



CAMBRIDGE

# Communication

Introductory guide for teachers  
and educational managers



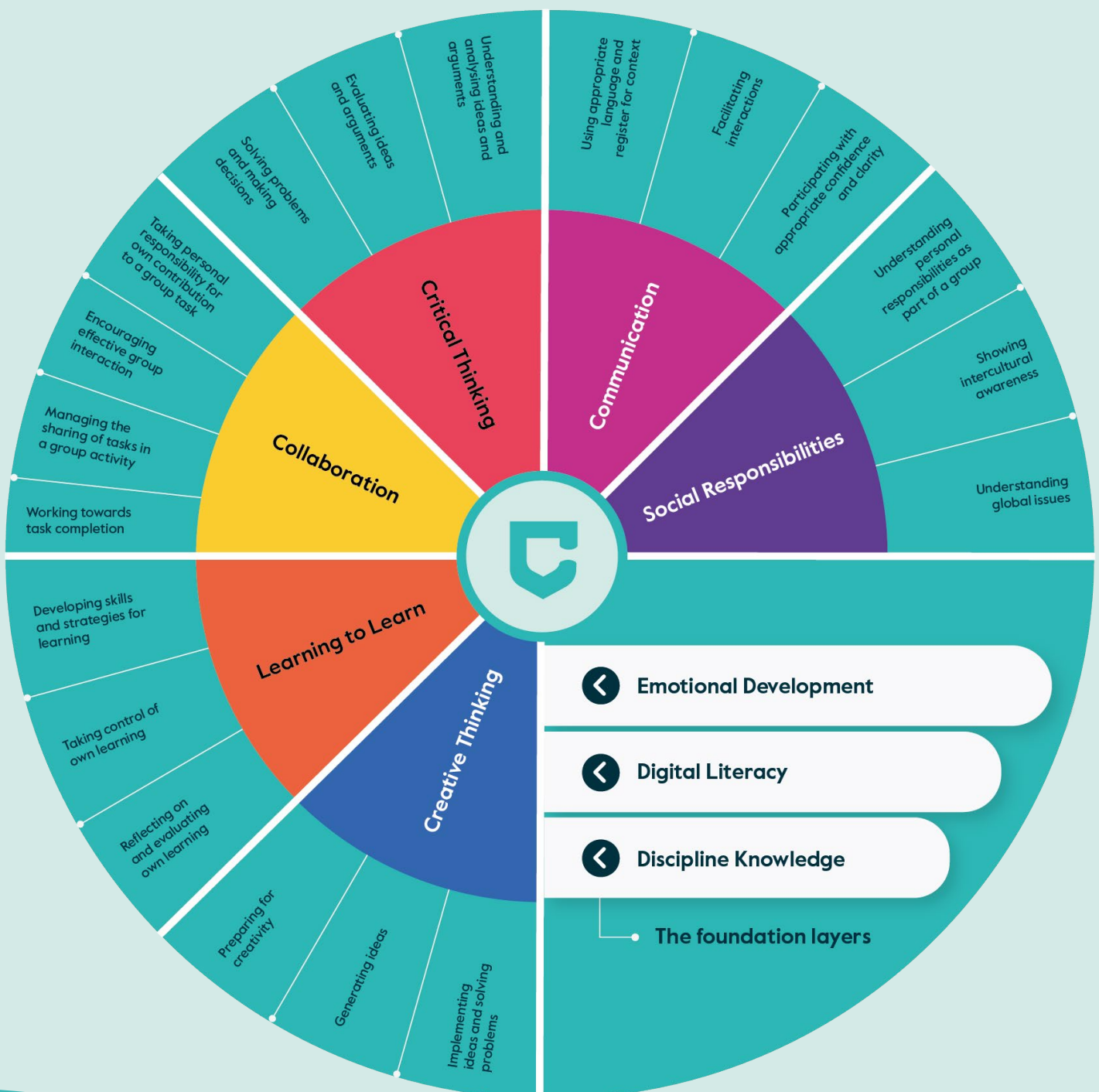
Cambridge  
Life Competencies

# Why teach Life Competencies?

Our world is changing fast, and we need to prepare our students with skills and experiences that go beyond simply learning an additional language.

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, and to maintain a positive mindset in an increasingly complex world.

We understand that the engaging and collaborative nature of the language classroom is the perfect place to develop and embed these key qualities and the Life Competencies framework supports teachers in this challenging area.



# What is the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework has been created in response to educators who have asked for a way to understand how life skills, or 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, can be integrated into English language programmes. It is made up of six **Competencies** that describe how these essential skills develop and vary across different stages of education, as learners grow and change.

<b>Creative Thinking</b>	Learners actively participate in creative activities, generate new ideas and use them to solve problems.
<b>Learning to Learn</b>	Learners develop practical skills to support and take control of their learning and reflect on their own progress.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Learners work well together in groups through actively taking part in group activities, listening to others, sharing tasks and finding solutions to problems.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Learners identify patterns and relationships, evaluate ideas and use these skills to solve problems.
<b>Communication</b>	Learners choose the most appropriate language to use in different situations, manage conversations effectively and express themselves clearly and confidently.
<b>Social Responsibilities</b>	Learners recognise and describe different roles and responsibilities in a variety of groups and understand cultural and global issues.

In addition, there are three **Foundation layers**. Foundation layers are not separate competencies. Instead, they act as underlying dimensions that support and strengthen every other competency. They provide the essential capacities that allow learners to develop and apply all other life competencies effectively.

<b>Emotional Development</b>	Learners identify and understand emotions, manage their own emotions as well as develop empathy and relationship skills.
<b>Digital Literacy</b>	Learners create content, share and interact with others online and maintain their safety and wellbeing while using technology.
<b>Discipline Knowledge</b>	Learners' knowledge of the English language, as well as of other subjects, supports and strengthens their competency development.

# The learning journey

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework supports learners at all stages of their learning journey, from very young pre-primary learners right through to adults in education and at work. The framework maps out how learner behaviours typically found within each competency can change and develop as learners encounter new situations and circumstances in their lives both within and beyond the classroom.

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework allows us to support learners throughout their education and into the careers of the future.

- Pre-Primary
- Primary
- Secondary
- Higher Education
- At Work

## How the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework aligns with key themes in ELT

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework consists of competencies that are strongly related to key themes in ELT such as:



- AI Literacy
- Global Citizenship
- Mediation and Translanguaging
- Oracy
- Sustainability
- Wellbeing

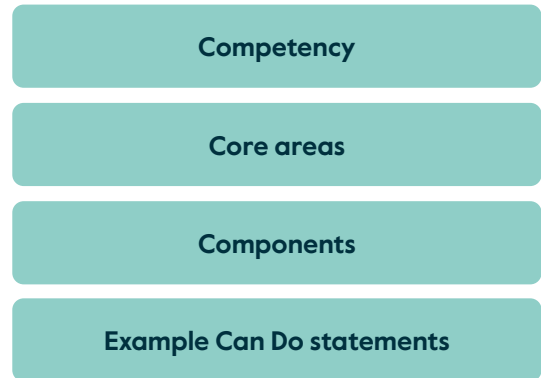
By developing the competencies in the framework, learners are also developing much of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to develop in the above areas.

This booklet will outline how the Critical Thinking competency aligns with these themes. To find out more about any of the themes, see our series of mini booklets .



# Understanding the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework is made up of six **Competencies** – **Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Learning to Learn, Communication, Collaboration** and **Social Responsibilities**. Each broad competency is broken down into **Core areas** that describe these competencies in more detail. These are then analysed further into **Components** that, along with example **Can Do statements**, describe the observable behaviours that learners are likely to be able to demonstrate by the end of each stage of learning if they have had the opportunity to develop in these areas.



Linked to the competencies are the three foundation layers of the framework – **Emotional Development, Digital Literacy** and **Discipline Knowledge**. Development of skills in these foundation layers underpins all other competencies.

Along with this structured breakdown, we provide **example language** that learners may use to express the actions and behaviours found in each of the Core areas at each stage of learning. These have been informed by both our Functional Language Phrase Bank, a collection of spoken data from expert speakers of English from children to adults, and input from experienced ELT practitioners from around the world. See this example for one Core area within Communication at the Primary stage:

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Communication	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively	Uses connectors to add additional points.	Also ...
		Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency	Tells a story or describes something clearly.	My story is ...

By clearly defining these areas of development in a structured and detailed way, we can ensure that our teaching and learning materials take a systematic approach to delivering and developing these skills in our learners, as they progress. This means that teachers can be assured that our resources bring out the best in their students, without creating extra work.

It should be noted that the framework was developed primarily from research and frameworks that centred neurotypical expressions of Competencies, as neurodiversity and neurodivergence were less understood when the framework was first created. Users of the framework should therefore adapt the framework flexibly, recognising that learners may demonstrate Competencies in diverse ways beyond those described in the framework. Further guidance on this will be published in due course.

# What is Communication?

Communication is an essential professional and life skill, enabling us to share information and ideas, as well as express feelings and arguments (Cenere et al., 2015). It is also an active process influenced by the complexities of human behaviour in which elements such as non-verbal behaviour and individual styles of interpreting and ascribing meaning to events have significant influence. Mastering effective communication is more than just mastering the core language resources of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. It's about using those resources for the desired effect – whether that is persuading someone of your argument, apologising for a mistake, or making friends.

We have identified three **Core areas** within Communication:

<b>Communication</b>	Using appropriate language and register for context
	Facilitating interactions
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity

- **Using appropriate language and register for context** refers to a learner's understanding that there are formal, semi-formal and informal situations which require them to vary their language and expressions and adapt their communication style. Learners can use language for effect by employing a variety of language and rhetorical devices, for example, to be more persuasive in an argument, to engage and catch attention or to add emphasis or humour. It also refers to learners' awareness of differences in communication styles across cultures.
- **Facilitating interactions** is related to a learner's ability to converse with others effectively and efficiently by knowing how to initiate, maintain and end conversations appropriately. Learners are aware of and use key communication strategies that can help them convey their own messages as well as support others in communicating successfully.
- **Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity** refers to a learner's ability to communicate effectively with appropriate fluency, confidence and pace. This may include using appropriate tonal and structural variation, facial expression and eye contact as well as an ability to structure content to create coherent and cohesive texts.

Within these Core areas we break things down further, defining the components that make up each Core area:

<b>Communication</b>	Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation
		Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect
		Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups
	Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations
		Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly
		Structuring spoken and written texts effectively
		Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency

# How does Communication align with key themes in ELT?

Communication skills support the development of the following key themes in ELT:



**AI literacy:** Communicating clearly and precisely is essential for prompting Generative AI effectively and shaping informed decisions about its use.



**Oracy:** Expressive and receptive spoken communication enables learners to articulate ideas, listen attentively, and interact with confidence in diverse contexts.



**Global citizenship:** Cross-cultural communication, including mediation, equips learners to engage meaningfully with others in the global community.



**Sustainability:** Sharing key messages about sustainability in clear, persuasive ways helps learners inspire others to take action on important issues.



**Mediation and translanguaging:** The ability to bridge understanding across languages and cultures supports collaboration and ensures that all voices are heard.



**Wellbeing:** Constructive communication practices foster supportive relationships, strengthen resilience, and contribute to overall wellbeing.

See our series of mini booklets on these themes to find out more.

## Spotlight on Oracy

Oracy skills help learners express themselves clearly, listen actively, and engage meaningfully with others. As such, they are essential to becoming confident communicators who can collaborate, share ideas, and build understanding in diverse contexts.

In the context of **Communication**, oracy involves using appropriate language and register, managing conversations effectively, and participating with clarity and confidence. These skills help learners adapt their communication to different audiences and purposes, supporting success both inside and outside the classroom.

The [Cambridge Oracy Skills Framework](#) highlights four interrelated strands - physical, linguistic, cognitive, and social & emotional - that underpin effective spoken communication. Together, these strands emphasise not only what learners say, but how they say it: from clarity of speech and confident delivery, to vocabulary choice, reasoning, turn-taking, and audience awareness.

Oracy skills align particularly well with the **Communication** components of **using appropriate language and register for the situation, using communication strategies to facilitate conversations, structuring spoken and written texts effectively, using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency**. Developing these skills enables learners not only to contribute their own ideas but also to listen, question, and respond thoughtfully to others.





We have highlighted **Example Can Do statements** from these areas of the framework that can be used to support Oracy. Look out for the following icon in the following pages:

To find out more about how the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework supports Communication through Oracy, see our mini booklet.





# Communication across the learning journey

Core areas may be realised in different ways across the different stages of learning. In order to demonstrate this, each **Core area** and **Component** is contextualised by an example **Can Do statement**. This illustrates what kinds of behaviour students who are competent in this area might display by the end of each stage of learning. These example Can Do statements can be used as a starting point in the development of a curriculum, programme or assessment system and will vary in their suitability for learners in different contexts. The example language is provided for teachers to consider what kind of language they could encourage their students to use in these kinds of tasks.





## Pre-primary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation 	Uses simple, polite forms of greetings, introductions and farewells.	Hello/Hi/Hey.
	Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect	Changes sound levels and pitch of voice when doing drama to communicate different emotions.	
	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Adjusts language for playing different roles (e.g. a teacher, an animal or a character from a story).	[A gold star for you!/I'm a very hungry lion!].
Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations 	Builds on others' ideas (e.g. in a role-play activity).	And he [lives] ...
	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Uses basic communication strategies, such as asking for repetition.	Pardon?
Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Points to pictures of objects or people and says what they show using simple words.	Dad!/Sun!
	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively 	Links ideas when speaking using simple connectors.	... and/but ...
	Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency 	Asks and answers simple questions with confidence.	What's your name?/It's ...





## Primary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation 	Uses appropriate tone and language when talking with others.	Good idea!
	Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect	Uses intonation and gesture to communicate different emotions during a drama or role-play.	I'm [a bit/really/so] sad.
	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Adapts language according to the social group (e.g. talking with teachers at school vs parents at home).	Excuse me, Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms ...
Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations 	Interrupts politely at appropriate moments in group talk.	Please can I speak now?
	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Tries to use alternative words or expressions if they are not understood.	I mean ...
Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Gives simple explanations using everyday vocabulary.	We use this to cut paper.
	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively 	Uses connectors to add additional points.	Also ...
	Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency 	Tells a story or describes something clearly.	My story is ...





## Secondary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation 	Adapts register and formality appropriately for different speaking contexts.	Hi!/Good afternoon, everyone.
	Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect	Uses language for emphasis (e.g. exaggerations or cleft sentences).	I've got a million things to do!
	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Demonstrates understanding of which topics are appropriate for conversation in different contexts.	I guess you could say this to [a friend/an older person someone you don't know].
Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations 	Respectfully listens to others and waits for their turn to speak.	That's a really good point. I'd also say ...
	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Guesses or coins a 'new' item of language based on existing knowledge.	Can you say [coined word] in English?
Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Defines and clarifies concepts using simple comparisons or examples.	It means ... /It's similar to ...
	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively 	Develops a clear description or narrative with a logical sequence of points.	When ... /After ... /Before ...
	Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency 	Uses facial expressions and eye contact appropriately to support verbal communication.	N/A

## Higher education

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation 	Appropriately expresses a point of view.	Personally, ...
	Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect	Draws on a range of discourse functions (e.g. questions, commands) to gain others' attention.	Can you guess what happened?
	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Uses a formal, semi-formal or informal register appropriate to the person they are communicating with.	Excuse me/Pardon?/Sorry?/What?
Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations 	Responds in an open-minded way to different ideas, including those which represent an opposing point of view.	I see [what you're saying]. I'm interested to know more about ...
	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Intervenes when it appears that there is a misunderstanding in a conversation or discussion.	Hang on. I think there's been a misunderstanding.
Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Presents complex ideas or arguments in a structured, accessible way.	To put it another way ...
	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively 	Organises spoken and written text logically and thematically.	Firstly, ... /Secondly, ... /Finally, ...
	Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency 	Varies pace, volume and emphasis strategically during presentations to engage the audience.	N/A

## At work

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Using appropriate language and register for context	Using language appropriate for the situation 	Appropriately expresses a point of view.	To me, it's a matter of ...
	Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect	Varies sentence patterns to achieve effect when speaking or writing.	Something [I enjoy] is ... /I enjoy ...
	Adapting language use according to different cultures and social groups	Communicates effectively with people from another culture, aware of differences in communication styles.	Hold on a sec!/Sorry, can we just pause for a second?
Facilitating interactions	Using communication strategies to facilitate conversations 	Interrupts a colleague appropriately in a meeting when necessary.	Could I just add something?
	Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns	Paraphrases or summarises what others have said to check comprehension.	So, just to [be sure/clarify], you mean ... ?
Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Explaining concepts and information clearly	Clarifies technical or abstract terms for a non-specialist audience.	In simple terms ...
	Structuring spoken and written texts effectively 	Uses discourse markers and signposting language to structure spoken presentations clearly.	To begin, ... /Furthermore, ... /In summary, ...
	Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency 	Chooses a presentation style that is suited to their audience.	First, let me set the scene.

# Communication in the classroom

In an increasingly interconnected world, communication is an essential skill that enables us to get our ideas, needs and feelings across to others in meaningful, useful ways. It allows us to access information, opportunities and develop relationships. In the language classroom, learners need extensive practice and feedback in order to use new language confidently and fluently. This is often facilitated through productive, communicative activities like asking and answering drills, role-plays and the multitude of activities that require learners to engage with one another in order to get or share information. Due to their communicative nature, these activities also present an opportunity to work with, and develop, communication competencies.

Learners reach for communication strategies during many classroom activities because of an inherent need for them. Not having these strategies to draw upon may result in learners hitting communicative blocks more frequently and being less able to benefit from time spent in the classroom. Communication strategies have a broad range of benefits for language learners within the classroom and beyond. For example, being able to continue with a speaking task despite not knowing key vocabulary, avoid misunderstandings by checking what has been said, or tell more engaging stories.

Learners and teachers benefit from developed communication skills by being able to:

- express themselves appropriately and enable a positive, productive learning environment;
- collaborate more effectively with others;
- take more responsibility for their learning, articulate their needs, and access information and support;
- engage in and benefit more from communicative language practice activities;
- experience increased motivation as a result of success in communicative activities.

## Suggestions for classroom practice

The ideas presented here are intended as a general indication of the types of activity that might develop this competency in the classroom, and are not a definitive list.

### General suggestions

Communication skills are so inherently embedded within language teaching and learning; the question is not so much whether they have a place in the language classroom, but rather, the extent and ways in which teachers provide an overt focus on them.

### Familiarisation with communication strategies

It should be noted that before spending significant amounts of time practising particular communicative strategies within classroom activities, it is helpful for learners to understand what these strategies are. This understanding is important as it informs and supports subsequent attempts to use them. It can help learners become more able to independently practise and reflect on their performance – rather than relying on teacher feedback.

## Allowing time

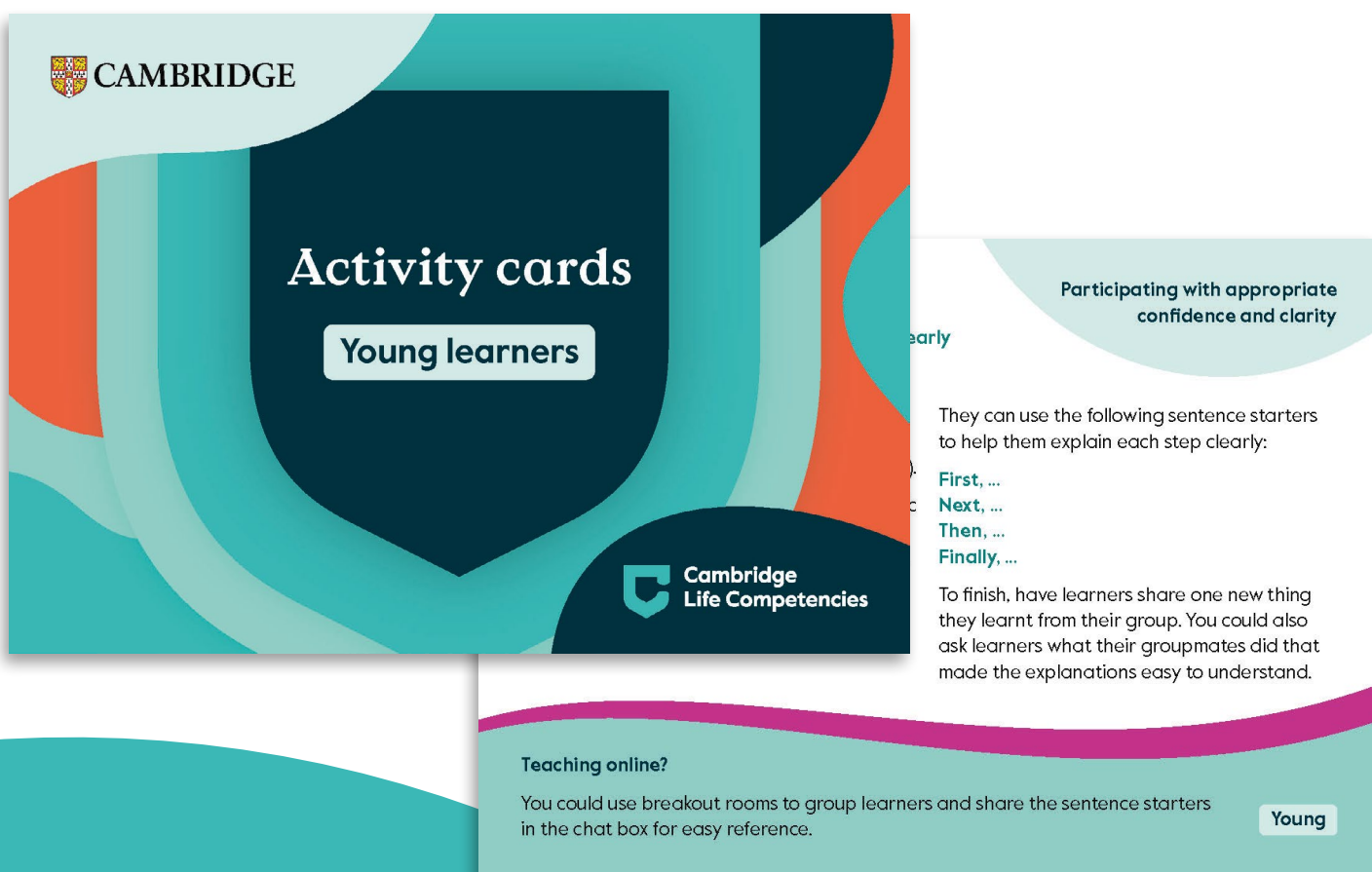
Once a strategy is established (what it involves, its potential benefits) and practised, learners will be better placed to use it in later lessons, with increasing independence. This is a key point; time and effort may need to be invested in developing learner recognition of communicative strategies which can initially distract from other teaching and learning aims.

## Including communication skills in everyday practice

It is important to note that existing learning activities and procedures can be adapted to accommodate the development of communication skills. This is an approach and a process; one that needs to be incorporated within communicative activities, with specific strategies revisited, honed and built upon; doing so leaves learners better equipped for success in both the language classroom and the real world.

## Activity cards

For more ideas on integrating the Communication Competencies into your classroom, see our Cambridge Life Competencies **activity card** packs. We've created a pack of cards for each stage of learning, and each individual card tackles a component from one of the core Cambridge Life Competencies. The activities are designed for you to use together with your coursebook or teaching materials, to tweak or supplement tasks. Go to [cambridge.org/clcf](https://cambridge.org/clcf) to download your free pack.



The image displays a collection of activity cards from the Cambridge Life Competencies pack. The main card is titled 'Activity cards' and 'Young learners'. It features the Cambridge logo and the text 'Cambridge Life Competencies'. A smaller card is partially visible, titled 'Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity', which includes a list of sentence starters: 'First, ...', 'Next, ...', 'Then, ...', and 'Finally, ...'. A third card, titled 'Teaching online?', suggests using breakout rooms and chat boxes for sentence starters. A 'Young' label is present in the bottom right corner of the cards.

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# Activity cards

Young learners

Cambridge Life Competencies

Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity

They can use the following sentence starters to help them explain each step clearly:

- First, ...
- Next, ...
- Then, ...
- Finally, ...

To finish, have learners share one new thing they learnt from their group. You could also ask learners what their groupmates did that made the explanations easy to understand.

Teaching online?

You could use breakout rooms to group learners and share the sentence starters in the chat box for easy reference.

Young

## Primary

Learners at this age tend to be more communicative generally – they can be confident and motivated to speak – but often lack the skills to work more effectively together in groups. Raising learners’ awareness of effective communication strategies, and engaging in tasks that promote these skills, are key to supporting young learners in this area. Young learners can be introduced explicitly to these communication strategies as outlined in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework. This could involve useful language and phrases for different contexts.

### Ground rules

An example is setting some ‘ground rules’ for classroom communication amongst peers or between learners and teachers, such as:

1. Speak clearly
2. Listen carefully
3. Ask questions
4. Show you’re interested - nod, smile, keep eye-contact
5. Say if you don’t understand something - use phrases like:
  - a. Sorry, could you repeat that?
  - b. I’m sorry, I don’t understand. Could you explain, please?
  - c. Could you speak more slowly/loudly, please?
6. Wait for your turn to speak

These ‘ground rules’ can be made more meaningful to learners if they are decided together as a whole class.

### Storytelling

For promoting communication in the classroom, storytelling is a useful method that can be exploited in numerous ways. For example, introducing young learners to greetings, making polite requests or asking for permission. The context provided by a well-chosen story can help convey the meaning of useful phrases. Further questions can establish the situations in which they are used, supporting the child’s developing awareness of language function and register.


Primary learners could also practise retelling the story to develop their communication skills. By adding a self- and peer-assessment element to this activity, learners are more motivated to retell the story accurately and clearly. This type of assessment can also help to develop receptive skills and learner independence. The success of this approach depends upon the establishment of clear, appropriate and achievable success criteria and the ability to review learner output. The ability to record and listen back to their answers using digital tools (e.g. tablets) can support this.

## Activity card idea

Try out this activity from our Young Learners activity card pack (page 42). When reviewing vocabulary, swap the roles of teacher and learner. Pretend you don't understand some of the words and invite learners to explain them to you using different words, drawings, or mime. This develops learners' strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns. Download this and other activity cards at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://www.cambridge.org/clcf).

### Communication

Facilitating interactions

 **Using strategies for overcoming language gaps and communication breakdowns**

"I don't understand!"

When reviewing or revisiting vocabulary with learners, swap the roles of teacher and learner by pretending that you don't understand some of the vocabulary and inviting learners to explain it to you using different words, drawings or mime.

**Teaching online?**

Encourage learners to use the 'raise hand' feature in your online classroom when they want to take the role of teacher and explain the vocabulary to you.

Young

### Over to you ...

1. Choose one of the example activities in this section and try it out with your class.
  - When planning the activity, you may find the guidance in the 'General suggestions' section helpful.
  - Following the activity, reflect on what worked well and what could be improved next time, particularly focusing on the extent to which learners were able to develop their communication thinking skills.
2. Using your course book or other materials, choose a few activities that you may be using in your classes in the next week or so. Consider how you could adapt these activities to have a greater focus on communication skills.

## Secondary

Motivation is a key factor for engaging learners in communicative activities at this age, and it will be important for activities to have a clear communicative purpose and include topics that are of interest to them. One way of doing this is to create situations in which learners can be successful.

### **Recognising and praising good learner-generated models**

Teachers should monitor carefully during communicative tasks in order to pick up on good learner-generated models which can be acknowledged and shared to the benefit of the broader class. In addition, teachers can highlight examples of unprompted effective communication strategy use in the classroom – these are often both meaningful and memorable for learners. However, care should be taken with teens who may be more self-conscious.

For example, in a discussion about holidays, a learner who is observed to be actively listening and developing conversation with a classmate by asking further questions about their trip could be praised by the teacher. The experience could then be discussed (use questions such as ‘What did they find out?’, ‘Was it interesting?’), shared with the class and extended to a whole class activity.

### **Noticing communication strategies**

Learners should be encouraged to notice communication strategies used in a variety of texts as a way of developing them in their own speaking and writing. Ideally teachers should choose texts that contain multiple examples of the strategy being focused on. They should ensure the texts are appropriate for the learners’ age, interests and language level so learners can focus on the strategy rather than struggling with trying to understand meaning. Here is an example:

- Learners work towards an understanding of appropriate forms of address and salutations in emails by analysing a selection of models. This analysis could involve reading tasks that focus on the relationship between writer and recipient, the email’s purpose and the phrases used.
- Learners then write their own emails based on what they have learnt from the models.

### **Using recordings to highlight progress**

A motivating sense of progress can be provided by encouraging learners to record themselves (if comfortable doing so) during tasks. Learners could be asked to speak about a topic, for example, their hobby, for a particular length of time with suitable fluency, using fillers to reduce excessive pausing. Learners record themselves using a device (e.g. a smartphone), listen back and self-assess. After self-assessing their performance, teachers could get learners to identify areas of focus before repeating the process. Finally, they prompt learners to reflect on their performance with questions such as the following:

1. What were you happy with?
2. What difficulties did you face?
3. How did you overcome these?



As an extension, learners could then re-record themselves to build on weaker areas. Learners could also engage in peer-assessment based on the recordings. Encouraging learners to share and offer each other advice provides the basis for further speaking and language practice while establishing a supportive learning environment.

## Activity card idea

Take a look at this activity from our Teenage Learners activity card pack (page 44). Write the structure “Make a point – Explain why – Give an example” on the board. When learners give feedback on a text, topic, or task, allow them time to prepare their ideas. Then, nominate learners to present their answers, making sure they include a clear point, their explanation, and an example. This helps learners practise using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency. Download this and other activity cards at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://www.cambridge.org/clcf).

### Communication

Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity

  Using appropriate language and presentation styles with confidence and fluency

Point – explain – example

Write on the board: ‘Make a point; Explain why; Give an example’. When eliciting feedback from learners on a text, topic or task, give them a few minutes to prepare one or two points they want to make. Then, nominate learners to stand up and ‘present’ their answers/arguments including a point, their explanation and an example.

Teaching online?

After each learner has presented, invite the rest of the group to use the chat box feature to comment on what they thought was the point, the explanation and the example.

Teen

### Over to you ...

1. Choose one of the example activities in this section and try it out with your class.
  - When planning the activity, you may find the guidance in the ‘General suggestions’ section helpful.
  - Following the activity, reflect on what worked well and what could be improved next time, particularly focusing on the extent to which learners were able to develop their communication skills.
2. Using your course book or other materials, choose a few activities that you may be using in your classes in the next week or so. Consider how you could adapt these activities to have a greater focus on communication skills.

## Adult

Adults often have a high level of communicative competence in their first language and experience of communicating effectively in a broad range of situations, and therefore bring this experience with them to the language classroom. This can mean that they may have more to learn from one another.

### Sharing effective communication strategies

By carefully monitoring as learners participate in communicative tasks, e.g. in a role-play of a meeting, the teacher may be able to identify and facilitate the sharing of effective communication strategies, e.g. ways of making suggestions and offering opinions, among learners.

### Noticing communication strategies

Teachers should help learners to notice communication strategies being used in context. Potentially useful models exist wherever there is communication, so there should be no shortage of choice. Potential sources include:

- Course book texts and recordings
- Films and television
- Podcasts, radio and audio books
- Real-world audio recordings
- Stories and books (digital or print)
- Naturally occurring learner interaction
- The teacher

Useful communication strategies can be highlighted with effective questioning. For example, a teacher helping adults on an English-for-work course may pause a recording of an interview to ask about the impression given by an interviewee who is looking downwards and avoiding eye contact with an interviewer (being prepared to highlight cultural differences). Additionally, teachers can ask questions or design tasks that lead learners to notice the strategy, the way it is used and its effect.

### Providing useful phrases and language structures

Teachers should provide any phrases or language structures needed to help learners manage conversations. This language can be identified when first modelled, practised and then displayed (on the board or on worksheets – see example below), so it can be referred to, if necessary, during an activity. As learners will naturally stop referring to it when they no longer need to, this is a simple way of ensuring individual learners receive the levels of support and challenge they need.

Language for signposting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Firstly,</li><li>• First of all,</li><li>• Secondly,</li><li>• Furthermore,</li><li>• Another point is ...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It's important to remember that ...</li><li>• It is well known that ...</li><li>• In short,</li><li>• Finally,</li><li>• To summarise,</li><li>• In conclusion,</li></ul>

### Encouraging the use of communication strategies

Teachers should encourage the continued use of communication strategies by directing praise and encouragement towards learners' attempts to use them (even if unsuccessful). They should also be specific in their praise and use this as an opportunity to reinforce the benefits and features of specific strategies, eliciting these from learners where possible and appropriate.

## Activity card idea

Why not try out this activity from our Adult Learners activity card pack (page 39)? When practising pronunciation of phrases and expressions, ask learners to say them with different emotions or intentions. For example, “Say it like you’re surprised, confused, or apologising” or “Say it like it’s a secret, a threat, or a promise.” This helps learners experiment with a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect. Download this and other activity cards at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://cambridge.org/clcf).

### Communication

Using appropriate language and register for context

Using a variety of language and communication strategies to achieve a desired effect

Say it like ... emotions

When practising pronunciation of phrases and expressions, ask learners to “Say it like you’re annoyed/upset/angry/surprised/confused” or “Say it like it’s a secret/a threat/a promise/an apology”, etc.

Teaching online?

Encourage learners to create audio recordings of particular phrases to share in a digital portfolio, or ask learners to choose an image to add audio to, using an app such as **Fotobabble**.

Adult

### Over to you ...

1. Choose one of the example activities in this section and try it out with your class.
  - When planning the activity, you may find the ‘General suggestions’ guidance above helpful.
  - Following the activity, reflect on what worked well and what could be improved next time, particularly focusing on the extent to which learners were able to develop their communication skills.
2. Using your course book or other materials, choose a few activities that you may be using in your classes in the next week or so. Consider how you could adapt these activities to have a greater focus on communication skills.

# Further reading

For more information on this topic, please see:

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2–27). London: Longman.

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Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 5–35.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*. Available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>

Dörnyei, Z. (1995). On the teachability of communication strategies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(1), 55–85.

Dörnyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1997). Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and taxonomies. *Language Learning*, 47(1), 173–210.

Giménez, J. (2023). *Teaching communication skills and competencies for the international workplace: A resource for teachers of English*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003270065>

Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the functions of language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Hymes, D. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Kellerman, E. (1991). Compensatory strategies in second language research: A critique, a revision, and some (non-) implications for the classroom, in R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Foreign/second language pedagogy research: A commemorative volume for Claus Færch*, (Multilingual matters). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Silver, J. (2020, November 30). *Cambridge Life Competencies: Communication—lesson plans*. World of Better Learning. <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2020/11/30/cambridge-life-competencies-communication-lesson-plans/>

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## Cambridge Life Competencies

You can find information about the other competencies and the foundation layers of the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://cambridge.org/clcf)

- ✓ Creative Thinking
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Learning to Learn
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Social Responsibilities
- ✓ Emotional Development
- ✓ Digital Literacy

Find out more at  
[cambridge.org/english](https://cambridge.org/english)

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*Where your world grows*