

The BEI Test of English Proficiency (TEP):

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the "grade" level of the TEP?

The grade level of the TEP is from the 11th to 12th grade.

What are the purposes of having it at that level of literacy?

An extensive analysis of the job and language tasks performed by ASL/English interpreters documented that competent interpreters require a minimum English proficiency at the 11th to 12th grade level. Candidates who pass the TEP are then eligible for the more rigorous performance tests, which assess their ability to competently interpret in settings representative of authentic job and language tasks.

Your test was proven Reliable and Valid. Is the data available for review?

Please see the online sources above for data about the reliability and validity of the test.

Do you recommend that the test-taker have some kind of college degree in order to pass the TEP? Or is "an average high school kid" expected to pass the TEP?

We do recommend intensive language study and practice to pass the TEP (*see Candidate Study Guide*). However, UA NCITRP knows of no correlation between educational attainment and interpreting ability. We have found that individuals with and without a university degree can pass interpreter certification examinations if they possess the required language and interpreting proficiency.

Is there a reason for completing the TEP in 75 minutes?

"Speededness" is a typical component of language proficiency tests, and especially certification tests, because it adds an element of difficulty reflective of language use in the real world. The TEP time limit was established through pilot testing, and reflects how long it takes for even low-scoring candidates to complete the TEP.

I failed the TEP by one point. Why aren't allowances given to address close scores such as this?

Typically, the passing score for a high-stakes test like the TEP is set between 80% and 75% (64-60 for the TEP). However, to be especially fair to candidates and ensure that more candidates were eligible to take the performance test, the passing score for the TEP was set at 69%, or 55 points, which is five points below the 75% cutoff of 60. This accommodation is referred to as a "passing band" of 55-60, and there is a high degree of confidence that a candidate who fails by one point (54) has not demonstrated the requisite minimum proficiency to pass the exam. Candidates who are this close to passing are encouraged to analyze their subsection scores and engage in intensive study of grammar, vocabulary building, and testing strategies using the references found in the *Study Guide for Interpreter Certification Candidates*.