

'Can do' statements

The CEFR describes specific performance abilities at each level using what are called 'can do' statements. The 'can do' statements describe what learners at each level are expected to do, by broad skill area.

There is, of course, a good degree of overlap between what learners are expected to be able to do in each skill at the different levels. As they go up through the levels, learners are expected to be able to do everything mentioned at all previous levels, and add new skills.

The following pages summarize the CEFR 'can do' statements for each level by skill.

Table 5: CEFR 'can do' statements by level and skill

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
... learners can				
Pre-A1	<p>recognize and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> everyday, familiar words in simple questions and answers when they are spoken slowly and clearly. numbers, prices, dates, and days of the week when spoken slowly and clearly in simple questions and answers. simple descriptions of rooms and familiar places with the help of pictures. simple factual information in short conversations. 	<p>read and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize familiar everyday words with the help of pictures. understand information about the days, times, and locations of events they are being invited to in short letters, cards, and emails. understand basic information such as menus with the help of pictures. understand simple personal letters, emails, and other short messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read aloud a text about an everyday situation so people can understand most of what they are saying. understand and reply to simple questions such as 'What is this?' and name some familiar people, objects, animals, and actions. give a basic description of a situation at home, at school, or in their free-time. talk about a picture story in simple words and phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spell a number of familiar words with the help of pictures. write some simple phrases and short sentences using the right word order. answer simple questions and give basic personal information about themselves and other people in writing.
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify when people give important and specific information, for example, about places, dates, and times. understand simple descriptions of rooms, familiar places, and objects with the help of pictures. understand important information about people, their likes and dislikes, and everyday activities in short conversations when speakers speak slowly and clearly. 	<p>read and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the main points of a short simple text given the help of pictures. short texts on a number of subjects of personal interest such as news, travel, and music, when they are written with simple words and supported by illustrations and pictures. simple messages sent via social media or email with details about what to do, and when and where to meet, for example. short, illustrated stories about everyday activities described in simple words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read aloud a short text based on a common situation using some English sounds and stress patterns clearly. answer questions on everyday topics with simple phrases and sentences. describe pictures of familiar scenes with simple phrases and sentences. tell simple stories using basic words and expressions to give information about the people and what they are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spell a number of familiar words with the help of pictures. recognize and use the correct word order in some simple phrases. give information using simple phrases and sentences about themselves and other people in writing. write simple messages, cards, or emails.

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
	... learners can			
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the most important information from short recordings when people are talking about familiar everyday situations. follow short conversations about people, their lives and daily routines, and what they do and don't like. understand basic details in descriptions of people, places, objects, and activities. 	<p>read and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand short, simple personal letters. understand short narratives and descriptions of people's lives and everyday situations. find factual information in short texts about familiar topics and situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read aloud a short text based on a common situation and pronounce familiar words and phrases quite clearly, and generally use the correct stress, rhythm, and intonation. answer a range of questions about everyday objects, places, and activities that people do. describe people, places, possessions, daily routines, and everyday activities that they can see in pictures and give their opinion about what they can see in simple terms. tell a very short story using a range of words and phrases in simple grammatical structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spell a range of words and phrases about basic and familiar situations correctly. use simple grammatical structures with some control. write short, simple stories based on pictures and using their own ideas. write notes, emails, and text messages to friends, family, and other people, for example, replying to questions, making or accepting invitations, and so on.
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follow the main points of extended discussions on everyday familiar topics. identify the most important information about people, places, objects, and activities when people are having everyday conversations on familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand descriptions of places, events, feelings, and people's opinions in a range of different types of texts, including short stories. find the key factual information in different sorts of short texts. understand letters, notes, messages, and emails sent by friends, family, and other people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follow the main points of extended discussions on everyday familiar topics. identify the most important information about people, places, objects, and activities when people are having everyday conversations on familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use in writing a range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. write sentences about familiar situations using the correct grammar. write detailed descriptions of people, places, objects, and activities in predictable situations. write and reply to personal letters and messages in good detail in an appropriate style.

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
	... learners can			
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the main ideas of complex and specialized conversations on a range of topics. understand in good detail what people say. follow extended talks and conversations on familiar topics, even when the arguments are relatively complex. follow radio and other recordings, and understand the main ideas on both concrete and abstract topics. Understand documentaries and identify the speaker's mood and opinions on the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize when a text provides factual information, and when it intends to convince or persuade the reader of something. use a variety of strategies to help understand a text, including using contextual clues to identify the main points and to check their own understanding. understand personal letters, emails, and other texts even when some colloquial or idiomatic language is used. recognize how texts are structured, for example, when they present contrasting arguments, offer problems and solutions, or deal with cause and effect. scan quickly through longer and more complex texts to find the most relevant details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take an active part in conversations on a wide range of topics, and easily understand detailed replies. use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly, and articulate individual sounds clearly so they are generally easy to understand. communicate the essential points on a range of familiar topics in a straightforward way. give detailed information and clear descriptions when comparing and contrasting pictures on a range of topics. express their viewpoint and develop arguments without searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a range of grammar structures accurately. spell with reasonable accuracy. write clear and detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to things they are interested in. write letters, texts, and emails that convey degrees of emotion, and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences and give their opinions on them. write essays which develop an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view, and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
... learners can				
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follow extended speech on a range of topics even when the information is not clearly presented. understand in good detail discussions and debates even when the topics are abstract, complex, or unfamiliar. understand talks and conversations that include idiomatic expressions. follow a wide range of recordings and identify both main and minor points of detail. understand the speakers' attitudes and opinions even when not mentioned explicitly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand in detail a wide range of long and complex texts. use and understand an extensive range of synonyms, other vocabulary options, and paraphrases. identify and understand implied and stated opinions, attitudes, and emotions in a range of different text types. both understand and also produce well-organized, coherent text using a variety of techniques. understand in detail complex texts on topics they are not so familiar with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use language flexibly and effectively in conversation, which includes being able to understand and use emotional, allusive, and joking language. articulate virtually all the sounds of English with good accuracy so everything they say is easily intelligible and sounds natural. use a broad range of vocabulary and demonstrate very good grammatical control that enable them to express themselves clearly. make detailed distinctions between ideas, concepts, and things that closely resemble one another when talking about topics based on pictures on a theme. give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points, and rounding off what they say with appropriate conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write with a high degree of grammatical accuracy. spell accurately. write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions, and imaginative texts in a natural style. express themselves in writing clearly and precisely in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively. write clear, well-structured essays on a range of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues.