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## Europe and the Common European Framework Lecture notes

Last updated 5 March 2010

The main reference is [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp). From here you can get most of the documents free of charge.

The most useful part is the self-assessment grid. Because this seems to be hard to find, and even harder to see on one page I have appended it at the end. The most convenient summary can be found in Little 2006.

### A. Introduction

Europe, from the 1970s onwards has been seeing a great surge of interest in bilingual education. There is a breakout from just considering the Canadian immersion work, (which has been pioneering and exemplary) and there is now a distinctive European stream of research and experience. With it has come new Journals, such as The International Journal of Bilingualism; The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism etc. Even more interesting from our viewpoint is the development of the Common European Framework of Reference.

The details will be presented below. But what attracts me to it is that it is extremely well thought through system of language scales. I like the way it had five major skills not four. I like the way it expands into incredible detail and becomes very practical - a guide to what a learner should learn or a teacher should teach. The detail is nicely balanced by the summary, so the user can apply the desired level of detail. I like the way it can function as reference levels which can be used to evaluate any aspect of language. And I like it because it can be adapted to consider diglossia (more below).

One tool many of us have used to help us learn a language is a language grid - a list of levels of attainment. There are many different language grids which give some kind of progression from absolute beginner to native speaker. Most are designed for written languages.

The Common European Framework of Reference, the CEFR is relatively new. It can be summarised in a page (see Appendix) and used in its expanded form of over 100 pages. It is more thorough and aims to be more comprehensive than other scales. It is being used across Europe, and by many Universities in Canada and America. It is very broad and comprehensive in terms of language skills, and also covers learning culture.

The material is available free on the web, in many languages (including English German and French) and adapted for the language been scaled. The end product in terms of assessment is actually three products, though only the first one is of interest to us at this point.

1. A '**language passport**' - a short document with levels for the various skills, starting with five scores for the five basic skills, (Reading, Writing, Listening, Spoken Interaction, and Spoken Production). In the expanded form each skill and level is broken down into many smaller skills and situations and abilities, and these details and scores can be provided as needed. The free testing side is handled by a tool called Dialang. If you go to [www.dialang.org](http://www.dialang.org) you can download and install a small program, which, with internet access, will test and rate you according to the CEFR framework. Over ten languages are available. The one for French rates you for reading, writing, listening, grammar, and vocabulary, and gives constructive advice and feedback.

2. '**My language autobiography**' describing the language backgrounds of the student, and their language activities in the family and the community. In this way there is emphasis on what can be done outside the classroom.

3. A **language portfolio/dossier**, which is samples of work which can be shown to others. This could well include audio and video.

It is very interesting to me to see the French and the Germans leading the way in adopting the framework. Their culture centres for instance are actively describing the courses they offer in terms of the CEFR. France has developed official tests, the DELF for levels A1 to B2, with a DELF Junior version for young people. The DALF is a test of levels C1 and C2. Anyone who has the DALF is not required to pass any more French language tests for any French University.

The framework is particularly liberating in the way it separates five skills and allows someone to self-assess where they are to a reasonable level of precision. Then, because the material has ample expansion of these skills, smaller specific language goals can be identified. Anyone planning a language program will find in this framework a wealth of ideas which are well organised and arranged, with progressions of difficulty clearly described for many aspects of language. Reporting attainment is also easy, because as well as the global score and the five scores for the five skills, each skill is further broken down into smaller sub-skills. You can use it with as much detail as you want.

Institutions such as government culture centres can test according to these levels, but the framework is designed for self-testing and measuring small steps of progress, according to clearly set language learning objectives. This point is important. Most adults, given accurate descriptions of a language skill, can accurately assess their own ability. Therefore formal extensive and comprehensive language testing is probably not needed for gauging language progress, though the examinations may be convenient objective profile statements of current ability. The main exception is perhaps pronunciation, because it is often difficult to hear one's own mistakes, and even more difficult to diagnose erratic errors.

At this point, one more technical word will help us. People who speak Swiss German, when asked how many languages they speak are often at a loss to reply. Does Swiss German count as one language and High German as another? All Swiss-Germans learn High German at school and are usually fluent in both. In the previous article I explained that Arabic exists in two basic forms, the high form, the classicals, and the low form, the dialects. **When linguists want to count how many forms people know, they call them varieties.** Thus, a Swiss-German who is fluent in French and English is described as being fluent in four varieties.

To continue the discussion of the CEFR. The CEFR is not just a grid (passport), biography, and portfolio. There is an extensive philosophy behind it. Firstly, it is rooted in the European political scene, where English dominates, and yet there is a need to promote and strengthen linguistic diversity. As part of citizenship in Europe, people should be expected to know at least two or three language varieties.

Secondly and more of interest to us, the concept of **plurilingualism** has been developed. Though the word is a mouthful, it is a very loaded word with a specific approach to what being a bilingual actually means in practice.

Traditionally, until about 20 years ago, the goal of learning a second language was to learn it so well that you could pass as a native speaker of the second language, and do everything in the second language as well as you could do it in the first language. It was expected that you would master

your native language and go on to master the second one. This can be illustrated if we draw a series of tables.

NB: the letters indicate different domains in which language is used. They do not indicate competence level.

L1
H
G
F
E
D
C
B
A

L1 (language 1)	L2 (language 2)
H	H
G	G
F	F
E	E
D	D
C	C
B	B
A	A

Table 1 shows the monolingual individual who in all areas of life, from A to H, can function totally and well in their only language. Table 2 shows the ideal bilingual, totally and equally at home in all linguistic situations in both languages.

The reality is that most bilinguals, even those regarded as the best examples, often have gaps in the second language, and even worse some would say, have gaps in the first language. This is illustrated in Table 3. A good example of a gap might be the language of talking to babies – this is rarely learned in both languages. Another example is when a professional subject is studied in L2, it can happen that L2 becomes stronger than L1 for that subject.

Table 3 bilingualism in reality ie "plurilingualism"	
L1	L2
	H
G	
F	F
	E
D	
C	
B	B
A	

The situation gets even more complicated when classical and dialect are added to the mixture. The point is, that **gaps in a language, even gaps in L1, are normal. Plurilingualism** explicitly recognises this and combines it with the philosophy or attitude that the individual needs to take charge of their language learning, and that most individuals will learn the language they need in order to do or achieve something they want. The plurilingual individual has a range of language skills, like a toolbox, which they draw on for a specific need. This fits well with the classical-dialect reality of the arab world. Arabs will sometimes use classical, sometimes use dialect, and sometimes use a foreign language. Sometimes they will mix classical and dialect, and other times they will mix dialect and one or more foreign languages, and they will do this mixing with skill.

The CEFR framework for learners explicitly works on the assumptions that **mistakes are normal** and that the most important goal is adequate communication. Therefore learners, for a time may be permitted to use simplified grammar, approximate pronunciation, and language mixing (code switching) if this helps to maintain the continuity and flow of communication.

At this point, if you have not already done so, I suggest you read the summary of the CEFR presented in the appendix, and if you know more than one language or language variety, score yourself for them. Get someone who knows you well to score you and see how well you agree. Educated native speakers of English will be C1 for all five skills. I say educated, because one of the unexpected applications of this framework has been towards helping native speakers improve their first language, and only the educated can achieve C1. French will give you five scores. Dialect refers to the two speaking skills and one listening. Classical could be all five, but for some could be just listening and reading, making a short speech in classical, and writing a simple letter.

Then I suggest you ask yourself where you want to be, and consider your local opportunities for making progress. You might want to download the detailed version, and find the skills and subskills you want to improve, and use the

framework as a guide to planning your language learning program. The CEFR was designed from the beginning to be a useful tool for learners to use, therefore, while there is as much detail as you want, it is not usually very difficult material.

#### The time element and reasonable general goals

It is generally reckoned that around 1200 hours of work is needed to go from zero to B2 in a language related to one's own. I have seen ordinary learners do this in nine months in French, studying intensively. Classical Arabic can take up to seven times longer – over 8000 hours. I have not seen any published estimates for learning an Arabic dialect, with basic reading and writing skills in classical. My estimate is 1000-2000 hours for the average learner who finds languages difficult and whose main skill is the ability to slog. Compare this with the work of (Jenkins 2000) etc on the pronunciation core. Her work is applicable up to B2 and maybe C1, but the implication is that C2 is the educated native speaker in all respects.

There is also the difference between regular work on a language for a few hours, and intensive stages. Probably intensive stages are more cost effective. But, work on students in immersion schools (where the hours logged in the language are high) has shown that by simple exposure, students do not necessarily improve. In particular, active production is needed as well as reception. One reason for this may be the 'plateau' effect - when students get to a reasonably competent level, they get by, and do often flatten out in their language ability and do not improve. Plateaus continue until active steps are taken to notice and systematically correct the errors.

#### B. Notes from various authors

**Byram 1997:239.** "Learning a foreign language, like any other social activity, has to be understood in its context, and plans and proposals for change made accordingly. ...

1. To learn French in anglophone Canada is a different experience to learning it in the United Kingdom, for example, since the political and social relationships between the communities of the learners and of the target language are radically different."
2. "There are two contrasting socio-political forces." The political will for economic interdependence and social cohesion ie European citizenship contrasted with regional cultures and identities. The tension is between social cohesion versus nationalism.
3. Third element: mobility. The EU has now, in theory, established equivalencies for qualifications based partly on what one is entitled to do with the qualification eg if a bachelors and teaching certificate are required for Britain, then with those, in theory, a British teacher can apply for jobs anywhere in Europe.

**L. King**, p25. In Europe at least (though as King points out, not in UK), there is a common thread of "foreign language capability as a precondition of citizenship.". [King explains how in current Department of Education thinking, topics such as globalisation, information etc, are well studied and assessed, without mentioning communication or language. "In the European context this is unthinkable - since a basis of the 'learning society' is multilingual competence". p25b. In other words, when the Foreign Office views the world, Foreign Languages are not given importance.

See the CEFR grid. Score yourselves!

### Council 2001

1. There was therefore a clear need to define objectives, bases on clear knowledge and specification of: What language? What competences and skills? How should it be taught/learned? Measurement scales Realistic expectations => a common European framework of reference that is detailed, encourages reflection, is workable, and is thorough.

### 2. The Common European Framework (Council ch 1)

Provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks etc across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. p1.

Based on the concepts of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, explained later.

CEF - planning of training programmes  
- planning of exams  
- guide for self-directed learning

### 3. Overall CEFR objectives

**Comprehensive** (thorough) ie specify as full a range as possible of language knowledge, skills and use. It should provide a series of reference points (levels, steps) by which progress in learning can be callibrated. It involves more than just linguistic knowledge or practice.

**Transparent** ie clear, and readily available.

**Coherent** ie free from internal contradictions. All the parts fit together. (opposite: incoherent, ill, eg when you are coming out of an anaesthetic). When applied to educational systems, coherence implies that there is harmony between the components.

- \*\*identification of needs
- \*\*determination (deciding, specifying and writing) of objectives
- \*\*definition of content selection of or creation of material
- \*\*teaching and learning styles
- \*\* evaluation, testing, and assessment

This led to a handbook for teachers being produced. It is a manual, a reference source. It is designed to be the starting point for many possible solutions. Multipurpose, flexible, refinable, evolving, user friendly, and non-dogmatic.

### 4. The scales (Little 2006)

- a. The scales are multidimensional scales of communicative behaviour. But the scales should be used with other scales of linguistic competence, language quality (eg vocabulary range, accuracy, etc) and strategic scales (planning, monitoring, inferring, turn taking etc)
- b. The scales describe learning outcomes - they are not a teaching syllabus.
- c. The scales are not an alternative system of grading of school classes.
- d. The behavioural dimension of the highest levels implies maturity, general educational achievement, and professional experience.

### 5. Notes on the origins of the CEFR

- a. The Council of Europe was founded in 1949:
  - 1) to defend human rights,
  - 2) to defend parliamentary democracy and the rule of law,
  - 3) to develop agreements to standardise social and legal practices in the member states,
  - 4) to promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values.
- b. The promotion of these values requires a continual educational effort, in which the teaching and learning of languages plays an indispensable role. Language and civilisation.
- c. From the beginning, the idea of learning languages for purposes of communication generated two fundamental concerns:
  - 1) To analyse the needs of learners
  - 2) To describe the language they must learn in order to meet these needs.

- d. This led to:
- 1) needs analysis
  - 2) notional-functional approach
  - 3) the definition of a threshold level of communicative proficiency
  - 4) the elaboration and promotion of the concept of autonomy in foreign language learning. This is understood as (p176 top left) "the learner's capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate his or her own learning" which is seen as a prerequisite for success of a needs based approach to language learning.

## 6. Three groups of documents

- a. "My language autobiography", describing the language backgrounds of the student, and language activities in the family and the community. It is a record of what students can do with languages, especially outside the classroom.
- b. "My language passport". This is a short document that records what a student knows and can do with languages. It can be used for informal assessment, and for measuring progress, and as a tool for planning language learning.
- c. "My language portfolio/dossier". A personal portfolio where students put samples of work to show others what you can do in other languages.

## 7. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism (equally at home in both cultures) (Council p4, 43, 133-5, 168. Coste.)

- a. **Multilingualism** = the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of a number of languages in a given society. Attained by:
  - 1) simply diversifying the languages on offer in an education system
  - 2) encouraging people to learn more than one foreign language
  - 3) reducing the dominant position of English in international communication

Languages are just an addition, in a compartmentalised way, of competence to communicate in another language. Most bilinguals have gaps in both languages. The goal in multilingualism is to be perfect in two or more languages.

- b. **Plurilingualism** Recognises reality. Count how many varieties you know!! (Council p168. "Plurilingual and Pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent (member of society) has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of

distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw."). Hence, a complicated mixture.

This implies moving away from the L1/L2 balanced dichotomy. Bilingualism is just one particular case.

- 1) Emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands (home -> local society -> other peoples), **they do not keep the languages and cultures separate**, in strict mental boxes. Instead, they build up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes, and in which the **languages interrelate and interact**. In contrast, many monolinguals view code-switching as wrong.
- 2) In different situations, a person can flexibly call upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication. (p4). Code switching.
- 3) The aim of language education is profoundly modified. "It is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, [box of tools. cp a musician has a repertory - the pieces they know well and can perform at short notice] in which all linguistic abilities have a place".
- 4) Language learning is seen as a lifelong task.

## c. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism: Uneven and changing

Concept of profile. The profile can go up and down, and can change with time, and can include first language loss.

- 1) Learners generally achieve greater proficiency in one language than in the others
- 2) The profile of competences in one language is different from that in others
- 3) The pluricultural profile differs from the plurilingual profile. eg possible to know a culture well, but not the language, and vice versa. Imbalances are the norm. ie **gaps are normal**.

Multilingualism implies mastery, and stability, and little change. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism means a profile that is constantly changing.

Think. What happens if there is no new learning? Then the culture and language

changes, and the competence goes down therefore changes!

Over time, significant changes take place in the linguistic repertory. These changes can be due to the career path, family history, travel experience, reading, hobbies etc. All this increases the complexity of the experience of many cultures.

NB this does NOT mean instability, uncertainty, or lack of balance for the person concerned. In most cases it enhances awareness of identity. This is the idea that someone is as good as they need to be, and links in with World Englishes, and ESP.

**d. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism: differentiated competence allowing for language switching**

- 1) In applying the competence, the individual draws on their general language skills and knowledge in different ways. eg. The strategies used in carrying out tasks may vary with the language.
- 2) It does not consist in the simple addition of monolingual competences, but permits combinations and alternations of different kinds.
- 3) Frequently there is transfer of language learning strategies. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism means a better grasp of the parts and functions of language, so that people have developed language awareness and language learning skills. They may also have fossilised, be prejudiced against something different.

**e. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism: Partial competence**

- 1) Not so much a matter of being satisfied with the level achieved, but of viewing the partial proficiency as part of the Plurilingual and Pluricultural scene, therefore as enriching, adding to the plurilingual context.
- 2) Even though partial competence, it is still functional, with respect to specific limited objectives.

**f. Wider implications and developments**

- 1) Wider promotion of plurilingualism has run parallel with other significant developments:
  - a) Greater prominence given to regional and minority languages - resulting in raising of their status.

- b) High levels of migration have resulted in great changes in the linguistic profiles of most western European countries. Plurilingualism is now the inevitable consequence of large scale mobility of populations. It can happen that 80% of children starting school do not know English well enough to begin.
  - c) The support for plurilingualism is in part due to the dominance of English. There is a stronger commitment to diversity ie “making more languages available to learners, and recognising that different objectives may be appropriate for different learners and different languages” (p166a).
- 2) The Germans have expanded this framework. For levels C1 and C2 they have added a wealth of new descriptors that in principle could be extended and applied to other languages, but also draws strongly on non-language elements. This confirms that “the higher the level, the more specific, concrete and needs oriented learner expectations tend to be; and second, the higher the level, the more difficult it is to define level-specific linguistic resources” (p179a).
  - 3) The CEFR (and the preceding, ‘Threshold level’) was designed for adults. Yet, Europe is going in the direction of lower starting ages at least for L2. Hence, there are now various adaptations for children. The Irish experience for instance shows the development of standards for learners of a certain age, learning in a specific educational context.

**8. Action based. Competences**

The foundations of the framework are in a description of competences and knowledges (see below). What does that mean?

The basic starting point is that learners are social agents, members of society who have tasks to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. Account is taken of a whole range of resources and abilities.

**Competences** = general + specific language, ie the sum of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions.

**General competences:** not those specific to language, but are used, drawn upon for actions of all kinds.

**Communicative language competences:** those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means. Generally considered as:

**a. Linguistic**

Range and quality/precision, + cognitive organisation, + the way this knowledge is stored, + accessibility. Knowledge may be conscious, or not.

**b. Sociolinguistic**

Sensitivity to social conventions.

**c. Pragmatic**

ie savoir, savoir-etre, and savoir-faire.

eg a lecturer has general competences (ie non-language), about the subject, teaching skills etc, PLUS linguistic competences.

9. **Knowledge**

See Byram 1996: 242, Council 2001:11, and ch 5

**a. Skills and knowhow, savoir-faire.**

This combines the other three. The ability to get it done, to communicate.

**b. Declarative, ie savoirs.**

General cultural. From experience or formal learning. Shared knowledge. All human communication depends on it.

NB new knowledge is not simply added to the old, but is conditioned by previous knowledge, and both modifies the old and is in turn modified by the old.

**c. Existential competence savoir-être**

The sum of individual characteristics, personality traits, attitudes. Includes factors which are the product of acculturation, and can still be modified. Affective and cognitive. Affective implies emotions and attitudes including the ability to sympathise and empathise. Cognitive concerns thinking.

They have to be considered in language learning and teaching. Huge cultural differences in what is perceived of as polite, friendly etc.

**d. Ability to learn, savoir apprendre.**

This is independent of a specific foreign language but is strongly influenced by previous learning and previous learning experience. Can include features such as the willingness to take risks.

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**Brief description of levels**

**Elementary**

**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.

**Intermediate**

**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.

**Advanced**

**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.

**Next page: Self Assessment grid (Council 2001 p26-7)**

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Listening	I can recognise 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.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
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.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
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.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
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.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.