

Seal of Biliteracy for CTE and Industry

What is it?

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy is an award that high school graduates can earn on their diplomas. It was created by [legislation](#) and is coordinated by the Illinois State Board of Education.

What does it represent?

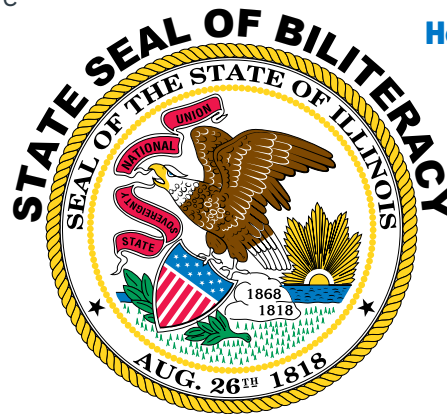
A student who graduates with the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy has demonstrated that they can competently communicate at an Intermediate High level in English and at least one other language at some time during their 9-12 school years. The seal is a representation that a student has credentialed their language skills beyond listing coursework on a transcript.

What do Intermediate High language skills look like?

The National Council of State Supervisors for Languages and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) issued a list of [Can-Do Statements](#) in 2017 indicating the capabilities of people with proficiency at various levels. Some examples of Intermediate High language competencies include:

- I can understand the main idea and flow of events expressed in various time frames in conversations and discussions.
- I can exchange information in conversations and some discussions on a variety of topics.

- I can interact with others to meet my needs, including when a complication arises.
- I can state my viewpoint on familiar or researched topics and provide reasons to support it.
- I can give detailed presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched.
- I can follow the main message in various time frames in informational texts.



How rigorous is the testing to prove Intermediate High proficiency?

All assessments for the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy are approved by ISBE. They must meet the standards set forth in [Ill. Admin. Code 680](#) and be aligned to nationally and internationally recognized language proficiency scales, such as ACTFL, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or the Interagency Language Roundtable. More information can be found on the State Seal of Biliteracy [webpage](#), including a list of approved assessments.

How can I use the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy in my particular setting?

Hiring managers may use “bilingual preferred” in an application and not have a way to identify the communicative competence of an applicant. The Seal of Biliteracy can identify applicants who have credentialed their language skills. School districts with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs can partner with instructors, coordinators, and industry professionals to promote this language credential and encourage seal recognition on behalf of bilingual students. CTE coursework can be developed to include language for specific purposes to integrate bilingualism, language learning and career preparation.

Proficiency Levels in the Workplace*

ACTFL Proficiency Level	Language Functions <i>What is the candidate able to DO with the language?</i>		Corresponding Professions/Positions **
	Oral	Written	
Advanced Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrate and describe events using the past, present, and future tenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write routine informal and some formal correspondence. Narrate, describe, and summarize. 	Banker, bank teller, customer service representative, facilities manager, researcher/analyst, credit/loan advisor, social worker, marketing manager, patient advocate, translator (predictable contexts).
Advanced Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deal effectively with unexpected complications in communication. Be understood by most people, native and non-native speakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaborate and paraphrase. Utilize frequently used and contextually appropriate grammar structures and vocabulary. 	Accounting coordinator, 911 dispatcher, billing clerk, call center representative, flight attendance, employee trainer, administrative assistant, maintenance administrator, nurse, first responder, teacher, retail personnel, sales and marketing representative.
Intermediate High <i>Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate, maintain, and bring a simple conversation to a close. Ask and respond to original questions with sentence-length structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write simple letters, messages, requests for information, and notes. 	Administrative assistant, billing clerk, custodian, first responder, flight attendant, teacher, missionary, nurse, social service receptionist, insurance manager, tour guide, utilities installer.
Intermediate Mid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication may include errors that can be clarified with mutual effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to simple questions and requests. 	Cashier, customer service, clerk, equipment technicians, drivers (truck, bus, train, car).
Intermediate Low <i>Illinois Commendation Toward Biliteracy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication may include errors that can be clarified with mutual effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication may include errors that are comprehensible with some clarification. 	Clerk, cashier, housekeeping, maintenance (incidental language use, predictable contexts).
Novice High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with memorized formulas, lists, and phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce lists and notes. Transcribe familiar words and phrases. 	<i>Not a functional level for professional competency.</i>

* This chart has been adapted from the [2023](#) collaboration between ACTFL and Language Teaching International.

** The levels of proficiency associated with the positions above are minimal levels of oral proficiency, most of which are based on a Language Testing International Task Analysis, where the minimal levels were determined by subject matter experts from companies and agencies that use ACTFL proficiency tests.