

**INTEGRATE IRELAND
LANGUAGE AND TRAINING**

**English language proficiency benchmarks
for non-English-speaking students
at post-primary level**

Version 2.0

September 2003

Foreword

In 1996 the Irish Refugee Agency commissioned the Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), Trinity College Dublin, to write a report on the provision of English language support for refugees in Ireland. *Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees*, by David Little and Barbara Lazenby Simpson, outlined some general pedagogical principles, reported on current practice in Ireland and elsewhere, and made a number of recommendations for future action.

One of the key recommendations was that systems of English language proficiency benchmarks and associated assessment procedures should be developed, and that these systems should then be used to identify the English language needs of individual refugees and design language courses to meet those needs. The implementation of this recommendation for non-English-speaking students attending post-primary school was among the principal tasks that the Department of Education and Science assigned to the Refugee Language Support Unit (now Integrate Ireland Language and Training) in its two-year pilot phase (1999–2001).

The original post-primary benchmarks were drawn up in CLCS by Fiona O'Connor in consultation with David Little, Barbara Lazenby Simpson, Eilish Hurley, and a small group of post-primary teachers. The benchmarks were one of the two foundations on which we built the programme of support for post-primary teachers of English as a second language that was launched in June 2000 (the other was a specially designed version of the European Language Portfolio).

The first version of the benchmarks served us well, providing a general map of the ground to be covered and orienting the development of English language proficiency to the linguistic and communicative requirements of the different areas of the curriculum. Nevertheless, as we developed more and more support material for teachers – planning tools, diagnostic and assessment instruments and information sheets, as well as teaching aids of various kinds – we came increasingly to recognize its limitations.

This new version of the benchmarks seeks to overcome those limitations by (i) defining global scales of English language proficiency in greater detail than previously, (ii) supplementing them with new global scales of linguistic competence and general communicative ability, (iii) creating a separate section for personal identification and classroom interaction, which provide a necessary underpinning for all language support, (iv) introducing a new section that focuses on learning to learn and the development of cultural awareness, and (v) rewriting the subject-specific scales to take account of the five communicative skills described in the global benchmarks. In compiling this version we have been able to draw on the wealth of experience and insights that teachers have shared with us at in-service seminars over the past three years.

The original benchmarks were our starting point for developing our version of the European Language Portfolio for non-English-speaking post-primary students and our *Language Training Manual*. Over the coming year these will be revised in the light of this new version of the benchmarks. We thus plan to start the school year 2004–05 with a fully updated English language support curriculum, European Language Portfolio and *Language Training Manual*.

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Introduction

What are the benchmarks and where do they come from?

The English language proficiency benchmarks presented in this document are intended to facilitate the design and delivery of English language teaching and support for non-English-speaking students in Irish post-primary schools.

The benchmarks derive from the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), which distinguishes five communicative skills – listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, writing – and six levels of proficiency – A1 (BREAKTHROUGH), A2 (WAYSTAGE), B1 (THRESHOLD), B2 (VANTAGE), C1 (EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL PROFICIENCY), and C2 (MASTERY). Proficiency in each skill is defined at each level by a series of “can do” statements (the appendix reproduces the so-called self-assessment grid from the *Common European Framework*, which summarizes the six levels in relation to the five skills).

The benchmarks differ from the *Common European Framework*, however, in three important respects:

1. They do not describe the full range of English language proficiency achievable by a non-English-speaking student at post-primary level, but rather specify the minimum proficiency required for full participation in mainstream schooling. For that reason, the benchmarks correspond to the first three levels of the *Common European Framework* only.
2. Whereas the descriptions in the *Common European Framework* reflect a trajectory of language learning that typically covers many years of formal education, from young adolescent to mature adult, the post-primary benchmarks are designed to support a process that must be as compact as possible if it is to meet the needs of the target group.
3. Whereas the *Common European Framework* is concerned in the first instance with language learning for general communicative purposes, the post-primary benchmarks are focussed entirely on the communicative needs imposed by the curriculum. This limitation has two consequences. First, the benchmarks are defined in terms of the communicative practices of the post-primary classroom and major themes of the post-primary curriculum. And secondly, they take account of the fact that English language support is provided on a withdrawal basis: they are formulated so as to emphasize the importance of providing students with the means of continuing to learn English during the many hours that they spend each week in mainstream classes.

These considerations help to explain the structure of what follows. Part I provides three summary scales: (i) the *Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency*, which are effectively a domain-specific interpretation of the first three levels of the self-assessment grid from the *Common European Framework* (see appendix); (ii) *Global scales of language competence*, which draw on the *Common European Framework* to specify progression in vocabulary, grammar, phonology, and orthography; and (iii) *Global scales of general communicative ability*, which likewise draw on the *Common European Framework* to specify progression in spoken fluency, planning, compensating, monitoring and repair, flexibility, and turn-taking. Part II offers two scales that focus on *Personal identification* and *Classroom interaction*: the point of departure for language support but also its most important guiding threads. Part III is concerned with learning to learn and the development of cultural awareness, providing suggestions as to how these should be dealt with at A1, A2 and B1. Finally, Part IV supplements the general descriptions provided in Parts I and II with five scales that focus on the communicative demands of different areas of the curriculum.

Uses of the post-primary benchmarks

In conjunction with the other tools and materials developed by IILT, the post-primary benchmarks can be used to

- *define the language support teacher's task;*
- *assess the proficiency of each non-English-speaking student newly admitted to the school;*

- *monitor his/her progress;*
- *identify the point at which he/she can be fully integrated in the mainstream;*
- *select appropriate learning activities and materials.*

Applying the benchmarks

The starting point for language support can vary greatly, depending on the individual student's age, mother tongue, ethnic background, and previous educational experience. As a consequence, the benchmarks should be applied to individual students rather than to groups. If possible, individual needs should be determined by observing students in mainstream classes. This should quickly reveal what level of language proficiency they already have, if any, and what strategies they are able to deploy to compensate for linguistic deficit.

Later, as the student begins to integrate socially and gradually becomes more confident and self-assured in the classroom, the language support teacher should identify, in collaboration with subject teachers, what topics will occupy the class during the coming six or eight weeks. The benchmarks can then be used to focus language support on those areas that will help the student to begin to identify and engage with what is taking place in mainstream classes.

Inevitably, students enter language support at different stages of English language proficiency, and for some the lowest levels of the benchmarks may not be relevant. For example, a student who attended school for the latter part of last school year will already be familiar with school routines and classroom activities when school resumes in September and can focus immediately on the benchmark areas that support work in mainstream classes.

Students do not all learn in the same way and at the same rate. This makes it even more critical to identify individual pathways of learning, so that the apparently less able student may be helped to progress along a path and in a way that meets his/her particular language learning needs. The individual student's progress through the benchmarks will rarely be entirely predictable and consistent; some skills may develop more quickly than others, and at any particular level some of the tasks articulated in the benchmarks may prove to be more difficult than others.

European Language Portfolio

IILT has developed a version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) for use with the benchmarks. The ELP consists of three parts:

- *Language passport* – This allows the student to articulate his/her linguistic identity and to set broad learning objectives. It also allows the language support teacher to record a regular assessment of the child's developing proficiency in global terms that are ultimately derived from the *Common European Framework*.
- *Language biography* – This has two purposes: (i) to make the student aware of him/herself as a language learner and (ii) to record his/her progress in learning English. This latter purpose is served by a series of self-assessment checklists derived from the benchmarks. Against each item are three boxes, labelled *With a lot of help*, *With a little help*, and *With no help*. Regularly shading in and dating these boxes provides a detailed record of progress that complements the more general record maintained in the language passport. Together the two records should be invaluable to other language support teachers who may subsequently work with the student, as well as to mainstream subject teachers, school principals and inspectors.
- *Dossier* – In this part of the ELP the student collects worksheets, vocabulary lists, grammar rules and other material relevant to his/her learning of English. The dossier provides practical corroboration of the profile of language proficiency and learning progress recorded in the language passport and language biography.



Part I




Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency and global scales of linguistic competence and general communicative ability

The global benchmarks provide a general definition of levels A1, A2 and B1 in relation to LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION and WRITING. Level A1 BREAKTHROUGH launches the educational process by focusing on (i) the very basic communication necessary in order to familiarize students with the daily routines and general environment of school and (ii) basic vocabulary and concepts they will encounter in mainstream classes. As its name implies, A2 WAYSTAGE defines an intermediate level at which the student is able increasingly to benefit linguistically and educationally from his/her presence in the mainstream classroom. And Level B1 THRESHOLD defines the communicative proficiency that students must achieve in order to become fully integrated in the mainstream. As noted in the Introduction, the benchmarks should always be read and applied with due regard for the individual student's age and previous educational experience.

The successive levels defined in the benchmarks involve linguistic development that is also educational. Reading, for example, progresses from familiarity with the alphabet and simple acts of comprehension based on word recognition (A1), through the ability to read simple texts that make frequent use of familiar vocabulary (A2), to the regular deployment of basic study skills, e.g. using diagrams and illustrations to support reading comprehension (B1). Similarly, writing begins as a matter of copying or writing individual words and copying simple sentences from the board (A1); the student then moves on to writing his/her own sentences (A2); and from there he/she progresses to the composition of short texts (B1). These are essentially the same developmental paths as are followed by native speaker students, though in most cases at an earlier age; and for that reason it is necessary to supplement the benchmarks with global scales of linguistic competence and general communicative ability. These define the *quality* of language and oral communication appropriate to each of the three levels.

Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	<p>Can understand basic words and phrases concerning him/herself, family and school.</p> <p>Can understand simple questions and instructions when teachers and other students speak slowly and clearly and use visual cues (facial expression, gesture, mime, etc.).</p>	<p>Can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to him/herself and family, classroom activities and routines, school instructions and procedures, friends and out-of-class activities.</p> <p>Can understand routine instructions given in all school contexts (classroom, gym, playground, etc.) and outside school (e.g., by a traffic warden).</p> <p>Can follow at a general level topics covered in the mainstream class when key concepts and vocabulary have been studied in advance and there is appropriate visual support.</p>	<p>Can understand detailed instructions given in all school contexts (classroom, gym, playground, etc.).</p> <p>Can understand the main points of topics that are presented and texts that are read aloud in the mainstream classroom provided that key concepts and vocabulary have been studied in advance.</p> <p>Can understand the main points of a short film on a familiar topic relevant to the mainstream curriculum.</p> <p>Can follow classroom talk between two or more native speakers, only occasionally needing to request clarification.</p>
	Reading 	<p>Can recognize the letters of the alphabet and numbers.</p> <p>Can understand basic signs and simple notices in the school and on the way to school.</p> <p>Can understand basic words on labels/posters in the classroom and on maps, diagrams, etc. in textbooks.</p> <p>Can identify basic words and phrases in a new piece of text.</p> <p>Can use the alphabet to find particular items in lists (e.g., a name in a telephone book).</p>	<p>Can read and understand very short, simple texts that contain a high proportion of previously learnt vocabulary on familiar subjects.</p> <p>Can use key words, diagrams, illustrations and comprehension questions to find specific information in mainstream textbooks.</p>	<p>Can read and understand the main points in texts encountered in the mainstream class, provided the thematic area and key vocabulary are already familiar or specially prepared in advance.</p> <p>Can use key words, diagrams and illustrations to support reading comprehension and learn new words/concepts.</p> <p>Can read and understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters, newspapers/magazines and short works of fiction.</p> <p>Can follow clearly written instructions (e.g. for carrying out a classroom task, conducting a simple experiment, assembling or using a piece of equipment, etc.).</p>

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	<p>Can greet, take leave, say <i>please</i> and <i>thank you</i>, and use very basic words and phrases to ask for directions to another place in the school.</p> <p>Can ask for attention in class.</p> <p>Can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things and help him/her formulate what he/she is trying to say.</p> <p>Can make basic requests in the classroom or playground (e.g., for the loan of a pencil) and respond appropriately to the basic requests of others.</p>	<p>Can respond with confidence to simple questions about family, friends, school work, hobbies, holidays, etc., but is not always able to keep the conversation going.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine classroom tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics/activities.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges with peers, though he/she usually can't understand enough to keep the conversation going.</p>	<p>Can cope with most communicative situations likely to arise in the classroom.</p> <p>Can repeat what has been said (e.g., by the teacher giving instructions) and convey the information to another person.</p> <p>Can engage spontaneously with other students in discussing topics of common interest (songs, football, pop stars, etc.), though he/she may still have some difficulty making him/herself understood from time to time.</p>
	Spoken Production 	<p>Can say the letters of the alphabet and numbers.</p> <p>Can use simple phrases and sentences to describe in very basic terms where he/she lives and people he/she knows, especially family members.</p>	<p>Can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms his/her family, daily routines and activities, and plans for the immediate or more distant future (e.g., out-of-school activities, holiday plans).</p> <p>Can use a series of phrases and sentences to express personal feelings in a simple way.</p>	<p>Can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, hopes and ambitions, or to summarize information from a text that is being studied in class.</p> <p>Can connect phrases in a simple way in order to summarize the plot of a film he/she has seen or a book he/she has read and describe his/her reactions.</p> <p>Can briefly give explanations and reasons for opinions and plans.</p>
W R I T I N G	Writing 	<p>Can write his/her name and address and the name of the school.</p> <p>Can copy numbers, words and short phrases that are being learnt in class.</p> <p>Can write labels and/or numbers on a picture, map or diagram.</p> <p>Can copy short sentences from the board.</p> <p>Can fill in forms with personal details (e.g. the language passport section of the European Language Portfolio).</p>	<p>Can enter newly-learnt words in a personal dictionary (e.g. in the European Language Portfolio), possibly including sample sentences.</p> <p>Can write short, simple texts on familiar or very specific new topics (e.g. for inclusion in the European Language Portfolio).</p> <p>Can write a short message (e.g., a postcard) to a friend.</p>	<p>Can write simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest, e.g. a brief summary of a book or film.</p> <p>Can write simple connected text that meets the different writing requirements of the curriculum, using key words and phrases from textbooks.</p> <p>Can write a short personal letter or a short entry in the European Language Portfolio describing experiences and impressions.</p>

Global scales of linguistic competence

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
Vocabulary range/control	Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations and school subjects.	Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics, including school subjects. Has a sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs.	Has sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself, sometimes with circumlocutions, on most topics pertinent to his everyday life inside and outside school. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.
Grammatical accuracy	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns that he/she has learnt by repeated use.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – e.g., with tenses and agreement. Nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.	Communicates with reasonable accuracy on familiar topics (those being studied or occurring frequently during the school day). Generally good control, though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Unfamiliar situations or topics present a challenge, however, particularly when the connection to familiar patterns is not obvious.
Phonological control	Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with students from different language backgrounds.	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but it is sometimes necessary to ask for repetition.	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.
Orthographic control	Can copy numbers, key words and short phrases from the board, flashcards, posters, textbooks, etc. Can write his/her name, address, other personal details, and the name of the school.	Can copy or write short sentences or phrases related to what is being studied in class. Sentence breaks are generally accurate. Words that he/she uses orally may be written with phonetic accuracy but inaccurate spelling.	Can produce continuous writing that is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.

Global scales of general communicative ability






	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
Spoken fluency	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident. Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.	Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in false starts and pauses, he/she is able to keep going effectively without help. Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
Planning	Can recall and rehearse basic words and phrases from his/her very limited repertoire.	Can recall and rehearse an appropriate set of phrases from his/her repertoire.	Can rehearse and try out new combinations and expressions, inviting feedback. Can work out how to communicate the main point(s) he/she wants to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express.
Compensating	Can use facial expressions and gestures to compensate for lack of language in familiar and routine situations.	Can use an inadequate word from his repertoire and use gesture to clarify what he/she wants to say. Can identify what he/she means by using a combination of general utterance and gesture (e.g. pointing to a piece of scientific equipment and saying, "I'd like this, please").	Can define the features of something concrete for which he/she can't remember the word. Can convey meaning by qualifying a word meaning something similar (e.g. <i>a truck for people = bus</i>). Can use a simple word meaning something similar to the concept he/she wants to convey and then invite "correction".
Monitoring and repair	Can use facial expressions and gestures, and in some cases basic words and phrases, to elicit conversational repair from the person he/she is speaking to.	Can use simple questions to seek clarification or to elicit conversational repair from the person he/she is speaking to.	Can correct mix-ups with tenses or expressions which lead to misunderstandings provided the interlocutor indicates there is a problem. Can ask for confirmation that a form used is correct. Can start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.
Flexibility	Can exercise very limited flexibility via the recombination of basic words and phrases.	Can adapt well rehearsed memorized simple phrases to particular circumstances through limited lexical substitution. Can expand learned phrases through simple recombinations of their elements.	Can adapt his expression to deal with less routine, even difficult, situations. Can exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he/she wants.
Turn-taking	Can use basic words and phrases to indicate that he/she wishes to speak. Can take a turn when others provide conversational space.	Can use simple techniques to start, maintain, or end a short conversation. Can initiate, maintain and close simple, face-to-face conversation.	Can intervene in a discussion on a familiar topic, using a suitable phrase to get the floor. Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.

Part II






Personal identification and classroom interaction

Personal identification and classroom interaction are the starting point for language support and its two most important guiding threads: students' access to education depends crucially on their developing ability to (i) give an account of themselves and (ii) participate appropriately in classroom interaction. In other words, the two scales in this section provide a point of departure for language support but also a general underpinning for the development of subject-specific communicative skills.

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can understand basic personal questions asked by the teacher or another student (e.g., <i>What is your name?, How old are you?</i>).	Can follow simple conversations between peers that relate to him/herself.	Can understand what is said by teachers and peers relevant to him/herself without the need for frequent repetition or supporting gestures.
	Reading 	Can use the alphabet to find his/her name in a list.	Can read very short and simple texts with a high frequency of familiar words on topics related to him/herself and family.	Can read and understand age-appropriate texts about people whose lives are similar to/different from his/her own.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can indicate personal needs (e.g., to go to the toilet). Can answer basic questions about him/herself (name, age, family, etc.) when supported by prompts. Can respond non-verbally (e.g., with a nod or shake of the head) or with single-word or very brief answers to basic questions about his/her likes and dislikes.	Can reply with confidence to familiar questions about his/her name, age, number of brothers and sisters, etc. Can initiate simple conversation on a personal topic (e.g., why he/she was late for school). Can use simple phrases and sentences to talk about him/herself and his/her country of origin. In response to questions from the teacher and other students, can say how he/she feels (tired, upset, ill, etc.).	Can ask and respond to questions on a wide range of personal topics (family, home, interests, etc.), including past experience. Can articulate personal worries or concerns to the teacher or some other responsible person.
	Spoken Production 	Can make a short, possibly incomplete statement about him/herself.	Can describe in simple terms his/her own appearance, including eye and hair colour, size, height. Can describe in simple terms his/her family, daily routines, plans (e.g., for holidays), likes and dislikes. Can give a simple account of what he/she did in school.	Can talk in an age-appropriate way about the people, history and geography of his/her country of origin. Can explain in an age-appropriate way his/her personal attitudes (e.g., family values, ethnic or religious difference). Can give a detailed account of what has taken place in school and describe his/her successes and achievements.
W R I T T I N G	Writing 	Can copy or write his/her name, address, other personal details, and name of school. Can copy simple sentences about him/herself from the board (e.g., <i>My name is ... , I live in ...</i>).	Can write short, simple texts describing his/her family, daily routines, etc. Can write short, simple texts describing personal interests, likes and dislikes (food, TV programmes, etc.).	Can write connected text about important personal experiences or family events (a new baby in the family, travelling to Ireland, etc.) Can write connected text about personal likes and dislikes, hobbies, interests, etc. Can write a brief comparison of his/her life now and in the past (e.g., at primary school, in another country).

CLASSROOM INTERACTION

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	<p>Can understand basic school and classroom rules when they are explained very simply and with appropriate visual support (e.g. gestures).</p> <p>Can understand the names of different rooms in the school, items of school equipment, resources, etc., when they occur in instructions.</p> <p>Can follow basic instructions from peers for playing games in the playground.</p>	<p>Can understand instructions given in the classroom, gym, playground, etc.</p> <p>Can understand basic information about half days, school closures, doctor's visits, etc.</p> <p>Can understand at a general level topics dealt with in the mainstream class when they are introduced and explained clearly.</p>	<p>Can understand detailed instructions in the classroom, gym, etc.</p> <p>Can understand presentations given by other students on familiar topics (<i>My interests, My family, etc.</i>).</p> <p>Can understand communication between the teacher and other students.</p>
	Reading 	<p>Can understand labels on doors in different parts of the school (<i>Hall, Secretary, Staff Room, etc.</i>).</p> <p>Can understand signs in the school (<i>Fire, Exit, No running, etc.</i>).</p>	<p>Can read and understand texts about school that use a high frequency of words already familiar or recently learnt.</p>	<p>Can read and understand texts on school subjects provided that difficult key words and/or concepts are introduced beforehand.</p>
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	<p>Can greet the teacher and other students and say goodbye.</p> <p>Can ask for attention in class and indicate if he/she has not understood.</p> <p>Can use <i>please</i> and <i>thank you</i> appropriately.</p> <p>Can respond non-verbally (e.g., with a nod or shake of the head) or with single-word or very brief answers to basic questions on classroom issues.</p> <p>Can use basic words and phrases to ask for classroom objects and materials (book, crayons, paper, etc.)</p>	<p>Can use a variety of greetings and leave-takings naturally and appropriately.</p> <p>Can generally sustain a simple conversation with another pupil when working collaboratively in the classroom.</p> <p>Can ask simple questions based on words and phrases from the textbook.</p> <p>With appropriate support from the teacher, can explain a situation that has arisen (e.g. a dispute with another pupil).</p> <p>Can pass on a simple message from one teacher to another.</p>	<p>Can interact spontaneously in the playground, engaging with other pupils in games and activities.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about specific classroom topics or in general discussion.</p> <p>Can give parents a detailed account of what happens at school.</p>
	Spoken Production 	<p>Can use key words and simple phrases/sentences to describe a playground game.</p>	<p>Can use a series of phrases and sentences to articulate a simple description or narrative.</p>	<p>Can give a short, connected talk about the school.</p> <p>Can give other students a short, connected account of going to school in another country.</p>
W R I T I N G	Writing 	<p>Can copy letters and key words from the board, including phrases or simple sentences related to a classroom topic.</p>	<p>Can write short texts describing the classroom or other pupils in the class.</p> <p>Can write short texts based on a topic recently studied in class</p>	<p>Can write a short, connected account of the daily routine in the school.</p> <p>Can write a short, connected account of his/her friends in school and what they like to do together.</p>

Part III

Learning to learn and developing cultural awareness

As language support students move from A1 through A2 to B1, they need to develop study skills and cultural awareness as part of their general educational toolkit.

The first table in this section summarizes learning-to-learn activities/skills appropriate to A1, A2 and B1 under four headings: *Identifying learning activities*, *Setting learning objectives*, *Organizing learning*, and *Monitoring learning progress*. The table serves as a guide to the kinds of teacher assistance that students are likely to need when working with the European Language Portfolio, which is explicitly designed to support the development of learners' goal-setting and self-assessment skills.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of developing the cultural awareness of *all* post-primary students, helping them to understand and accept cultural difference as a source of enrichment rather than conflict. The second table in this section identifies four focuses of cultural awareness for language support students – *Patterns of daily life*, *Cultural expectations*, *Values and attitudes*, *Cultural events* – and summarizes communicative tasks appropriate to each of them at A1, A2 and B1.

LEARNING TO LEARN

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
Identifying learning activities	With help from the teacher, can tick items on an illustrated list to identify familiar, useful or preferred learning activities.	When prompted by the teacher, can draw up a list of familiar, useful or preferred learning activities.	Can draw up a list of familiar, useful or preferred learning activities without prompting.
Setting learning objectives	In interaction with the teacher and other students, can identify simple, short-term objectives and record them in key words and formulaic phrases.	In interaction with the teacher and other students, can identify short and medium-term objectives and record them in short, simple sentences.	In interaction with the teacher and other students, can identify short and medium-term objectives in relation to curriculum demands and record them in writing.
Organizing learning	With help from the teacher, can use a picture dictionary to compile lists of words and phrases in appropriate categories (e.g. parts of the body, items of clothing, the equipment countered in different classrooms).	With help from the teacher, can create more elaborate aids to learning, e.g. vocabulary organized according to semantic field, colour-coded grammatical rules and examples.	With help from the teacher, can use appropriate works of reference to supplement his/her own learning aids and can categorize language items according to broad differences in language use between curriculum subjects.
Monitoring learning progress	When prompted by the teacher, can use symbols, key words and formulaic phrases to record which objectives have been achieved and which need further work.	When prompted by the teacher, can use short, simple sentences to record which objectives have been achieved and which need further work.	When prompted by the teacher, can write a brief review of learning progress, with reference to specific communicative skills and language items.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
Patterns of everyday life	Can use key words and formulaic phrases to identify/communicate differences in daily routine/cultural practice as shown in, e.g., textbook illustrations.	Can describe in short, simple sentences his/her own daily routines and cultural practices and indicate how these differ from the routines and practices of other students.	Can give a brief spoken or written account of his/her cultural identity based on family routines and practices.
Cultural expectations	Can use key words and formulaic phrases to identify/communicate ways in which his/her behaviour is constrained by cultural or religious considerations.	Can describe in short, simple sentences what is expected in his/her own culture and say whether it is similar to or different from what is expected of other students.	Can give a brief spoken or written account of his/her cultural and religious values, relating them to personal experience and cultural knowledge.
Values and attitudes	Can express agreement or disagreement with simple statements of attitude or belief, e.g. by saying <i>yes/no</i> or nodding/shaking head.	Can use short, simple sentences to say whether he/she is for or against an opinion or course of action that has cultural or religious implications.	Can give a brief spoken or written explanation of his/her position in relation to specific social and cultural issues, e.g., smoking, drinking alcohol, state lotteries.
Cultural events	Can use key words and formulaic phrases to respond to and comment on illustrations of cultural or religious events.	Can use short, simple sentences to identify the main features of cultural and religious events.	Can give a brief spoken or written account of cultural and religious events with which he/she is familiar

Part IV

Subject-specific scales

The scales in this section focus on five different areas of the curriculum which between them embrace the varieties of communication the language support student must master in order to become fully integrated in the mainstream:

Physical education and sports






Mathematics

Science subjects






History and Geography

English






PHYSICAL EDUCATION

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can follow very basic instructions for games when the teacher and/or other students also demonstrate what is required.	Can follow instructions for games when they are spoken clearly and slowly.	Can understand the main points of a television broadcast involving a game or sport with which he/she is familiar.
	Reading 	Can recognize the names of familiar sports and sports stars.	Can read and understand the basic rules of familiar sports provided key vocabulary has been prepared in advance.	Can read and understand short media reports on games or sports with which he/she is familiar.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can indicate, if necessary non-verbally, lack of understanding and need for clarification in the PE or games class. Can indicate his/her readiness to play, participate, etc.	Can ask for clarification of rules. Can engage with other students in the simple and direct exchange of information necessary to manage a game.	Can use colloquial expressions appropriate to particular sports and games. Can participate in discussions about team performance and defend his/her own performance in a match.
	Spoken Production 	Can name familiar sports and games and the equipment associated with them.	Can use a series of phrases and sentences to give a simple explanation of rules.	Can give a short connected account of the rules of a game or sport he/she is familiar with. Can give a short connected account of a sporting event in which he/she took part.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	Can write the names of familiar sports and games and items of equipment associated with them; also the names of familiar sports stars.	Can use a series of phrases and sentences to write a simple description of his/her participation in a game or sport.	Can write a short connected explanation of the rules of a game or sport he/she is familiar with. Can write a short connected text describing a sporting event in which he/she took part.






MATHEMATICS

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can recognize and understand numbers and the words for shapes and basic mathematical categories and processes when they are spoken slowly and clearly.	Can understand simple mathematical processes when they are demonstrated by the teacher on the board, provided that new words and concepts have been prepared in advance.	Can understand the range of mathematical processes relevant to his/her level in the school when they are demonstrated by the teacher on the board, provided that new words and concepts have been prepared in advance.
	Reading 	Can use knowledge of numbers and mathematical symbols to follow very basic problems in the textbook.	Can understand simple problems when they are set out in mathematical language but needs assistance when they are written in everyday language.	Can read and understand most textbook tasks and problems, though there are still gaps in his/her vocabulary.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can use his/her basic knowledge of numbers and mathematical symbols/processes to participate in classroom interaction.	Can ask for assistance in understanding textbook tasks. Can ask other students to confirm solutions to problems. Can contribute to the collaborative solution of familiar and routine mathematical problems.	Can use everyday terms to engage in discussion of solutions to mathematical problems. Can ask and answer questions about mathematical procedures. Can collaborate with other students in the exploration and solution of unfamiliar mathematical problems.
	Spoken Production 	Can say numbers and the words for shapes and basic mathematical categories and processes.	Can use a series of phrases and sentences to say how a familiar mathematical problem is solved.	Can give a simple, connected explanation of the mathematical processes relevant to his/her level in the school.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	Can work through very basic examples from the textbook, using his/her knowledge of numbers and mathematical symbols/processes to compensate for lack of language.	Can work through examples from the textbook, using phrases and simple sentences to describe/explain processes.	Can work through examples from the textbook, producing simple connected text to describe/explain processes.






SCIENCE SUBJECTS

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can understand basic words and phrases denoting scientific objects, processes and equipment when they are spoken clearly.	Can follow very simple scientific explanations provided that they are given in slow careful speech and key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance.	Can understand the teacher's explanations of experiments, scientific processes, etc. when supported by, e.g., diagrams on the board or illustrations in the textbook. Can understand the main points of audio-visual presentations on science topics provided that key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance.
	Reading 	Can understand labels on diagrams and associate them with appropriate pieces of equipment.	Can use diagrams to access the text that accompanies them. Can follow simple written instructions for familiar, previously demonstrated experiments, observations, etc.	Can understand textbook explanations and examples provided that new words and concepts have been prepared in advance. Can follow written directions for simple observational or experimental procedures that he/she has not encountered before.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can indicate lack of comprehension and ask for assistance with scientific vocabulary. Can use basic scientific words and phrases and visual support (e.g. pointing, gestures) to participate in group work.	Can use words and phrases from the textbook to answer simple questions and participate in group work.	Can engage spontaneously and fully in group work (observations, experiments, etc.). Can contribute to discussions of observations and experiments carried out in class.
	Spoken Production 	Can say basic words and phrases denoting scientific objects, processes and equipment	Can use a series of phrases and sentences to give a simple description/explanation of basic scientific processes.	Can give a short connected description/explanation of scientific processes with which he/she is familiar.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	Can use basic scientific words to label charts and diagrams. Can write basic scientific words into a gapped text. Can draw diagrams that illustrate basic scientific processes and simple experiments.	Can use phrases and sentences to write simple descriptions of experiments when guided by a writing frame. Can use phrases and sentences to write simple text to accompany scientific diagrams. Can use phrases and sentences to make simple notes about observations, experiments, etc. carried out in class.	Can use notes, headings and reference works to write short connected descriptions of scientific experiments, processes or concepts. Can contribute short connected text to group projects. Can write short connected summaries of observations, experiments, etc. carried out in class.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can understand basic words that arise in mainstream history and geography classes when they are spoken slowly and clearly.	Can follow simple explanations in the mainstream history or geography class provided that they are given in slow careful speech and key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance.	Can understand the teacher's introductions to new topics in the mainstream history or geography class provided that key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance. Can follow the main points of media presentations on familiar historical or geographic topics.
	Reading 	Can understand key words, e.g. names of people and places, in history and geography textbooks.	Can extract specific information from history and geography textbooks. Can use illustrations, graphs, tables, etc. to access the main ideas of units in history and geography textbooks. Can follow simple written instructions for familiar learning procedures in history and geography textbooks	Can use reference works to enhance understanding of the history or geography textbook. Can read simple texts about people and places in other times and other places for interest as well as for study purposes.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can indicate lack of comprehension and ask for assistance with vocabulary specific to history/geography. Can use basic words and phrases and visual support (e.g. pointing to appropriate pictures or graphics in the textbook) to participate in group work.	Can use words and phrases from the textbook to answer simple questions and participate in group work.	Can engage spontaneously and fully in group work (e.g., history or geography projects), though he/she will still need help with unfamiliar words and concepts. Can contribute to class discussions of historical and geographical topics.
	Spoken Production 	Can say basic words that arise in mainstream history and geography classes.	Can use phrases and sentences to give a very simple account of people, events, places, etc. dealt with in the mainstream history or geography class.	Can give short connected accounts of people, events, places, etc. dealt with in the mainstream history or geography class.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	Can copy facts from simple history and geography texts. Can draw on the textbook to fill in names and subject-specific terms in gapped history and geography texts. Can draw and label simple time-lines and maps.	Can use phrases and sentences to write simple accounts of people, events, places, etc. dealt with in the mainstream history or geography class. Can use phrases and sentences to write simple text to accompany timelines, maps, etc. Can use phrases and sentences to make simple notes about topics dealt with in the history or geography class.	Can write a short connected account of an event in history as a first person narrative. Can write a short connected description of a geographical region or product. Can contribute short connected text to group projects. Can write short connected summaries of topics studied in the history or geography class.






ENGLISH

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	Can understand key words and basic phrases when they are pronounced clearly.	Can follow simple explanations provided that they are given in slow careful speech and key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance. Can follow the main points of a short text read aloud provided it makes frequent use of familiar vocabulary.	Can understand the teacher's introductions to new topics in the mainstream English class provided that key vocabulary and concepts have been prepared in advance. Can follow simple dramatic performances provided that they deal with a familiar situation/topic and make frequent use of familiar words and phrases.
	Reading 	Can understand key words and basic phrases in simple written texts.	Can understand very simple narrative texts with the help of word lists and/or illustrations. Can use titles, headings, etc. to establish the general theme of simple texts. Can distinguish between text types studied in the mainstream English class, e.g. stories, news reports, advertisements, instructions.	Can access literary and other texts studied in the English class provided he/she has help with unfamiliar and/or infrequent vocabulary. Can distinguish between different text purposes (to inform, entertain, persuade, move, etc.).
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	Can indicate lack of comprehension and ask for assistance with vocabulary. Can respond to simple questions non-verbally (e.g., with a nod or shake of the head) and/or with key words and simple phrases.	Can ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics. Can ask for clarification of unknown words and expressions. Can use familiar words and phrases to participate in group work.	Can engage spontaneously and fully in group work (e.g., devising a short play to be performed in front of the class), though he/she will still need help with unfamiliar words and concepts. Can ask about different linguistic and stylistic features in the texts studied in the mainstream English class.
	Spoken Production 	Can say basic words that arise in the mainstream English class.	Can use phrases and sentences to create a very simple précis of or response to texts studied in the mainstream English class.	Can give a short connected opinion on a story, poem or other text read in class.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	Can copy words and phrases from the board or textbook. Can use basic prompts to fill in gapped texts.	Can use phrases and simple sentences to write a short summary of the main points of a text. Can use key words, phrases and simple sentences to write a very brief response to a simple poem or prose text. Can write a simple letter. Can use text as a stimulus to write a simple dialogue.	Can write a short connected summary of a poem, short story, film, etc. Can write connected notes on texts using headings to provide structure.

Appendix

The Common Reference Levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* as summarized in the self-assessment grid

*(Common European Framework of Reference for Languages,
Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.26–27)*

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening 	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I 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.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading 	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction 	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I 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).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production 	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	Writing 	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.