

# METHODOLOGY & TEST OVERVIEW

## The Parrot Test



# PROMPT DEVELOPMENT

**All of Parrot's test items are developed by an external panel of expert linguists and psychometricians.**

The team that produces Parrot's test items is composed of experts in languages and assessment, many with terminal degrees in their fields. Before deployment, each item goes through multiple internal and external reviews to ensure that it functions as intended. After employment, its performance is monitored for unexpected analytical results, relative to the rating level.

**Parrot's prompts are designed to elicit spontaneous, open-ended responses to common workplace scenarios.**

By placing respondents in real-life situations, they are invited to speak naturally, ensuring a measurement focused on the type of skills most commonly valuable in the workplace.

**Prompts are written at-level and designed to receive at-level responses.**

Each prompt is designed to elicit a response that will appropriately indicate the respondent's skill-level relative to a specific rating on the ILR or CEFR scales. This simplifies rater decisions on a prompt-by-prompt basis, and enables Parrot's innovative rating methodology (see page 5 - "Rating Methodology").



# TEST FORMAT & STRUCTURE

**The Parrot Language Test is virtually proctored, taken remotely, and available on-demand, on any web-enabled computer, tablet, or smartphone.**

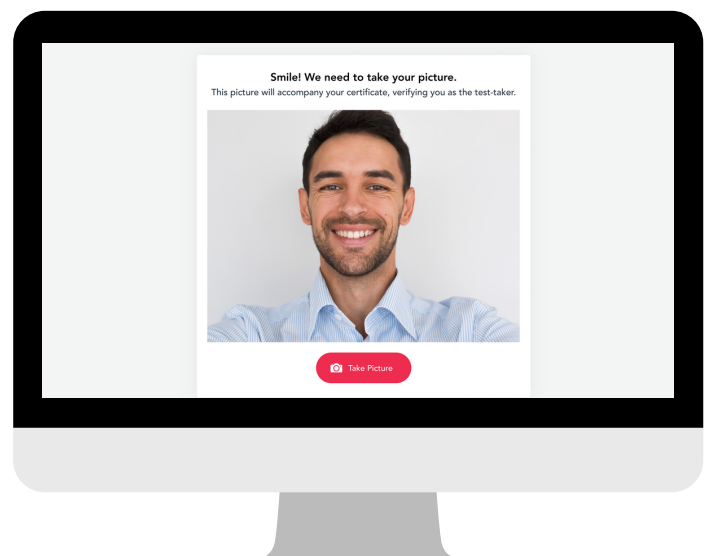
Respondents are not required to schedule a test or visit a testing center. Instead, they take the test at a time and place convenient to them on their own devices. Each respondent receives instruction on how to ensure a proper testing environment and to access support as needed from Parrot's team.

**Each test consists of 12 prompts, distributed across Parrot's three rating levels.**

Candidates are provided adequate time to review each prompt as needed, consider their response, and record an improvised response. The simpler prompts designed to elicit lower-level responses are presented to help the candidate overcome familiarity barriers and "warm up" for the more complicated prompts that come later in the test.

**Parrot confirms that the responses are all provided by one individual without use of reference aids.**

Respondents provide Parrot with access to their webcam to capture footage of the testing process. Footage is reviewed via automated and manual processes to confirm the same candidate provides each response alone, without referring to notes or other aids. A verified photo of the respondent appears on each certificate for identity verification.



# USER PREPARATION & SUPPORT

**Everyone who purchases or is assigned a Parrot Language Test receives a test familiarity and preparation guide.**

The information provided helps users understand the test, prepare appropriately, ease their testing anxiety, and demonstrate their skills fully and accurately. See Appendix A: "How to Optimize Your Parrot Rating."

**Each user receives access to a demo version of the test.**

By exploring the demo test, candidates familiarize themselves with the test interface and functionality in a no-stakes environment. This increases the accuracy of the samples provided on the actual test's early prompts and helps the candidate demonstrate true performance without any unnatural anxiety.

**Respondents are advised that practicing speaking is the most effective way to prepare for the test and optimize their scores.**

Because the test measures conversational skill, last-minute studying is not likely to improve scores. For preparation, they are encouraged to do the activities that actually affect their practical skill level.

**User support is available 24/7 via phone, email and web chat.**

Parrot fully supports a global testing population, independent of time zone.



# RESPONSE ACQUISITION

**Test-takers respond to four distinct prompts per proficiency level tested.**

The industry standard, maintained by most in-class tests, is two, meaning that Parrot examines a significantly larger pool of data to issue its ratings.

**Each response may be recorded once and only once.**

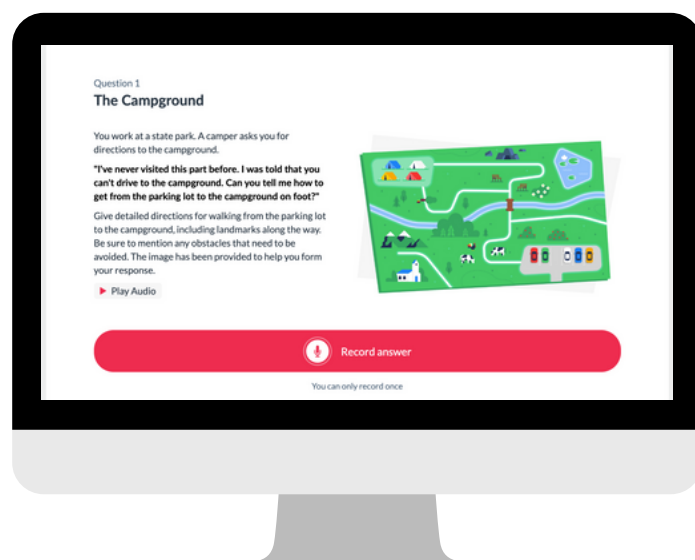
While test-takers are encouraged to think about how they want to answer before recording their responses, our tech does not allow them to start over or re-record once they have begun. Their overall time for the test is limited to 120 minutes so that candidates can't memorize and recite fully prepared responses.

**Respondents are prompted to respond in ways that demonstrate target skills.**

Each CEFR or ILR level represents a set of discrete skills. Parrot's prompts are designed to elicit demonstrations of the skills associated with the level of the prompt. This gives each candidate a fair and natural opportunity to demonstrate the relevant skills in a way that is more easily and accurately rated.

**All prompts are presented with multimedia accompaniments.**

Parrot prompts always include reference images or videos. These elements serve a dual purpose: elevating the user's confidence in the testing experience and helping them contextualize the prompt to formulate a response.



# RATING METHODOLOGY

**Parrot's methodology was designed by a respected industry leader.**

Bill Hindle, Parrot's co-founder and COO, currently serves as the chair of the testing committee of ASTM International and is an active member of the US Govt.'s Inter-Agency Language Roundtable (ILR). He designed Parrot's methodology to be the most efficient model of accurate language rating in use.

**Our prompt development team gathers and validates benchmark responses.**

Each prompt approved for use in a Parrot test has an associated benchmark response that has been determined by multiple experts to exemplify the typical characteristics of a speaker at the target level. This is the lynchpin of Parrot's methodology, as it enables a simplified model of comparative rating.

**Raters are provided individual, anonymous responses and asked to compare those responses to the benchmark for that prompt.**

Other language tests ask a single rater or two to complete a difficult task, namely to compare a full 30 minutes of recorded speech to a complicated set of written descriptors. In contrast, Parrot asks multiple raters a much simpler question: is the candidate's response as good as the benchmark or not?

**Each response is rated by a minimum of three unique raters with independent agreement in 24 hours or less.**

Once independent agreement has been reached for each prompt, a rating is issued. That rating represents the highest level at which raters agree that the candidate matches or exceeds benchmark performance for all at-level prompts.



# VALIDITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Parrot achieves an inter-rater reliability of 90%.**

Because of a measure of subjectivity inherent to human rating models, the industry's acceptable standard for inter-rater reliability, or how frequently raters agree on the rating of a specific response, is 70%. Parrot does not consider that to be acceptable. By testing and fine-tuning its methodology, Parrot has been shown to significantly surpass that threshold.

**Responses and ratings are reviewed via automated and manual processes at regular and random intervals for quality assurance.**

Parrot employs continuous quality improvement in order to better serve and protect its clients. General performance indicators are measured and analyzed to find opportunities for improvement. New or revised prompts are carefully tested. Individual responses and ratings are reviewed to confirm consistent performance and to identify risks so we can address potential issues before they occur.

**Parrot avoids business activities that can contribute to skill-source bias.**

Because Parrot does not provide language training or other language services, Parrot is not incentivized to favor indicators of skill-source associated with their programs at the expense of skills acquired via other means.



# QUESTIONS?

Thank you for reviewing this report. Parrot's team stands ready to discuss these methodologies as well as any other concerns or questions you may have about the quality, rigor, and validity of the Parrot Language Test. Should you have any such questions, please contact us using the information below.



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# Appendix A: How to Earn Your Best Parrot Rating

If you're nervous about taking the Parrot Language Test, you should know that you're not alone! Most people report anxiety surrounding any kind of exam, and since a higher Parrot rating can help you access new opportunities, it's natural to feel like the stakes are high. Our goal is to make the experience as simple and stress-free as possible, allowing you to demonstrate your speaking skills without unnecessary distraction or confusion. To that end, here are some ways you can prepare for the test in order to showcase the skills you've worked hard to develop:

1

## Understand how the test works.

On the Parrot Language Test, you will be asked to respond to 12 prompts. You'll be able to read the prompts, listen to audio recordings, and review reference images or video. Then, using the microphone on your computer or mobile device, you'll record a response to the prompt in the target language. It's that simple!

2

## Practice speaking in the target language.

It may seem obvious, but the best way to optimize your Parrot rating is to get as comfortable as you can having conversations in the target language. Speak as much as you can and get feedback from native speakers. This will help you develop the skills we'll be measuring and give you a confidence boost to help you do your best.

3

## Explore the demo test.

We've built a demo test to help you become familiar with how the test works, reduce your anxiety, and improve your performance on the actual test. While demo responses are not rated, you'll still get the best results by practicing as if they were. You can access the demo test at [www.parrotdemo.com](http://www.parrotdemo.com)

4

## Choose the right time and place.

You can take the test anywhere, anytime, on a web-enabled device, so plan to do your best. Make sure you're well-rested and comfortable in a quiet place with a stable internet connection. Warm up by speaking the target language. The test should take about a half hour. Reserve enough time to make sure you aren't rushed.



5

### **Trust your instincts.**

While you should think about your responses before you begin to record, once you are recording, it is best if you try to speak naturally, just as you would in the situation described. Don't try to memorize what you want to say. This will harm the flow of your speech, and our raters will notice it as an indicator of low-level speaking.

6

### **Don't give up when you make mistakes.**

You can only record each response one time. Try not to let that discourage you. If you make a mistake, correct it if possible and keep going. Being able to correct errors and still be understood is a skill our raters look for. We don't share your responses with anyone else, so no need to feel embarrassed about anything you might say.

7

### **Make sure the raters have enough to go on.**

While there are no rules about how long your answer must be, very short responses typically do not earn high ratings. If you don't know what to say, use the images provided and your imagination to respond in some way. We aren't rating your opinion or the content of your answer, but the language skills you demonstrate.

8

### **Contact us if you have any questions or concerns.**

Our support team has lots of experience helping people understand the exam and optimize their scores. If you have any questions about how the test works or how you should prepare, don't hesitate to reach out. We want you to do your best, and we're excited to hear from you! Support is available via phone, email and chat.

Our mission at Parrot is to help people just like you to succeed, by demonstrating your hard-earned language skills with a verified rating. A Parrot rating helps you qualify for opportunities in which you're prepared to excel.

**We're excited about what's next for you.**



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