



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF RUSSIAN

February 15, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

The Board of Directors of the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) is pleased to express strong support of the National Examination in World Languages (NEWL)-Russian (known since 2007 as the “Prototype AP® Russian Examination”) to U.S. college and university Russian language programs for use in determining credit and/or course-level placements of entering first-year students (traditional or heritage) with prior study of the language.

NEWL-Russian is formally endorsed by the College Board/AP Program to its more than 6000 member institutions for advanced placement and/or credit by examination purposes. NEWL is also recognized in a growing number of U.S. states for Seal of Bi-Literacy certification.

NEWL is a four-skill proficiency-based examination designed specifically to support effective school-to-college articulation. Its purpose is to encourage U.S. students of Russian, traditional and heritage, to persist in their study of the language through the high school and college years. It represents a prime example of the best practices recommended by the 2017 American Academy of Arts and Sciences Commission Report on the need for improvements in articulation, training to the advanced-level, and greater support of heritage languages already spoken in the United States.

ACTR urges all teachers of Russian to make use of the NEWL-Russian tests, which are administered in late April of each year. College and university faculty are requested to consider the NEWL-Russian score in placing entering first-year students into intermediate and advanced-level courses. (See chart below). K-12 teachers of Russian are requested to bring the NEWL-Russian examination to the attention of high school students (and parents), administrators, guidance counselors, and AP Coordinators, noting that the College Board AP Program recommends that NEWL: Russian exam scores be accepted for credit and/or advanced placement, in the same way as a comparable score as an AP exam.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Jesús Garza

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UT Regents and University Distinguished
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The National Examinations in World Languages (NEWL: Arabic, Korean, Portuguese, and Russian) are designed to be a measure of functional proficiency in the target languages for use as a predictive assessment, credit granting, and placement tool at the university level. NEWL consists of four equally-weighted components aimed at assessing proficiency: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

NEWL uses the skill component scores to determine a composite AP 1-5 score. For example, at least two Intermediate High or higher scores, and one Intermediate Low or Mid score or higher, are required to attain a NEWL score of 5; at least three Intermediate Low or Mid scores, or two Intermediate High and two Novice High, are required for a NEWL 4; and at least two Intermediate Low or Mid scores or higher are required for a NEWL 3.

Number of skill component scores			NEWL composite score
Novice High	Intermediate Low/Mid	Intermediate High or higher	
4	0	0	1
3	1	0	2
2	2	0	3
2	1	1	
1	3	0	4
1	2	1	
0	4	0	
0	3	1	
2	0	2	
1	1	2	5
0	2	2	
1	0	3	
0	1	3	
0	0	4	

This summative numerical scale does not imply that a NEWL score is a “global proficiency rating.” Instead, each score is a bundle of proficiency ratings, corresponding to typical outcomes (by semester) of U.S. university foreign language programs. For example, a NEWL composite score of 5 would be suitable for placement to fifth semester Russian, and/or four semesters of target language credit; 4 corresponds to fourth semester placement; 3 corresponds to the first semester of second year; 2 represents second semester of first year; and 1 would indicate that the student would benefit from review in a first-year course.