STAMP4S Test Taker Guide

What is STAMP 4S?

STAMP stands for *Standards-Based Measure of Proficiency* and is a web-based test that assesses language proficiency. A STAMP 4S test has four sections – reading, writing, listening and speaking and the results of this test inform test takers and educators about learning progress and program effectiveness. STAMP 4S test items are based on real-world, everyday situations. STAMP 4S measures a test taker's language ability according to Benchmark Levels that are based on national standards. Test results will indicate the level of proficiency achieved for each section of the test.

Preparing for the STAMP 4S Assessment

Take a STAMP sample test to familiarize yourself with the layout of the test and the types of prompts that you can expect. It is also advisable to read the STAMP 4S Benchmarks and Rubric Guide if you want information about the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve a certain test level.

Rules for Taking A STAMP 4S Test

The STAMP 4S test must be taken in a proctored environment, with a proctor who is authorized by the organization sponsoring the test.

- No paper, pens, pencils, cell phones, etc. are allowed in the testing area
- No additional applications (e.g., Word, email, chat) or browser windows are allowed to be open during testing
- Avant graders review all written and spoken responses and any inappropriate responses (vulgar, violent, etc.) will not be scored and will be reported to your test administrator

Logging in to STAMP 4S

- Your teacher or proctor will provide the URL, Test Code and Password for the STAMP 4S login page
- You will need to enter a Login Name (between 6-20 characters) on the login page. Login Name may contain lower case letters, numbers, and any of the following special characters: @ (at symbol); _ (underscore); - (hyphen); . (period); , (comma); ‘ (single quote). Your teacher or proctor may have suggestions on what to enter in this field but please note that your Login Name cannot be the same as anyone else's in your testing group
- Be sure you remember how you entered your Login Name because if you need to resume you will need to use the same Login Name you started the test with previously.
- After you log in, the Student Profile screen will appear where you will need to enter your First Name, Last Name and Student ID. Follow directions from your teacher or proctor for entry into these fields

Taking the STAMP4S Assessment

Your proctor will let you know what section of the test to start first. Reading and Writing sections are usually taken together (the Reading section is a prerequisite for the Writing section). Listening and Speaking sections are also usually taken together (the Listening section is a prerequisite for the Speaking section).

The test will provide helpful instructions at the beginning of each section. Please read the instructions carefully.

Responses to test questions are submitted using the NEXT button, located at the bottom right of the screen. Scroll down, if necessary.

A warning will appear if you spend too much time on one test item. However, the warning message allows you to add more time if needed. If no entry is given when this message is displayed, you will be logged out of the test and will need to resume when you have more time.

Unless directed otherwise, complete all sections of the test until the Test Complete message appears.

Reading and Listening Sections

The Reading and Listening sections of the test are multiple choice and computer-adaptive, meaning that each new question is selected based on previous responses. Because STAMP 4S is used to determine language proficiency for test takers who are at Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels, the Reading and Listening sections start out with questions at various levels. If you are at the early stages of language learning, the test may challenge you, but don't be frustrated if you encounter a topic or words that are unfamiliar to you. Do your best, but keep in mind that an incorrect answer on an unfamiliar topic is okay and provides the system with valuable information needed for determining proficiency.

As your test progresses, you may see easier or more difficult questions based upon your earlier answers. Each test taker will follow a unique path as he/she moves through the test. You will see approximately 30 questions in each of the sections. The Reading section takes, on average, 40 minutes to complete and the Listening section averages 45 minutes. Either section may take longer for test takers who are getting many higher-level test items, which feature longer reading or listening passages. The speed of your Internet connection can also affect the length of the test.

Here are some tips:

- Read the question and answers before you attempt to read or listen to the passage (this will help guide your reading/listening and help you move through the test more quickly)
- Do not translate each word that you read or hear – translating each word is not reading or listening for comprehension and it will take more time that you can better use in later sections
- In the Listening section, you can listen to each recording two times

Writing and Speaking Sections

- These sections start with a sample item
  - Use the sample Writing item to practice keyboarding special characters you may need to use
  - Use the sample Speaking item to ensure that your microphone is working properly
  - Do not spend much time crafting answers to sample questions as they do not contribute to your final score
- Provide your response using the target language you are being tested in
- Write or record at your highest possible level
- Provide all detail requested in the question and enough detail to fully demonstrate your writing or speaking skills • Stay on topic
- Pace yourself
  - Allow sufficient time for all three of your Writing/Speaking items
  - Complete responses for all items are needed to accurately determine your proficiency level
- In these sections, click **NEXT** to submit the response and move to the next screen
- After clicking **NEXT**, you will not be able to return to the question

Writing Section

The Writing section consists of one or two samples and three test questions.

- For Spanish and French writing tests, a "visual keyboard" is provided for selecting special characters associated with the language
- For Arabic, Chinese and Japanese writing tests, you need to select the correct language for input from your computer's task bar or desktop (your teacher or test proctor can show you how to do this)
- Use the SAVE button regularly as you write
  - The test will timeout if 30 minutes have elapsed without clicking **SAVE** or **NEXT**. If a timeout occurs prior to clicking SAVE, you will lose all of your writing input. If you timeout after you have clicked **SAVE**, you will lose all of your writing input since your last **SAVE.**
  - A 5-minute warning appears prior to a timeout; click the message if you need additional time; you will also want to click **SAVE** at that time. If no entry is given when this message is displayed, you will be logged out of the test and will need to resume when you have more time.
  - Saving frequently also guards against lost work in the event of any connectivity issues
  - If you get logged out of the test, you can log back in with the same credentials to continue from the point of your last **SAVE**
- When done with a test question, click **NEXT** to save the response and move to the next question or screen

Speaking Section

The Speaking section consists of one or two samples and three test questions.

- Organize your thoughts before you start to record
- To record a response, click **RECORD**
- When done recording, wait two or three seconds, and then click **STOP** • After recording, click **PLAY** to listen to your recording
- You can then do one of the following:
  - If you want to add to the recording, click **RECORD/ADD TO RECORDING**
  - If you want to delete the recording and start over, click **START OVER**
- Avoid long pauses when you are recording
  - Use the **STOP** and **RECORD/ADD TO RECORDING** buttons as needed
- When the recording is complete, click **NEXT** to save your response and move to the next test question or screen

VERY IMPORTANT

For the Speaking Section, click **PLAY** after recording to verify that the response was recorded properly.

- If the response is inaudible or of poor quality, **DO NOT CLICK NEXT**.
- You can try recording again, but should contact the test proctor or teacher if there are headset issues, or if a problem persists
- Never click **NEXT** to bypass the test item –if the problem cannot be resolved during the current testing session, click **STOP TEST** (and resume the test after the problem is resolved)

Following these procedures will prevent having a speaking response that cannot be graded. Keep in mind that Avant graders hear exactly what you are able to hear.

Completing the STAMP 4S Assessment

- If you are not completing the test in one session, follow the instructions from your teacher or proctor about when to click Stop Test
- You have not completed STAMP 4S until you see a screen that says “Test Complete.”
- If you need to finish the test at another time, plan to do so within 14 days of starting the test (or within the timelines specified by your teacher or proctor).

Resuming the STAMP 4S Assessment

To resume a test, log in exactly as you did the first time using the same credentials. The test should restart at the point where you left off. If the Student Profile screen appears instead, STOP the test. This indicates that the name entered in the Login Name field this time is different than originally entered. Try logging in again or contact your test proctor or teacher for assistance.

Need Help?

Students: Contact your assessment Administrator or Proctor

Administrators: **Email:** support@avantassessment.com
Phone: **Within the U.S.:** 1 888-713-7887
Outside the U.S.: + 541-338-9090

After hours, please leave a voicemail message.

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Support Representatives available Monday – Friday from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time (March, April, and May), and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time during the rest of the year