

## Suggestions for Improving Performance on the Foreign Language Credit Program Exam

The following are some ideas you might want to use to improve your performance on the written Foreign Language Credit Program exam.

### Know what the assessors are looking for:

- The assessors are looking for a level of writing that can consistently and accurately describe and narrate in the past, present and future using complete sentences to form coherent paragraphs. The assessors evaluate the writing in six domains: task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse (degree of sophistication), vocabulary, language control (grammar) and mechanics (spelling and punctuation). A sample scoring rubric is available online at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/OHSICS/forlang/creditemam/pdf/WritingRubric2008.pdf>.

### To prepare for the exam:

- If you speak the test language but have not had many opportunities to write it, you may have difficulty with the written exam. You may not know how to write and spell words in your language, even if you know how to say them. To improve this, practice writing paragraphs or stories in your language. Ask someone who knows how to write your language to go over what you have written and to provide corrections and suggestions. Remember that spelling does count!
- As you practice writing in your language, also practice using the rules of good composition. Organize what you write into complete sentences and then group sentences on the same topic into paragraphs. If it is appropriate for your language, capitalize the first word of each sentence, and use correct punctuation at the end of each sentence. Sentences that are very long and run into one another without a break are difficult to read and understand. Remember that written compositions are more organized and formal than just writing what you would say in a conversation with a friend.
- Read magazines and newspapers written in your language. You will learn how to spell words that you already know how to say, as well as increase your vocabulary.

### When you take the exam:

You will be given two topics (written in your language) and asked to write two compositions about personal experiences. Each composition must consist of at least three well-developed, cohesive paragraphs using complete sentences with a variety of vocabulary. Your writing samples need to be long enough for the assessor to determine your writing proficiency.

- Include a variety of ideas and vocabulary. If you write about only one or two ideas, the vocabulary you use may be too limited and may not demonstrate the depth of your knowledge. Show what you know!
- After you finish the writing portion of the exam, read over what you have written before handing in your exam. Make sure that your handwriting can be easily read, and check your spelling and punctuation.