

**ANNOUNCING THE 8TH ANNUAL
STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST
SPONSORED BY CT COLT ~ 2020**



Goals of the Essay Contest are:

1. To offer students a voice with regard to world language education and policies, in addition to recognizing excellence in research, documentation and writing.
2. To have an exemplary piece of writing that CT COLT may use for advocacy; to that end, the essay needs to be in English.



**2020 CT COLT ESSAY
CONTEST AND TOPIC:**

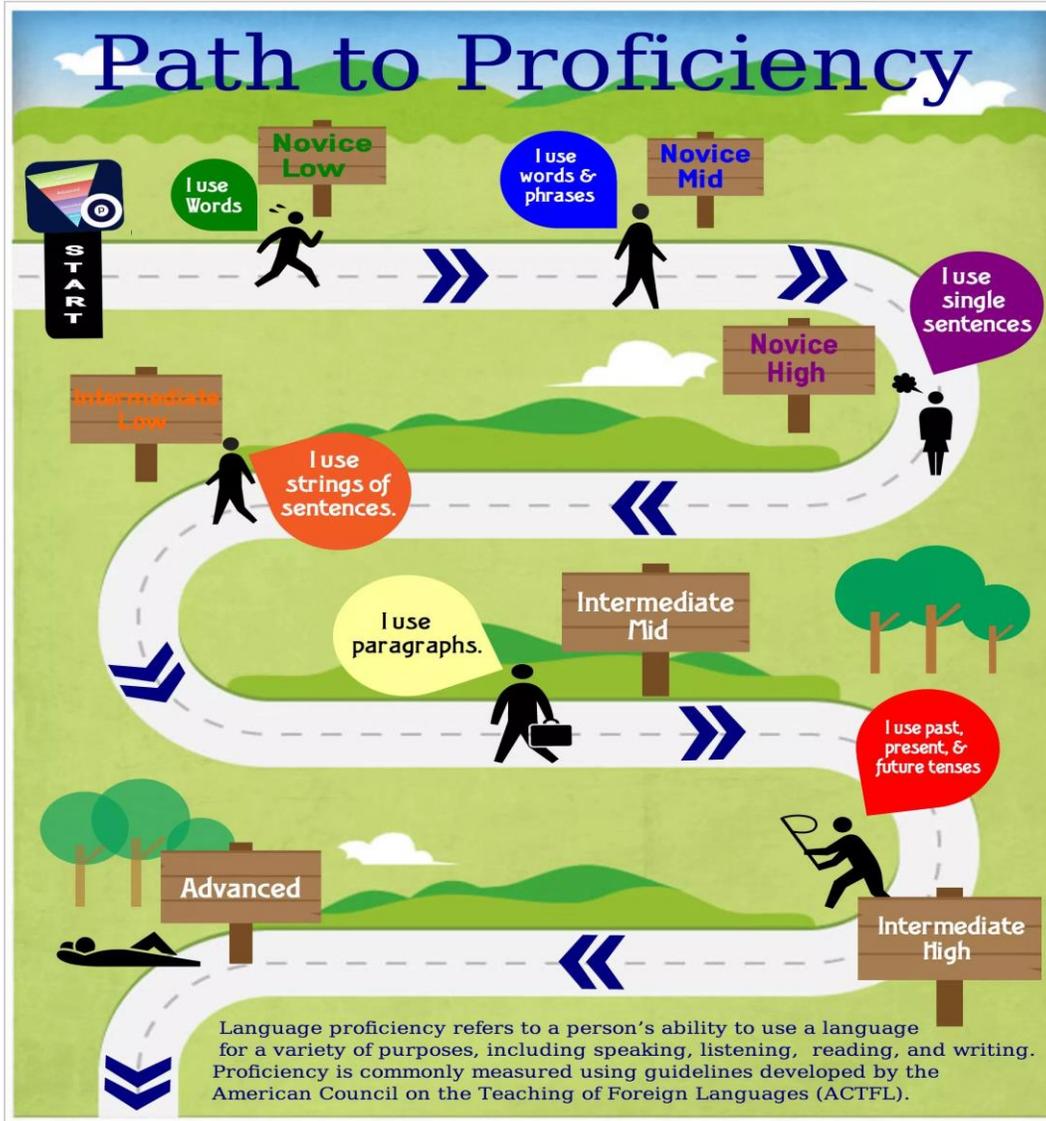


**ESSAY TOPIC: Proficiency: Continuing the
Journey**

Background Information

View the following infographic entitled, “***Path to Proficiency***” which depicts a person’s journey on how their language develops and at various levels.

Source: www.path2proficiency.com



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Language learning is complex process, which involves many factors, which affect how well and how fast learners will acquire language skills. Some of these factors concern where the language learning takes place, if the setting is immersive, at what age the learning occurs, the reason for the language learning, etc. For this essay, your focus will be on **developing proficiency**.

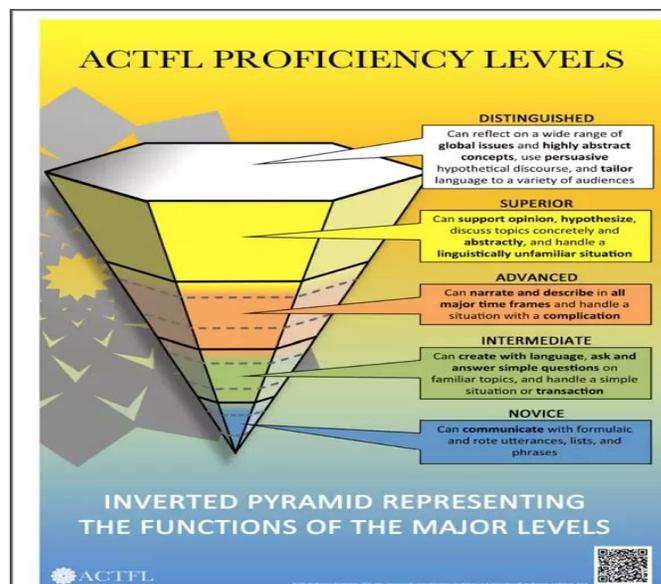
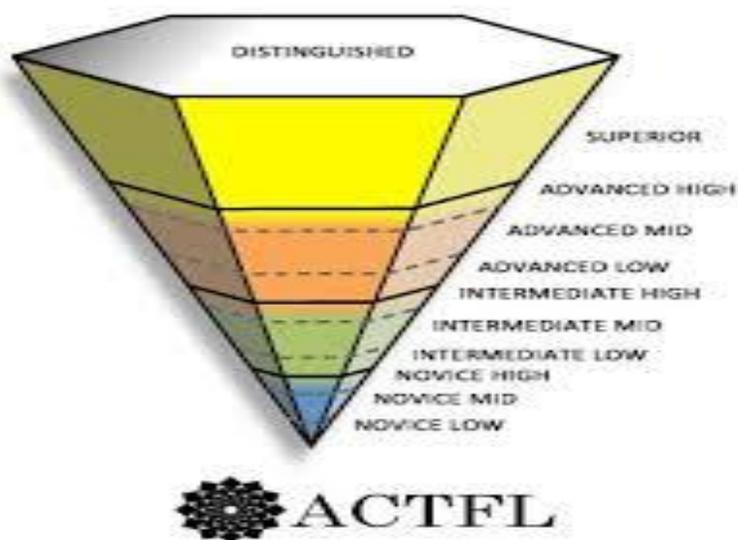
PROFICIENCY

Proficiency is the ability to use language in real world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do regardless of where, when or how the language was acquired.

ESSAY TOPIC AND FOCUS

Proficiency is something that the language instructor and language learner both consider as soon as language learning begins and which is reflected upon during the entire learning process. Proficiency is in a continuous state of development and requires a learning and instruction that is proficiency-based. Thus, **Proficiency-based learning** refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students

demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. Below are two (2) images that show the various ACTFL Proficiency Levels and the linguistic functions that correspond to each level.



After looking over the above, now reconsider the essay topic, which is **“Proficiency: Continuing the Journey”**. Write an essay in which you consider the following questions/topics. Before you start, you should do some more independent research about **proficiency** and **proficiency-based language learning**. Any research needs to be documented and cited appropriately. (See requirements below).

When writing, describe your own journey towards linguistic proficiency, as a context for the following ideas and topics.

- (1) Throughout your essay, you should argue in support of **proficiency-based language learning**. Remember to give specific evidence to support your claims – from your own experience and classroom.
- (2) How is **proficiency-based learning** being used in your classroom? How has this differed from any language instruction or language learning that you have experienced in the past?
- (3) What do think are the **benefits of proficiency-based language learning** for language learners? Which benefits have you seen in your own school and/or with your own language learning?
- (4) Do you feel more empowered, engaged and involved in the language-learning process as a **proficiency-based language learner**? What are your **responsibilities** as a proficiency-based language learner?

(5) How do you **track your proficiency**-based language learning, strengths and areas to work on concerning skills in speaking, writing, viewing, listening, and reading? How else do you incorporate **reflection into your language learning**?

(6) How has **proficiency-based language learning** helped you to reach your personal and academic goals thus far? How will it assist you in reaching your professional goals in the future?

(6) Do you have any recommendations or advice for students, teachers and school districts that have not adopted **proficiency-based language learning**? Is this something that should be embraced by all foreign language departments in Connecticut? Why so?

Tasks and Requirements of the Student:

- Write an essay of no more than two (2) typed, 12 point font, double-spaced pages, in which you address the designated topic.
- The essay should be in a letter format, with an imagined audience of a school board or politician.
- It is recommended that you employ standard writing practices, such as creating an outline before writing the essay fully.
- The format should be similar to a 5-paragraph, typed essay.
- Feel free to use your imagination; we encourage creativity and analytical thinking as part of the organizational and writing processes.
- We also require you to do research and provide evidence for some of your statements (use **official citation format**). Thus, you should give credit to any words and ideas from another author to which you refer. Ask your teacher for advice when you have questions about how to cite correctly. In addition to citing within your essay, you should provide a List of Citations at the end of your essay, after your concluding paragraph. (at least 2)
- Include your Full Name, Name of School, Name of Teacher, Year of Graduation and Name of Class on top of your first page.
- Provide a hard copy of your essay to your teacher.

Tasks and Requirements of the Teacher:

- CT COLT MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT: Teachers participating in the Essay Contest MUST possess a current and paid membership with CT COLT. If you are unsure about your membership status, you may check the mailing sticker on your latest copy of the CT COLT Newsletter, or email Paul M. St. Louis (pmsaint1946@comcast.net)
- There is NO FEE for participating members' students to enter the contest.

- Inform your students about the **2020 CT COLT Essay Contest**, with special consideration to the contest requirements.
- Select your students who will participate in the **2020 CT COLT Essay Contest**.
- Administer the **2020 CT COLT Essay Contest** as a research and writing assignment after careful explanation of the essay and rubric requirements.
- Collect and compile the completed essays from your students.
- **DUE DATE FOR ESSAY SUBMITTALS:** Friday, April 3, 2020
- **ESSAY LIMIT.** Evaluate your essays using the rubric contained herein – NOTE: Each teacher may submit **A MAXIMUM of FIVE (5) essays only** for final judging by the 2020 CT COLT Essay Committee Members. Thus, the pre-screening process on the part of the participating teacher is essential, in order to achieve the 5-essay limit for contest entry.
- **ESSAY SUBMITTAL FORMAT:** Participating teachers must PDF-scan (preferred) all submitted essays (limit = 5) and forward one (1) PDF electronic file via email to John R. Rook at: rookj@glastonburyus.org.
- The prize for the winning essay is \$50 as well as a \$50 *Carlex* voucher to teacher. *Carlex* is a leading distributor of FL classroom and curricular materials.
- **SPECIAL NOTE:** Any and all essays submitted may be used by CT COLT for advocacy purposes. The winning essay will be posted on the CT COLT Website (<http://www.ctcolt.org>)
- **NOTIFICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONTEST WINNER.** The teacher of the essay winner will be notified in addition to a notification placed on the CT COLT Website: (<http://www.ctcolt.org>) by May 1, 2020.

Questions and Concerns:

- Regarding the **ESSAY CONTEST:** Contact John R. Rook (rookj@glastonburyus.org)
- Regarding **CT COLT MEMBERSHIP:** contact Paul M. St. Louis (pmsaint@verizon.net).

THANK YOU ☺

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT IN CT COLT

ESSAY EVALUATION RUBRIC

CT COLT 2020 Essay Contest

	Excellent 20-25 points	Good 16-19 pts	Fair 12-15 pts	Poor under 12 pts
Accuracy of facts cited	several accurate facts are presented and correctly cited	some accurate facts are presented and cited	few accurate facts are presented and/or are not cited	no real back up is made for claims
Persuasiveness	piece contains both objective (fact-based) and subjective (personal experience based) arguments- these are effective and relevant	piece contains both objective (fact based) and subjective (personal experience based) arguments- these are mostly effective and relevant	piece contains either objective (fact based) or subjective (personal experience based) arguments- which are mostly effective and relevant	piece does not present relevant and effective arguments
Conventions of writing	conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation are observed- voice is appropriate to audience	conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation are usually observed- voice is mostly appropriate to audience	conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation are sometimes observed- voice is mostly appropriate to audience	errors in English grammar and spelling or lack of sense of audience detract from piece
Organization of piece	arguments are well organized and flow logically	arguments are mostly well organized and flow logically	arguments are well organized in places	piece does not show enough organization to flow easily for reader