DLAB Study Guide

Delta Gear, Inc.

Thank you: Logan Jack for inspiring me on numerous occasions, and especially Mom and Dad without whom I would have no linguistic abilities.

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Preface

The Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) is a standardized government test, approximately two hours in length, used to determine the natural ability of armed services members to learn a foreign language.

It is difficult to study for the DLAB in the traditional way, as the DLAB is designed to measure language-learning potential, not current knowledge. Because the testing involves a gibberish language, there is no way to create a traditional study guide, however, studying the grammatical rules that apply to each specific section of the test and knowing what to expect, will give you a definite advantage.

The DLAB test scores are ultimately used to determine the service member's eligibility for language training in accordance with (IAW) AR 611-6 and for reclassification into Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 37F, 97E, or 98G IAW DA PAM 611-21.

You may take the test to fulfill a requirement, such as Special Forces or the Olmsted scholarship. You may also take it if you are trying to get a job that specifically requires language training, such as a linguist, cryptographer, or signal intelligence. This applies to the following:

- MOS – used by Army and Marines
- AFSC – Air Force Specialty Code used by Air Force
- Rating – used by Navy and Coast Guard

Thus, at the Defense Language Institute (DLI), DLAB scores are used for selection and placement. The government's intelligence agencies normally use either the MLAT or the ALAT for selection and placement. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) participated in the original validation studies of the MLAT and has continued to use it ever since. The FBI uses the DLAB score and the government's four-category system to determine whether its agents would be successful if sent to receive full-time language training.

Task

The DLAB is approximately two hours in length and is divided into two major portions, audio and visual. There will be ten survey questions at the beginning of the test, which you will have 90 seconds to complete.

- The audio portion is approximately 80 minutes long, divided between five sections. The first section will test your ability to identify stress patterns in gibberish words. The remaining sections use a gibberish language structured with grammatical rules given at the beginning of each section.

- The visual portion is approximately 25 minutes long. You will not be using headphones for this section. You will be given pictures with a gibberish word beneath each picture. Then you will be given another picture, and you will have to pick which gibberish word best describes that picture.

Conditions

If the test is not computerized, you will be given a pencil, an answer sheet (in the form of a fill-in-the-circle grid), a test booklet, and two pieces of white scratch paper. You will also be given headphones for the audio portion. If the test is computerized you will not be given a test booklet nor will you have the benefit of using scratch paper.

The audio portion uses a CD recorded from a cassette tape. Therefore, the audio portion of the test has remained unchanged since the advent of cassette tapes. The information contained within this study guide should be extremely accurate.

If you fail your first time, you can retake the test in six months. If you get a passing score, you will only have one chance to take this test. Requests for re-tests by individuals who have already made a minimum qualifying score are approved only based on documented military necessity, and must be approved by the appropriate commander (i.e., recruiting squadron commander).

Standards

The U.S. Government has grouped languages into four categories according to their difficulty for English speaking persons. Regardless of your score, you will be trained in a language determined by the needs of the Department of Defense. The following minimum DLAB scores are associated with qualification for studying the languages in each category of difficulty:

Category I	85 or higher
Category II	90 or higher
Category III	95 or higher
Category IV	100 or higher

> **NOTE:** See Appendix B for a list of languages for each of the four categories.

The test is scored by converting your raw points to score. Individual services or agencies may demand higher qualifying scores at their discretion. For example, the Air Force requires a minimum score of 95 on the DLAB for all Cat I-III languages and 100 for Cat IV languages. Although the Marine Corps will lower the requirement to 90 for Cat I and II languages, they require a minimum score of 100 for all languages. The highest possible score on the DLAB is 176.

Section 2. Audio Nouns and Adjectives

The second part of the audio segment begins to introduce rules to a modified English language.

NOTE: See the Glossary for grammatical terms and brief descriptions related to the DLAB sections.

Unlike the first section (which was complete gibberish), these words have a very familiar English sound to them.

The rules for this section are:

1. The noun will always precede the adjective.
2. The noun and the adjective will always end in the same vowel sound.
3. There is no translation for articles (the grammatical term for *a, an,* and *the*).

You will be given a booklet showing only the English sentences that require translation. When the tape is played, the narrator will provide four choices. For the sake of example, we have shown these choices, but during the actual test you will only *hear* the choices.

Here are two examples:

Example 3. Translate *the brown dog*
A- brownie doggie
B- dogie brownie
C- brownie dogo
D- dogo browna

The correct answer is B because the noun precedes the adjective and both end with the same vowel sound.

Example 4. Translate *a small broken jar*
A- brokenu smalla jara
B- brokenee smallu jaree
C- smallu jaru brokene
D- jaru brokenu smallu

The correct answer is D because the noun precedes the adjective and all words end in the same vowel sound.

Below are additional challenging exercises. Based on the four given picture/word combination, deduce the word for the given image. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper. You may check your answers using the key in Appendix A.

farkila	janko	zik	farkiloy jank

1.
A- farkilam jankov
B- farkizik
C- farkilam zikov
D- jankiloy fark

2.
A- farkilam jankov
B- farkilam zikov
C- zikiloy fark
D- farkila