

# Language Point

## CEFR Level B1

At **level B1** students are able to maintain interaction and get across what they want to express in a range of contexts and follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided that speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect. They can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly and keep going comprehensibly, even though they may have to pause for grammatical and lexical planning and repair, especially in longer stretches of free production. The second feature is the ability to cope flexibly with problems in everyday life, for example coping with less routine situations on public transport; dealing with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; entering unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.

### **Global**

Students can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken and can produce a simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. They can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

### **Listening**

They are able to understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

### **Reading**

Students are able to understand factual texts on subjects related to their interests that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. They can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects and can understand the description of events feelings and wishes.

### **Spoken interaction**

Students at this level can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. They 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).

### **Spoken Production**

They can keep going comprehensibly in order to describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. They are able to narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe reactions.

### **Writing**

Students at this level can write simple texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence. They can write personal letters describing events, experiences and impressions.

### **Listening Proficiency Scales**

At B1 level students can guess the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and understand sentence meaning if the topic discussed is familiar. They can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided speech is clear and in standard language. They can follow clear speech in everyday conversation, though in real life situations they will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases. They can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided that speech is clear and a familiar accent is used. They can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters which occur regularly and can follow a lecture or a talk within their own field, provided that the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly organized. They can understand simple technical information, such as operation instructions for everyday equipment. They can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material about familiar subjects spoken relatively slowly and clearly. They can follow many films in which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and in which the story is straightforward and the language clear. They can catch the main points in broadcasts on familiar topics and topics of personal interest when the language is relatively slow and clear.

### **Reading Proficiency Scales**

Students at level B1 can understand straightforward texts on subjects related to their fields of interest. They can find and understand general information they need in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents. They can search one long or several short texts to locate specific information they need to help them complete a task. They can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects and can identify the main conclusions in clearly-written argumentative texts. They can recognise the general line of argument in a text but not necessarily in detail. They can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond with a friend or acquaintance. They can understand clearly-written straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment.

## **Speaking Proficiency Scales**

Students at this level are able to keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production. They can make themselves understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident. They have enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times. They have a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words. They have sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events and to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics. They show good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations and use reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations. Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur. They are aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately and are aware of, and look out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of their own. They can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests, and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way. They can socialise simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines and can exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what they want. They can adapt well-rehearsed simple phrases to particular circumstances through limited lexical substitution. They can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. They can use simple techniques to start, maintain, or end a short conversation and can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points. They can use the most frequently-occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.

## **Writing Proficiency Scales**

At this level, students can write very brief reports, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions. They can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in detail. They can describe basic details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g., an accident. They can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions and can take messages describing enquiries, problems, etc. They can describe the plot of a book or film and describe their reactions to it.

## **Level B1 Learner Outcomes**

**Students will be able to use the following:**

### **Functions/ notions**

Describing places  
Describing past experiences and storytelling  
Describing feelings, emotions, attitudes  
Expressing opinions  
Expressing agreement/ disagreement  
Talking about films and books

### **Discourse Functions**

Initiating and closing conversation  
Checking understanding  
Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming or continuing)

### **Discourse Markers**

Linkers: sequential – past time (later)  
Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc.  
Markers to structure informal spoken discourse

### **Verb forms**

Wh- and Yes/No Questions in present /past  
Complex question tags  
Past continuous  
Used to  
Would expressing habit in the past  
Past perfect  
Future time (will & going to)  
Future continuous  
Present perfect  
Present perfect vs past simple  
Present perfect continuous  
Conditionals  
Zero and first conditional  
Second and third conditional  
Phrasal Verbs  
Extended phrasal verbs  
Passives  
Simple passive  
Reported speech (range of tenses)  
Modals: Possibility  
Might, may, will, probably  
Must/can't (deduction)  
Modals: Obligation & Necessity  
Must/have to

Ought to  
Need to  
Modals: Past  
Should have, might have/etc.  
Articles with countable and uncountable nouns  
Determiners  
Broad range (e.g. all the, most, both)  
Collocation of adjectives  
Adverbial phrases of time, place and frequency including word order  
Adjectives vs adverbs  
Adverbial phrases of degree/extent, probability  
Comparative and superlative form of adverbs  
Broader range of intensifiers

### **Vocabulary**

Things in the town, shops and shopping  
Travel and services vocabulary  
Contrasting opinions (on the one hand...)  
Collocation  
Colloquial language

### **Topics**

Leisure activities  
Education  
Film  
Books and literature  
News, lifestyles and current affairs  
Media

### **Learner Training**

- Increased familiarity with a (probably bilingual) dictionary
- Increased familiarity with phonemic chart - layout, voiced/unvoiced, main simple vowel sounds
- Revision of vocabulary learning techniques
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words
- Strategies for asking for something without knowing the exact word
- Awareness of skimming and scanning reading skills
- Awareness of note taking skills

## **Learner Outcomes: Examples**

### **Functions/ notions**

#### **Describing places**

Cairo is the capital city of Egypt. It is on the banks of the River Nile. It has a population of more than 10 million people. Cairo has a rich history. The famous pyramids and the sphinx are located just outside the city.

#### **Describing past experiences and storytelling**

Last year we went to Thailand for our holidays. We visited many interesting places. I went scuba-diving while my boyfriend went on an elephant ride. We also tried lots of different kinds of food. We had a great time.

#### **Describing feelings, emotions, attitudes**

He felt a little nervous about the exam.

I'm fed up with this British food.

We should all use public transport as much as possible.

I'm sorry to hear that.

#### **Expressing opinions**

I think England will win the World Cup

I don't think he is old enough to get married.

In my opinion, it's too expensive.

#### **Expressing agreement/ disagreement**

I think so too.

You're right

Exactly!

Yes, I agree.

I think you are absolutely right.

So do/am I.

Neither do I.

Well, actually . . .

Well not really.

I'm sorry but I think you're wrong.

I see what you mean but . . .

#### **Talking about films and books**

Meryl Streep was brilliant.

It was difficult to follow.

It was set in Chicago.

It was about a woman who went around the world.

If you like action movies you will like this one. It had a happy ending.

I think you should read this book.

I liked this book because . . .

## **Discourse Functions**

### **Initiating and closing conversation**

#### **Initiating:**

Hi! My name's Paula. What's your name?  
Excuse me- can I talk to you for a minute?  
Excuse me, please. Have you got a minute?  
Excuse me, please. I wonder if you could help me.  
Let me introduce myself.  
Guess what!  
You will never believe what I saw yesterday

#### **Closing:**

It's been nice talking to you. Bye.  
I'm sorry. I've got to go now.  
Must go – see you later.  
See you later. Take care.

### **Checking understanding**

#### **From speaker's point of view**

Is that clear?  
Do you follow me?  
Do you know what I mean?  
Do you understand?

#### **From listeners point of view**

I'm sorry, did you say ". . ."?  
Is this what you are saying? . . .  
I'm not sure I understand. Are you saying that . . . ?  
Do you mean . . . ?

### **Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming or continuing)**

#### **Interrupting**

Sorry, to interrupt you but . . .  
I have a question.  
Could I interrupt here?  
Do you mind if I say something?  
Could I just say something?  
Sorry, I just wanted to say . . .

#### **Changing the topic**

Anyway, . . .  
By the way, there's something else I wanted to tell you.

#### **Resuming a conversation**

Anyway, . . .  
Anyway, what was I saying?  
What were we talking about?  
To get back to what I was saying . . .

### **Continuing**

Anyway, . . .

So, as I was saying . . .

Okay, . . .

### **Discourse Markers**

#### **Linkers: sequential – past time (later)**

He finished the e-mail and then went out for a while. Later, he looked at it again, to see if he had missed anything important. After that, he changed the text a little. Finally he checked it and sent it.

#### **Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc.**

On the other hand, we could stay at home and watch television.

However, this depends on the number of people you've invited.

Therefore, it is cheaper to take the bus.

#### **Markers to structure informal spoken discourse**

Right.

Really?

Well, anyway . . .

Oh I know.

Yes, I suppose so.

I know how you feel

You know, I don't like her either.

### **Questions**

#### **Wh-questions in the past**

Who did you see at the party?

How long have you been studying English?

Why did you get the tattoo?

What happened then?

What have you been doing since you left school?

#### **Complex question tags**

He hasn't come home yet, has he?

He built the house himself, didn't he?

#### **Past continuous**

It happened while I was watching television yesterday.

I was coming home from work when the car in front of me suddenly stopped.

Car "A" was coming from a side street. The driver wanted to turn left. The other car was coming along the road. It was moving really fast. The driver of car "A" didn't see it. They hit each other.

#### **Used to**

They used to live in Portugal.

I used to have a really nice wallet, but I lost it.

When I went to primary school I used to walk to school with a friend, but my mother used to collect me in the afternoons.

I never used /didn't use to like olives, but now I love them.



**Would expressing habit in the past**

Every night I would tell my little brother a story and he would fall asleep in the middle of it.

During the summer holiday we would get up early and go to the beach.

**Past perfect**

The train had left when I got to the station.

When I got home, Joan had already cooked supper.

They had already paid by the time I asked for the bill.

Ahmed had just arrived.

**Future****Future time (will & going to)****(Prediction)**

If they continue to play this badly, Liverpool are going to lose the cup.

Spurs will probably win the league this season.

Look at those clouds. It's going to rain.

He will pass his driving test eventually.

**Future continuous**

I'll be working late tomorrow.

He'll be arriving on the last train from Manchester.

**Present perfect**

She's just gone to the shop.

I've started but I haven't finished it yet.

He still hasn't arrived.

**Present perfect, past simple**

I've been to Thailand twice. I went there in 2003 and 2007. Have you been there?

He's won every match so far.

He won every tournament last year.

I've had about 9 cars.

We went out together for six months.

When I was at school I studied French for about 5 years.

I have studied French since I was 14 years old.

**Present perfect continuous**

How long have you been playing tennis?

It's been raining non-stop for two days now.

He's been working on the report all morning.

**Conditionals****Zero and first conditional**

If you heat water, it boils.

If you press this button, it switches off.

If we don't tell him, he'll be angry.

What will he do if he doesn't find a job?

We'll go swimming if the water is warm enough.

## **Second and third conditional**

If I won the lottery I'd buy a big house in the countryside.

What would you do if they asked you to work in America?

I would have told Jim, if I had seen him.

If we hadn't gone out last night, we wouldn't have missed them.

My girlfriend would have killed me if I'd forgotten her birthday.

## **Phrasal Verbs**

### **Extended phrasal verbs**

He turned the jobs down.

They made the story up.

She switched the light on.

## **Passives**

### **Simple passive**

The lock was broken.

The trees were damaged by the storm.

Rome wasn't built in a day.

## **Reported speech (range of tenses)**

She said she liked brown bread.

He asked if she wanted to go home.

John told them the machine was working.

She explained that she'd lost my telephone number.

## **Modals: Possibility**

### **Might, may, will, probably**

I might be half an hour late.

Petra will probably be late too.

She's usually late.

We may go to Egypt this year.

Are you going to have a party in your new flat? I don't know. I may, I may not.

## **Must/can't (deduction)**

Mohamed can't be at home yet, I saw him leave just a few minutes ago.

I don't believe it. It can't be true.

That must be Brigitte's father. She told me he was coming.

You've just walked all the way from Oxford Street. You must be tired.

## **Modals: Obligation & Necessity**

### **Must/have to**

I really must lose some weight before the holiday.

Passengers must not put their feet on the seats.

I can't come tonight because I have to meet my cousin.

I have to make an appointment this week. It hurts!

### **Ought to**

I really ought to spend less money.

You ought to inform the police.

My parents will be worried. I ought to phone.

**Need to**

I need to get back to work.

Do you really need to wear such old jeans?

Do we need to buy tickets before we get on the train?

**Modals: Past****Should have, might have/etc.**

We had a great time in Crete. You should have come with us.

The letter should have come yesterday.

They might have arrived already.

She might have gone home.

**Articles****With countable and uncountable nouns**

Don't go in the water. It's freezing.

I would like milk in my tea.

He was wearing black jeans.

**Determiners****Broad range (e.g. all the, most, both)**

All the seats are taken.

We haven't got enough paper for everyone.

Several people are waiting.

**Adjectives****Collocation of adjective**

I didn't want to wake him from his deep sleep.

The student produced some really high quality work.

We couldn't get to work because of the heavy snow.

There was a strong smell of coffee in the room.

**Adverbs****Adverbial phrases of time, place and frequency including word order**

We usually go abroad in summer.

I have never been abroad.

He stayed behind yesterday.

They often play upstairs.

**Adjectives vs adverbs**

She's a good singer. She sings really well.

The instructions were not very clear.

My mother has been working too hard recently.

This cheese is a bit hard.

**Adverbial phrases of degree/extent, probability**

The water was extremely cold.

He speaks very quickly.

He speaks too quickly.

There will probably be some speeches after the meal.

He'll definitely win.

### **Comparative and superlative form of adverbs**

Paula got ready more quickly than the others.

Jenson Button was faster in practice. I'm afraid he's getting worse.

The person who most frequently got ill was Angela.

Jo worked the hardest.

Marie did the worst in the exam.

Paulo did the best at maths.

### **Intensifiers**

#### **Broader range of intensifiers (such as too, so enough)**

He's a really good driver.

Do we have enough cake to go round?

He came back so suddenly.

She's so intelligent it's scary.

The ball was just too fast.

He's quite good at science.

#### **Wide range (such as extremely, much too)**

We did quite well.

I've got a terribly difficult decision to make.

The maths test was unbelievably easy.

That's much too difficult for a B1 test.

### **Lexis**

#### **Things in the town, shops and shopping**

It fits really well but do you think it suits me?

I need to get some toothpaste from the chemist's in the shopping mall.

Can you hold on while I get a magazine from this newsagent?

#### **Travel and services vocabulary**

I'm sorry, we don't accept cheques.

Do you have a debit or credit card?

You need to check in at least two hours before departure.

The gate number will be announced on the monitor in the departure lounge.

#### **Contrasting opinions (on the one hand...)**

On the one hand, he is good with people. On the other hand, he doesn't work very hard.

Even though he earns very little he is always very generous.

Mind you, he is still very fit.

### **Collocation**

I'm going to take a quick shower.

It's midnight but I still feel wide awake.

There's a good chance he'll be late.

### **Colloquial language**

That's a really cool top you're wearing.

My boss is nice but he talks really posh.

The kids had a brilliant time at the zoo.

**Topics**

Leisure activities

Education

Film

Books and literature

News, lifestyles and current affairs

Media

**Learner Training**

- Attempts to increase vocabulary via word building
- Use of grammar reference
- Awareness of phrasal verb types and identifying a concept for recording
- Increased familiarity with monolingual dictionary
- Guessing the meaning of unknown words via context