

Common reference levels

The Common European Framework divides learners into three broad divisions which can be divided into six levels:

A Basic User

A1 Breakthrough or beginner

A2 Waystage or elementary

B Independent User

B1 Threshold or intermediate

B2 Vantage or upper intermediate

C Proficient User

C1 Effective Operational Proficiency or advanced

C2 Mastery or proficiency

The CEFR describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level.

A1

- Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2

- Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

B1

- Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
- Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.

- Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
- Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2

- Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
- Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.
- Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

C1

- Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.
- Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
- Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
- Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

C2

- Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
- Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
- Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.