



## Descriptions of learner levels

Council of Europe Level (Devon School level name)	What the student can do	Possible weaknesses	Examples of language typically studied at this level	Council of Europe level description	Approximate exam equivalent
<p><b>C2</b> Proficient user (Proficiency)</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Can participate effectively in social and work situations; able to take full part in practical and social conversations as well as technical discussions in their own field.</p> <p>Can cope with official, semi-official and casual verbal exchanges with a wide range of native speakers in a range of settings. Can appreciate connotation.</p> <p>Can express complex ideas well and can understand the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally or conceptually different from his/her own.</p> <p>Can enjoy TV/radio broadcasts &amp; films. Can understand most English dialects in face-to-face interaction.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can handle most reading &amp; writing tasks related to life roles: reading &amp; interpreting most non-simplified materials; interpreting routine charts, graphs, &amp; labels; filling out forms &amp; job applications.</p> <p>Can write organised, discursive essays with clearly expressed points of view, extended reasoning and adequate support/examples.</p>	<p>Weaknesses can be as varied as those of an educated native speaker.</p> <p>May lack confidence as well as vocabulary in unfamiliar, specialised areas.</p> <p>Obscurely-rooted idiomatic and metaphorical usage may sometimes cause problems.</p> <p>May miss precise meaning when key terms are used idiomatically, metaphorically, connotatively or when a less common cultural association needs to be made.</p> <p>May sometimes struggle with precise requirements of genre.</p>	<p>Passive voice verb patterns (e.g. He was widely reported as being NP) Common &amp; Fixed collocations (e.g. collective responsibility, collective unconscious) Modern &amp; topical phrases (e.g. joined-up thinking) Idiomatic phrases (e.g. salt of the earth) Metaphorical use (e.g. He was a shadow of his former self) Dependent prepositions (e.g. That reminds me of him; They specialise in domestic insurance) Ditransitive use (e.g. She read him the poem: She read the poem aloud to herself) Reflexive verbs (e.g. He contented himself) Reciprocal verbs (e.g. He fell out with her) Managing subordinate clauses Subjunctive forms (e.g. They insisted the car be moved) Detailed attention to register and modality (e.g. Well I suppose you could buy her a present, etc) Fronting (e.g. All week I've been waiting for these; Never have I seen such a mess, etc) Nominal relative clauses (e.g. What he did was unacceptable) Adverb placement (e.g. He slowly walked home vs He walked home slowly) Features of genre and style (e.g. literary use, poetic use, journalese etc)</p>	<p>Can understand virtually everything heard or read with ease.</p> <p>Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.</p> <p>Can express him/herself spontaneously, fluently and precisely; can express finer shades of meaning in ideas, arguments and descriptions.</p>	<p>CPE IELTS 8+ TOEFL iBT 112+ TOEIC 900 +</p>

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<p><b>C1</b> <b>Proficient user</b> (Advanced)</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Can function independently in survival, social and work situations; can clarify general meaning and communicate ideas even on less familiar topics.</p> <p>Can produce English stress, rhythm, intonation and features of connected speech.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can read and interpret non-simplified materials on everyday subjects and more specific subjects related to own field; can interpret routine charts, graphs, and labels; fill out forms and job applications.</p> <p>Can write reports and essays in a reasonable academic style related to their own specialist knowledge.</p> <p>Can draw on a broad passive vocabulary and use much of it readily, accurately and appropriately.</p> <p>Can understand nuanced differences in close synonyms and pick up on a significant amount of connotation.</p>	<p>May exhibit some hesitancy, uncertainty and strain in less familiar situations thus limiting the range of tasks that can be reliably performed.</p> <p>Errors may persist in less common or more complex structures.</p> <p>May miss meaning when key terms are used idiomatically, metaphorically, connotatively or when a cultural association needs to be made.</p> <p>Problems with the pronunciation of some unfamiliar words may occur but these are quickly learned.</p>	<p>Reporting with passive verbs (e.g. It is felt that...She is understood to have turned it down...etc)</p> <p>Non-literal phrasal verbs (e.g. The party went off well)</p> <p>Using auxiliaries to avoid repetition (e.g. He's not working now and I don't think he ever has)</p> <p>Use of auxiliaries for emphasis (e.g. She did do that very well); adding emphasis with cleft sentences (e.g. What she did was carry on; It was what she did that impressed me, etc)</p> <p>Verb patterns (e.g. I hate to tell you to stop having fun vs I hate telling you...)</p> <p>Mixed conditionals (e.g. I would be happier now, if I hadn't married him)</p> <p>Reduced infinitive responses (e.g. Have you done it yet? No, I'm just going to)</p> <p>Negative inversion (e.g. Nowhere will you find a kinder teacher etc)</p> <p>Discourse markers (e.g. As I was saying; To be quite honest, etc)</p> <p>Use of seem/appear</p> <p>Adjective order (e.g. A nice, old, Chinese, porcelain, flower vase)</p> <p>Adverbial position affecting comment/manner reading (e.g. She finished the job carefully vs Carefully she finished the job)</p> <p>Contrastive stress (e.g. He had been in trouble, she helped him)</p> <p>Idiomatic expressions</p>	<p>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.</p> <p>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.</p> <p>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.</p> <p>Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</p>	<p>CAE IELTS 7+ TOEFL iBT 100+ TOEIC 820 + BEC Higher</p>

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<p><b>B2</b> Independent user (Upper-intermediate)</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Can satisfy most survival needs and social demands. Has some ability to understand and communicate on the telephone on familiar topics and use language as part of normal professional duties.</p> <p>Can participate in conversations on a variety of topics and can elaborate ideas freely.</p> <p>Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers.</p> <p>Understanding of English pronunciation at sentence level (stress, rhythm, intonation, connected speech) an aid to listening comprehension.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can read and interpret simplified and some non-simplified materials on familiar topics.</p> <p>Can interpret simple charts, graphs, and labels and complete a simple order form; fill out information forms and job applications.</p> <p>Can write short personal notes, letters and emails and simpler discursive essays.</p>	<p>Errors occur in low-frequency and highly complex structures.</p> <p>Other structural inaccuracies occur but are rarely the cause of serious misunderstanding.</p> <p>Sentence level pronunciation (rhythm, stress and intonation) may still show influence of first language but this will not impede understanding. Some problems with particular phonemes and clusters may persist.</p>	<p>Combined use of narrative tenses Will/going/shall to for predictions 'Future' perfect/prefect progressive (e.g. will have fallen/will have been falling) Negative question forms (e.g. Didn't we discuss this last week?) Non-defining relative clauses Use of participles: after nouns (e.g. The painting stolen last week); in cause and effect (e.g. Being generous, he bought her a present). Be used to/get used to Use of modals in the past (e.g. he needn't have done it, she should have got up earlier etc) Third conditional (e.g. I wouldn't have been late, if my alarm clock had gone off) Indirect requests (e.g. I wonder whether you'd be able to help me on Saturday; Do you mind very much if I ask you not to do that?) Non-literal phrasal verbs Idiomatic expressions Adverbs of comment Modifying adjectives/adverbs Adverb and adjective collocations (e.g. desperately unlucky, seriously rich) Each/every/all</p>	<p>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</p> <p>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>FCE IELTS 6+ TOEFL iBT 80+ TOEIC 730 + BEC Vantage</p>

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<p><b>B1</b> <b>Independent user</b> (Intermediate)</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Can satisfy basic survival needs and limited social demands; can follow spoken directions in familiar contexts.</p> <p>Is able to read intentions more reliably than a Basic User, interpreting unfamiliar phrases with some known vocabulary.</p> <p>Can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic material on familiar subjects.</p> <p>Can write messages or notes related to basic needs. Can fill out basic forms and job applications.</p> <p>Can follow basic written instructions and diagrams especially if they can be clarified orally.</p>	<p>Simple structures and basic grammatical relations are typically controlled; however, there are areas of weakness these may be simple markings such as plurals, articles, linking words, and negatives or more complex structures such as tense/aspect usage, case morphology, passive constructions, word order, and the use of dependent clauses.</p>	<p>Passive voice with perfect and progressive aspect (e.g. It has been checked thoroughly etc) Modals of permission Modals to express probability/possibility in the present and past (e.g. She could be a doctor, She must have been tired etc) Defining relative clauses (e.g. The teacher (who/that) I met yesterday was very kind) Verb patterns (e.g. I need to decide what to do; I decided to stop smoking to get fit) Indirect question forms (e.g. I wonder if you could tell me...) Question tags (e.g. It's cold, isn't it?; He didn't make it, did he?) Will/shall/should (to make offers) Reported speech (e.g. She said she had been to the hospital, etc) Reporting verbs (ask, tell, admit, explain etc) Time phrases with for, during, while, since etc Use of too/either/neither Enriching description with adjectives and comparison (e.g. It's as tall as a door, etc)</p>	<p>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</p>	<p>PET IELTS 5+ TOEFL iBT 60+ TOEIC 630 + BEC Preliminary</p>

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<p><b>A2</b> Basic user (Pre-intermediate)</p>	<p><b>Speaking/Listening:</b> Can satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands. Speaking ability may extend beyond immediate survival needs.</p> <p>Can understand simple phrases easily and some new simple phrases containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly or with some repetition.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can read and interpret simple material on familiar topics.</p> <p>Can read and interpret simple directions, schedules, signs, maps, and menus.</p> <p>Can fill out forms requiring basic personal information and write short, simple notes and messages based on familiar situations.</p>	<p>Can use the more common forms of verb tenses but may make frequent errors in formation and selection.</p> <p>Accurate use of basic grammar possible but not always consistent.</p> <p>Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Speech will usually be laboured.</p> <p>Ability to describe and give precise information is limited.</p> <p>Pronunciation may only be understandable to natives used to dealing with non-native speakers. Has difficulty in producing certain phonemes or clusters. Has to repeat utterances to be understood by native speakers.</p>	<p>Past progressive Present progressive (for future) Present perfect simple (for recent actions) Present perfect progressive Passive voice First and second conditional Common verb patterns (e.g. want to play, like playing) Would like to Must/have to/should/might/may Phrasal verbs with literal meaning Comparative and superlative adjectives More question forms (e.g. What's it like? How was it?) Adverbial time clauses (e.g. As soon as, before, etc) Adverbs of manner Broader vocabulary fields (e.g. music, towns, health)</p>	<p>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, and employment).</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.</p> <p>Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</p>	<p>KET IELTS 4+ TOEFL iBT 40+ TOEIC 450 +</p>

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<p><b>A1</b> <b>Basic user</b> (Elementary)</p>	<p><b>Listening/Speaking:</b> Can usually cope with predictable, simple, personal needs: Greetings, introductions, exchanging personal information in familiar contexts.</p> <p>Simple spoken communication possible using basic phrases and sentences. Can make themselves understood to native speakers (especially those who are in regular contact with non-native speakers) despite the lack of precision in the information conveyed.</p> <p><b>Reading/Writing:</b> Can read graded texts.</p> <p>Can write simple phrases related to immediate needs and basic personal information in simplified forms.</p>	<p>Structural accuracy is likely to be very inconsistent or very limited. Most utterances will contain structural errors and errors in basic grammatical relations.</p> <p>Vocabulary range is very narrow and characteristically does not include modifiers. Vocabulary use is often very imprecise.</p> <p>Can only speak with great difficulty in freer use.</p> <p>Pronunciation, stress, and intonation are generally poor, and strongly influenced by first language.</p>	<p>Present simple (including question and negative forms) Past simple (regular verbs and common irregular verbs) Present progressive Present perfect simple (for experience) Will/going to (for future) Infinitive of purpose Can/can't There is/are Question forms How many/much Some/any/much/many This/that/these/those Time expressions Prepositions of place Common adjectives and adverbs Common social expressions Common vocabulary fields (e.g. family, rooms, countries, jobs, food, clothes, weather etc)</p>	<p>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</p>	<p>IELTS 3+ TOEFL iBT 20+ TOEIC 280 +</p>