

The CEFR Global Scale

You will find the Global Scale is a useful starting point:

C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

Progressing through the CEFR levels

The CEFR helps us understand the different levels of language proficiency. It also helps us understand how learners progress through the levels.

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) – of which Cambridge English Language Assessment is a founding member – estimates that learners typically take the following guided learning hours to progress between levels. 'Guided learning hours' means time in lessons as well as tasks you set them to do. You will notice that it takes longer to progress a level as learners move up the scale. Of course, learners will vary in how long they take depending on many factors.

CEFR Level	Guided Learning Hours
C2	Approximately 1,000–1,200
C1	Approximately 700–800
B2	Approximately 500–600
B1	Approximately 350–400
A2	Approximately 180–200
A1	Approximately 90–100

This means that many learners will follow more than one course to progress from one level to the next. We can also use the '+' to indicate the top half of a level. For example, 'B1+' means the top half of the B1 range. You will find this convention followed on Cambridge course books.

We are also working on a project to define in more detail the linguistic knowledge typically mastered at each CEFR level – for English. This programme is called English Profile and there's more information on this later in this booklet. This more precise information helps teachers get a better idea of how to break down the learning for each CEFR level into different classes within their school or college.