of the Puffs, the most exclusive society on this campus, and I have the power to make her life a living hell. She's *a piece of mutton trying to dress up like a lamb, period!*

Symmetry and Asymmetry: high level challenges of Transfer between Chinese and English

- yìjiàn 意见 意見 : • **Opinion, views,**
- xiànxàng 现象 現象 : • **Phenomenon**
- guànxìng 惯性 慣性 : • **Inertia**
- wénhuà 文化 文化 : • **Culture**
- wénmíng 文明 文明 : • **Civilization, civilized**
- fēngjiàn 封建 封建 : • **Feudal, feudalism**