

FAQs about the DLPT-V

Short Description: Frequently Asked Questions and answers about the DLPT-V exam from www.monterey.army.mil website

The Presidio of Monterey
DLPT 5 Frequently Asked Questions

Tentative Rollout Dates

Frequently Asked Questions

Can you tell me exactly what is involved in the DLPT5?

How is the test divided up?

Is the entire test multiple choice?

Do you have to answer questions in the language or in English?

Can you provide a link with sample DLPT 5 questions and/or study aids that will aid me in passing the test?

Is note taking allowed for the test?

How often will the DLPT 5 be updated and revised to prevent the test from being compromised?

Military language analysts are on a set schedule for DLPTs: will this change or be maintained?

Do I have to take the listening and reading portions of the test back to back, on the same day?

Are rest breaks allowed during the test?

For RSOCs and field sites, where is the location of the test?

Can we use an English dictionary during the DLPT5?

Computer-Adaptive Tests - is the test taker aware of increases or decreases in level and what effect will this have on him/her?

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Are Listening and Reading tested at both the Upper and Lower Ranges?

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Are native English speakers who develop the DLPT 5 tested on English skills according to ILR levels?

During the development stage, is there a common-sense check at the higher levels to "bring them (test writers) back from the clouds"?

During the test, can you go back and change your answer?

Will there be sample test items in English prior to test start?

Does the Chinese-Mandarin DLPT 5 contain both long and short form passages?

Why is the test question written in English and not the target language?

As part of the validation process, what is your plan to prevent global language knowledge from allowing you to guess the correct answer?

Test topics (context) considered to be level 2+ and above are not written at the same level. How do you account for this?

Q. Can you tell me exactly what is involved in the DLPT5? How is the test divided up? Is the entire test multiple choice? Do you have to answer questions in the language or in English?

A. The DLPT5 includes separate tests for reading and listening comprehension. In addition, many languages have both lower-range tests going from level 0+ through 3 and upper-range tests going from level 3 to 4.

In the "big" languages (for example, Russian, Chinese and Arabic) the test format will be multiple-choice. The test taker will read or listen to foreign language passages, read questions in English, and provide short answers in English.

In the less-commonly-taught languages (for example, Hindi and Dari) the test format will be constructed response. The test taker will read or listen to foreign language passages and answer short questions in

English.

In languages with large populations at low levels and small populations at high levels, the lower-range test will be multiple-choice and the upper-range test will be constructed-response.

Q. Can you provide a link with sample DLPT 5 questions and/or study aids that will aid me in passing the test?

A. There are familiarization guides in Chinese, Korean, and Russian available on the web. LangNet, an e-learning web site, will also provide Assessment Objects in many languages. LangNet (www.LangNet.org) is a language learning support system with interactive materials designed for those who want to practice and maintain their target language reading and listening skills.

Q. Is note taking allowed for the test?

A. Note-taking is not allowed for the lower-range multiple-choice test. It is allowed for upper-range tests and for lower-range constructed-response tests.

Q. How often will the DLPT 5 be updated and revised to prevent the test from being compromised?

A. Unlike current DLPTs, DLPT 5 system tests will be updated and revised on a continual basis.

Q. Military language analysts are on a set schedule for DLPTs: will this change or be maintained?

A. The military test cycle will not change.

Q. Do I have to take the listening and reading portions of the test back to back, on the same day?

A. No. The tests are distinct and you may take the two portions on different days. Our goal is to be as flexible as possible in scheduling test administration.

Q. Are rest breaks allowed during the test?

A. Rest breaks will be factored in to the schedule for both reading and listening tests.

Q. For RSOCs and field sites, where is the location of the test?

A. Certified Test Control Officers will administer the tests in the field. Details are yet to be determined.

Q. Can we use an English dictionary during the DLPT5?

A. No dictionary of any sort is authorized for the DLPT5.

Q. Computer-Adaptive Tests - is the test taker aware of increases or decreases in level and what effect will this have on him/her?

A. Most test takers are aware of when the questions get easier. But it's important for test takers to know that getting an easier question does not necessarily mean the examinee answered the previous question incorrectly. The CAT will give passages in groups -- we call them testlets, and depending on how well the test taker does, s/he will be given the next testlet at the appropriate level. Within a testlet, there will always be small differences in difficulty from question to question. This is because in addition to difficulty, the

computer must consider content areas and other factors. So if a test-taker has just answered a difficult question correctly, he/she might still get an easier question, if that is the only way to fulfill the content requirement. Also, examinees will get several testlets, so even if a test taker has a hard time with the first testlet and is given an easier second testlet, if s/he does well on the second one, a harder one will follow. It is important for all test-takers to understand this and not worry too much about whether the questions they're getting seem easier or harder than the ones they just answered.

Q. Do native English speakers develop the test questions?

A. Tests are developed by a multidisciplinary team -- target language experts work with foreign language testing experts to select passages, rate them, write questions and build multiple choice items (or a protocol for the constructed response tests.) The tests are always reviewed by at least one native speaker of English, and undergo thorough, independent review and piloting prior to validation.

Q. Are Listening and Reading tested at both the Upper and Lower Ranges?

A. Yes, depending on the language. Not all languages have Upper Range tests right now, but all except the Arabic dialects have reading and listening tests.

Q. Are Arabic dialect tests in development?

A. Yes. Iraqi is in validation and Egyptian and Levantine are in development as of June 8, 2005.

Q. If you score poorly on the Upper Range test are you eligible to test the Lower Range portion that same year?

A. You cannot take the Upper Range test unless you have already scored a 3 on the Lower Range test that year. If you do poorly on the Upper Range test, you will get a 3; you cannot get a score below 3. In such cases it would probably be best to take the Lower Range test the following year; the services and agencies will determine the policy. At this point we will follow the DLPTIV policies for retesting.

Q. Which languages are Constructed Response and which are Hybrid?

A. The CRT will be used for languages with a small testing population. The Hybrid will be used for languages that have a large population at the lower range (0+ to 3) and small at the upper range (3+/4). Examples of Constructed Response tests are Persian-Dari, Pashto, Hindi, Urdu, Albanian, Greek, and Norwegian. Examples of Hybrid tests are Persian-Farsi, Turkish, and Japanese.

Q. How are you able to marry-up Level 4 native English questions when they're being written by a level 2 or 3 target language expert?

A. This is where the testing experts -- the project managers -- come into play. They work together with the target-language test writer to make sure that the passage is well understood by the whole development team, and that the questions that are being asked are valid and the item has a right answer and plausible wrong answers.

Q. Are native English speakers who develop the DLPT 5 tested on English skills according to ILR levels?

A. Not directly, but the staff in DLI-ES have MAs and often PhDs in fields such as applied linguistics and foreign language assessment. The staff is continuously trained. People who do not have excellent English do not have the skills required to become project managers.

Q. During the development stage, is there a common-sense check at the higher levels to "bring them (test writers) back from the clouds"?

A. Yes. As noted above, there are extensive reviews by experts both within the test development team and outside it.

Q. During the test, can you go back and change your answer?

A. Yes, and there is a review screen at the end so you can see immediately if you haven't answered a particular question.

Q. Will there be sample test items in English prior to test start?

A. No. Each test has a sample passage and questions in the target language. In addition, DLI is working on familiarization guides that are language-specific. We do not have sample test items in English at this point, but we may produce a generic familiarization guide with English examples in the future.

Q. Does the Chinese-Mandarin DLPT 5 contain both long and short form passages?

A. Yes, it does, in varying amounts starting from the lowest level and increasing to 50% at Level 3.

Q. Why is the test question written in English and not the target language?

A. For lower-range tests, we want to test examinees' ability to understand the target-language passage; if we had test questions in the target language, some test-takers might understand the passage but not understand the question or answer choices, and they would get the question wrong unfairly. For upper-range tests, this is not a problem, but our testing experts do not have access to all the languages we test, so in order to make sure the test questions are working properly we need to use English. In addition, anyone taking the upper-range test is expected to understand the target language but produce reports in English, so we are assuming that all examinees have good English skills and the ability to move back and forth between the target language and English.

Q. As part of the validation process, what is your plan to prevent global language knowledge from allowing you to guess the correct answer?

A. As part of the review process, we have people go through the questions without reading the passages to make sure that they can't be answered based on experience. The validation process is also useful in catching such questions: if too many people who are at levels below the level of a question get the question right, we do not use the question.

Q. Test topics (context) considered to be level 2+ and above are not written at the same level. How do you account for this?

A. The test developers are trained to select passages based on text typology. They consider the text mode (for instance, is the purpose of the passage to persuade, or to inform?), the language features (lexicon and syntax, for example), as well as to consider the functions, content and accuracy components of the skill level descriptions. At high levels there is a great diversity of types of texts and uses of language; for example, level 4 people should understand both formal academic language and slang or non-standard dialect.

Tentative Rollout Dates

Tentative rollout dates for the DLPT 5 are the following:

- January 06: Russian, Iraqi
- January-March 06: Chinese, Korean

April-June 06: Greek, Spanish

October-December 06: Levantine, Kurdish (Sorani)

2007: Modern Standard Arabic, Serbian-Croatian, Persian-Farsi, Japanese, Egyptian

2008: Turkish