

Levels

(for the illustration of the levels, please see below)

One of the aims of the "Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment", Council of Europe reference document for the European Language Portfolio, is to help partners to describe the levels of proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications. For this purpose the Council of Europe has developed a European Framework with common reference levels.

There does appear in practice to be a wide consensus on the number and nature of levels appropriate to the organisation of language learning and the public recognition of achievement.

These six levels are an interpretation of the classic division into basic, intermediate and advanced. The scheme proposed in the "Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment" adopts a "Hypertext" branching principle, starting from an initial division into three broad levels:

Basic User: A1 and A2

Independent User: B1 and B2

Proficient User: C1 and C2

Such a simple "Global Scale" makes it easier to communicate the system to non-specialist users and will also provide teachers and curriculum planners with orientation points.

However, in order to orient learners, teachers and other users within the educational system for some practical purpose, a more detailed overview is necessary. Such an overview is presented in the form of a Self-Assessment Grid showing major categories of language use at each of the six levels.

It is intended to help learners to profile their main language skills, and decide at which level they might look at a checklist of more detailed descriptors in order to self-assess their level of proficiency.

Global Scale

Proficient User	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 more complex situations.
	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.
Independent User	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.
	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.
Basic User	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.
	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.