

Common European Framework of Reference

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard or guideline to describe achievements of learners of foreign language in an international comparable manner. It describes what language learners can do on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare your qualifications to other exams in other countries. CEFR divides language learners into three major categories (beginner, intermediate and advanced) which can additionally be divided into six levels (two levels for



each category): A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2:

These categories and levels describe what is the language learner supposed to be able to do in regards of reading, speaking, writing and of course listening. The table below provides you with a short description of each category and level.

The CEFR was put together by the Council of Europe to be used in Europe, but since its publication in 2001, the CEFR has been translated into 37 languages and its use has spread outside Europe, from Asia to Latin America, as an aid to defining levels for learning, teaching and assessment of foreign languages.

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

Division	Level	Description
Basic user	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.
Independent user	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.
Proficient user	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 more complex situations.

Source: Council of Europe / Conseil de l'Europe

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