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Learning

# The Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies



# Introduction

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How can we prepare our students to succeed in a world that is changing fast? We see the increasing need to work together with people from around the world, to think creatively and solve problems, to analyse sources more critically, to communicate our

views effectively, to maintain a positive mindset in an increasingly complex world. How can we support the development of these skills? In Cambridge, we have set out to support teachers in this challenging area.



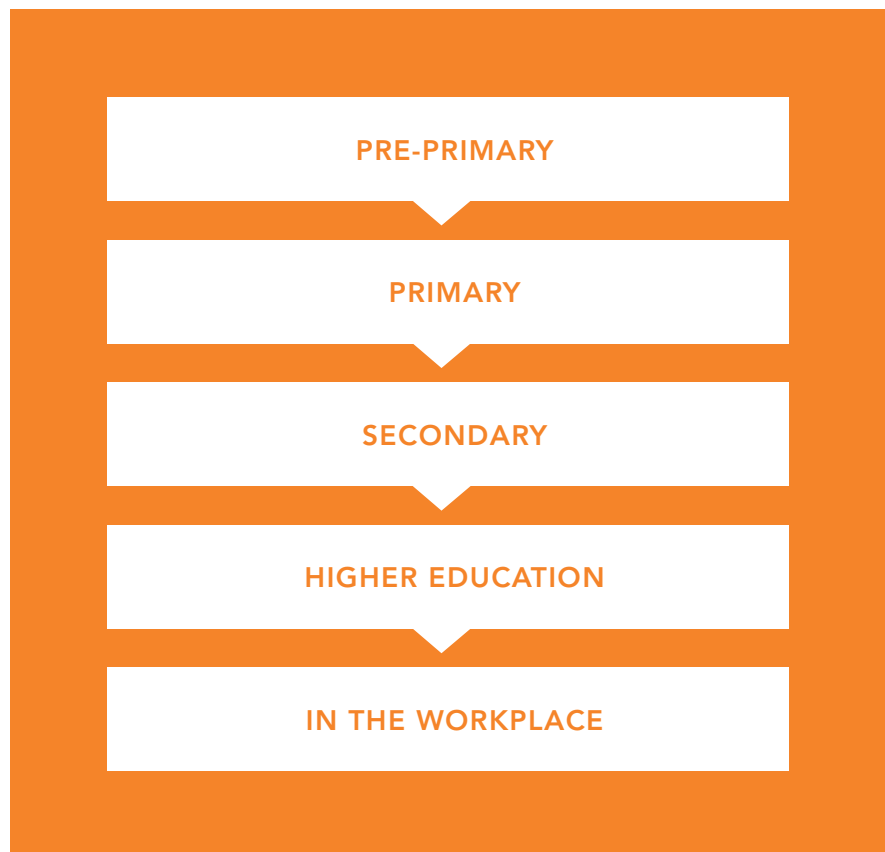
# The stages of the learning journey

We have developed the Cambridge Framework of Life Competencies to show what different life skills there are and how they can develop along the learning journey.

We have grouped the different competencies into eight main areas:

- Creativity
- Critical thinking & problem-solving
- Digital literacy
- Learning to learn
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Emotional development
- Social responsibilities

We then track how each competency develops across five stages of the learning journey:



# The Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies

## THINKING AND LEARNING SKILLS

Creativity	Critical thinking	Digital literacy	Learning to learn
Participating in creative activities	Understanding links between ideas	Using digital and online tools	Practical skills for participating in learning –
Creating new content – from own ideas or other resources	Evaluating texts, ideas and arguments	Following safe online practices – to protect yourself and your school	Showing a positive mindset for learning (English)
Discovering & expressing own personal identity and feelings through creative activities	Synthesizing ideas and information	Behaving appropriately to others online – ‘netiquette’	Reflecting on and evaluating own learning success
	Identifying and prioritising problems to be addressed		Identifying and articulating learning goals
	Evaluating options		Identifying and using effective learning techniques
	Asking effective questions		Seeking help from other people or resources
			Making notes, storing & retrieving information
			Preparing for and taking exams

## SOCIAL SKILLS

### Communication

Using appropriate language/register for context

Managing conversations

Overcoming own language gaps

Participating with appropriate confidence & clarity

Supporting others to communicate successfully

### Collaboration

Taking turns in shared activities

Listening to and respecting others' contributions

Sharing ideas

Taking personal responsibility for own contributions to a group task

Managing the sharing of tasks in a project

Evaluating and responding constructively to others' contributions or activities.

### Emotional development

Identifying and talking about own emotions

Managing own emotions

Empathy & relationship skills: recognising & responding appropriately to other children's emotional state

### Social responsibilities

Understanding personal responsibilities as part of a group and in society – including citizenship

Behaving consistently with personal and social responsibilities

Showing leadership skills

Understanding and describing own culture

Understanding and respecting how other cultures can differ

Understanding and discussing global issues - environmental, political, financial and social

Understanding & managing career development options and techniques

# Component skills

We have broken down the competencies even further, analysing the component skills typical for each competency.

Here are two examples:

## LEARNING TO LEARN

### Taking control of your own learning

Controlling learning environment

Making effective use of available resources

Getting help from other people

Showing confidence in own ability to learn

Finding own opportunities to learn outside classroom

## COLLABORATION

### Managing the sharing of tasks in a project

Understanding the need to share tasks

Identifying tasks and sub-tasks that can be shared

Ensuring the division of tasks is fair

Offering to help when others need it



# Can Do Statements

The Framework includes a bank of Can Do Statements which describe what a learner can do with each competency at the end of each stage of the learning journey. These Can Do Statements bring the Framework to life for most teachers, assessors, curriculum developers or materials writers. Here are some examples:

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES	
SHOWING LEADERSHIP SKILLS	
<b>PRE-PRIMARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decides what activities they will take part in</li> <li>Volunteers to perform simple tasks (e.g. tidy up toys, help younger children)</li> <li>Shows confidence to speak in a familiar group</li> <li>Suggests a way to solve simple problems</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers to try out new activities</li> <li>Volunteers for roles of responsibility</li> <li>Takes the initiative in group projects – starting discussions and activities before being asked to</li> <li>Shows confidence in expressing own ideas</li> <li>Manages disputes peacefully</li> </ul>
<b>SECONDARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In group work, makes consultative decisions</li> <li>Encourages others to participate and contribute in projects</li> <li>Sets strategies and plans for tackling a task</li> <li>Shows confidence in speaking in public (e.g. to present a project)</li> <li>Resolves issues in a group</li> </ul>
<b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes responsibility for creating and managing groups for shared activities</li> <li>Identifies and communicates goals and approaches for group activities</li> <li>Participates in decision-making in group/institution</li> </ul>
<b>IN THE WORK-PLACE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes responsibility for pursuing new opportunities or resolving business issues</li> <li>Allocates and delegates work according to colleagues'/subordinates' strengths</li> <li>Identifies and effectively communicates business tactics and strategy</li> </ul>

CRITICAL THINKING	
EVALUATING TEXTS, IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS	
<b>PRE-PRIMARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says whether something is true or not</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says whether something is true or not, and gives a reason</li> <li>Explains why they believe or not what a character says in a story</li> <li>Identifies inconsistencies in stories</li> <li>Identifies missing key events from short narrative summaries</li> </ul>
<b>SECONDARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguishes fact and opinion as well as source and evidence</li> <li>Identifies assumptions and inferences in a text</li> <li>Gives reasons for the evaluation of an argument's plausibility or coherence</li> </ul>
<b>HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check clarity, relevance and fairness of the arguments and points of view presented by different writers</li> <li>Recognises basic fallacies in argumentation</li> <li>Arrives at nuanced evaluations of arguments in texts</li> </ul>
<b>IN THE WORK-PLACE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks the strength of argument in a proposal – e.g. its significance and coherence</li> <li>Evaluates the plausibility of explanations in a report, e.g. the weight of evidence</li> <li>Assesses the significance of implicit assumptions in a proposal</li> </ul>

# Life Competencies in ELT

These Life Competencies are already embedded into many of your English lessons. The purpose of the Framework is to help you approach this more systematically and effectively. Here are some examples of activities you may already be using to develop Life Competencies.

## 11 MAKING THE NEWS

### OBJECTIVES

**FUNCTIONS:** reporting what someone has said; expressing feelings: anger

**GRAMMAR:** reported statements; verb patterns: object + infinitive

**VOCABULARY:** fun; more verbs with object + infinitive; expressions with *make*

### READING

- 1 Tick (✓) the qualities you need to be a news journalist.

<input type="checkbox"/> funny	<input type="checkbox"/> intelligent	<input type="checkbox"/> brave
<input type="checkbox"/> confident	<input type="checkbox"/> charming	<input type="checkbox"/> talented
<input type="checkbox"/> positive	<input type="checkbox"/> active	<input type="checkbox"/> cheerful
<input type="checkbox"/> warm	<input type="checkbox"/> serious	
<input type="checkbox"/> adventurous		

- 2 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. What other adjectives can you think of?

- 3 **SPEAKING** Would you like to be a journalist? Say why or why not.

*I'd like to be a journalist because I like finding out things.*

*I wouldn't like to be a journalist because I'm not adventurous.*

- 4 On April Fool's Day in many English-speaking countries, people play jokes on others. Journalists are usually serious, but sometimes they play jokes, too. Do you have a similar day in your country?

- 5 **▶ 2.27** Read and listen to the article. Which photo relates to each story? Write the dates of the stories on the pictures to match them.

- 6 Read the article again. Which story are these people talking about?

- 'I saw that. I think they were in the middle of making a nature programme.'
- 'What a great way to get people interested in your product.'
- 'They said the mistake happened because of a bad translation.'
- 'It definitely doesn't come from a plant. I think it's made with flour and water.'
- 'I think people believed the story because he was such an intelligent person.'

Understanding links between ideas

Managing conversations

Talking about emotions

Intercultural awareness

Problem solving



## April Fool's Day

In 1957 the BBC news programme Panorama told its viewers that Swiss farmers were enjoying a really good year for their spaghetti crop. They showed a film of the farmers picking the pasta from their trees. Many people believed the story and some of them even phoned up the BBC to ask how they could grow their own spaghetti tree. The date, of course, was April 1st, or April Fool's Day – the day when people in many countries across the world like to play jokes on each other.

April 1st seems to be very popular with journalists. They have the extremely important job of reporting the news to us. For 364 days a year they need to be serious. But for one day a year they allow themselves to forget this responsibility for a few minutes and have a bit of fun trying to fool their readers or viewers.



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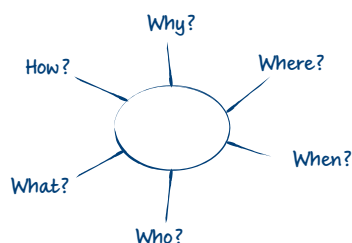


## SPEAKING TASK

Give a short presentation about an invention or discovery that has changed our lives.

### PREPARE

- 1 Work alone. Make a list of inventions or discoveries that have changed our lives.
- 2 Choose one of the inventions and prepare an ideas map about it. Write questions on the diagram.



Creating new content from own ideas

### PRACTISE

- 3 Work with a partner. Discuss your research questions and help each other answer the questions on the ideas maps.
- 4 Work with a partner. Take turns to practise giving your presentation.
- 5 Give each other feedback using the questions below.

- 1 Was the presentation clearly organized and interesting?
- 2 Was there a clear description of the invention/discovery?
- 3 Were there examples of how the invention/discovery has changed our lives?

Respond constructively to others

### PRESENT

- 6 Work in small groups. Take turns to give your presentations. Discuss which one of your inventions has had the biggest influence on our lives.

#### TASK CHECKLIST

Did you use phrases with <i>make</i> correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you use passive and active forms correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you outline the topic clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you explain clearly how something is used?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Structuring content

Evaluating own learning success

# Going forward

## Applications of the Framework

How can the Framework be used to improve English language programmes?

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Use descriptors of component competencies at each learning stage to develop Curriculum Learning Outcomes

### LEARNING MATERIALS

Use descriptors to design suitable learning activities

### TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

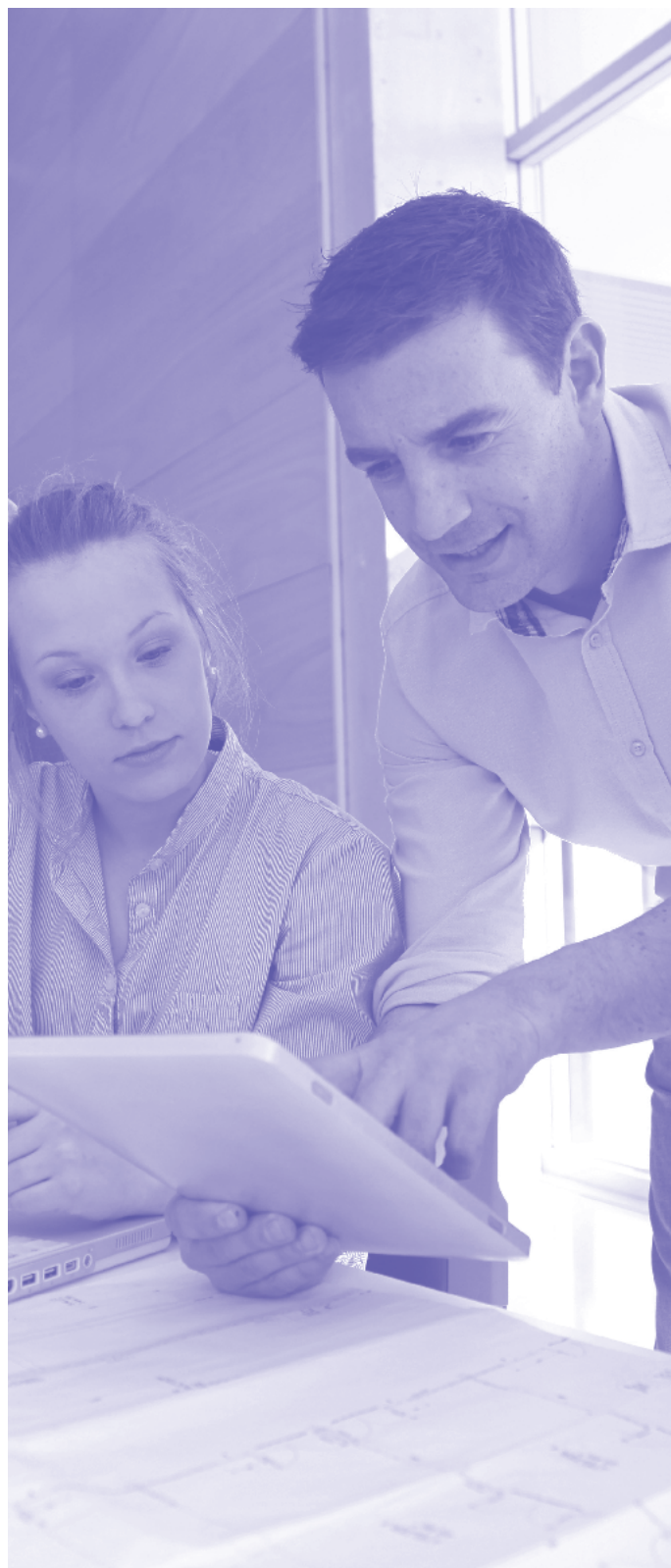
Develop awareness of the component skills that learners should be developing at each stage of learning

### EVALUATION

Develop appropriate tasks and record-keeping to monitor success in developing Life Competencies

## Validation

Cambridge is working on the validation of the Framework, setting up a number of research projects to examine the appropriacy of the proposed component competencies and their descriptors. If you would like to get involved with these validation projects, contact [language@cambridge.org](mailto:language@cambridge.org)



# Further reading

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