

Language · Point

CEFR Level C1

Students at the **C1 level** have good access to a broad range of language, which allows fluent, spontaneous and almost effortless communication. They have a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language. The discourse skills characterising the previous band continue to be evident at Level C1, with an emphasis on more fluency. They are able to select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep it whilst thinking. They can produce clear, smooth-flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

Global

At the C1 level of proficiency, students should be able to understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. They can express themselves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. They can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

Listening

Students at this level can understand lectures and discussions on complex topics beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. They can understand even when the talk is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.

Reading

At the C1 level of proficiency, students are able to understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. They can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to their field.

Spoken Interaction

Students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes and can formulate ideas and opinions appropriately and relate contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.

Spoken Production

At the C1 level, students can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

Writing

Students are able to write clear, well-structured text and express points of view at some length. They can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining the salient issues. They can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.

Listening Proficiency scales

Students can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers and can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. They can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms and recognise changes in style. They can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships between ideas are only implied and not stated explicitly. They can follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease and can extract specific information from poor quality public announcements. They can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services. They are able to understand a wide range of recorded audio material, including some nonstandard language, and identify finer points of detail, including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers. They can follow films which contain a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.

Reading Proficiency scales

Students can understand any correspondence with an occasional use of the dictionary and can understand in detail long, complex instructions on a new machine or procedure even outside their own field of specialization if they can reread difficult sections.

Speaking Proficiency scales

At level C1, students can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language. They can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech and can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say. They can express themselves clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. They have a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. They have a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. They consistently maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot. They demonstrate good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. They can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning. They can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage and can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.

They are able to express themselves confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned. They can adjust what they say and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient and adopt a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. They can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface their remarks appropriately in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor whilst thinking. They can intervene appropriately in discussion, exploiting appropriate language to do so and can initiate, maintain and end discourse appropriately with effective turntaking. They can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. They can produce clear, smooth-flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. They can use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.

Writing Proficiency scales

Students at this level can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. They can develop an argument systematically, giving appropriate emphasis to significant points, and presenting relevant supporting detail. They can give clear detailed descriptions of complex subjects and can usually write without consulting a dictionary. They can write so well that their language needs to be checked only if the text is an important one.

Level C1 Learner Outcomes

Students will be able to use the following:

Functions/ notions

Expressing attitudes and feelings precisely
Expressing certainty, probability, doubt
Synthesizing, evaluating, glossing information
Speculating and hypothesising about causes, consequences etc.
Expressing opinions tentatively, hedging
Expressing shades of opinion and certainty
Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference
Critiquing and reviewing
Developing an argument systematically
Conceding a point
Emphasizing a point, feeling, issue
Defending a point of view persuasively
Responding to counterarguments

Discourse Markers

Markers to structure and signpost informal speech and writing
Markers to structure and signpost formal speech and writing – especially logic markers

Verb forms

Narrative tenses for experiences, including passive
Simple past (narrative)
Past continuous (narrative)
Used to (narrative)
Would expressing habit in the past (narrative)
Past perfect (narrative)
Futures (revision)
Mixed conditionals in the past, present and future
Wish/if only & regrets
Phrasal Verbs
Extended phrasal verbs (splitting)
Passive forms, all
Modals in the past
Adverbs
Inversion (negative adverbials)

Lexis

Collocations
Colloquial language
Approximating (vague language)
Differentiated use of vocabulary
Eliminating false friends
Formal and informal registers
Idiomatic expressions

Topics

Books and literature / Media / Arts

News, lifestyles and current affairs / Scientific development / Technical and legal language

Learner outcomes: examples

Functions/ notions

Expressing attitudes and feelings precisely

Well it would be all right if they came out and said it, but I have a bit of a problem with . . .

I don't really feel comfortable with . . .

I couldn't care less whether . . . or not.

I'm afraid this is something I feel quite strongly about.

Cristina became a vegetarian and her father had rather mixed feelings about it.

Michael felt completely devastated.

Somebody had deliberately sabotaged his research but he did not know who could do such a thing.

When I reached the summit of the mountain I felt a great burden had been lifted from my shoulders. My childhood dream had finally come true. Looking down into the valleys far below I felt a sense of pride in my achievement.

Expressing certainty, probability, doubt

It is highly likely that the airport will be closed again tomorrow.

No doubt he'll bring his dog as usual.

There's bound to be trouble at the meeting.

Is that settled, then? Yes. It's settled.

It looks as if she's going to be late.

Surely, you don't think it was my fault?

Synthesizing, evaluating, glossing information

In a nutshell, it was the headmaster who had to take responsibility.

To cut a long story short, he ended up sleeping on my floor.

All things considered, I think we've made the best decision.

Another way of putting this would be to say . . .

To recap on what has been said so far, . . .

Speculating and hypothesising about causes, consequences etc.

Supposing he had missed his train?

If the pound did drop to parity with the euro, Britain might be better off in the long run.

Well if we don't do something about the oil spill, there could be dire consequences.

If you'd arrived on time, we would probably have missed the traffic.

If she didn't get so excited, she might get more work done.

Expressing opinions tentatively, hedging

I assume you'll be going home for Christmas.

Am I right in thinking you're responsible?

It's supposed to be good.

I'm just not so sure, it could be okay.

Maybe she is the best person for the job.

I should think he'll be delighted with the surprise.

It could well be the best solution.

Expressing shades of opinion and certainty

There's no doubt about the fact that there is going to be inflation.

No, I'm absolutely sure. I mean look at the figure for X.

I may be wrong, but I think higher inflation is almost certain.

I have a feeling there may be a problem here.

I suppose that could be an option.

I rather doubt that he'll come.

It's not something I feel strongly about.

Well one option/possibility might be to go earlier.

I really think that the people who produce our food should not be exploited. But the problem is that sometimes fair trade goods are more than double the price.

When this is the case I tend to buy the cheaper product. I am not proud of this, but I am sure there are many other people exactly like me.

I thought the meeting was a missed opportunity to actually do something good for a change. But I know that when it comes to environmental issues, governments tend to talk a lot and make grand promises, and then go back and carry on just the same as before. If they really wanted to make a difference they wouldn't just set so-called 'green objectives' but would pass laws which would have an immediate impact on the environment..

Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference

To be honest, I simply don't care.

Why bother?

It's not such a big issue.

I don't really mind/have an opinion, one way or the other.

What are you trying to say?

Absolutely!

I don't believe it.

That's amazing!

Oh, you poor thing.

You can say that again!

Critiquing and reviewing

The (report) highlights some important issues but it does not, to my mind, get to the bottom of the problem.

It's an excellent summary, but I think it would be improved by a deeper consideration of X.

The (report) sets out to do X, and it does parts of this well, but it seems to me to lack . . .

The good/best thing about (the report) is that it is so concise. It really hits the nail on the head.

Well, it starts well, but then after x pages/ in the section on X, I had the impression that it . . . The plot involves the disappearance of a sacred sword and introduces us to various levels of castle intrigue. Stephenson weaves his usual magic by giving us snippets of information here and there, now from the royal chambers, now from the castle kitchens. The master of gothic science fiction has provided us with a real page-turner. The only criticism that might be levelled here is that the author assumes that the reader is already familiar with characters and the world they inhabit. To get the most out of this book one needs to have read the previous books in the series.

Developing an argument systematically

It is frequently argued that . . . , however
X is clearly a topic of concern to many people nowadays.
There are several reasons for this: one . . . , two . . . , and finally . . .
The main reason for this . . . is/may be . . .
Some people might argue that . . . However . . .
Opponents of this idea try to suggest that . . . However . . .
It's clear that . . .
No one would dispute that . . .
It is generally accepted that . . .
All the evidence/data indicates/suggests that . . .
Thus to conclude, the central issues are . . .
The key point is . . .
In conclusion, before we . . . we need to . . .

Conceding a point

I see what you mean, but . . .
I take your point. I agree we need . . .
It's certainly true that . . .
I have to admit that . . .
It is true that . . .
Though I hate to say it, I think you are right that . . .
That may be true, but . . .

Emphasizing a point, feeling, issue

The main point I'd like to emphasize here is the fact that parents have an important role to play in a child's education
75% of those interviewed said that public transport was not as safe. Yes, 75% think public transport is now more dangerous.
After turning the whole house upside-down, the police found nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Defending a point of view persuasively

I know this may not be a popular conclusion, but it seems to me we have to face facts/ the fact that . . .
I do appreciate that what I proposed may be expensive/painful/a surprise to some people, but I really am convinced the evidence shows we need to . . .
I recognise that this may . . . , but . . .
But one should not lose sight of the fact that . . .
But surely one still needs to take X into account

Responding to counterarguments

What you say may be true in some contexts, however in this case...
You may be right, but I still think that . . .
Whilst it may indeed be true that . . . , I still think . . .
There is no evidence to show that
On the contrary, . . .
I think you have misunderstood the point I was making . . .

I can see where you are coming from but there are problems with your analysis of the situation.

In some circumstances, I would agree with you entirely, but in this case . . .

Even so, he still has a long way to go before he is suitable management material.

No matter how you look at it, he made a mistake.

All the same, she deserves another chance.

Discourse Markers

Markers to structure and signpost informal speech and writing

We've a bit more money coming in than we had last year. Mind you, we'll still need to be careful with the heating bills.

He'd spent all his money without realising it. So, he couldn't afford a taxi and had to walk home.

Then guess what happened?

On top of that his girlfriend was really angry with him.

Markers to structure and signpost formal speech and writing – especially logic markers

The pound is not as strong as it was two years ago. Moreover, the cost of flights has gone up

Profits are likely to fall this year. Consequently, we need to prepare our shareholders for some bad news.

He was warned many times about the dangers of mountain climbing in winter. Nevertheless, he continued to tackle some of the toughest peaks. Despite the clear danger that was pointed out to him, he insisted on continuing so he is at least partly responsible for what happened.

The cost of fuel has gone up. Therefore it is hardly surprising that there has been an increase in the use of public transport.

Whereas that is the case in Brazil, in Columbia it is more a question of . . .

Certainly the car is here to stay, but the question is to what extent it will be the same concept of car.

The policy was correct in so far as it was applied; the problem is that it wasn't applied systematically.

Verb forms

Narrative tenses for experiences, including passive

Simple past (narrative)

I went home that evening in a very sombre mood. I tried to relax. I made myself a cup of coffee and turned on the television. But I just could not get the incident out of my mind. The more I thought about things, the more certain I was that something just didn't make sense. I decided to go back over everything the next day.

Past continuous (narrative)

They were late as usual, hoping the guests would be a little late. Miriam was still in the kitchen preparing enormous bowls of salad. Her father was tidying away all his papers which were usually scattered over every available space in the dining room. John was keeping a lookout at the front gate, kicking pebbles along the path.

Used to (narrative)

That bit of the coastline used to be much less busy than it is these days. Lisa and her brothers loved exploring the coves and beaches for miles in both directions.

Would expressing habit in the past (narrative)

My grandmother used to live by the seaside and we would go there every Easter. My dad would drive, my mother would navigate and we'd sit in the back fighting. In the summer we went to Devon for years. My dad would ask us to navigate. It was a way of keeping us quiet. We'd watch out for named pubs and read the road signs. Usually we counted cars too. I would count VWs; my more sophisticated brother counted Jags. I would usually win.

Past perfect (narrative)

When he returned to the UK things were very different. Maria had given up her job in the library and gone back to university. Reza had finally left home and had moved in with a rather odd group of postgrads who had very strict house rules about everything from the storage of food to when guests were allowed to visit. Brigitte seemed to have completely disappeared. Just six months before they had been inseparable. Although he had known that it couldn't last, it surprised him just how quickly things had changed.

Past perfect continuous (narrative)

Whoever it had been must have had a key. So if his parents had been visiting their friends in Lyon, and his sister had been out celebrating the end of term with her boyfriend, then there was only one person who would have been able to get into the house that night.

Futures (revision)

My brother and his girlfriend are getting married in August. They're not going to go on honeymoon. They're going to do up the flat they bought with the money they'll save. They'll probably have some kind of reception or party for the wedding but I don't think it will be a very grand affair.

Oh no. Another goal for United! Arsenal is going to lose.

I just got a phone call from Raoul. He's in a taxi. He's going to get here in about five minutes.

This time next year I'll be sun bathing on my yacht in Antibes. I'll be mixing with celebrities from all over the world. I'll be driving a fancy car and going to posh restaurants.

At the speed things are moving, the case will have expired before it is brought to court.

At the end of next year, I'll have been working here for 5 years!

Conditionals

Mixed conditionals in the past, present and future

If she had taken her studies more seriously last year, she'd have more job opportunities now.

If Lola had given me the information earlier, she'd be coming with us on holiday.

If I were rich, I would have bought that painting we saw yesterday.

If Nareene didn't come with us to Glastonbury, everyone would be disappointed.

Wish/if only & regrets

I wish I'd studied a bit harder.

You wish you'd kept your mouth shut, don't you?

If only he'd take more care of his health.

If only I had behaved a bit better, she might have given me a chance.

If only the sun would come out!

Phrasal Verbs

Extended phrasal verbs (splitting)

The policeman broke the fight up very quickly.

She talked me into going to her parents' place for the weekend.

I can't make anything out; it's really dark.

Passive forms, all

He'll be given a warning.

The seats will all have been taken by the time we get there!

He's going to be given an award.

He ought to be sacked for behaviour like that.

Having been beaten so many times, he decided to fight back.

He might have been hurt.

Modals in the past

You shouldn't have told her.

I should have warned him about the traffic, but I forgot.

You might have told me it was her birthday. I felt embarrassed I didn't take a present.

He can't have got my message. He would never be this late.

You needn't have bought any potatoes. We had some.

I don't think anyone could have done anything. He had decided.

Things might have turned out differently, if she had asked first.

Adverbs**Inversion (negative adverbials)**

Little did I know that he had already left the company.

Lexis**Collocations**

It's there in black and white.

He was in excruciating pain.

The suspense is palpable.

I did physics at university.

The situation is untenable.

It's a no-go area.

Colloquial language

I am absolutely knackered.

She was gobsmacked when he turned up at the party.

The whole thing was a cock-up from beginning to end.

He tried to flog me an old banger.

Approximating (vague language)

There will be about 30 odd people – well 30 to 40.

I think he an accountant or something like that.

The book is sort of similar to his first one.

Can you pass me the thingamajig for taking nails out?

All the painting stuff is in the garage.

Differentiated use of vocabulary

She was really upset when she failed her exams. I think she is still in shock.

It's not that I don't like her; I detest her.

It's really good. It's concise, focused, readable.

I wouldn't say she's antisocial, just a bit shy.

It wasn't bad, just a bit disappointing.

Eliminating false friends

In the chemistry class they performed an interesting experiment.

(As opposed to experience which is French for experiment)

Formal and informal registers

Mr. John Wilson passed away peacefully at his home in Nottingham last week.

John Wilson died in his sleep last week.

John kicked the bucket a few days back.

Idiomatic expressions

I wish I could remember her name. It's on the tip of my tongue.

Everybody wants to work with Marion. She really is the flavour of the month.

If you want a shoulder to cry on, I'll always be here for you.

Topics

Books and literature

Media

Arts

News, lifestyles and current affairs

Scientific development

Technical language

Legal language