



Pearson

Global Report: a Snapshot of English Proficiency

Introduction

In 2016 English is the most widely spoken language worldwide, counting both native and non-native speakers. It is in regular use by approximately 1.75 billion people—a quarter of the world's population.

The growth of English has been reinforced by the emergence of the internet as a global business and communication tool. It is clear that English is currently the lingua franca of the global economy. The Economist reports that close to 70% of executives said their employees will need to master English to meet the needs of business growth, and that increasing numbers of businesses are adopting English as their official language. As English has become a core skill for workplace readiness, businesses and other organizations are seeking effective ways to measure language proficiency and language-learning outcomes.

Pearson's automated Versant language tests use artificial intelligence to efficiently and accurately assess second language proficiency. The speaking tests employ speech processing technology to evaluate the content and manner of speech against sophisticated statistical models built by analyzing the varied rhythms and pronunciations of both native and non-native speakers. The writing tests use the Knowledge Analysis Technologies™ (KAT) engine and Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) to generate semantic similarity of words and passages by analyzing large bodies of relevant text. LSA can then "understand" the meaning of text in the same way a human reader does.

Versant measures of language skill are virtually indistinguishable from scoring carried out by multiple independent human raters using careful analysis and judgment. Years of research comparing scores from parallel administrations of Versant tests and other well-established language assessments indicate that Versant aligns very well with other measures of language skill.

Versant measures of language skill are virtually indistinguishable from scoring that is carried out by multiple independent human raters using careful analysis and judgment.



Since Pearson's fully automated Versant language tests were launched in the late 1990s there has been an explosive growth in their use. The figure below shows that just over the three-year period from 2013 to 2015 (following publication of 2012 data in the last Pearson Global Report) test usage increased by 70 percent, to almost a million tests worldwide.

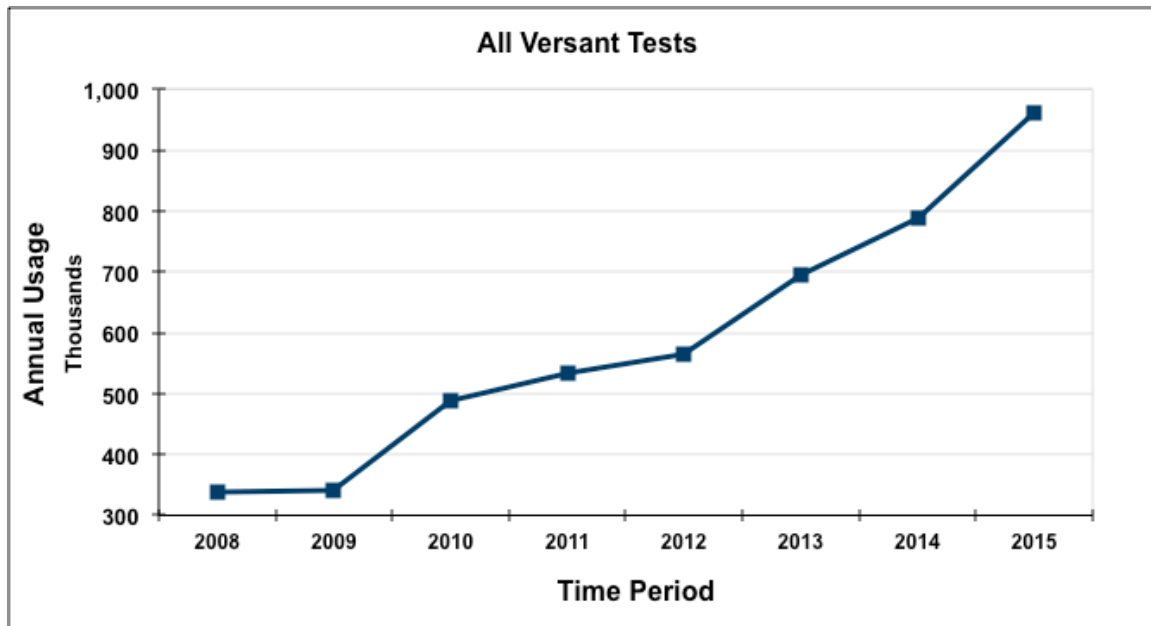


Figure 1. Annual Versant test usage from 2008 to 2015.

Versant automated tests, because they do not require human intervention in the testing process, offer many benefits, as described on the following pages. One important benefit is a large reservoir of readily available score data that can be tapped to draw comparisons and inform decision-making about language testing.

Versant automated tests...offer...a large reservoir of readily available score data that can be tapped to draw comparisons and inform decision-making about language testing.

This report provides current score data for key Versant tests as they were used worldwide in 2015. The report compares mean scores and threshold ranges in the regions where the tests are widely used, and analyzes trends over time. The data provide an up-to-date snapshot of average skill levels among Versant test takers in the regions and how these may be changing. Pearson welcomes the opportunity to discuss the data presented in this report. For more information please contact sales@pearsonkt.com.

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Versant Automated Language Tests

Pearson's fully automated Versant tests are used worldwide by businesses and academic institutions to measure language skill efficiently and accurately. The suite includes flagship tests for spoken and written English, as well as spoken tests for Spanish, Arabic, Dutch, French, and Chinese. Tests are also available for young learners. Versant automated tests put the test taker first by offering a fair and convenient way to track progress and measure language learning.

Benefits of Versant Tests:

- free from potential bias and fatigue that can affect human judgment
- extensive field testing and research supports test reliability and validity
- streamlined test administration, 24/7, from any phone or computer, allowing large groups of candidates to be tested quickly
- test scores are available online, minutes after testing
- scores are provided on a finely grained scale that permits differentiation among candidates
- overall scores use a weighted average that takes into account the differential impact of specific language skills on language performance
- diagnostic information is provided to help language learners improve
- efficacy in tracking language learning progress and measuring learning gains.

Pearson's fully automated Versant tests are used worldwide by businesses and academic institutions to measure language skill efficiently and accurately.

Why Distinct Tests for Speaking and Writing?

It is important to use a speaking test to assess speaking skills and a writing test to assess writing skills. Using a test for one skill does not serve as a proxy for the other because both forms of communication follow different conventions and rules. To give just a few examples:

- spoken language is sparse, sentences are shorter; written language is dense and more elaborate
- speech uses everyday words with fewer syllables; written language uses a more complex lexicon
- the ratio of words that carry meaning to those that don't (lexical density) is usually higher in writing than in speech
- speech is more instantaneous; written language takes time to produce and usually more thought has gone into it
- some grammar, (e.g., the past perfect) tends to be reserved almost exclusively for writing.

In light of the material differences in the skills required for speaking and writing, accurate assessment requires a test that has been constructed and validated to measure the specific skill of interest. Pearson's two flagship tests for spoken and written English do just that.

Pearson's **Versant English Test** (Versant English) is used worldwide to measure spoken English communication skills. The fully automated test can be taken in 15 minutes by phone or computer and provides an Overall score as well as four sub-scores in Sentence Mastery (i.e., grammar), Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation.

Pearson's **Versant Writing Test** (Versant Writing) assesses the use of everyday written English in a workplace environment. It takes 35 minutes to complete by computer and provides an Overall score and subscores in Grammar, Vocabulary, Organization, Voice & Tone, and Reading Comprehension.

In light of the material differences in the skills required for speaking and writing, accurate assessment requires a test that has been constructed and validated to measure the specific skill of interest.

Speaking and Writing Combined in a Single Test

As globalization in the business environment has matured, employers are beginning to seek candidates with more well-rounded language skills who can communicate effectively both in writing through email and chat, and in conversation on the phone. Likewise, in educational and training settings where the focus is on language learning, a more comprehensive test of language skills is required to provide a complete picture of strengths and weaknesses and to track learning outcomes.

Pearson's **Versant English Placement Test** (VEPT) measures the ability of test takers to understand and communicate clearly in both spoken and written English in many different work situations. The 50-minute test provides an Overall Score and four skill scores in Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading.



The Pearson Portfolio: Assessing Other Key Skills for Workplace Readiness

Pearson's extensive portfolio of talent assessments includes many that are used by businesses and other organizations, alongside Versant automated language tests, to evaluate candidates for workplace readiness. A few of the more widely used tests are listed below.

Other Pearson Tests of Workplace Readiness:

The Customer Service Occupational Test measures the behaviors & skills required to be successful in a customer service role, including customer-facing work styles such as Concern for Others, Initiative, and Persistence. It is used to recruit customer service representatives, salespeople, and entry-level staff.

Watson-Glaser™ Critical Thinking Appraisal is a leading critical thinking test used to assess decision-making skills and judgment. It measures the ability to assimilate and interpret information and to provide logical solutions. Businesses use it for hiring high-potential employees into Service Desk, Technical Support, and Risk Management Roles.

Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test® – II is one of the most widely used and validated assessments of mechanical aptitude. It is used to select candidates for mechanical, repair, and industrial occupations, and is a great hiring tool for entry-level mechanical engineers.

Raven's Progressive Matrices™ assesses skills including advanced observation and clear-thinking skills, efficient problem solving, abstract reasoning, and the ability to learn. Questions are non-verbal, which is perfect for a multicultural workforce. Organizations find it a good indicator of programming abilities for hiring IT product development staff.

Hire.Me is an integrated mobile recruitment solution. The platform gives businesses the ability to effectively reach, engage, and evaluate candidates in a mobile environment while providing real-time assessment, analytics, and reporting to make the best hiring decisions.

Threshold Scores

Typically the most effective way to utilize Versant tests for selection is to establish a *threshold* or *cut score* (i.e., a passing score). This is the score that sets the lowest level of acceptable language proficiency either for entry into a learning program or for selection into a particular job role. Versant customers have found that effectively established cut scores offer a fair and transparent solution to defining language requirements for entry into their organization.

Threshold scores add concrete definition to the minimum expectation of language skill required for language training or workplace readiness. Establishing a data-driven cut score for entry into a language-learning program or for different job roles is the first step towards leveraging Versant tests to set a meaningful standard for language proficiency. There are numerous criteria for success in a learning program or in the workplace. Where language skill is a key criterion for success, the factors related to language can be fairly assessed by applying a threshold score and applying it consistently.

Threshold scores add concrete definition to the minimum expectation of language proficiency required for language training or workplace readiness.

Cut scores can also be used to set clear and measurable goals for language learning outcomes. Versant tests enable learning efficacy to be measured objectively by assessing gains in language learning through an analysis of pre- and post-training test scores. Moreover, by setting a threshold score required to exit a language training program, Versant tests can be used to set specific criteria for learning outcomes that are tied to workplace readiness.

Threshold Scores are used to:

- establish a base line from which to measure candidates objectively for learning programs, workplace readiness, promotion, etc.
- ensure a fair selection and promotion process, as related to language skill
- assist organizations in evaluating levels of proficiency required for different training programs and job roles
- clarify selection, training, and promotion processes for candidates
- set goals for clear and measurable language learning outcomes
- accurately evaluate workplace readiness.

Pearson's Global Scale of English

In recent years, Pearson has begun using the Global Scale of English (GSE), a scale Pearson developed to provide a Global standard for measuring progress in English language acquisition. The GSE is directly linked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). In the past, scores on Versant tests were reported on the Versant scale, and Pearson provided guidance to test users on how those scores compared with other commonly used test scales such as IELTS or TOEFL. The new GSE links to both the Versant scale and the CEFR and can be used to precisely identify language learners with a commonly defined level of English proficiency.

Pearson is in the process of implementing the GSE company-wide for all English learning materials and assessments. Employing a common scale makes it possible to synchronize skill levels across Pearson's English language products and processes, and to build on the general understanding of CEFR levels. However, the GSE has the advantage of providing greater granularity than the broad categories offered by the CEFR.

As shown in Figure 2, the GSE ranges from 10-90 across the full spectrum of language proficiency; a learner at GSE level 10 is barely able to use the language, while an individual at 90 functions with great comfort and facility.

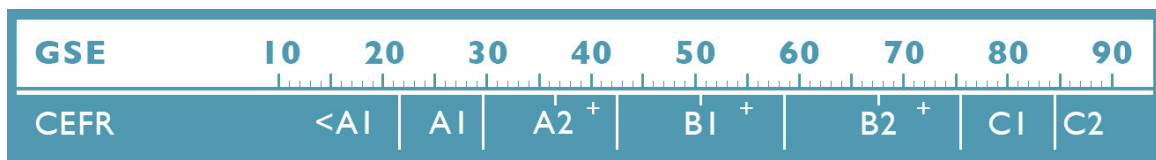


Figure 2. Comparison of the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework of Reference.

The new GSE links to both the Versant scale and the CEFR, and can be used to precisely identify language learners with a commonly defined level of English proficiency.

Through robust analyses comparing test taker performance on assessments that use the Versant and the GSE scales, Pearson has been able to establish the GSE equivalency for each score on the Versant score scale. More information about how Versant scores map to the GSE for Versant English, Versant Writing, and the Versant English Placement Test are provided in Appendix D.

Note that all scores in this document are reported on the Versant score scale of 20-80.

Overview: Study of the Versant English Test and Versant Writing Test

Test Description

The Versant English Test assesses spoken English communication skills and can be taken by phone or computer anytime, anywhere, in approximately 15 minutes. Overall test scores are provided online within minutes of testing on a scale from 20 to 80. These provide a weighted combination of subscores in four areas: Sentence Mastery (grammar), Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation. Diagnostic information and suggestions for improvement are also included to enable personalized learning. The score concordance with GSE, CEFR, and TOEFL is also presented.

The Versant Writing Test assesses the use of everyday written English in a workplace environment. It takes approximately 35 minutes to complete and can be taken by computer on-demand, in any location. Scores are reported on a scale of 20 to 80 and are provided online within minutes of testing. Overall scores are a weighted combination of subscores in five areas: Grammar, Vocabulary, Organization, Voice & Tone, and Reading Comprehension. The score concordance with GSE, CEFR, and TOEFL is also provided.

Regions Analyzed

The study analyzed scores on Versant English from almost 400,000 tests taken between January and December 2015 in eleven key regions:

South Africa	Japan
Central America	South Korea
South America	Mexico
China	Middle East
Europe	Philippines
India	United States and Canada

The study also analyzed scores on Versant Writing from close to 94,000 tests taken from January to December 2015 in seven regions:

South Africa	Japan
Central America	Philippines
China	United States and Canada
India	

Study Goals:

- provide a current snapshot of levels of English speaking and writing skill among Versant test takers worldwide
- analyze changes in spoken and written English proficiency over time in the regions
- open a window onto the range of cut scores currently used in the regions
- identify changes in cut scores over time.

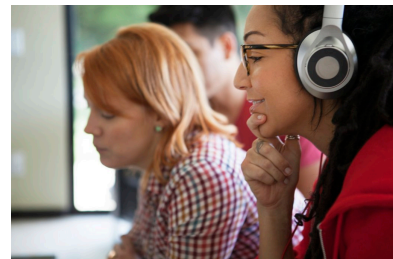
Who Are Versant English and Versant Writing Test Takers

The current snapshot presents scores for both Versant English and Versant Writing tests taken by adults in corporate settings. Test takers typically already have some English competency, but English is not their first language. It is important to note that the data is representative of the Versant test-taking population in each region and cannot necessarily be used to make inferences about the general population of English language learners. Please contact us for more specific information about the Versant test-taking population in any particular region.

Corporate settings include call centers and other organizations where English is an important workplace skill or is required for internal promotion. In these settings Versant tests are used to:

- screen candidates for hire into roles requiring specific, and sometimes divergent, levels of language skill
- gauge general levels of language proficiency within an office or department
- place candidates into appropriate language training
- provide diagnostic information to enable personalized language training
- evaluate training efficacy by assessing learning gains
- identify candidates for promotion, in settings where English is a prerequisite.

The study provides a current snapshot of levels of English speaking and writing skill among Versant test takers worldwide.



Versant English Test and Versant Writing Test: Global Snapshot

Average Skill Levels: Versant English Test

Average levels of spoken English proficiency in 2015, as indicated by mean Versant English scores, are shown in Figure 3. Note that for all test takers in all regions, English was not their first language. The same identifying color is used for each region throughout the report.

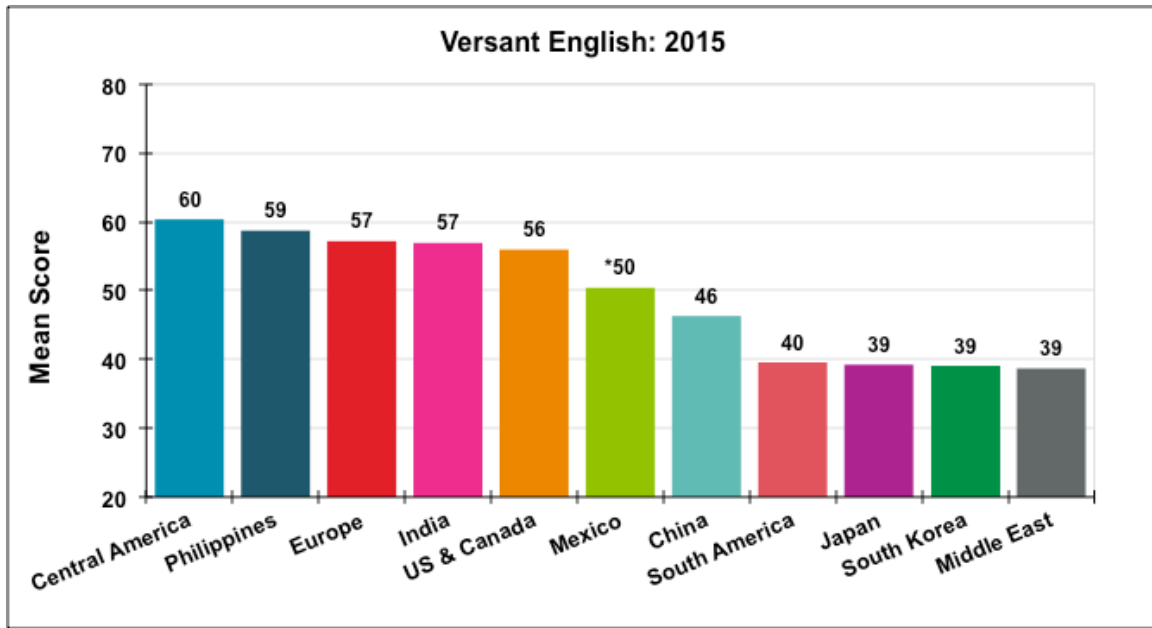


Figure 3. Average Versant English scores in 2015 across the eleven regions.

*The number of test takers is relatively low: caution is recommended when interpreting the data for this region.

Key Findings

- The highest level of spoken English overall was found in Central America, which had a mean score of 60.
- The mean for the Philippines was 2 points higher than the next highest mean of 57 for both Europe and India.
- The Philippines and India, the two largest test users, placed second and fourth highest, respectively, among the eleven regions.
- The lowest levels of spoken English were found in Japan, South Korea, and the Middle East, which each achieved a mean of 39.
- The next lowest performing region was South America, which had a mean of 40.

Average Skill Levels: Versant Writing Test

Written English skills, as indicated by mean Versant Writing scores, are shown below, for the regions in which the test is widely used. For all test takers, English is not their first language.

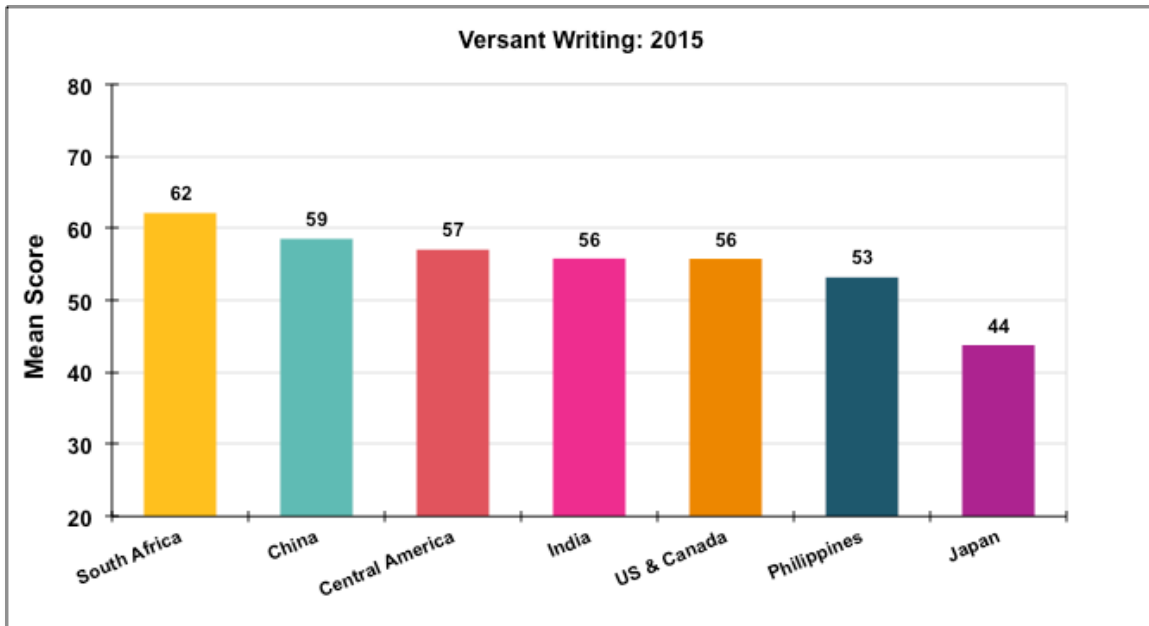


Figure 4. Average Versant Writing scores in 2015 across the seven regions.

Key Findings

- The highest level of written skill was found among South African test takers, who achieved a mean of 62.
- China achieved the second highest mean score of 59.
- Central America and India, the regions where Versant Writing is most widely used, showed the third and fourth highest mean scores of 57 and 56 respectively.
- The lowest level of written English skill was found in Japan, where test takers achieved a mean of 44.
- There is a considerable difference of 9 points between the lowest mean for Japan and the second lowest mean of 53 for test takers in the Philippines.

Threshold Ranges: Versant English Test

The lowest and highest threshold scores used in the regions where current data were available are shown below.

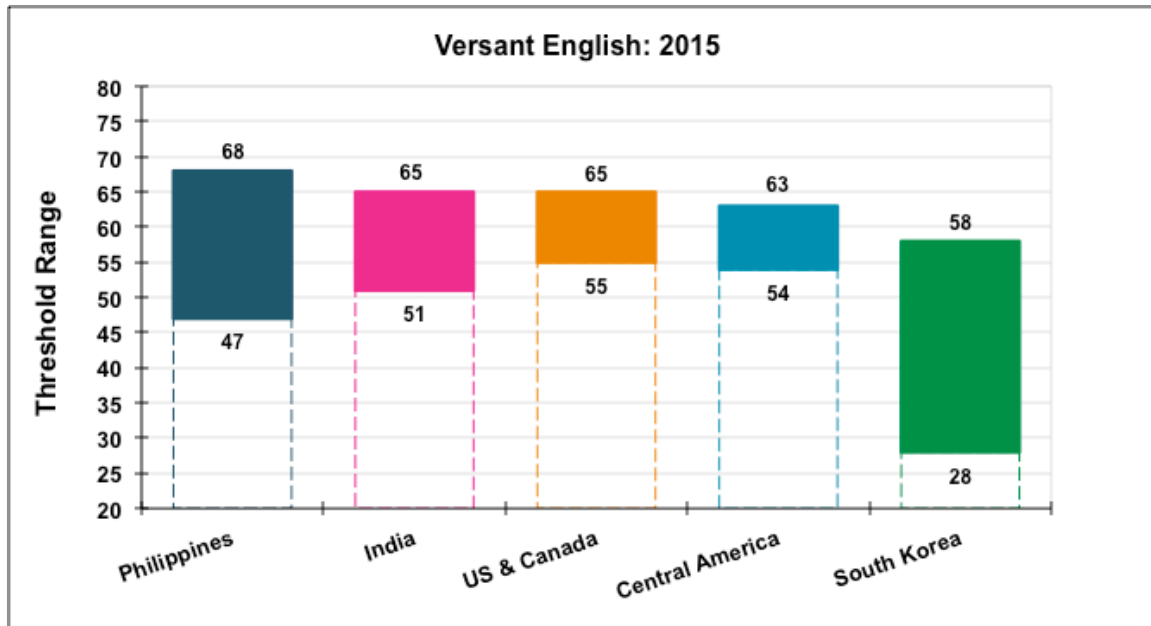


Figure 5. Minimum and maximum Versant English threshold scores used in 2015 for the five regions where data were available.

Key Findings

- In 2015 the maximum threshold score varied across the five regions from 68 in the Philippines to 58 in South Korea.
- There were considerable differences in the range of threshold scores across the regions, likely because of different testing purposes and language requirements. This is discussed more fully in the regional analysis below.
- Central America showed the narrowest range of 9 points, reflecting testing for work roles that require a high level of spoken English.
- The Philippines showed a fairly broad threshold range of 21 points and India a slightly narrower range of 14 points. In both regions, a majority of testing is for work roles that require a moderate to high level of spoken English.
- South Korea showed the broadest range of 30 points from 28 to 58. This likely reflects a variety of testing purposes, including promotion. Many companies require a basic level of English for promotion even if it is not used on the job.

Threshold Ranges: Versant Writing Test

The minimum and maximum threshold or cut scores used in 2015 in the four regions where data were available are shown below.

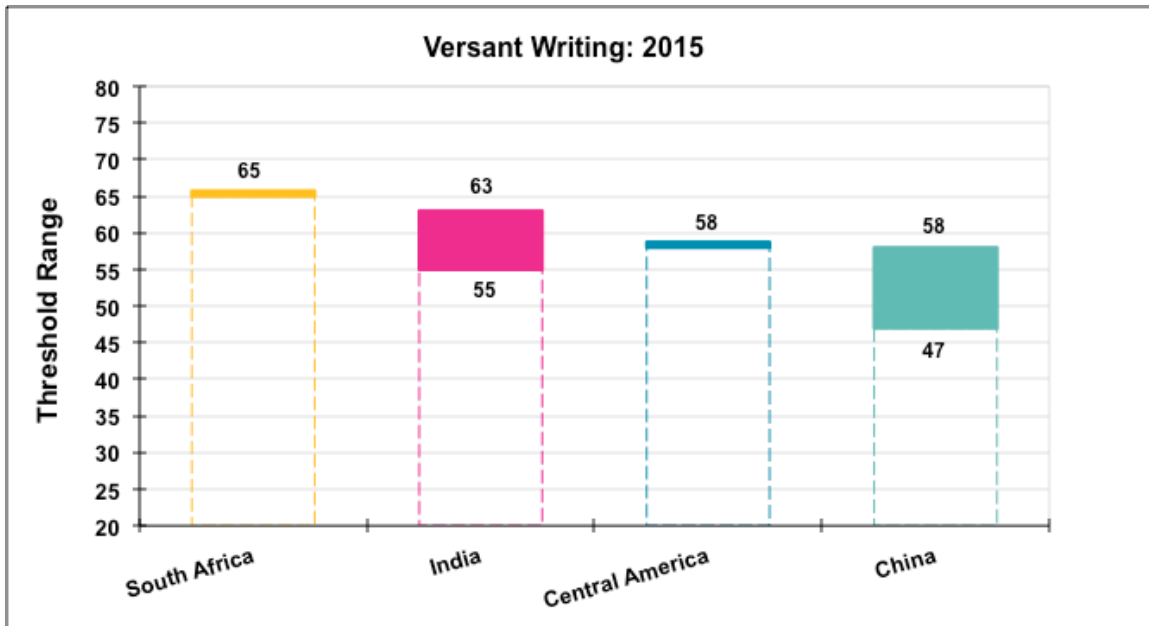


Figure 6. Minimum and maximum Versant Writing threshold scores used in 2015 in the four regions where data were available.

Key Findings

- South Africa and Central America both showed single threshold scores. The cut score of 65 for South Africa is the highest across the four regions.
- In India, a relatively narrow threshold range of 8 points was used for Versant Writing in 2015.
- China showed the broadest range of threshold scores from 58 to 47, an 11-point range.
- The relatively narrow range of threshold scores used for Versant Writing in 2015 likely reflects limited testing purposes. For most test users, Versant Writing is used to screen candidates for work roles requiring written English.

Versant English Test and Versant Writing Test: Regional Snapshot

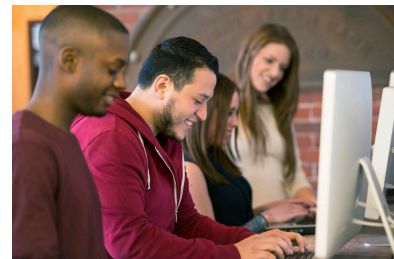
The following snapshot provides summary descriptive statistics, including the mean, median, standard deviation and, where available, the range of threshold scores employed, for the tests currently in use in the regions. A summary descriptor for the mean Versant score is also provided to give concrete definition to the average level of spoken and written English among test takers. This draws on the performance descriptors for each Versant score range presented in Appendix A (speaking) and B (writing). For some regions both Versant English and Versant Writing are currently in use, for other regions only one of the tests is in use.

The data provide an up-to-date snapshot of average skill levels among Versant test takers in the regions and how these may be changing.

The analysis of trends over time presents a chart of mean scores for 2011 through 2015 where available in each region. Rather than showing the full score range, the charts zoom into a 20- or 30-point range to make the change over time more clearly visible.

For India and the Philippines, which represent the largest markets for Versant Tests, the analysis of trends over time draws on Pearson's historical data to provide trend lines for the seven-year period 2009–2015. Again, the charts zoom into a 20-point score range to give a clearer view of the change over time.

As discussed earlier, it is important to note that for all regions, Versant test takers are not necessarily representative of the general population. First, they are non-native English speakers, even in countries that are predominantly English speaking, such as Australia. Second, attaining English proficiency may reflect a certain level of education or language exposure that is not available to all sectors of the population.



South Africa

2015 Snapshot

South Africa	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant Writing Test	62.1	63	9.4	65

Table 1. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant Writing score of 62.1 for South Africa is in the range 58–68. Reference to the Versant score descriptors in Appendix B indicates that test takers scoring in this range, “*understand texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear.*”

The single threshold score for South Africa reflects the specific use of Versant Writing to screen for work roles requiring a moderately high level of written English.

Trends Over Time

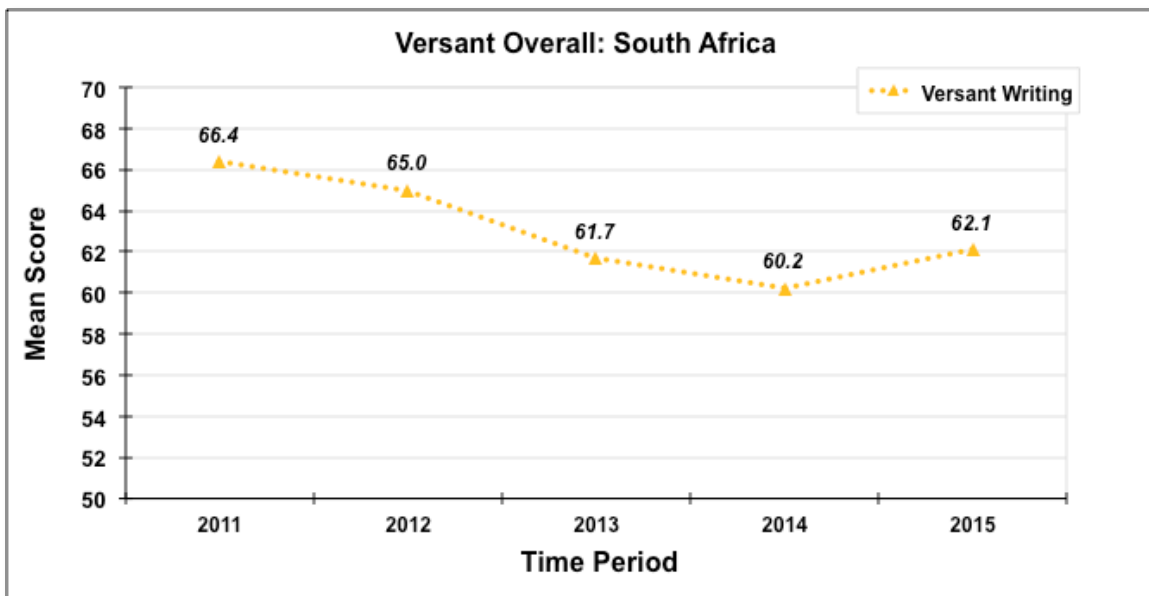


Figure 7. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The trend line for Versant Writing shows a steady decline of a total of 6.2 points from 2011 through 2014, followed by an increase of 1.9 points in 2015.

Central America

2015 Snapshot

Scores for Versant English reflect test takers in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Panama. Versant Writing scores reflect test takers in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

Central America	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	60.3	60	11.6	54–63
Versant Writing Test	57.0	58	10.9	58

Table 2. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 60.3 is in the range 58–68. The Versant score descriptors in Appendix A indicate that, at this level, test takers can “*easily handle a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is generally fluent, smooth and intelligible.*” The threshold range of 9 points for Versant English is narrow, reflecting testing for recruitment into work roles that require a moderate to high level of spoken English.

The mean Versant Writing score is 57.0. Test takers scoring in the range 47–57 can “*understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*” The single threshold score for Versant Writing in Central America represents a specific use of Versant Writing to screen individuals for work roles requiring a relatively high level of written English.

Trends Over Time

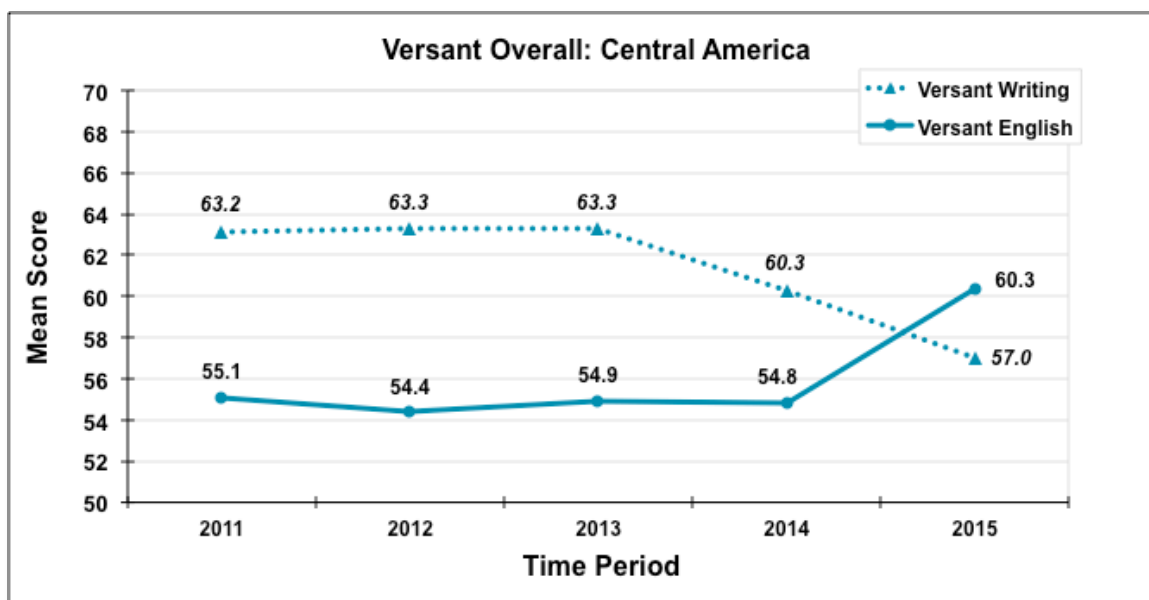


Figure 8. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data show a higher level of writing skill than spoken skill through 2014 for test takers in Central America. However, this trend reversed in 2015. Speaking scores were more or less consistent at close to 55 from 2011 through 2014 before increasing 5.5 points in 2015. Writing scores were consistent at 63 points through 2013 before declining 6.3 points in 2015.

South America

2015 Snapshot

Versant English scores for this region reflect test takers in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador.

South America	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Test	39.6	38	9.9

Table 3. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 39.6 is at the lower end of the 36–46 range. At this level, test takers can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation.*”

Trends Over Time

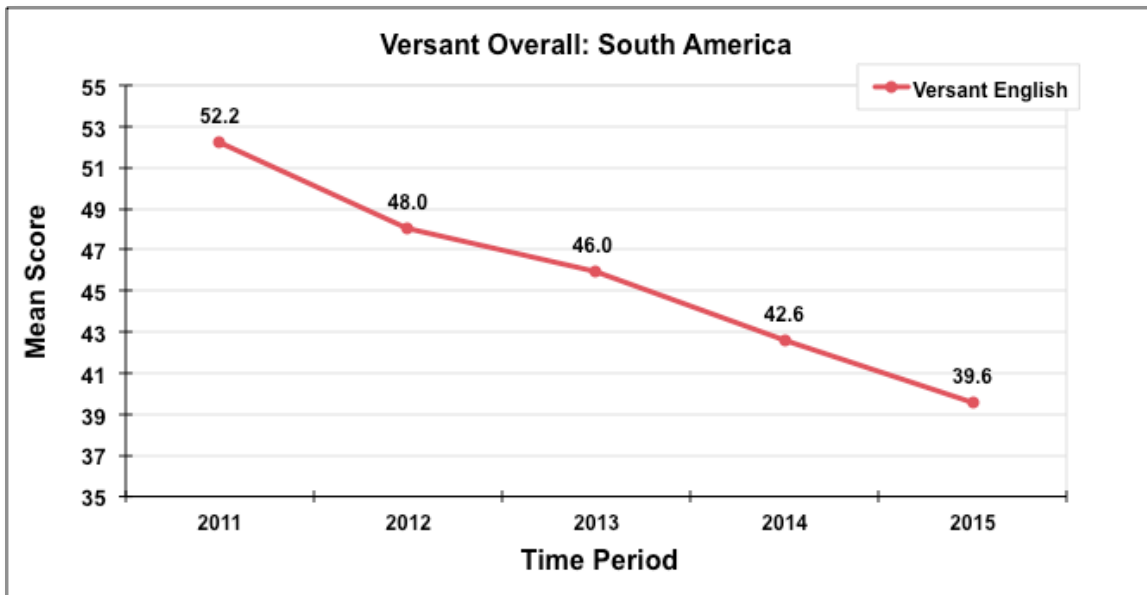


Figure 9. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data for South America show a steady decline of 12.6 points in speaking scores for the five-year period 2011 through 2015.

China

2015 Snapshot

China	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	46.3	45	9.2	n/a
Versant Writing Test	58.5	58	8.5	47–58

Table 4. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 46.3 is at the high end of the 36–46 range. The Versant score descriptors indicate that test takers scoring at this level can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation.*”

The mean Versant Writing score is 58.5. Test takers scoring in the range 58–68 can “*understand texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear.*” The 11-point range in threshold scores for Versant Writing reflects testing for recruitment into both entry level and higher-level roles requiring a moderate to high level of written English proficiency.

Trends Over Time

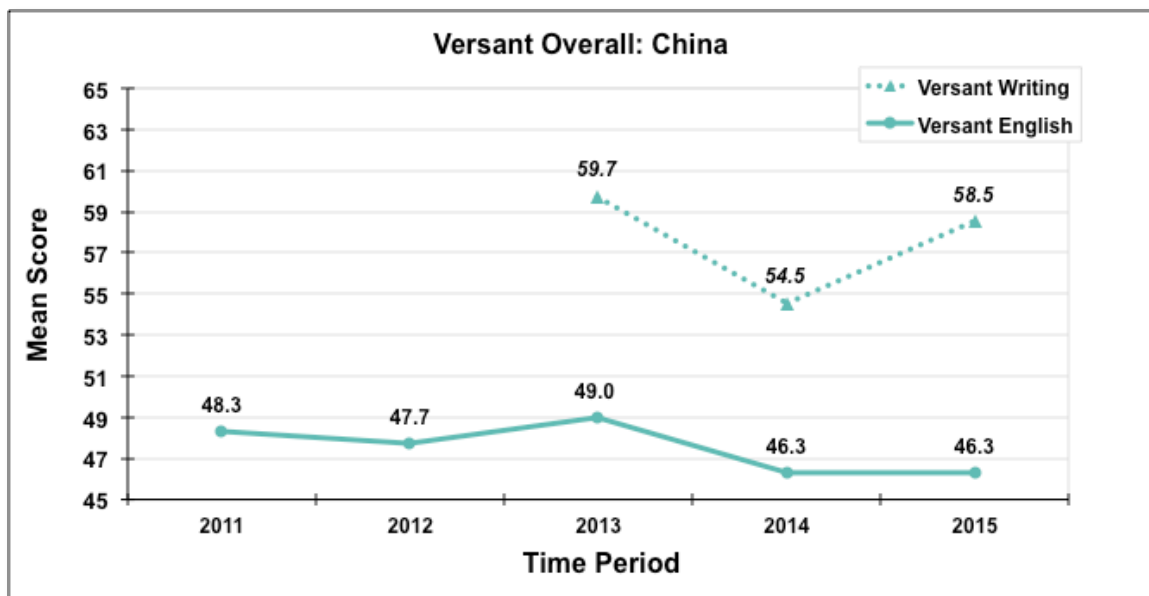


Figure 10. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data show a considerably higher level of writing skill than spoken skill for test takers in China. There is, however, more variability in mean writing scores from year to year than there is for mean speaking scores. Speaking scores have declined 2 points from 2011 to 2015 but were constant the two years 2014 and 2015.

Europe

2015 Snapshot

Versant English in this region was taken by individuals in Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK.

Europe	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Test	57.2	57	14.1

Table 5. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 57.2 is at the high end of the 47–57 range. The Versant score descriptors reveal that candidates in this range “*can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible.*”

Trends Over Time

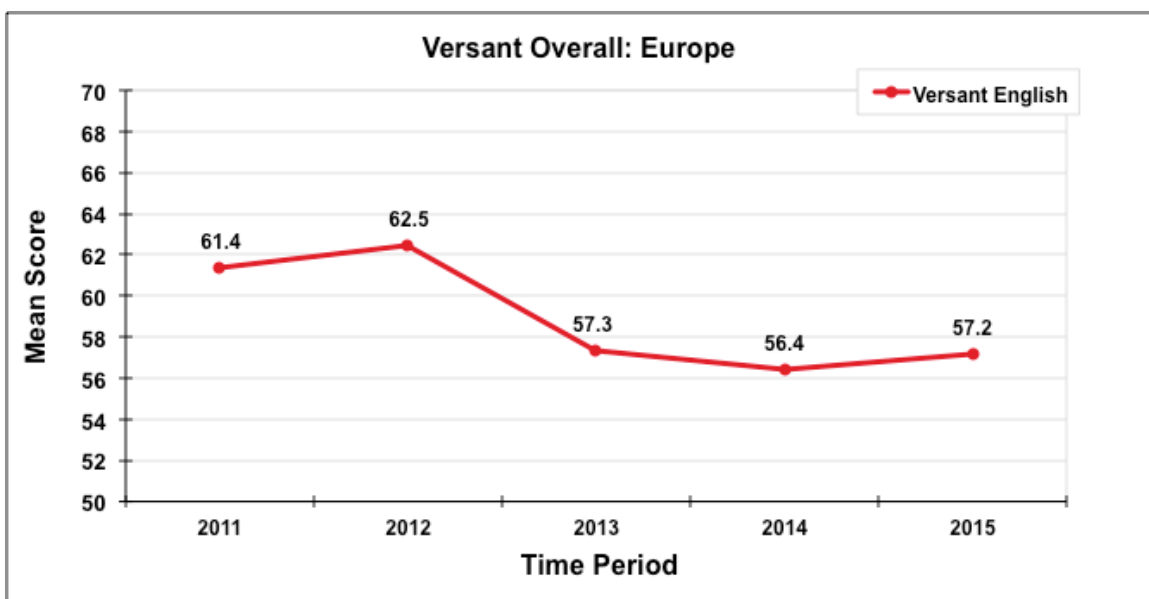


Figure 11. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data for Europe show a 5.2-point drop in scores from a maximum of 62.5 in 2011 to a mean of 57.3 in 2013. Scores were more consistent from 2013 through 2015, hovering around 56–57.

India

India	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	56.9	56	9.4	51–65
Versant Writing Test	55.8	56	10.1	55–63

Table 6. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 56.9 is at the high end of the 47–57 range. At this level, test takers “*can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible.*”

The mean Versant Writing score of 55.8 is at the high end of the 47–57 range. Such test takers can “*understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*”

The threshold ranges of 14 points for Versant English and 8 points for Versant Writing reflect the use of Versant to screen candidates for specific work roles that require a high level of language skill, as well as to gauge the English proficiency of existing employees in similar roles.”

Trends Over Time

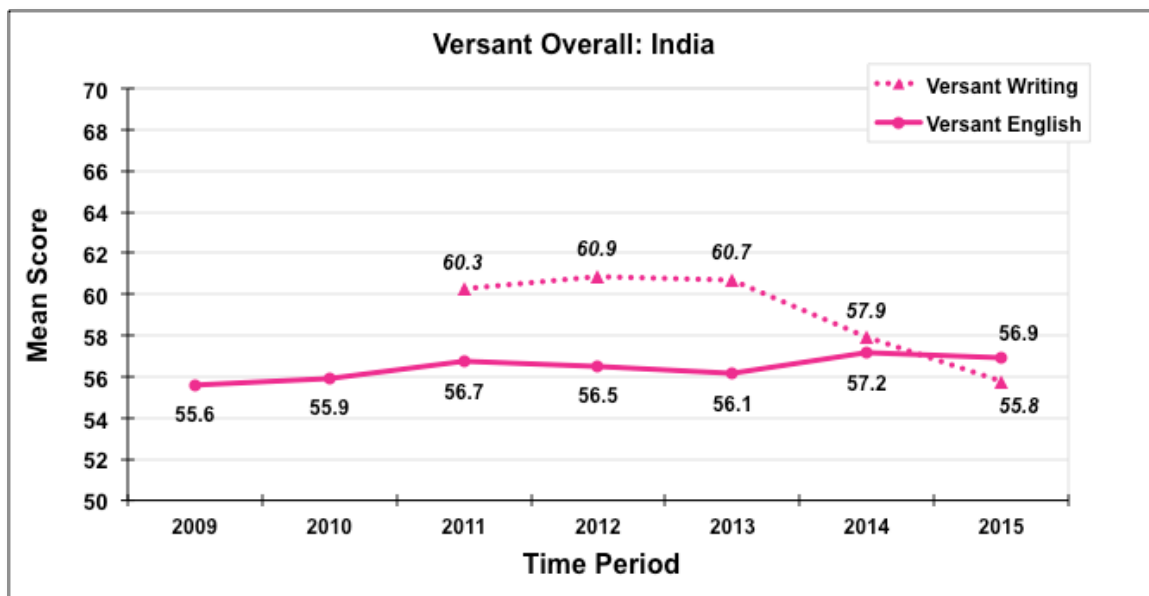


Figure 12. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2009 to 2015.

The data for India show a slightly higher level of writing proficiency than speaking proficiency through 2013. Writing scores dropped 2.8 points from 2013 to 2014 and speaking scores increased 1.2 points, bringing the scores very close together in 2014. Writing scores continued to drop by 2.1 points in 2015, bringing them lower than Speaking scores, which also dropped by 0.3 points.

Japan

2015 Snapshot

Japan	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Test	39.2	39	8.6
Versant Writing Test	43.8	44	14.8

Table 7. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 39.2 is at the low end of the 36–46 range. At this level, test takers can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation.*”

The mean Versant Writing score is 43.8. Test takers scoring in the range 36–46 can “*handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.*”

Trends Over Time

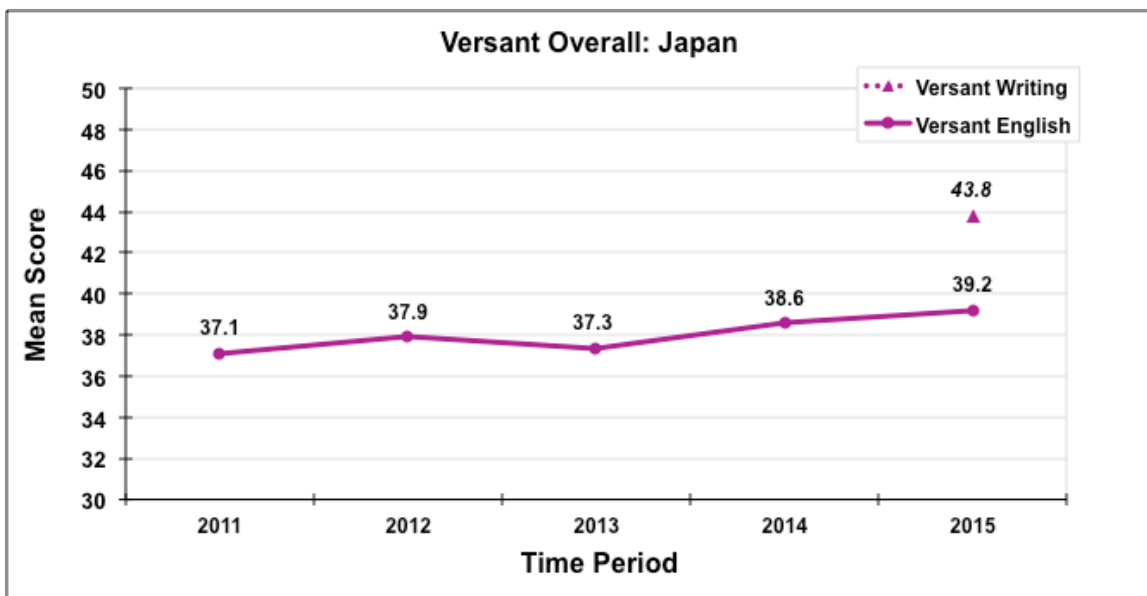


Figure 13. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data show a higher level of writing skill than spoken skill for test takers in Japan in 2015. Speaking scores have increased gradually by 2.1 points over the five-year period from 2011 to 2015.

South Korea

2015 Snapshot

South Korea	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	39.0	38	10.4	28–58

Table 8. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 39.0 is at the low end of the range 36–46. Test takers scoring in this range can *“handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation.”*

The broad threshold range of 30 points for South Korea indicates a variety of testing purposes. This includes placement into levels of language learning, selection for work roles requiring spoken English, and promotion, for which a basic level of English is a prerequisite whether or not it is spoken on the job.

Trends Over Time

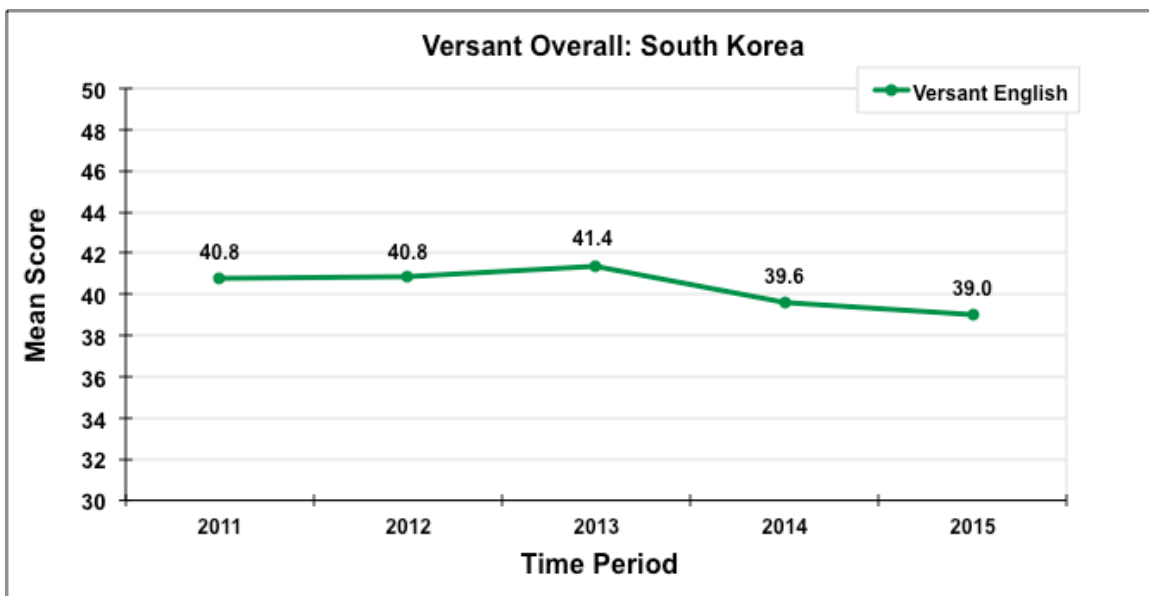


Figure 14. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

Speaking scores have remained fairly consistent over the five-year period, increasing 0.6 points from 2011 to a maximum of 41.4 in 2013, then dropping by 2.4 points through 2015.

Mexico

2015 Snapshot

It is important to note that the number of test takers for Mexico in 2015 is relatively low. Caution is therefore recommended when interpreting the 2015 results because the data may not be representative.

Mexico	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Test	50.4	48	12.9

Table 9. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 50.4 is in the range 47–57. At this level, test takers “*can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible.*”

Trends Over Time

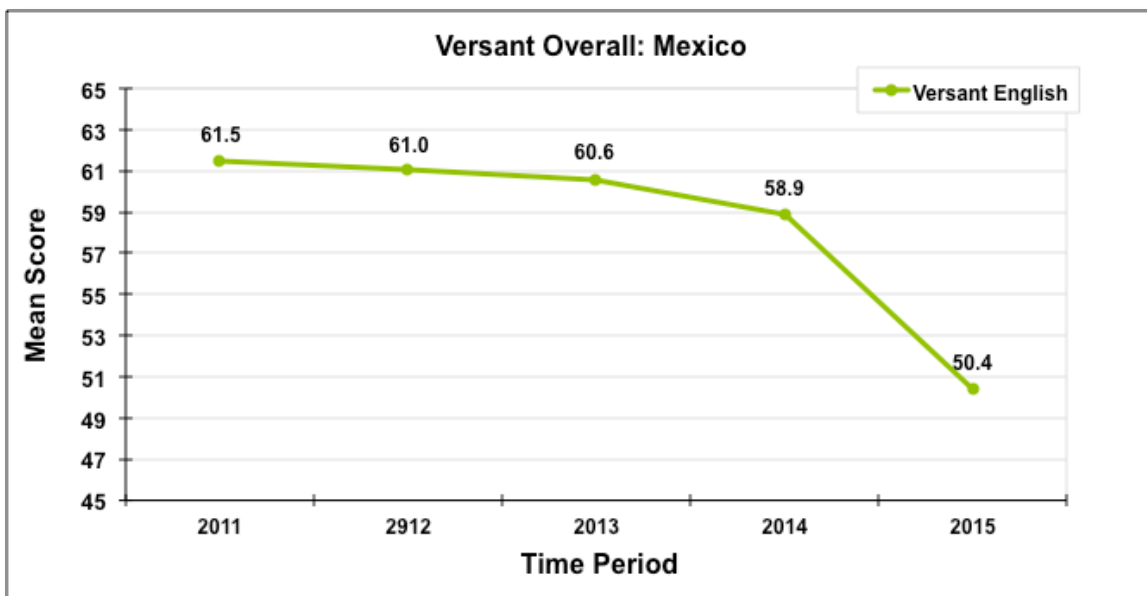


Figure 15. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data for Mexico show a slow decline by 2.6 points from 2011 through 2014, before a step drop of 8.5 points in 2015. Again, caution is recommended when interpreting this finding because the number of test takers in 2015 is relatively small and the mean may be based on an unrepresentative sample.

Middle East

2015 Snapshot

The data for Versant English in this region reflect test takers in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Middle East	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Test	38.7	37	7.6

Table 10. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 38.7 is at the low end of the 36–46 range. Test takers at this level can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation.*”

Trends Over Time

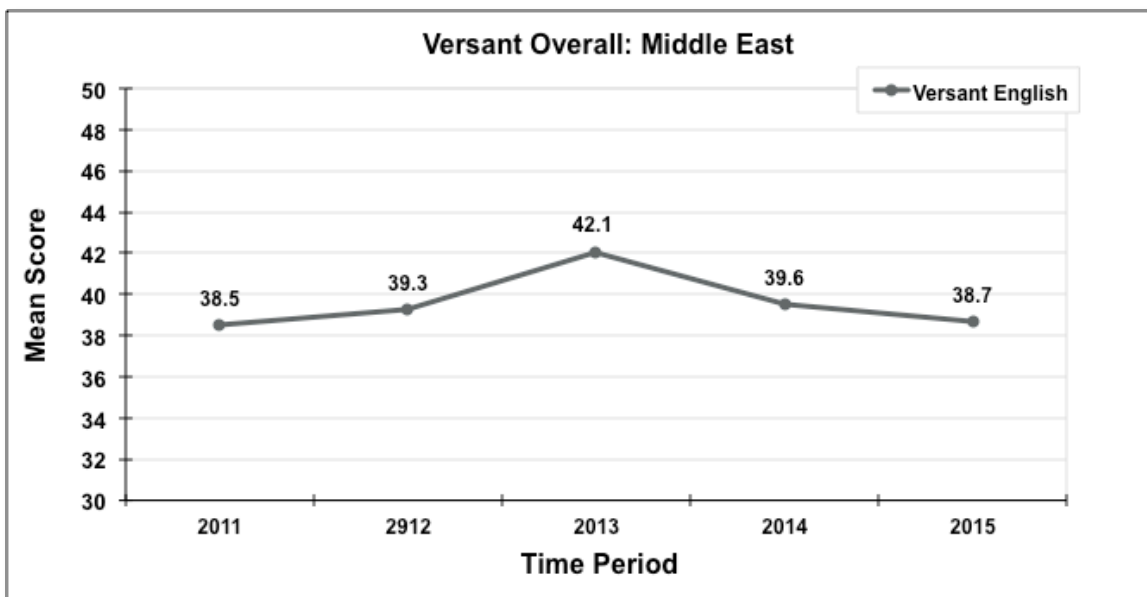


Figure 16. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data show a peak of 42.1 in speaking scores in 2013, up 3.6 points from a mean of 38.5 in 2011. Scores then declined gradually by 3.4 points through 2014 and 2015.

Philippines

Philippines	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	58.7	58	9.6	47–68
Versant Writing Test	53.2	54	9.8	n/a

Table 11. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 58.7 is at the low end of the 58–68 range. Test takers scoring in this range can “*easily handle a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is generally fluent, smooth and intelligible.*” The fairly wide threshold range of 21 points reflects the use of Versant English for selection into a variety of job roles that require a moderate to high level of spoken English.

The mean Versant Writing score of 53.2 is in the range 47–57. At this level, test takers can “*understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*”

Trends Over Time

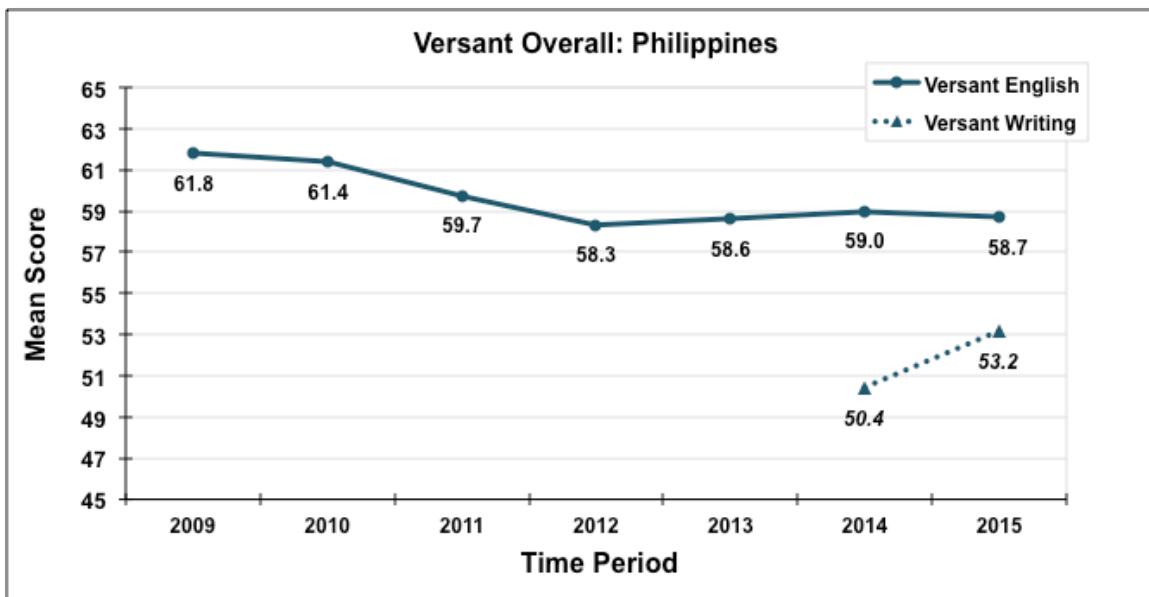


Figure 17. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2009 to 2015.

The data show more variability in the Writing scores than in the Speaking scores. For the past two years, the Writing scores were considerably lower than the Speaking scores. The Speaking scores show a decline of 3.5 points from 2009 through 2012, and then a slight increase of 0.4 points from 2012 through 2015.

US and Canada

US and Canada	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Threshold Range
Versant English Test	56.0	55	13.2	55–65
Versant Writing Test	55.7	56	8.3	n/a

Table 12. Average Versant test scores for the region in 2015.

The mean Versant English score of 56.0 is at the high end of the 47–57 range. At this level, test takers “can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible.” The threshold range of 10 points reflects a variety of testing purposes. These include placement into levels of language learning, screening for programs of study, and recruitment.

The mean Versant Writing score of 55.7 is at the high end of the 47–57 range, where test takers can “understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.”

Trends Over Time

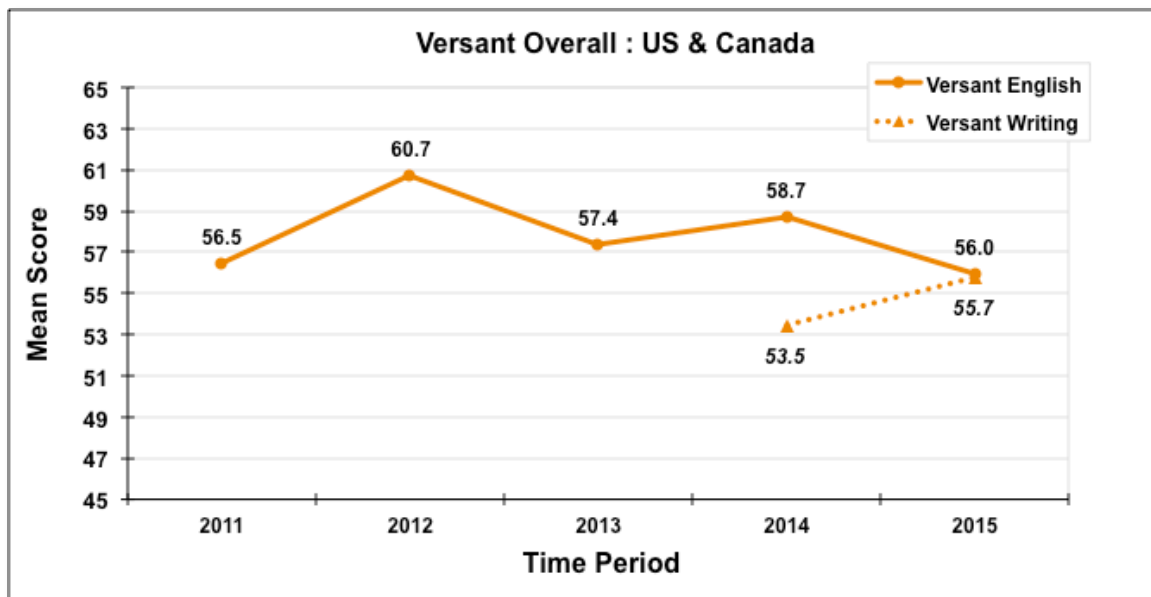


Figure 18. Trends in mean Versant scores in the region from 2011 to 2015.

The data for Versant English show a zig zag pattern of an increase in mean scores followed by a decrease, followed by an increase, and so on. The scores range 4.7 points from a maximum of 60.7 in 2012 to a minimum of 56.0 in 2015. Versant Writing scores increased 2.2 points from 2014 to 2015.

Overview: Study of the Versant English Placement Test

Test Description

Pearson's Versant English Placement Test (VEPT) measures the ability of test takers to understand and communicate clearly in both spoken and written English in many different work situations. The fully automated test is taken in a single 50-minute session by computer anytime, anywhere. Results are available online within minutes of testing on a scale of 20 to 70. Score reports include an Overall Score and four skill scores in Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading. Diagnostic information and suggestions for improvement are also provided.

Regions Analyzed

The study analyzed scores on the VEPT from almost 45,000 tests taken between January and December 2015 in thirteen key regions:

Africa	India
Central America	Japan
South America	South Korea
South East Asia	Mexico
Australia and New Zealand	Middle East
China	United States and Canada
Europe	

Study Goals:

- provide a current snapshot of English proficiency among VEPT test takers in educational settings worldwide
- analyze changing English skill levels on VEPT over time in the regions
- evaluate current subscores for Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading among VEPT test takers to identify relative strengths and weaknesses.

Who Are Versant English Placement Test Takers

The Versant English Placement Test is currently administered mostly in academic institutions including universities, colleges, and language learning centers. In these settings, test takers are English language learners. It is important to note that the data presented here is representative of the Versant test-taking population in each region and cannot necessarily be used to make inferences about the general population of English language learners. Please contact Pearson for more specific information about the Versant test-taking population in a particular region.

In educational settings the VEPT is used to:

- screen students to ensure a minimum level of language proficiency required for study
- place students into appropriate levels of language learning
- track progress and measure learning gains or “needle movement” post-training
- personalize learning by offering diagnostic information and accurately tracking progress
- evaluate program efficacy by objectively measuring learning outcomes
- as an exit screen to provide an indicator of workplace readiness.

Versant English Placement Test: Global Snapshot

Average Skill Levels: Versant English Placement Test

Mean scores on the Versant English Placement Test for the thirteen regions are shown below. Note that for test takers in all regions English was not their first language.

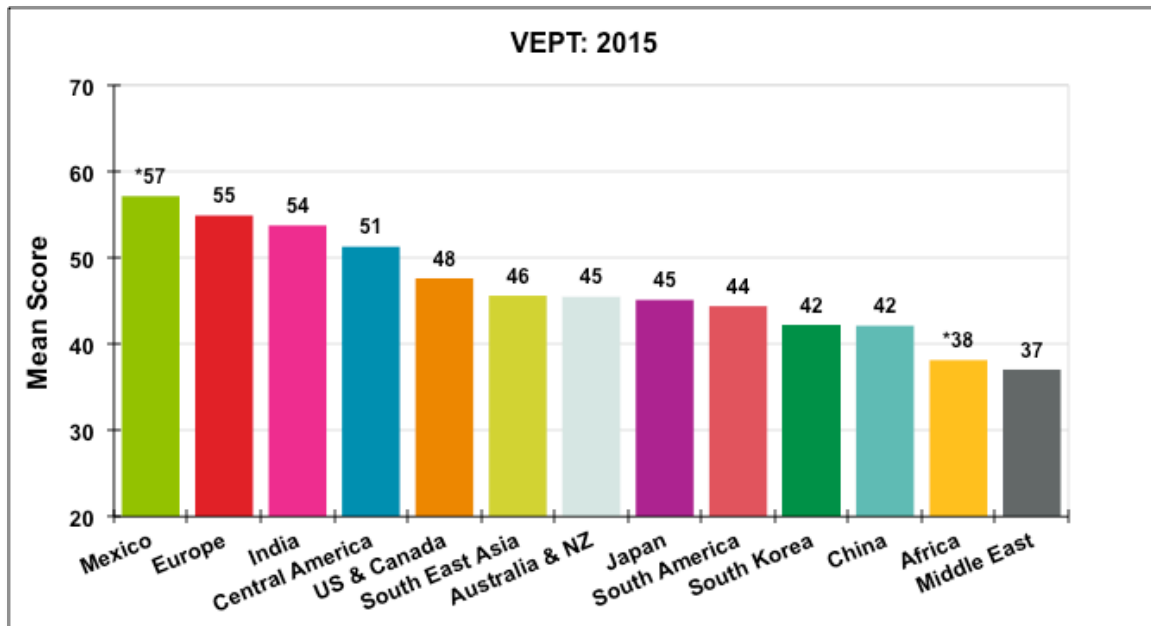


Figure 19. Average VEPT scores in 2015 across the thirteen regions.

*The number of test takers is relatively low: caution is recommended when interpreting the data for these regions.

Key Findings

- The highest level of English language proficiency overall was found in Mexico, which had a mean score of 57. However, given the relatively low number of test takers in 2015, caution is recommended when interpreting this finding.
- The next highest mean of 55 was achieved by test takers in Europe, a score that was 1 point higher than the next highest mean of 54 for India.
- The lowest levels of English proficiency were found in the Middle East and Africa, which each achieved a mean of 37 and 38 respectively. Note that caution is advised when interpreting the data for Africa because of the comparatively low number of test takers in the region in 2015.
- The next lowest performing regions were China and South Korea, which each achieved a mean of 42.

Versant English Placement Test: Regional Snapshot

The following provides basic summary descriptive statistics, including the mean, median, and standard deviation for the regions where the VEPT is currently used. A summary descriptor for the mean VEPT score is also provided, to give concrete definition to the average level of English proficiency among test takers. This draws on the performance descriptors for each Versant score range presented in Appendix C.

The data provide an up-to-date snapshot of average skill levels among Versant test takers in the regions and how these may be changing.

The analysis of trends over time presents a chart of mean scores for 2013 through 2015 for the regions where data were available. Rather than showing the full score range, the charts zoom into a 20- or 30-point range to make the change over time more clearly visible. Although the data reflect a limited time period, the charts nevertheless provide an indication of the direction in which scores appear to be moving.

Subscores are also analyzed for the VEPT by presenting a chart showing the mean skill scores for Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading, in order from highest to lowest. These data provide a current indicator of relative strengths and weaknesses across the four skill areas in the regions.

It is important to note that for all regions, Versant test takers are not necessarily representative of the general population. To begin with, they are non-native speakers, even in regions where English is the main language. In addition, attaining English proficiency may reflect a certain level of education or language exposure that is not be available to all groups in the population.



Africa

2015 Snapshot

VEPT test takers in this region are from South Africa and Nigeria. It is important to note that the number of test takers for Africa in 2015 is relatively low. Caution is recommended when interpreting the results presented below because the data may not be representative.

Africa	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	38.1	37	12.1

Table 13. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 38.1 is in the range 33–45. Reference to the Versant score descriptors in Appendix C indicates that at this level, test takers can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation may sometimes not be intelligible. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.*”

Four Skills Subscores

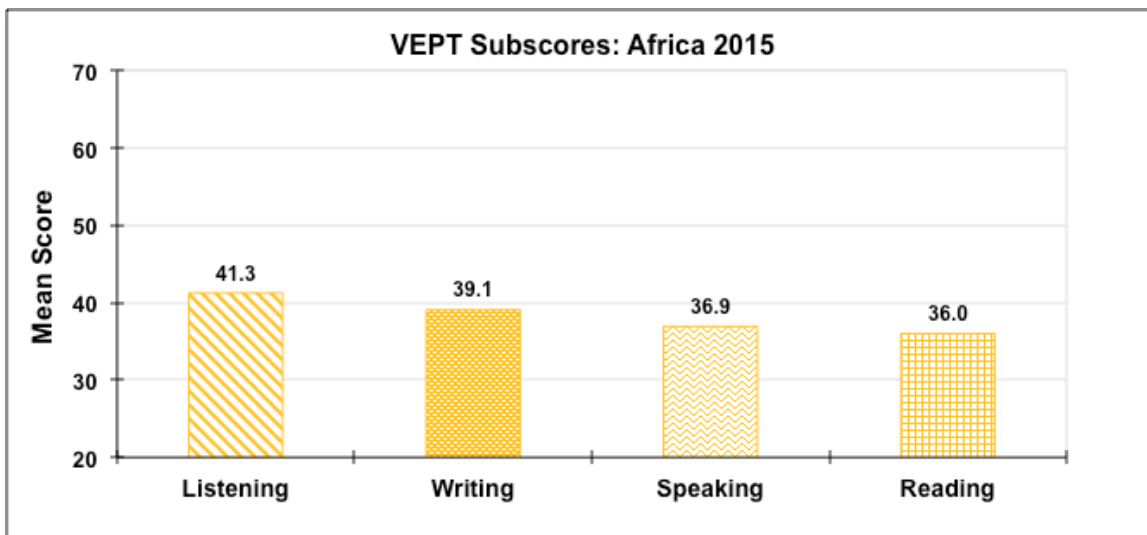


Figure 20. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The mean subscores were highest for Listening. The second highest mean for Writing was 2.2 Versant points lower than the mean for Listening and 2.2 points higher than the mean for Speaking. There is a 0.9-point difference between the mean for Speaking and the lowest mean for Reading.

Central America

2015 Snapshot

VEPT scores in this region reflect test takers from Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Central America	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	51.3	51	10.2

Table 14. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 51.3 for Central America is in the range 46–55. The Versant score descriptors reveal that candidates scoring in this range can “*handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*”

Four Skills Subscores

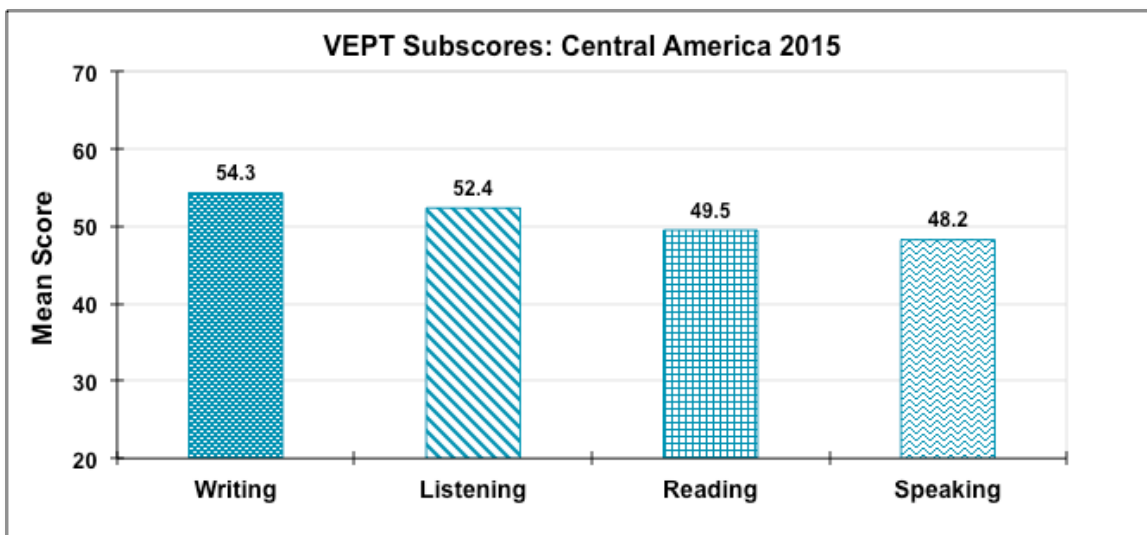


Figure 21. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

There is a 1.9 difference between the highest mean for Writing and the second highest mean for Listening, which is in turn 2.9 points higher than the mean for Reading. The mean for Reading is 1.3 points higher than the lowest mean for Speaking.

South America

2015 Snapshot

The VEPT scores below are for test takers from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

South America	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	44.4	44	10.3

Table 15. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 44.4 is at the high end of the range 33–45. Candidates in this range can *“handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation may sometimes not be intelligible. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.”*

Trends Over Time

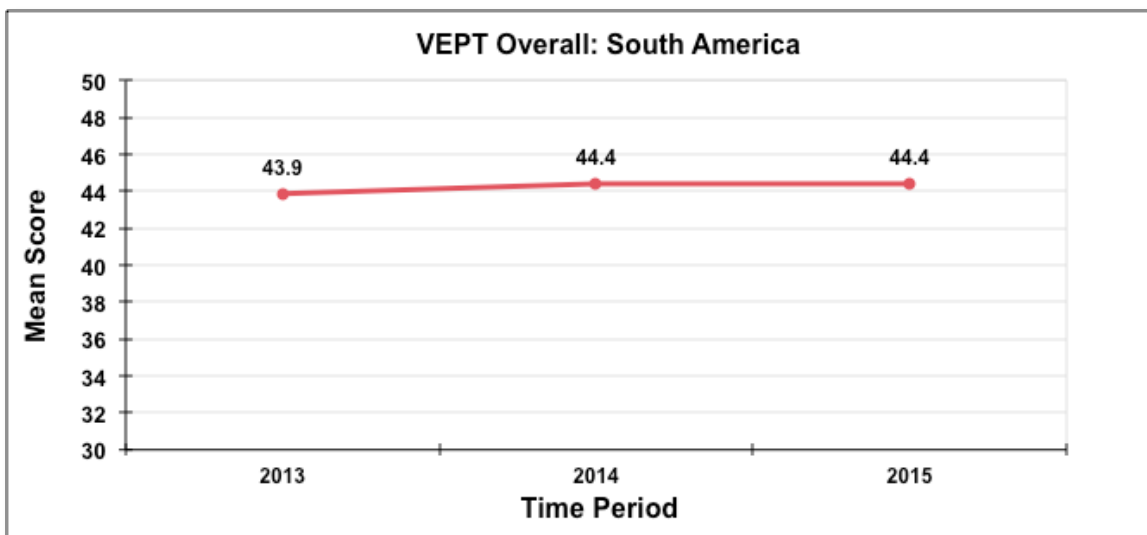


Figure 22. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

Mean VEPT scores were constant in the region over the three-year period, showing a slight increase of 0.5 points from 2013 to 2014 and remaining at this level in 2015.

Four Skills Subscores

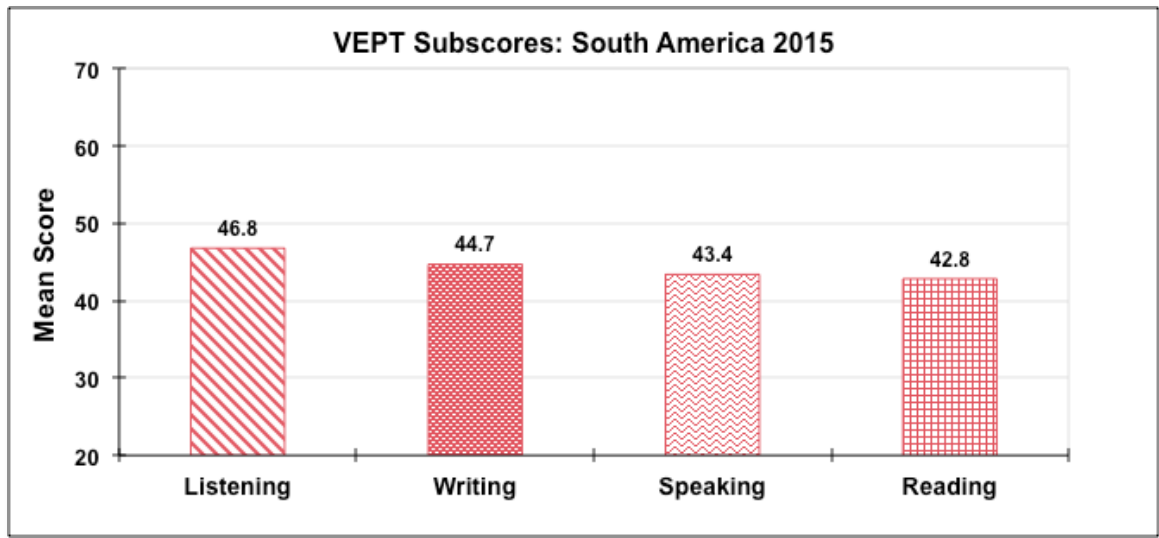


Figure 23. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

There is a 2.1-point difference between the highest mean for Listening and the second highest mean for Writing. The Writing mean is 1.3 points higher than the Speaking mean, which is itself only 0.6 points higher than the lowest mean for Reading.

South East Asia

2015 Snapshot

The scores for South East Asia are for test takers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

South East Asia	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	45.6	47	12.0

Table 16. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 45.6 is at the very low end of the range 46–55. At this level, test takers “can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.”

Trends Over Time

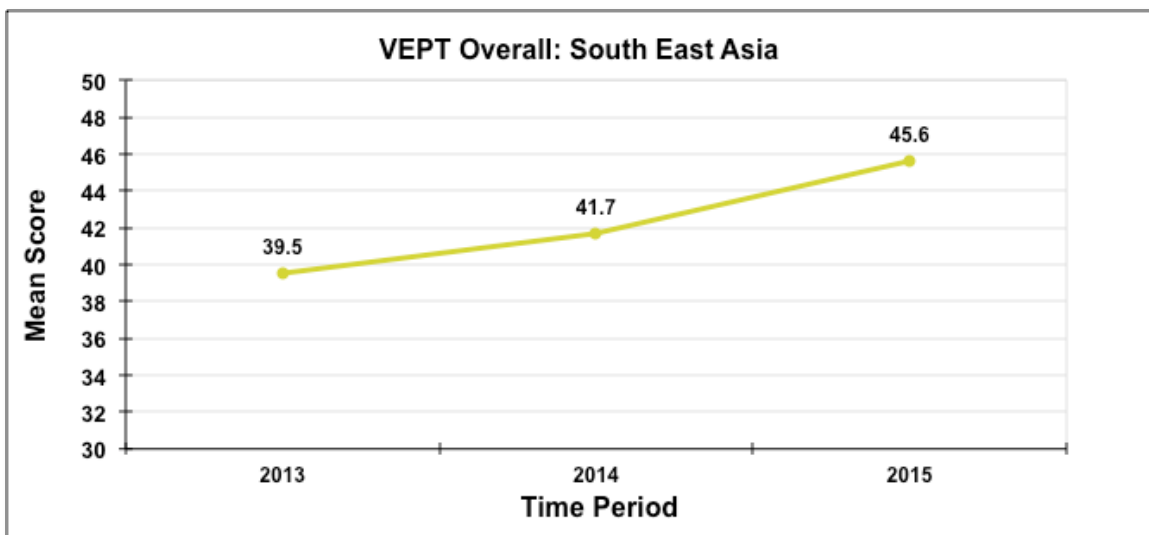


Figure 24. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

The data show a 6.1-point increase in scores over the three-year period 2013 to 2015.

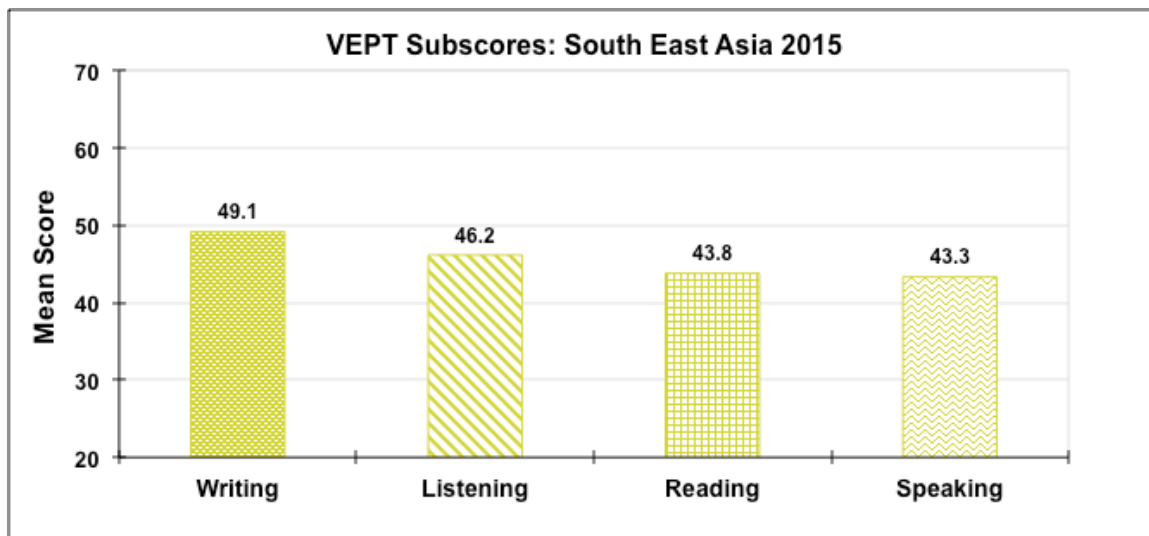
Four Skills Subscores

Figure 25. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The highest mean for Writing is 2.9 points higher than the second highest mean for Listening, which is 2.4 points higher than the next highest mean for Reading. The mean for Reading is close to the lowest mean for Speaking with only 0.5 points difference.

Australia and New Zealand

2015 Snapshot

Australia and New Zealand	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	45.5	46	10.7

Table 17. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 45.5 is just inside the range 46–55. Candidates at this level can “*handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*”

Trends Over Time

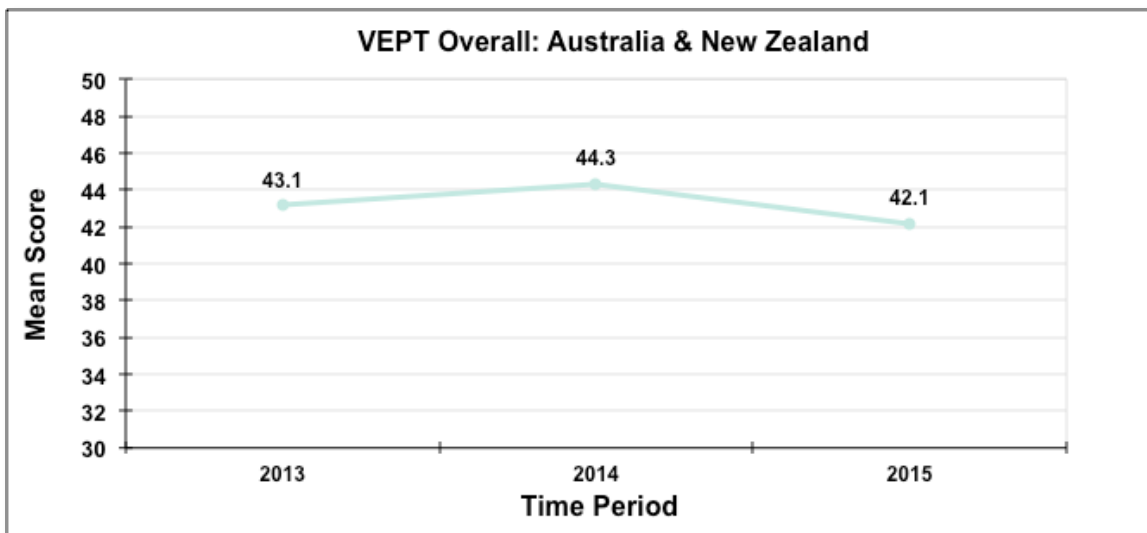


Figure 26. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

Mean VEPT scores were reasonably consistent in the region over the three-year period, showing a 2.2 difference from the peak of 44.3 in 2014 to the lowest score of 42.1 in 2015.

Four Skills Subscores

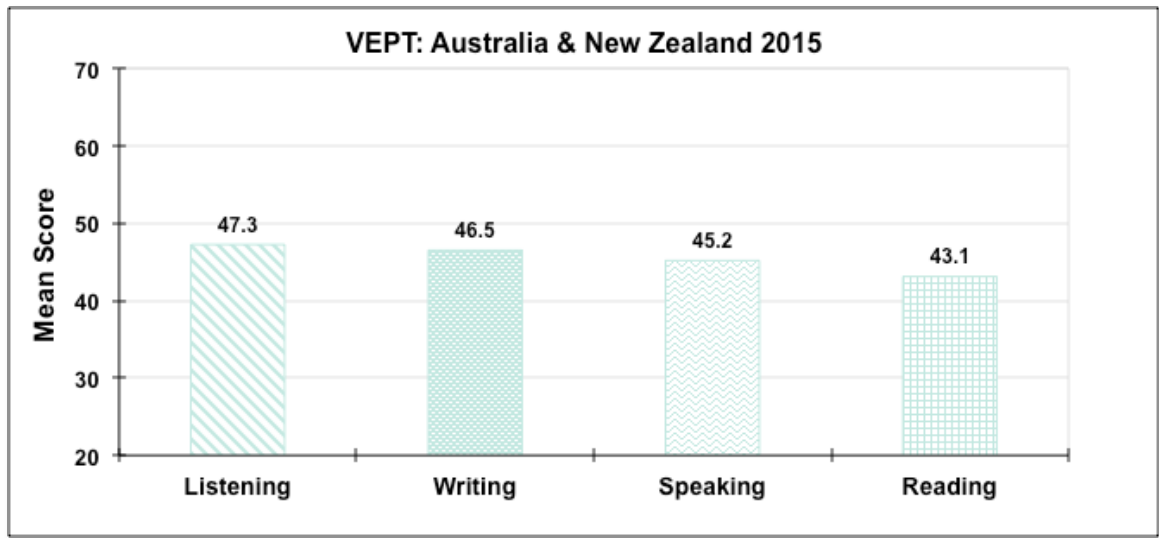


Figure 27. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The mean VEPT subscores in the region are fairly close. There is 0.8 points difference between the highest mean for Listening and the second highest mean for Writing, and 1.3 points difference between the means for Writing and Speaking. The lowest mean for Reading is 2.1 points lower than that for Speaking.

China

2015 Snapshot

China	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	42.1	43	9.8

Table 18. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean score for China is in the range 33–45. At this level, candidates “*can handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.*”

Trends Over Time

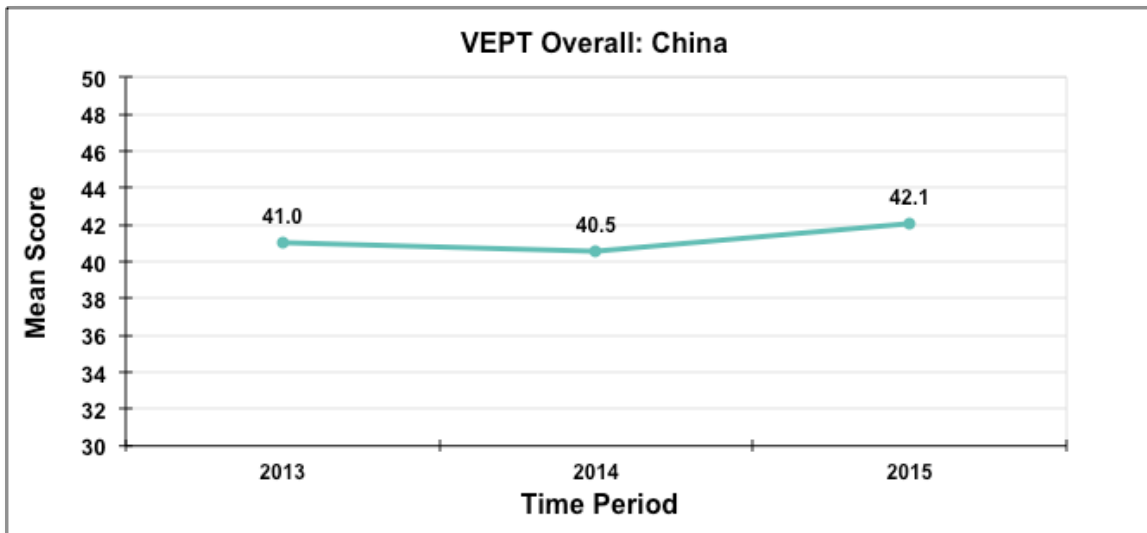


Figure 28. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

Mean VEPT scores were fairly consistent in China over the three-year period, showing a slight increase of 1.1 points from 2013 to 2015.

Four Skills Subscores

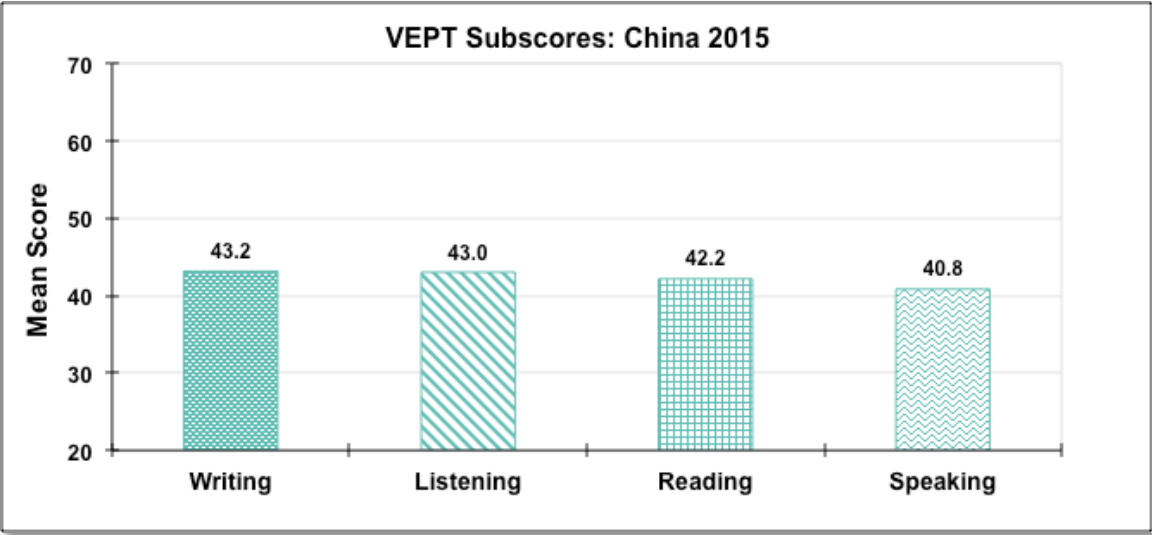


Figure 29. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

Mean VEPT subscores in the region are reasonably evenly balanced. The highest mean for Writing is 0.2 points higher than the mean for Listening. The mean for Listening is 0.8 points higher than the third highest mean for Reading, which is itself 1.4 points higher than the lowest mean for Speaking.

Europe

2015 Snapshot

The following data for Europe reflect test takers in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Ukraine, and the UK.

Europe	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	54.9	55	8.7

Table 19. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 54.9 is at the very high end of the range 46–55. Test takers at this level can “handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.”

Trends Over Time

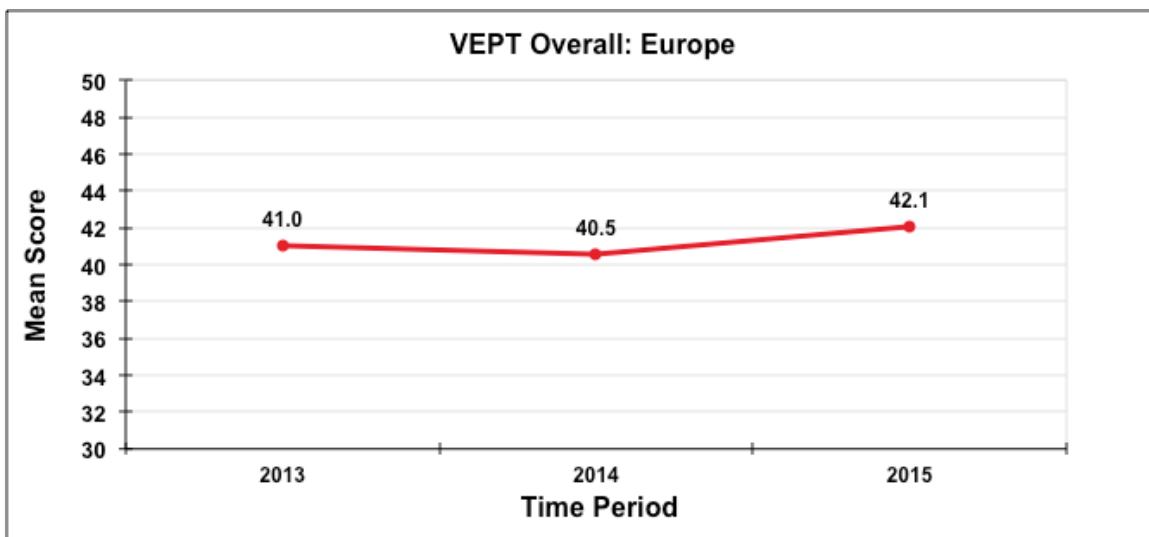


Figure 30. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

The mean VEPT scores show a degree of consistency, ranging 1.6 points from a low of 40.5 in 2014 to a high of 42.1 in 2015.

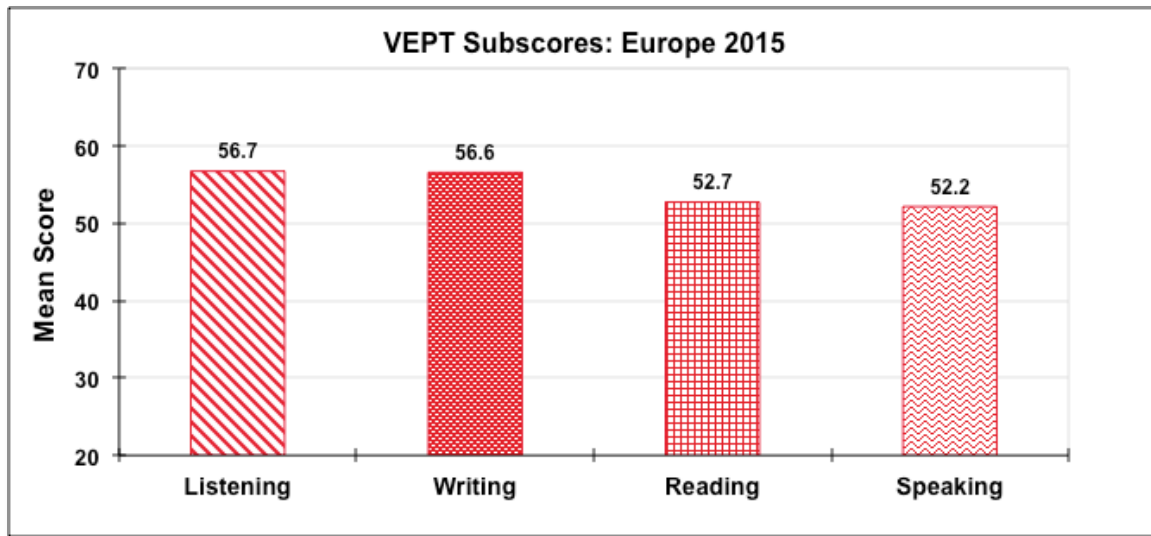
Four Skills Subscores

Figure 31. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The mean subscores are extremely close for Listening and Writing, showing a difference of 0.1 points. There is then a drop of 3.9 points from the second highest mean for Writing to the next highest mean for Reading. The mean for Reading is close to the lowest mean for Speaking with a difference of only 0.5 points.

India

2015 Snapshot

India	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	53.7	54	8.9

Table 20. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean score is toward the high end of the 46–55 range. Such test takers can “*handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.*”

Trends Over Time

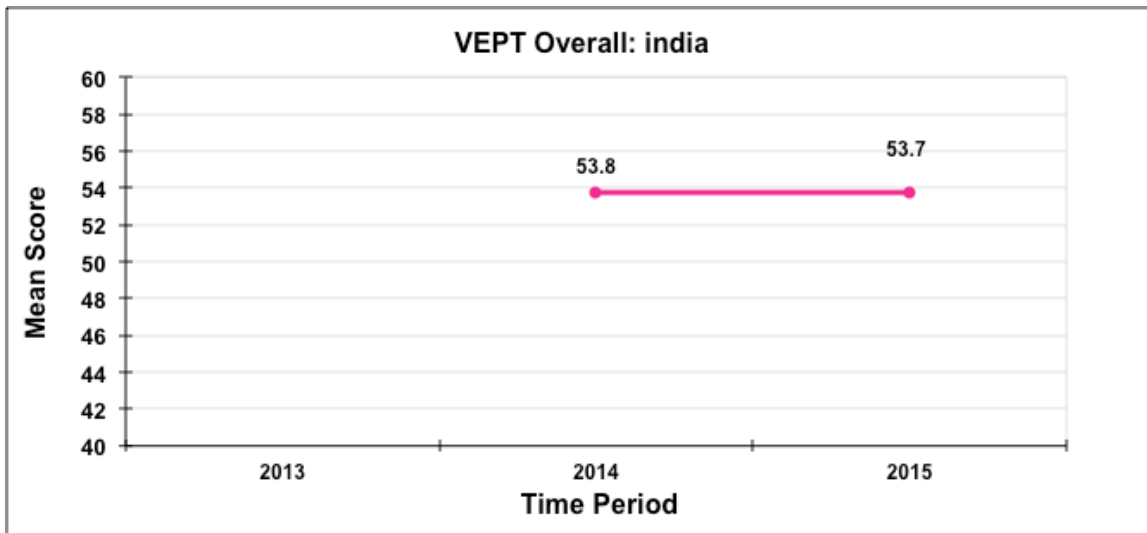


Figure 32. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2014 to 2015.

The mean VEPT scores for India show a high degree of consistency over the two-year period, declining by only 0.1 points from 2014 to 2015.

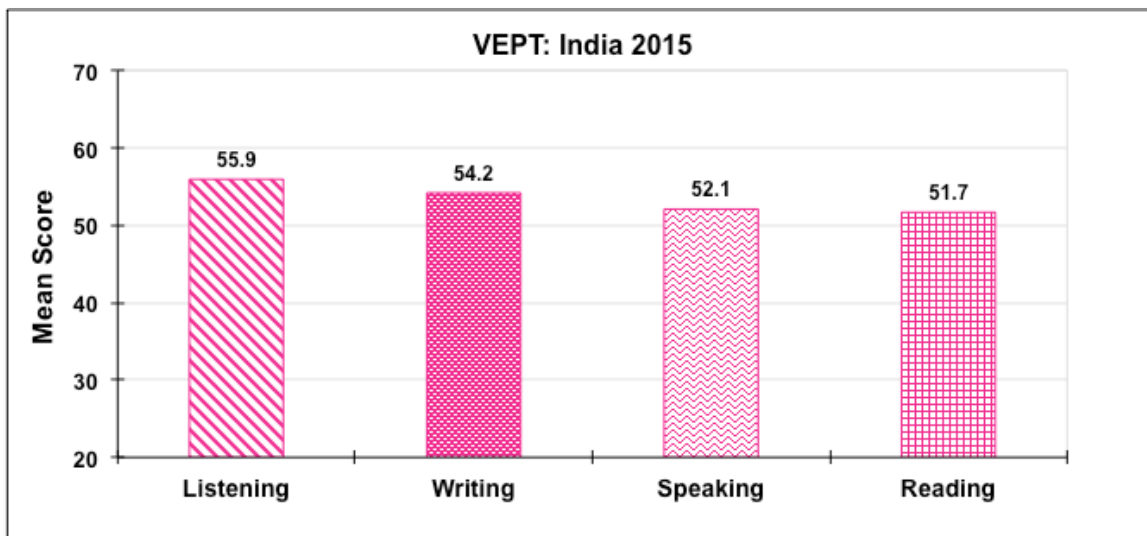
Four Skills Subscores

Figure 33. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The highest mean for Listening is 1.7 points higher than the second highest mean for Writing. There is then a gap of 2.1 points between the mean for Writing and the mean for Speaking, which is in turn only 0.5 points higher than the lowest mean for Reading.

Japan

2015 Snapshot

Japan	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	45.1	44.5	10.1

Table 21. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean of 45.1 is at the very high end of the range 33–45. Candidates scoring in this range can “handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.”

Four Skills Subscores

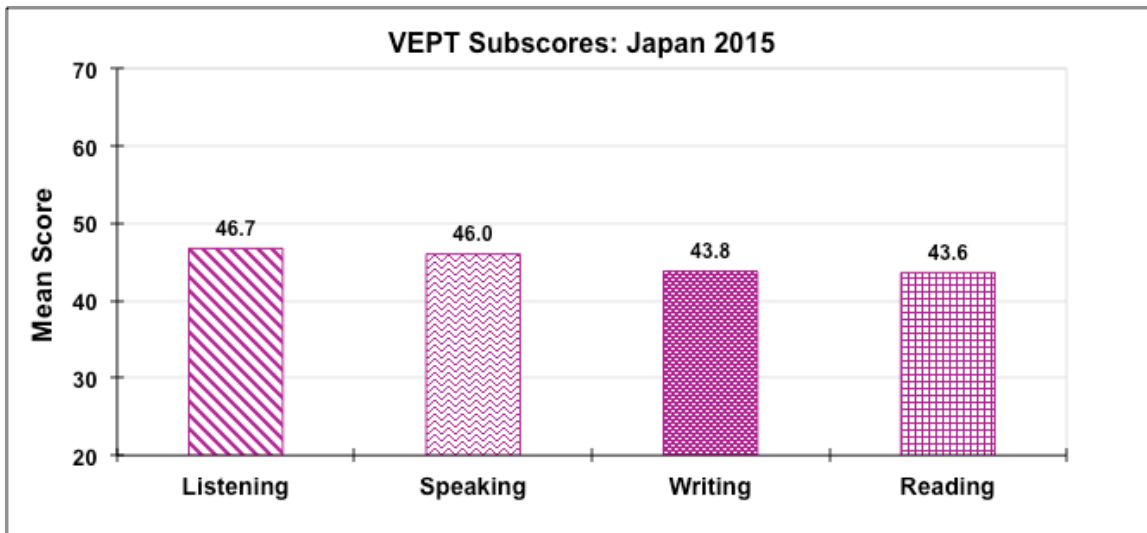


Figure 34. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The highest mean for Listening is 0.7 points higher than that for Speaking. The mean score for Writing is only 0.2 points higher than that for the lowest subscore Reading. In the middle of the range there is a 2.4 difference between the mean for Speaking and the third highest mean for Writing.

South Korea

2015 Snapshot

South Korea	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	42.1	44	11.1

Table 22. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 42.1 is at the high end of the 33–45 range. Test takers in this range can “handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.”

Trends Over Time

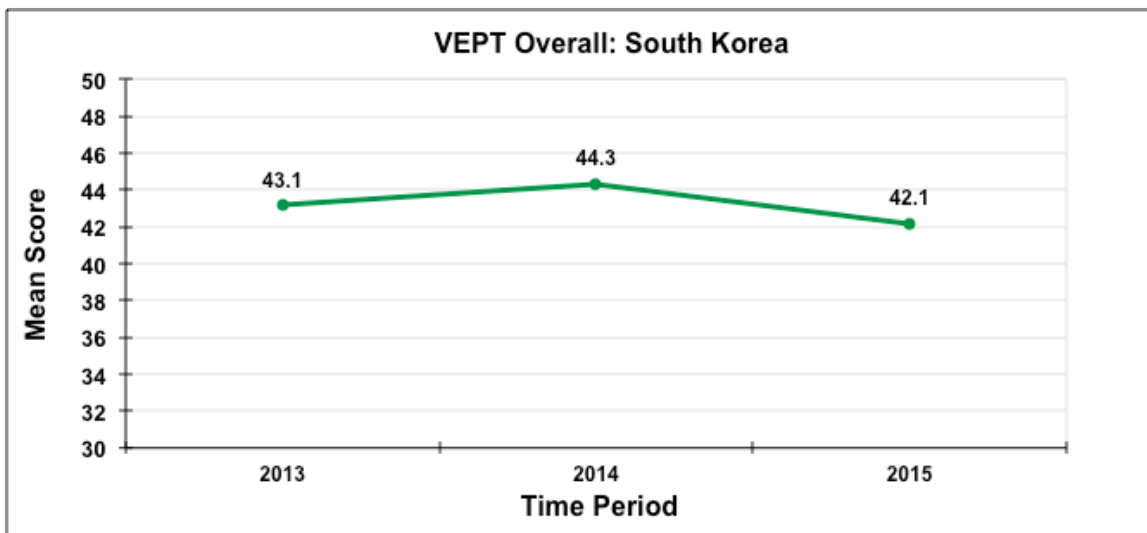


Figure 35. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

The mean VEPT scores are fairly consistent over the three-year period. They ranged 2.2 points from a high of 44.3 in 2014 to a low of 42.1 in 2015.

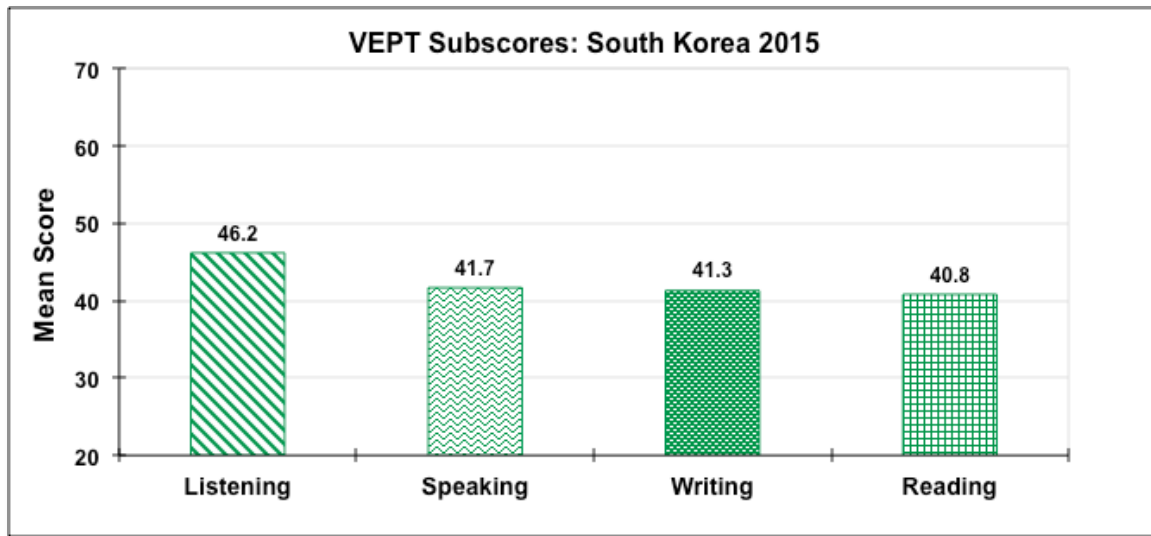
Four Skills Subscores

Figure 36. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The mean subscore for Listening is considerably higher than the means for the other subscores. There is a 4.5 difference between the mean for Listening and that for the second highest mean for Speaking, which is itself only 0.4 points higher than the mean for Writing. Writing, in turn, is 0.5 points higher than the lowest mean for Reading.

Mexico

2015 Snapshot

The number of VEPT test takers for Mexico in 2015 is comparatively low. Pearson therefore recommends caution when interpreting the findings shown below because the data may not be representative.

Mexico	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	57.1	57	7.9

Table 23. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean score of 57.1 is at the low end of the range 56–67. Test takers scoring in this range can “*easily handle a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Candidates understand texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce texts for most purposes.*”

Four Skills Subscores

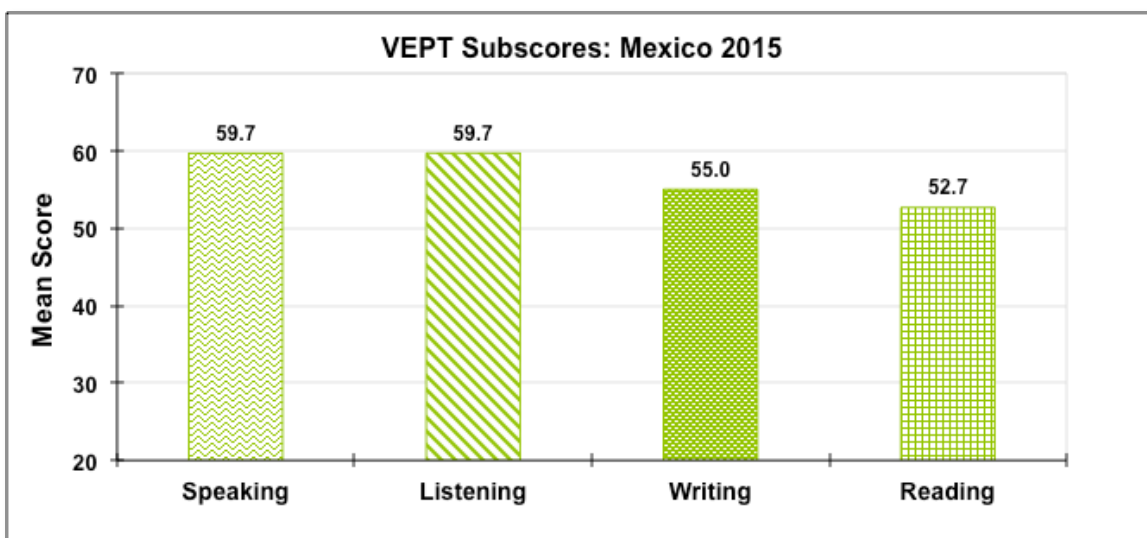


Figure 37. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

Mean subscores for Speaking and Writing are the same at 59.7. There is then a drop of 4.7 points to the third highest mean for Writing, which is itself 2.3 points higher than the lowest mean for Reading.

Middle East

2015 Snapshot

VEPT scores in the Middle East are drawn from test takers in Bahrain, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan.

Middle East	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	37.0	36	14.4

Table 24. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score of 37.0 falls in the range 33–45. Such test takers can “*handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but have difficulty following a native-paced conversation. They can handle texts using simple words and structures, but have difficulty understanding long or complex texts.*”

Trends Over Time

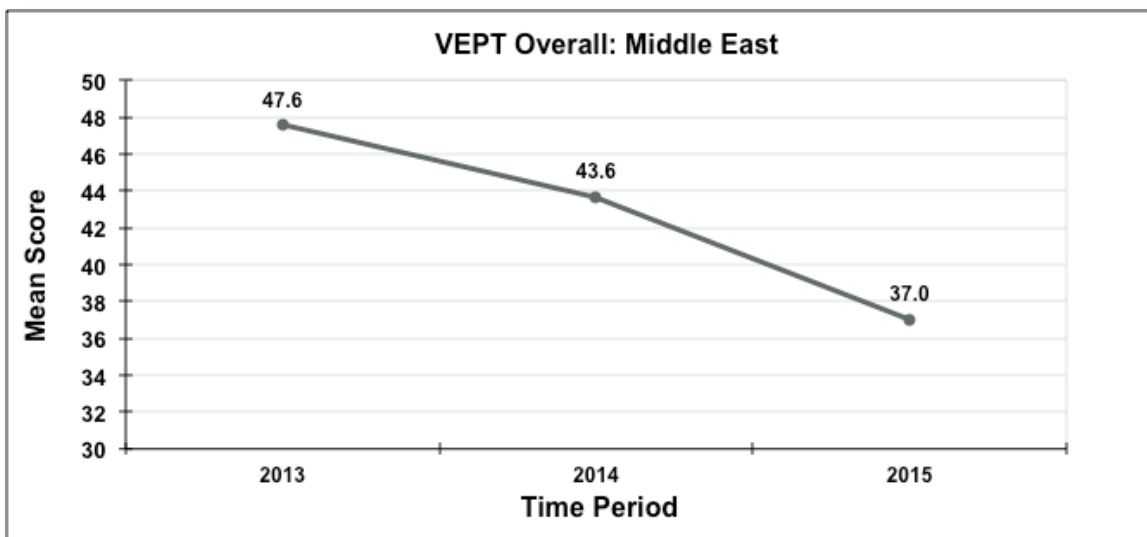


Figure 38. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

VEPT scores in the Middle East have declined 10.6 points over the three-year period to a low of 37.0 in 2015.

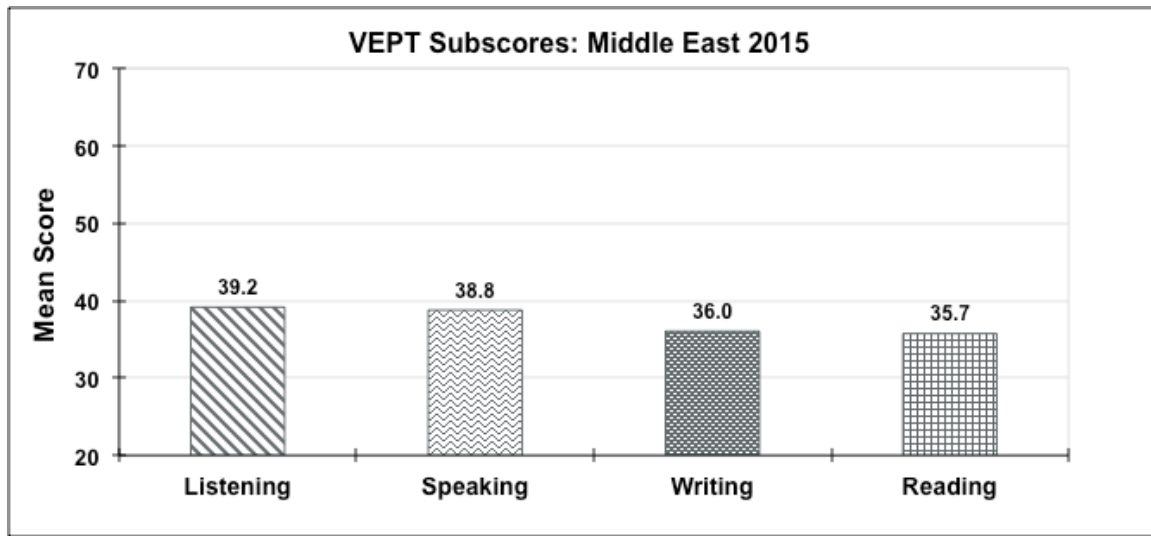
Four Skills Subscores

Figure 39. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The mean subscores are close for Listening and Speaking: the latter is 0.4 points lower than the highest mean for Listening. Similarly, the means for Writing and Reading are close, showing a 0.3-point difference. In the middle of the spectrum, the difference between the second highest mean for Speaking and the third highest mean for Writing is 2.8 points.

US and Canada

2015 Snapshot

US and Canada	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Versant English Placement Test	47.6	48	9.9

Table 25. Average VEPT scores for the region in 2015.

The mean VEPT score is at the low end of the range 46–55. Test takers scoring in this range can *“handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. They understand texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes.”*

Trends Over Time

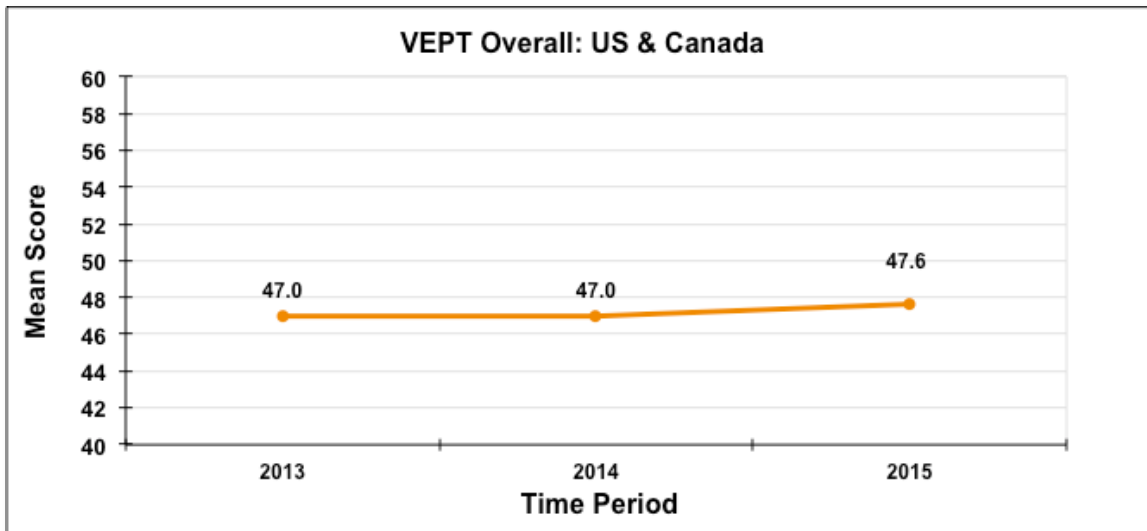


Figure 40. Trends in mean VEPT scores in the region from 2013 to 2015.

The mean VEPT scores have remained more or less constant, increasing only 0.6 points to 47.6 in 2015 from a mean of 47.0 in 2013 and 2014.

Four Skills Subscores

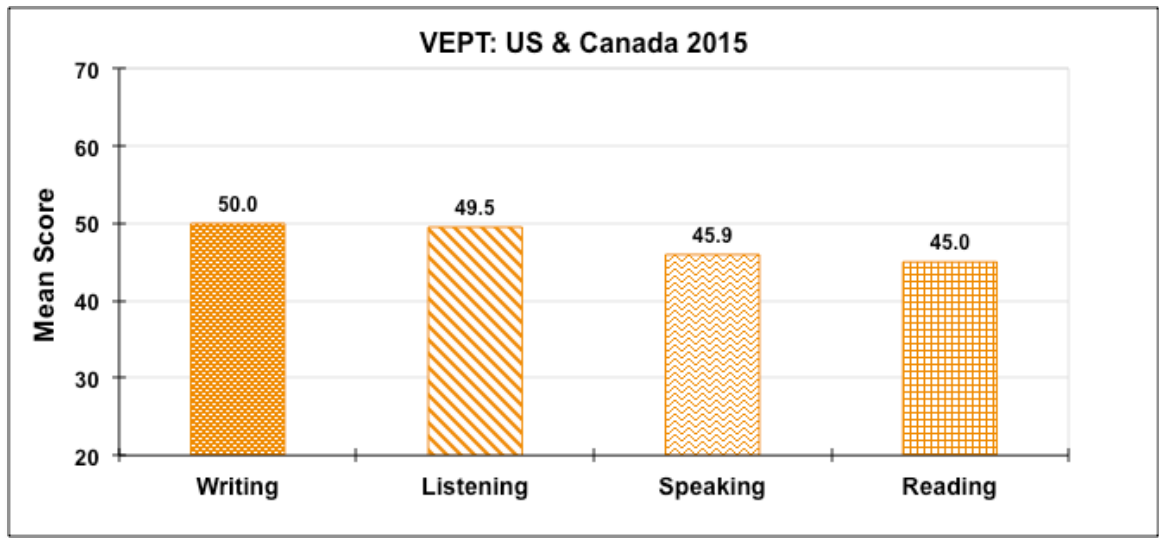


Figure 41. Mean VEPT subscores for the region in 2015, from highest to lowest.

The highest mean for Writing is only 0.5 points higher than the second highest mean for Listening. There is then a drop of 3.6 points to the third highest mean for Speaking, which is 0.9 points higher than the lowest mean for Reading.

APPENDIX A: VERSANT ENGLISH TEST SCORE DESCRIPTORS

This appendix provides performance descriptors for Versant English Test scores. For more information about the design and structure of the Versant English Test, refer to the *Test Description and Validation Summary* report.

Overall Score

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand spoken English and speak it intelligibly at a native-like conversational pace on everyday topics. Scores are based on a weighted combination of four diagnostic subscores. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 80.

Score	Performance Descriptor
79 – 80	Candidate speaks and understands effortlessly at native-speaker speeds, and can contribute readily to a native-paced discussion at length, maintaining the colloquial flow. Speech is completely fluent and intelligible; candidate has consistent mastery of complex language structures.
69 – 78	Candidate speaks and understands at native-speaker speeds with minimal effort, and can contribute readily to a native-paced discussion at length, maintaining the colloquial flow. Speech is fluent and intelligible; candidate has consistent mastery of complex language structures.
58 – 68	Candidate easily handles a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is generally fluent, smooth and intelligible; candidate controls appropriate language structure for speaking about complex material.
47 – 57	Candidate can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible; candidate can express some composite information on familiar topics to a cooperative listener.
36 – 46	Candidate can handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but has difficulty following a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation may sometimes not be intelligible; candidate speaks slowly and pauses, but can convey basic information to a cooperative listener.
26 – 35	Candidate can manage some slow, short, isolated utterances, or spoken formulas, but has difficulty following any native conversation; candidate may often pause to search for words and is difficult to understand.
20 – 25	Candidate has very limited speaking and listening skills in English.

APPENDIX B: VERSANT WRITING TEST SCORE DESCRIPTORS

This appendix provides performance descriptors for Versant Writing Test scores. For more information about the design and structure of this test, refer to the *Test Description and Validation Summary* report.

Overall Score

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand English input and write accurate, appropriate texts at a functional pace for everyday and workplace purposes. Scores are based on a weighted combination of five subscores. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 80.

Score	Performance Descriptor
79 – 80	Candidate reads and writes effortlessly at native-speaker speeds, and can readily produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is effective and clear, with appropriate style for the genre or audience; candidate has consistent mastery of complex language structures.
69 – 78	Candidate reads and writes at native-speaker speeds, and can readily produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is generally effective and clear, with appropriate style for the genre or audience; candidate has high degree of control over complex language structures.
58 – 68	Candidate understands texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear, with adequate attention to style; candidate maintains reasonable control of complex language structures.
47 – 57	Candidate understands texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes. Writing contains errors or inappropriate word choice, but the message is clear to a sympathetic reader.
36 – 46	Candidate can handle texts using simple words and structures, but has difficulty understanding long or complex texts. Candidate can convey basic information in writing using a limited range of language.
26 – 35	Candidate understands texts written using high-frequency words and structures, and can write short, simple sentences or paragraphs drawing on a narrow range of language or learned repertoire.
20 – 25	Candidate has very limited skills in understanding or producing written English.

APPENDIX C: VERSANT ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST SCORE DESCRIPTORS

This appendix provides performance descriptors for the Versant English Placement Test Overall scores and subscores. For more information about the design and structure of the Versant English Placement Test, refer to the test's *Test Description and Validation Summary* report..

Overall Score

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand spoken and written English and respond appropriately in speaking and writing on everyday topics, at a native-like pace and in intelligible English. Scores are based on a weighted combination of four diagnostic subscores. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 70.

Overall Score	Performance Descriptor
68 – 70	Candidate speaks and understands at native-speaker speeds with minimal effort, and can contribute readily to a native-paced discussion at length, maintaining the colloquial flow. Speech is fluent and intelligible. Candidate has consistent mastery of complex language structures. Candidate reads and writes at native-speaker speeds, and can readily produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is generally effective and clear.
56 – 67	Candidate easily handles a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is generally fluent, smooth and intelligible. Candidate controls appropriate language structures for speaking about complex material. Candidate understands texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear.
46 – 55	Candidate can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is mostly intelligible; candidate can express some composite information on familiar topics to a cooperative listener. Candidate understands texts using a variety of words and structures, and given enough time can produce written texts for general purposes. Writing contains errors or inappropriate word choice, but the message is clear to a sympathetic reader.
33 – 45	Candidate can handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but has difficulty following a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation may sometimes not be intelligible; candidate speaks slowly and pauses, but can convey basic information to a cooperative listener. Candidate can handle texts using simple words and structures, but has difficulty understanding long or complex texts. Candidate can convey basic information in writing using a limited range of language.

Overall Score	Performance Descriptor
24 – 32	Candidate can manage some slow, short, isolated utterances, or spoken formulas, but has difficulty following any native conversation; candidate may often pause to search for words and is difficult to understand. Candidate understands texts written using high-frequency words and structures, and can write short, simple phrases and sentences drawing on a narrow range of language or learned repertoire.
20 – 23	Candidate can manage some slow, short, isolated utterances, or spoken formulas, but has difficulty following any native conversation; candidate often pauses to search for words and is difficult to understand. Candidate understands short, simple texts written using high-frequency words, and can write simple words and phrases drawing on a narrow range of language or learned repertoire.

Speaking Subscore

The Speaking subscore of the test reflects the ability to produce English phrases and clauses in complete sentences. The score is based on the ability to produce consonants, vowels, and stress in a native-like manner, use accurate syntactic processing and appropriate usage of words in meaningful sentence structures, as well as use appropriate rhythm, phrasing, and timing. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 70.

Speaking Subscore	Candidate's Current Capabilities
68 – 70	Candidate generally produces accurate and meaningful sentences. Candidate speaks with good rhythm and appropriate phrasing and produces most vowels and consonants in a clear manner, although an occasional mispronunciation may occur.
56 – 67	Candidate produces a range of meaningful sentences. Candidate speaks with adequate rhythm but with some inappropriate phrasing and pausing, and produces many vowels and consonants in a clear manner, although some sounds are non-native.
46 – 55	Candidate produces some simple and meaningful sentences. Candidate speaks with adequate rhythm; speech contains some smooth runs containing several words but in some sections rhythm is uneven; many vowels and consonants are produced in a clear manner, but certain sounds are consistently pronounced in a non-native manner.
33 – 45	Candidate produces some simple sentences. Candidate speaks with irregular phrasing or rhythm and mispronounces many consonants and vowels, resulting in a strong, intrusive non-English accent.
24 – 32	Candidate produces some simple phrases and sentences. Candidate speaks in a slow manner with many hesitations, false starts, and/or long pauses, and pronunciation is strongly non-English in character.
20 – 23	Candidate produces some simple words and phrases. Candidate speaks in a slow manner with many hesitations, false starts, and/or long pauses, and speech is unintelligible to many listeners.

Listening Subscore

The Listening subscore of the test reflects the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday English speech. The score is based on the ability to track meaning and infer the message from English that is spoken at a conversational pace. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 70.

Listening Subscore	Candidate's Current Capabilities
68 – 70	Candidate follows most of what is said around him/her on most topics, although occasionally some information may be lost.
56 – 67	Candidate follows much of what is said around him/her on general topics provided speech is clear, although occasionally information is lost.
46 – 55	Candidate generally follows the main points of a discussion provided speech is clear, but will miss some details.
33 – 45	Candidate understands simple everyday conversational speech when it is spoken clearly and directed at him/her.
24 – 32	Candidate understands some basic questions or statements given in clear, simple speech.
20 – 23	Candidate understands some basic words, phrases, and simple questions or statements given in slow, clear speech with long pauses.

Reading Subscore

The Reading subscore of the test reflects the ability to understand written English texts on everyday topics. The score is based on the ability to operate at functional speeds to extract meaning, infer the message, and respond appropriately. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 70.

Reading Subscore	Candidate's Current Capabilities
68 – 70	Candidate reads, understands and responds to texts on everyday topics at a fast, functional pace. Occasionally some details may be lost.
56 – 67	Candidate reads, understands and responds to texts on everyday topics at a functional pace. In more complex texts, specific, important details may be lost.
46 – 55	Candidate reads, understands and responds to simple written texts, but has difficulty dealing with more complex texts.
33 – 45	Candidate has limited comprehension; reads, understands, and responds to texts that contain simple vocabulary and grammatical structures.
24 – 32	Candidate has limited comprehension; reads, understands and responds to very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases.
20 – 23	Candidate exhibits minimal comprehension; reads, understands, and responds only to very short, simple texts, a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names and words with much rereading.

Writing Subscore

The Writing subscore of the test reflects the ability to produce written English texts on everyday topics. The score is based on the ability to present ideas and information in a clear and logical sequence, use a wide range of appropriate words as well as a variety of sentences structures. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 70.

Writing Subscore	Candidate's Current Capabilities
68 – 70	Candidate writes clear, well-structured texts on a wide variety of subjects using a wide range of grammatical structures and English words.
56 – 67	Candidate writes clear, connected texts on a variety of subjects using a sufficient range of grammatical structures and a good range of common English words.
46 – 55	Candidate writes straightforward texts on familiar subjects using a limited range of grammatical structures and an adequate range of common English words.
33 – 45	Candidate writes a series of simple phrases and sentences using a limited range of grammatical structures and basic vocabulary.
24 – 32	Candidate writes simple, isolated phrases and sentences using a very limited range of grammatical structures and basic vocabulary.
20 – 23	Candidate writes simple isolated words and phrases

APPENDIX D: EQUIVALENCE AMONG SCORE SCALES

This appendix provides tables for the Versant English test and the Versant Writing test showing equivalent score ranges for the Global Scale of English, the Common European Framework of Reference, and the Versant score scale.

Versant English Test

Scores on the Global Scale of English are reported in the range from 10 to 90; scores on the Versant scale are reported on from 20 to 80.

Versant Score Range	GSE Score Range	CEFR Level
79 – 80	85 – 90	C2
69 – 78	76 – 84	C1
58 – 68	59 – 75	B2
47 – 57	43 – 58	B1
36 – 46	30 – 42	A2
26 – 35	22 – 29	A1
20 – 25	10 – 21	< A1

Versant Writing Test

Scores on the Global Scale of English are reported from 10 to 90; scores on the Versant scale are reported from 20 to 80.

Versant Score Range	GSE Score Range	CEFR Level
79 – 80	87 – 90	C2
69 – 78	78 – 86	C1
58 – 68	64 – 77	B2
47 – 57	48 – 63	B1
36 – 46	35 – 47	A2
26 – 35	26 – 34	A1
20 – 25	10 – 25	< A1

Versant English Placement Test

Scores on the Global Scale of English are reported from 10 to 90; scores on the Versant English Placement Test are reported from 20 to 70. Note that the VEPT assesses only up to CEFR level C1.

Versant Score Range	GSE Score Range	CEFR Level
68 – 70	75 – 78	C1
57 – 67	59 – 74	B2
46 – 56	43 – 58	B1
34 – 45	30 – 42	A2
24 – 33	22 – 29	A1
20 – 23	18 – 21	< A1