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**9th East Asia New Directions in Language Assessment Conference**

## Fairer, Greener, Stronger: The Future of Language Assessment

**Fairer:** Equal access to quality education is a crucial driver of social and economic progress.

**Greener:** Calls on all individuals, institutions and governments to work together to reduce their impact on the environment.

**Stronger:** Building future-ready, shock-proof educational systems by designing testing systems that are adaptable and resilient.

Dec 10 & 11 - Online



**Early-bird registration: Until Oct 31; Regular registration: Nov 1-Dec 9**  
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Visit our website to find out more:  
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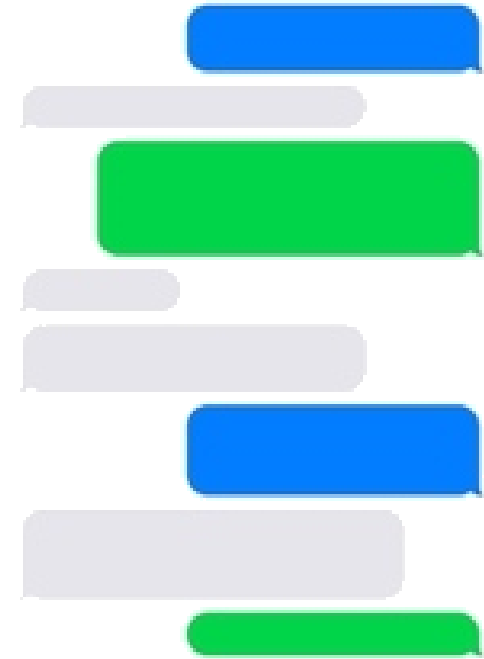
**East Asia Assessment Solutions Team**

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# **Linking reading test tasks to the CEFR**

Presenter: Jonathan Dixon

## A Few Webinar 'rules'



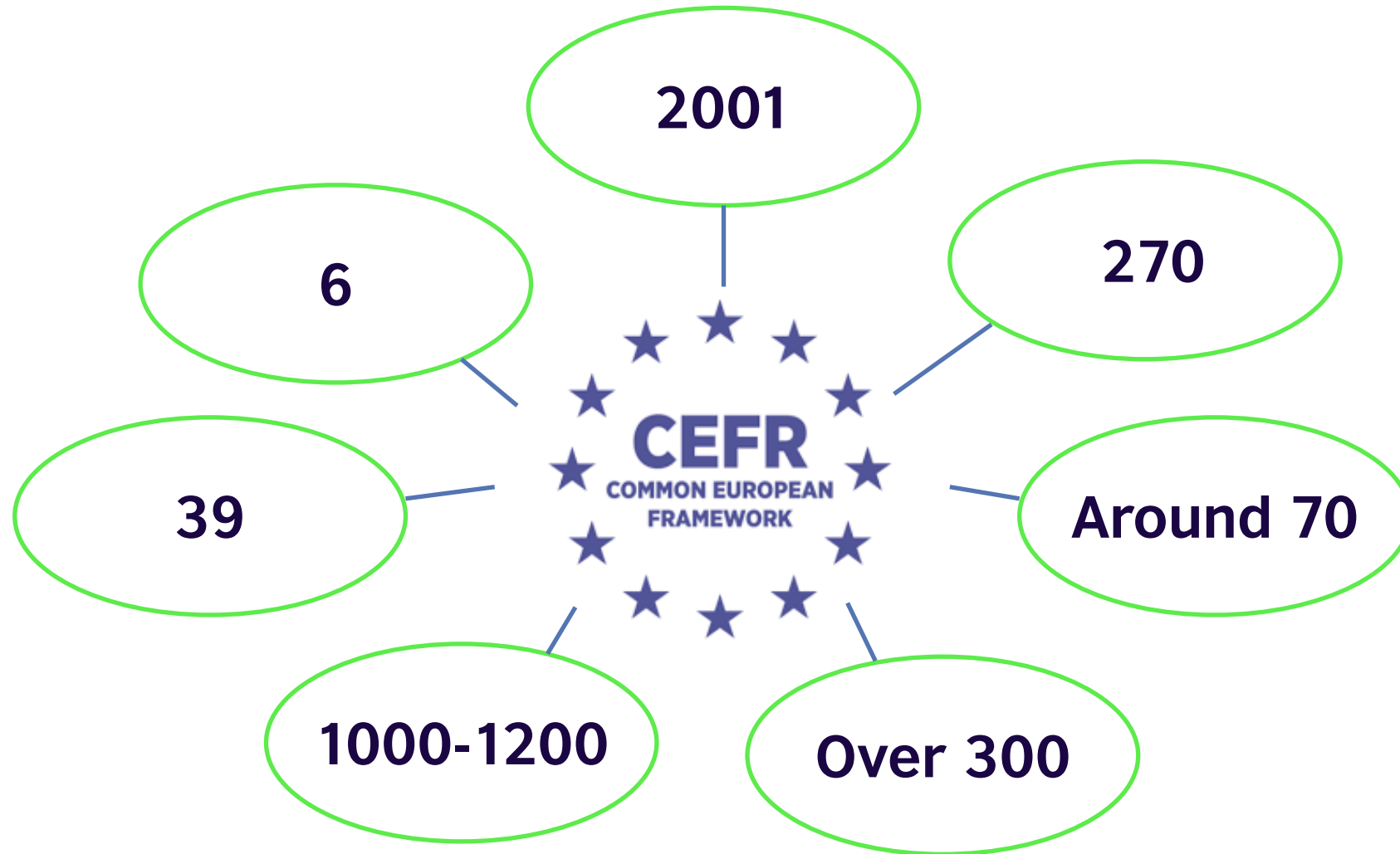
# Overview

*In this workshop, we will...*

- *reverse engineer reading test items*
- *gain insight into how to develop reading tests for your classrooms.*



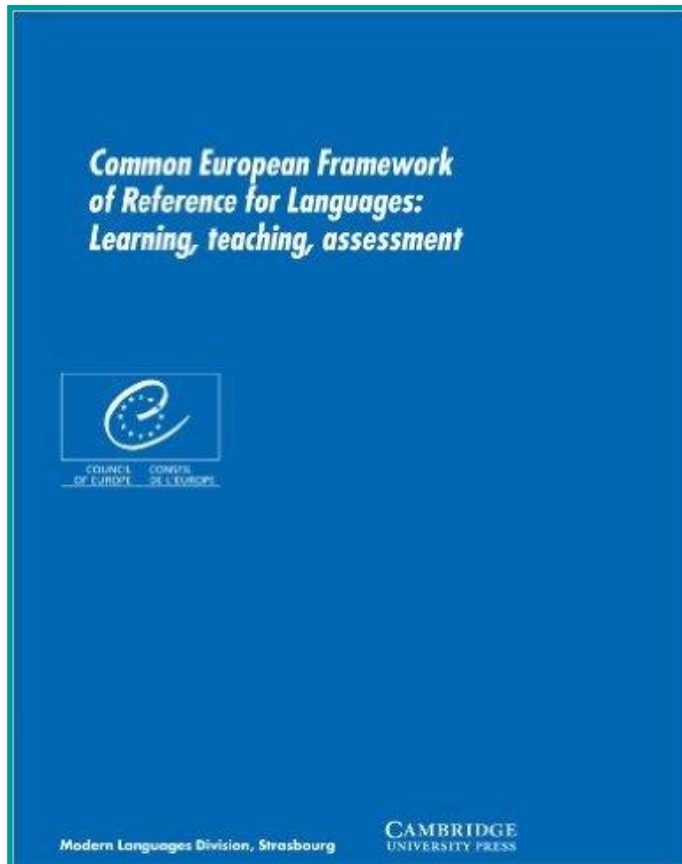
# How much do you know about the CEFR?



# What is the CEFR?



*A framework to describe what a person **can do** in a language as they progress from the lowest level to the highest.*



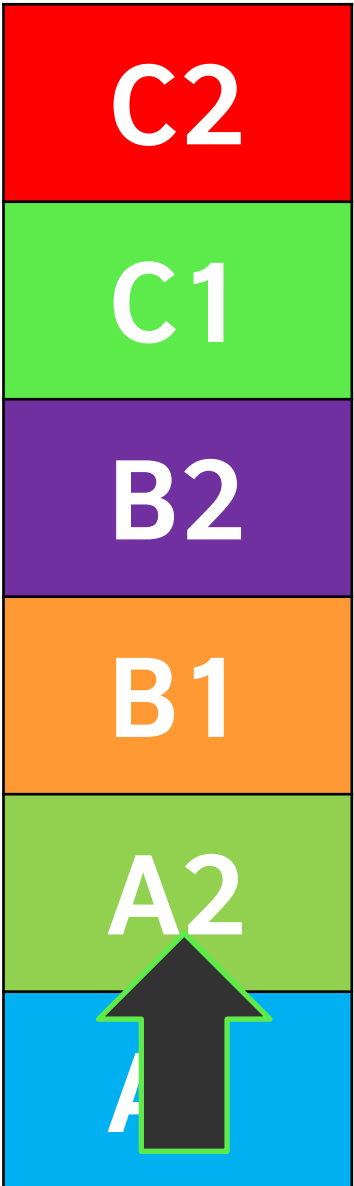
- The CEFR stands for The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- The descriptions of levels are skills-based, in the form of Can Do statements
- First published by the Council of Europe in 2001, the CEFR has been translated into 39 languages and is used all over the world
- All major international tests, textbooks, language syllabuses and language programmes claim a link between themselves and the CEFR



# Global Scale

C2	<p>Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can understand the <u>main ideas of complex text</u> on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</li><li>• Can interact with a <u>degree of fluency and spontaneity</u> that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible <u>without strain</u> for either party.</li><li>• Can <u>produce clear, detailed text</u> on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</li></ul>
C1	
B2	
B1	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can understand and use <u>familiar everyday expressions</u> and very <u>basic phrases</u> aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.</li><li>• Can introduce him/herself and others and <u>can ask and answer questions about personal details</u> such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.</li><li>• Can <u>interact in a simple way</u> provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</li></ul>
A2	
A1	

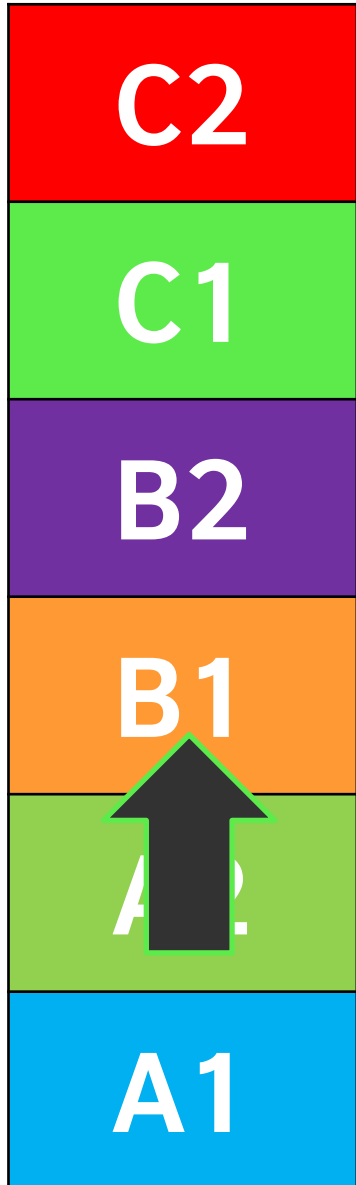
# Global Scale



- 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.

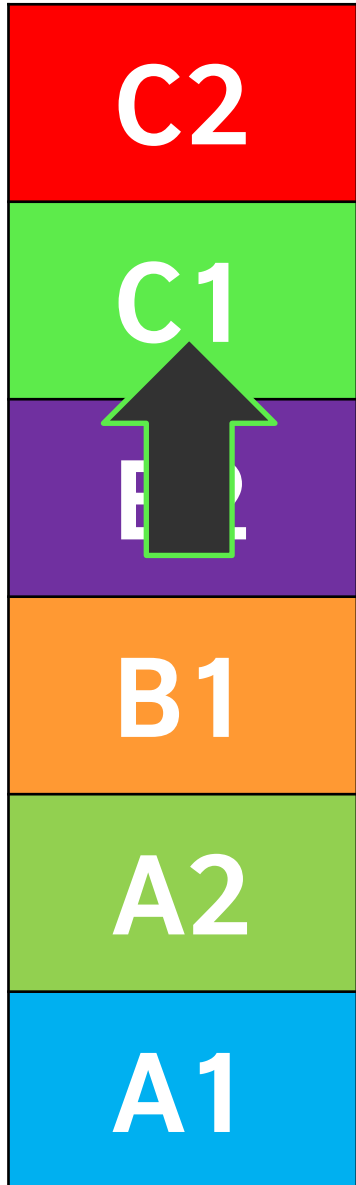


# Global Scale



- 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 and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

# Global Scale



- 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.

# CEFR Levels

*What language skills do you think these types of people need to have?*

*IELTS  
Examiner*

*Studying  
medicine at  
university*

*University  
prep  
course*

*Spousal  
visa for the  
UK*



# The CEFR, Assessments and Tests

## CEFR:

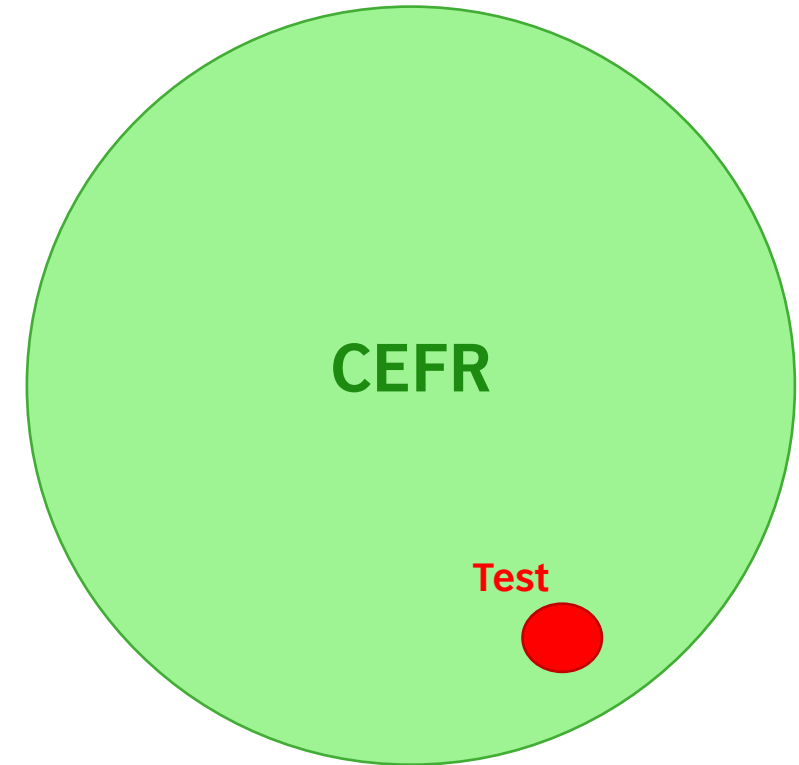
A comprehensive document that describes a learner's language ability as they progress from the lowest level to the highest.

## Assessment:

The act of collecting information and making judgments about a language learner's knowledge of a language and ability to use it.

## Test:

A procedure designed to elicit certain behaviour from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual.



# Tests at the British Council

The IELTS logo consists of the word "IELTS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font, with a small "TM" trademark symbol to the upper right.

- High stakes English language proficiency test
- Used by people who want to study/work in an English-speaking country
- **Linked to CEFR**



- Low-Medium stakes English language proficiency test
- Used by people who want to quickly know and certify their own English level
- **Aligned to CEFR**

The Aptis logo features the word "Aptis" in a large, red, sans-serif font. Below it, the tagline "Forward thinking English testing" is written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.

- Low-Medium stakes English language proficiency test
- Used by schools/companies to measure the English of their students/employees
- **Based on the CEFR**

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# Why link tests to the CEFR?



## FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

- *Deeper understanding of their own English proficiency*
- *Helps learners choose suitable learning plan/materials at the right level*

## FOR TEACHERS

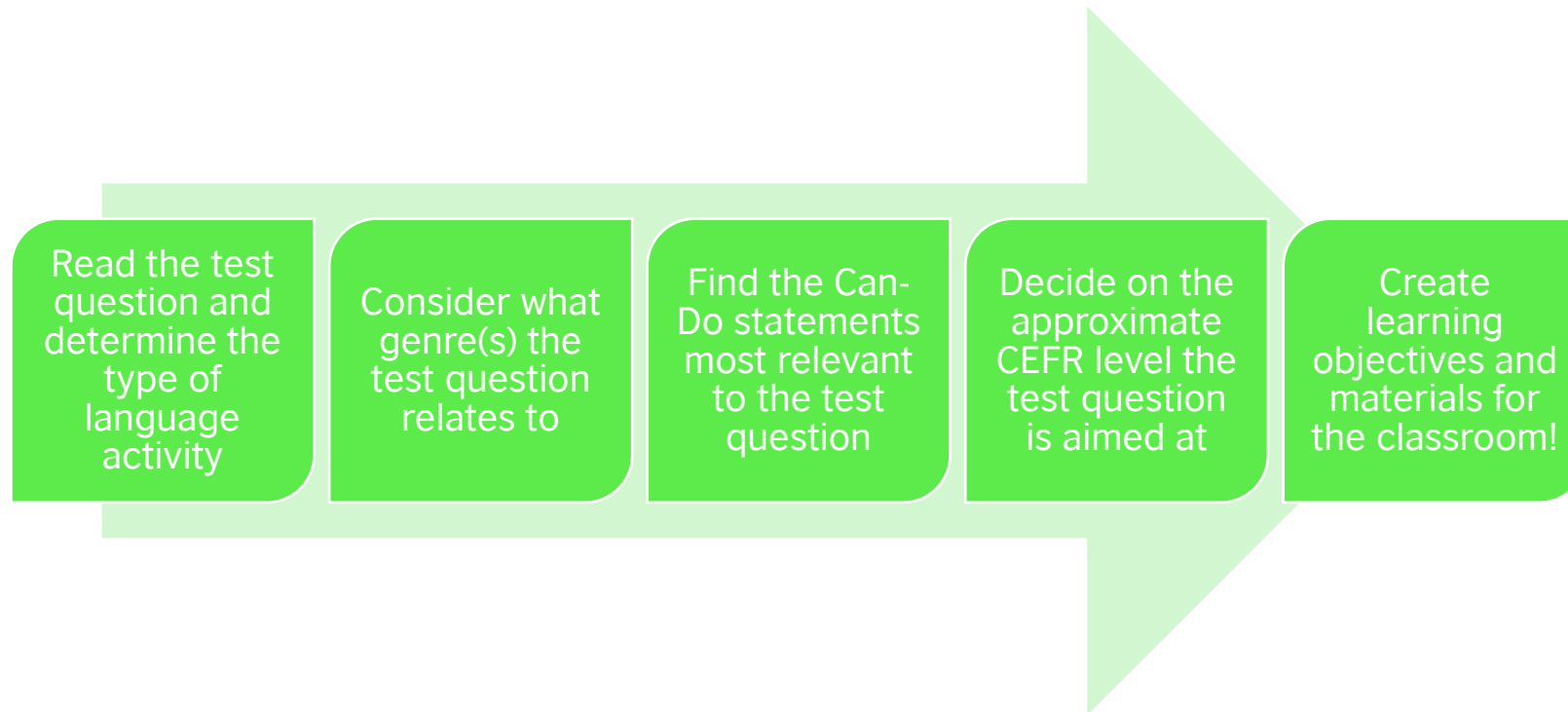
- *Deeper understanding of their students' English proficiency*
- *Helps teachers plan suitable goals/lessons for their students*

## FOR TEST USERS

- *Deeper understanding of test takers' exam results*
- *Allows comparisons of different examinations to be made*

## What if a test is not linked to the CEFR?

*It is possible to 'reverse engineer' test questions to find out the CEFR level it is testing, as well as the Can-Do statements that apply to it.*





# Test item: EXAMPLE 1

*The candidate must sort the sentences into the correct order so that the text makes sense. They do this by clicking on a sentence and dragging it to its correct position.*

*There are two of these tasks in this part.*

The sentences below are from a report. Put the sentences in the right order. The first sentence is done for you.

This report gives information about the traffic problems on the coast road.

For this reason it is easy for them to take a wrong turn and get lost.

These will help visitors to find their way to our beautiful town.

This road is busy during the summer when tourists visit the area.

They don't know the road because many of them are here for the first time.

This is why we think there should be more signs along the road.

The sentences below are from some instructions. Put the sentences in the right order. The first sentence is done for you.

If you are visiting our office for the first time, please follow these instructions.

A member of staff will write this information in the visitor's book.

Before you leave, please return the card to a member of staff at the front desk.

You can then use the card to enter through the security gate.

Next, he or she will give you a visitor's identity card.

You should go to the front desk upon arrival and give your name and address.

# 1) Language Activity

## READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension involves receiving and processing written input: activating what are thought to be appropriate schemata in order to build up a representation of the meaning being expressed and a hypothesis as to the communicative intention behind it.

## 2) Genre

### Reading Comprehension

*Match the genre with the correct definition*

***Reading  
correspondence***

***Reading for orientation***

***Reading for information  
& argument***

***Reading instructions***

***Reading as a leisure  
activity***

a) Search reading. Involves 'skimming' (reading at speed in order to judge relevance) and 'scanning' (looking quickly through a text searching for specific information).

b) Involves both fiction and nonfiction, including creative texts, different forms of literature, magazine and newspaper articles, blogs, biographies, etc. – depending on one's interests.

c) A specialized form of reading for information.

d) Reading (and understanding) both personal and formal communication, i.e., through emails, letters, discussion forums, blogs, etc

e) Detailed reading. Involves careful study of a text that one has judged to be relevant for a purpose at hand. It is often associated with study and professional life.

# Test item: EXAMPLE 1

*The candidate must sort the sentences into the correct order so that the text makes sense. They do this by clicking on a sentence and dragging it to its correct position.*

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### 3) Can-do statements

Genre	Descriptor	Band?
Reading for information & argument	Can understand the finer points and implications of a complex report or article even outside their area of specialization.	C2
	Can recognize when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something.	B2
	Can understand texts describing people, places, everyday life and culture, etc., provided they use simple language.	A2
	Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects.	B1
Reading instructions	Can understand clearly expressed, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment.	B1
	Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in their field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided they can reread difficult sections.	B2
	Can follow short, simple directions (e.g. to go from X to Y).	A1
	Can understand simple, brief instructions, provided they are illustrated and not presented in continuous text.	A2

## 4) Can-do statements and appropriate level



	Reading for Information and argument
A2	Can identify specific information in simpler material they encounter such as letters, brochures and short news articles describing events.
	Can follow the general outline of a news report on a familiar type of event, provided the contents are familiar and predictable.
	Can pick out the main information in short news reports or simple articles in which figures, names, illustrations and titles play a prominent role and support the meaning of the text.
	Can understand the main points of short texts dealing with everyday topics (e.g. lifestyle, hobbies, sports, weather).
	Can understand texts describing people, places, everyday life and culture, etc., provided they use simple language.
	Can understand information given in illustrated brochures and maps (e.g. the principal attractions of a city).
A1	Can understand the main points in short news items on subjects of personal interest (e.g. sport, celebrities).
	Can understand a short factual description or report within their own field, provided simple language is used and that it does not contain unpredictable detail.
	Can understand most of what people say about themselves in a personal ad or post and what they say they like in other people.
A1	Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short, simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.
	Can understand short texts on subjects of personal interest (e.g. news flashes about sports, music, travel or

	Reading Instructions
B1	Can understand clearly expressed, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment. Can follow simple instructions given on packaging (e.g. cooking instructions). Can understand most short safety instructions, (e.g. on public transport or in manuals for the use of electrical equipment).
A2	Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.
	Can understand short instructions illustrated step by step (e.g. for installing new technology).
	Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.
	Can understand simple, brief instructions, provided they are illustrated and not presented in continuous text.
A1	Can understand instructions on medicine labels expressed as a simple command (e.g. "Take before meals" or "Do not take if driving").
	Can follow a simple recipe, especially if there are pictures to illustrate the most important steps.
A1	Can follow short, simple directions (e.g. to go from X to Y).

Approximate CEFR level = A2

## 5) Learning objectives

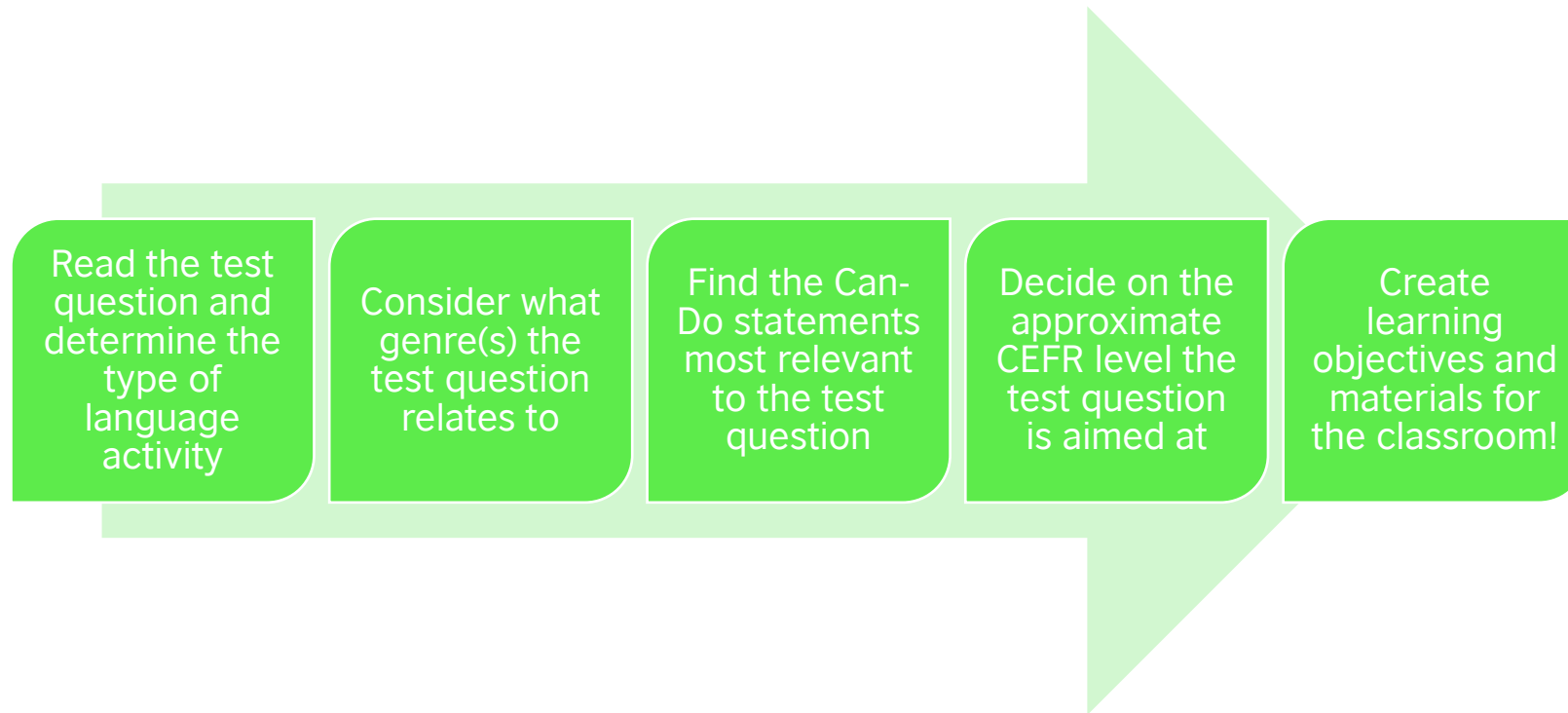
- Can identify specific information in simpler material they encounter such as letters, brochures and short news articles describing events.
- Can understand the main points of short texts dealing with everyday topics (e.g. lifestyle, hobbies, sports, weather).
- Can understand texts describing people, places, everyday life and culture, etc., provided they use simple language.
- Can understand a short factual description or report within their own field, provided simple language is used and that it does not contain unpredictable detail.
- Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.



## Your turn!



*Have a look at the following test item and reverse engineer it to find out the CEFR level it is testing, as well as the Can-Do statements that apply to it!*



## Test item: EXAMPLE 2

*The candidate is asked to read a long text (about 750 words). They will also read eight headings. The task is to match seven of the headings to paragraphs in the text. There is always an extra heading that does not fit with any paragraph.*



### Mission To Mars

1. On 3rd June 2010 an international crew of six astronauts entered a space ship and prepared themselves for a 520 day voyage to the planet Mars and back. The module that was to be their home for the next year and a half contained their sleeping quarters, a kitchen/dining room, a living room, a control room and a toilet. There was also space for food storage, a small greenhouse, a bathroom, a sauna and even a gym. The Mars landing was scheduled for 12th February 2011, following a 255-day flight, and would involve a full two days of exploration of the planet surface. An equally long return journey would see the astronauts return to earth on 4th November 2011.

2. Emerging from the spaceship after an exhausting 520 days, Russian commander Alexei Sitev declared the mission finally over. "The programme has been fully carried out," he announced at a press conference. "All the crew members are in good health. We are now ready for further tests." Indeed, the general consensus in the scientific community was that the Mars 500 project had achieved its aims, and, what is more, the crew had managed to complete their mission without ever having to leave the Earth's atmosphere.

3. Mars 500 was, in fact, a simulation exercise. The astronauts never even left the ground and their space ship was a specially constructed working model situated in a warehouse in the suburbs of Moscow. The aims of the mission were to see how well humans could cope with the confinement and stress involved in extended interplanetary travel. The astronauts – three Russians, a Frenchman, an Italian and a Chinese national – were volunteers for the project, and, although all of them had the option of leaving their 550 cubic meter living space at any time, none of them chose to do so.

4. All communications between the crew and mission control were subject to a twenty minute delay to simulate the time it would take signals to reach the earth from outer space. Although not all the elements of space flight - such as the effects of zero gravity - could be reproduced, the conditions on board were made as realistic as possible. The astronauts breathed recycled air, showered only once every ten days and lived mostly on a diet of tinned food. Even the surface of Mars had been recreated to allow the crew the simulated experience of walk

Read the passage quickly. Choose a heading for each numbered paragraph (1-7) from the drop-down box. There is one more heading than you need.

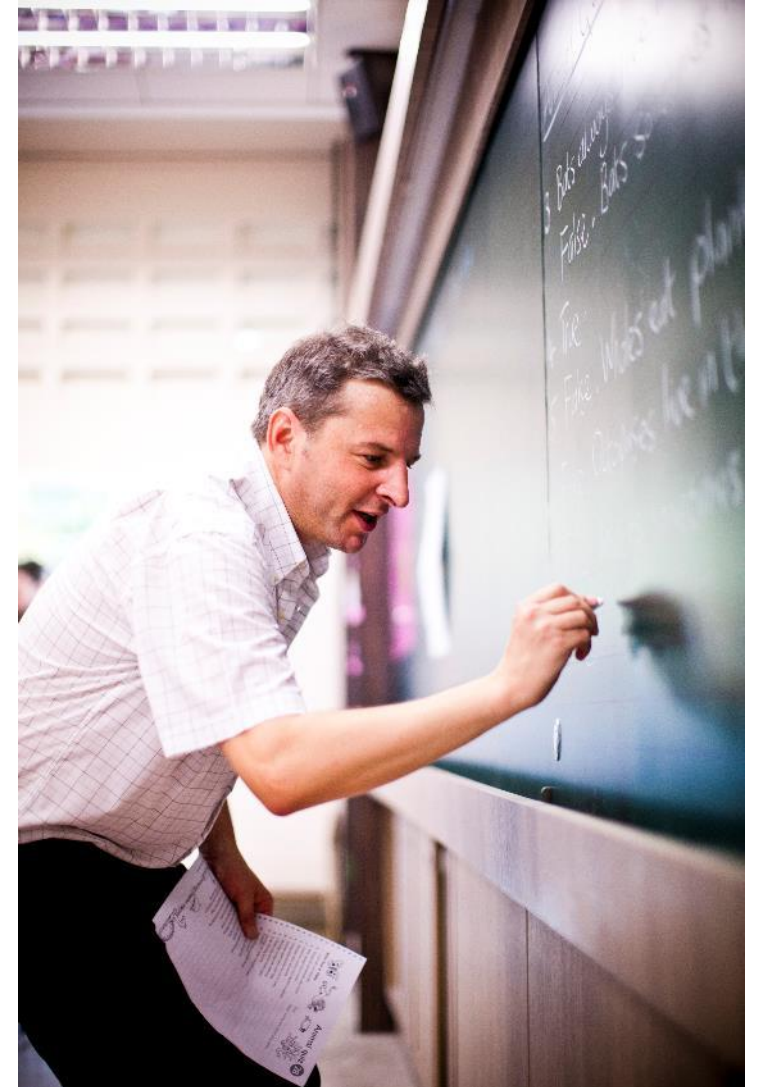
1. A long journey in space
2. Is space the future for mankind?
3. The difficulties of living in space
4. A successful outcome
5. A distant new world
6. Imitating life in space
7. Only an experiment

Scroll

# This is just the beginning!

*Today, we used CEFR Scales to ‘reverse engineer’ a reading test question to find out the CEFR level it is testing, as well as the Can-Do statements that apply to it. You could also:*

- *Use Reception Strategy scales*
- *Measure the language level of the text*





COUNCIL OF EUROPE

# Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

[Home](#)[Newsroom](#)[Introduction ▾](#)[Purposes ▾](#)[Levels ▾](#)[Learning, Teaching, Assessment ▾](#)[Tests/Examinations ▾](#)[Resources ▾](#)

You are here: [Democracy](#) > [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\)](#) > [Levels](#)

## The CEFR Levels

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>

Some of the instruments produced within the Council of Europe have played a decisive role in the teaching of so-called “foreign” languages by promoting methodological innovations and new approaches to designing teaching programmes, notably the development of a communicative approach.



CEFR

## British Council | EAQUALS Core Inventory for General English

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-eaquals-core-inventory-general-english-0>



This project may be of interest to anyone involved in curriculum development.

### British Council – EAQUALS Core Inventory for General English



#### A - Z of Content

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N  
P R S T W Y

#### sort descending

A framework for planning a listening skills lesson

A handbook for exploratory action research

A history of IATEFL: The first 50 years of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

Action plan for teachers

Action plan for teachers

An investigation into improved primary school



# EnglishProfile

The CEFR for English

<http://www.englishprofile.org/>

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About Us

Corpus

The CEFR ▾

English Vocabulary Profile ▾

English Grammar Profile ▾

## English Profile – what the CEFR means for English

English Profile helps teachers and educationalists understand what the [Common European Framework](#) means for English. It describes what aspects of English are typically learned at each CEFR level. This tool helps teachers, course-developers, course-book authors and test writers what is suitable for learning at each level.

This site contains a wealth of information about English Profile, including two innovative online tools: [English Vocabulary Profile Online](#) and [English Grammar Profile Online](#). These are searchable databases that give you free access to what English vocabulary and grammar is suitable for teaching at each CEFR level.

## Assess the difficulty level of English language texts with an award winning linguistic analysis tool.

Text Inspector gives you detailed feedback, using over 200 metrics benchmarked to the CEFR, so you can design texts for teaching, assessing and learning English.



Winner of the British Council Award for Digital Innovation

<https://textinspector.com/>



**Try Text Inspector now**

Analyse up to 250 words free – right here



Simply copy and paste any text into this box and click 'analyse' for an instant result.

Want more features or need to analyse a longer document?



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## The End!

*If you have any questions about today's topic, please feel free to ask!*



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# Continue the conversation with us at New Directions East Asia 2021

**NEW  
DIRECTIONS**

Fairer, Greener, Stronger  
The Future of Language Assessment

The British Council's annual language testing and assessment conference takes place **ONLINE** on **Dec 10 & 11**

## Plenary Speakers

Professor Judit Kormos  
*Lancaster University*



Professor Barry O'Sullivan OBE  
*British Council*



Stevie Spring CBE  
*British Council*



Professor Low Ee Ling  
*Nanyang Technological University*



Dr. Jayanti Banerjee  
*Trinity College London*



## Panel Discussions

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Climate Action in Language Assessment

Artificial Intelligence

English Medium Education

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# Share your research ideas with the Conference community

**NEW  
DIRECTIONS**

Fairer, Greener, Stronger  
The Future of Language Assessment



## Best Student Research Idea

Do you have a research idea to share? This year we invite students enrolled in language assessment or linguistics courses to experiment with a new style of communication, a video presentation of their research idea. Attendees and experts at New Directions East Asia 2021 will cast their votes for the Best Student Research Idea award.

**#NewDirections2021**



Visit our website to find out more: <https://www.britishcouncil.sg/student-research-idea-awards>

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**Thank you!**

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East Asia Assessment Solutions Team:

