

Introduction to the CEFR

Introduction to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The overall aim of the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) is to provide objective criteria for describing and assessing language proficiency in an internationally comparable manner.

The Council of Europe's work on the definition of appropriate learning objectives for adult language learners dates back to the '70s. The influential *Threshold* series (J. A. van Ek and J. L. M. Trim, Cambridge University Press, 1991) provides a detailed description in functional, notional, grammatical, and sociocultural terms, of what a language user needs to be able to do in order to communicate effectively in the sort of situations commonly encountered in everyday life. Three levels of proficiency are identified, called Waystage,

Threshold, and Vantage (roughly corresponding to Elementary, Intermediate, and Upper Intermediate).

The *Threshold* series was followed in 2001 by the publication of the *Common European Framework of Reference*, which describes six levels of communicative ability in terms of competences or "can do" statements: A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Waystage), B1 (Threshold), B2 (Vantage), C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency), and C2 (Mastery). Based on the CEFR descriptors, the Council of Europe also developed the *European Language Portfolio*, a document that enables learners to assess their language ability and to keep an internationally recognized record of their language learning experience.

Four Corners Second Edition and the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR was used as a point of reference throughout the development of the *Four Corners Second Edition* series and informed the choice of language content and activity. The table below shows how *Four Corners Second Edition* correlates with the Council of Europe's levels and with some major international examinations.

<i>Four Corners Second Edition</i>	CEFR	Council of Europe	Cambridge ESOL	IELTS	TOEFL iBT	TOEIC
Level 1	A1/A2	Breakthrough				120+
Level 2	A2	Waystage	KET (Key English Test)	3.0		225+
Level 3	B1	Threshold	PET (Preliminary English Test)	3.5–4.5	57–86	550+
Level 4						

Sources:

<http://www.ielts-test-practice.com/ielts-scores.html>

http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/CEFR_Mapping_Study_Interim_Report.pdf

http://www.sprachenmarkt.de/fileadmin/sprachenmarkt/ets_images/TOEIC_Can-do-table_CEFR_2008.pdf

Four Corners Second Edition Level 1

Four Corners Second Edition Level 1 covers the CEFR competences for A1 and starts A2. The table below contains the general competences described in the CEFR self-assessment grid for these two levels.

		A1	A2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family, and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words, and very simple sentences, for example, on notices and posters or in catalogs.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday materials, such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, and timetables, and I can understand short, simple personal letters.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way, provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background, and my present or most recent job.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example, sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example, entering my name, nationality, and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example, thanking someone for something.

A strong focus on speaking characterizes *Four Corners Second Edition*. The speaking outcomes at the end of every lesson, which define objectives and allow teachers and students to assess progress, mirror the CEFR “can do” statements for this ability. The tables on pages xxxiv-xxxvii list the detailed speaking competences for A1, as well as some A2 competences, and show exactly where each CEFR “can do” statement is covered in the Student’s Book. The Listening, Reading, and Writing tables contain the same type of information for these abilities, and also include information on the Workbook contents. Further information on how *Four Corners Second Edition* correlates to the CEFR and an in-depth breakdown of Level 1 content by unit is available on the *Four Corners Second Edition* website.

Sources:
Breakthrough (Unpublished manuscript) J. L. M. Trim, University of Cambridge ESOL
http://www.englishprofile.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45:).
 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (2001) Council of Europe, Cambridge University Press.
 Council of Europe European Language portfolio (2000) Swiss National Foundation Project
<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/appendix2.pdf>).
Waystage 1990 (1991) J. A. Van Ek and J. L. M. Trim, Council of Europe, Cambridge University Press.

Speaking

A language user at A1 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Introduce someone and understand basic greetings and leave-taking expressions.	W	SB1A			
Ask how people are and react to news.					
Discuss numbers, quantities, costs, and times.			SB2B SB2Wu		SB4B SB4Wu
Ask and answer simple questions, and initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.		SB1B	SB2B	SB3B	
Ask and answer questions about themselves and other people, e.g., where they live, things they have, people they know.		SB1A SB1C SB1D SB1Wu	SB2A SB2C SB2D	SB3A SB3C SB3D	SB4C SB4D SB4Wu
Indicate time with such phrases as “next week,” “in November,” “three o’clock.”					SB4B SB4C SB4D SB4Wu
Describe himself or herself, what he or she does, where he or she lives.					SB4A

A language user at A2 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Handle very short social exchanges.					
Make and respond to invitations, suggestions, and apologies.					
Say what he or she likes and dislikes.					
Use simple, everyday, polite forms of greeting and address.					
Discuss what to do in the evening or on the weekend.					
Make and respond to suggestions.					
Agree and disagree with others.					
Ask and answer questions about habits and routines.					
Ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time.					SB4C SB4D SB4Wu

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
					SB10B	SB11B	
SB5B SB5Wu							
SB5B	SB6Wu		SB8A				
	SB6A						
					SB10A SB10C	SB11A	SB12A
		SB7A	SB8C SB8Wu				

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	SB6B			SB9B	SB10B	SB11B	SB12B
							SB12B
		SB7B SB7D SB7Wu	SB8Wu				
	SB6B			SB9B			
							SB12B
							SB12C
							SB12C
		SB7A SB7C					
SB5A SB5C SB5D	SB6C SB6D SB6Wu			SB9C SB9Wu			

(continued)

Speaking *(continued)*

A language user at A2 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Ask and answer questions about pastimes and past activities.					
Describe past activities and personal experiences.					
Ask for and give directions referring to a map or plan.					
Give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.					
Describe plans and arrangements.					
Give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.					
Indicate when he or she understands.					
Ask for clarification about key words.				SB3B	

W = Student's Book, Welcome unit SB1A = Student's Book, Unit 1, Lesson A Wu = Student's Book, *Wrap-up section*

Listening

A language user at A1 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type.		SB1B	SB2B SB2D	SB3B SB3D	SB4B
Understand numbers, prices, and times.			SB2B		SB4B
Understand questions addressed carefully and slowly to him or her.	This competence is practiced throughout the course.				
Understand instructions and follow short, simple directions.					

A language user at A2 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with everyday matters.					SB4D
Understand what is said to him or her in simple everyday conversation.					

W = Student's Book, Welcome unit SB1A = Student's Book, Unit 1, Lesson A

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
					SB10C SB10D	SB11A SB11C SB11D SB11Wu	
					SB10A SB10B SB10Wu	SB11B SB11Wu	
			SB8A SB8B				
				SB9A SB9D SB9Wu			SB12D
							SB12A
			SB8D				
					SB10B		

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SB5B	SB6B	SB7B	SB8B	SB9B			
SB5B							
			SB8B SB8D				

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SB5D	SB6D	SB7D	SB8D	SB9D	SB10B SB10D	SB11B SB11D	SB12B SB12D
			SB8C	SB9B	SB10B	SB11B	SB12B SB12C

Reading

A language user at A1 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Understand very short, simple texts, a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases.		SB1D WB1D	SB2D WB2D	SB3D	SB4D
Get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short, simple descriptions.		SB2Wu	SB2Wu	WB3D	WB4D
Understand short, simple messages on postcards.					
Follow short, simple written directions.					
Understand simple messages written by friends or colleagues about everyday situations (e.g., text messages, invitations).					
Understand simple forms well enough to give basic personal details.		SB1B	SB2B WB2A		
Understand information about people (age, place of residence, etc.) in newspaper articles and webpages.		SB1D	SB2D WB2D		SB4D

A language user at A2 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Understand short, simple personal letters, emails, and blogs about aspects of everyday life.					
Identify specific information in simpler written material, such as brochures, short newspaper articles, and webpages.					
Identify the most important information in advertisements in newspapers.					

W = Student's Book, Welcome unit **SB1A** = Student's Book, Unit 1, Lesson A **Wu** = Student's Book, *Wrap-up section*

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			WB8C				
SB5D SB5Wu WB5D	WB6D						
						SB11D	
			WB8D				
				SB9D			WB12D
	WB6A						

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				WB9D	SB10D SB10Wu WB10D	SB11D SB11Wu WB11D	
	SB6D SB6Wu	SB7D SB7Wu WB7D	SB8D SB8Wu				SB12D SB12Wu
			SB8A				

WB1A = Workbook, Unit 1A

Writing

A language user at A1 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Copy familiar words and short phrases.		WB1A WB1B WB1C WB1D	SB2A WB1A WB1B WB1C WB1D	WB1A WB1B WB1C WB1D	WB1A WB1B WB1C WB1D
Write sentences and simple phrases about himself or herself and others, for example, where they live and what they do.		SB1D WB1A WB1C SB1Wu	SB2D SB2Wu	SB3D SB3Wu	SB4D WB4A WB4C
Write name, nationality, address, etc., for example, on a hotel registration form.		SB1B WB1A	SB2B SB2D		
Write a short, simple postcard.					

A language user at A2 can:	W	1	2	3	4
Write about aspects of his or her everyday life (people, places, family, hobbies, job, school).					
Describe events, past activities, and personal experiences in simple sentences.					
Write very simple personal letters and emails, using simple expressions for greeting, addressing, asking, or thanking someone.					
Write a series of simple phrases linked with simple connectors, such as <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , and <i>because</i> .					

W = Student's Book, Welcome unit **SB1A** = Student's Book, Unit 1, Lesson A **Wu** = Student Book's, *Wrap-up section*

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
WB1A WB1B WB1C	WB1A WB1B WB1C	SB7C WB1A WB1C	WB1A WB1B	WB1C			
SB5D WB5C	SB6D SB6Wu WB6A	SB7Wu		SB9D		WB11A WB11C	
						SB11D	

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		SB7D	SB8D				
	SB6Wu		SB8Wu	SB9Wu	SB10D SB10Wu	SB11Wu	SB12Wu
				WB9A			SB12D WB12C
	WB6C						

WB1A = Workbook, Unit 1A