

# Understanding EnglishScore

## How to assess and set required scores

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June 2022

## Executive summary

Individuals and organisations around the world rely on EnglishScore to provide accurate and trusted assessments of English language proficiency across the A2 to C1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Results from EnglishScore assessments may be used to make hiring decisions, staffing decisions (i.e. promotion or development), judgments of readiness for other exams or to inform further study.

This guide will help individuals and organisations to:

- understand the different range of Business English skills and levels
- understand how EnglishScore results relate to CEFR levels and commonly used exams
- set and measure English language skills necessary for specific job roles and functioning in the workplace.

As EnglishScore is used primarily as an assessment of workplace English, the descriptions for each score range relate to a 'group' of employees and describe what an employee is likely capable of doing.

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## What is the CEFR?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a standard description of language proficiency at different levels and is used by teachers, learners, policy experts and other stakeholders for assessment, learning and courseware design. It is the standard used by employers, education institutions and governments around the world.

According to the Council of Europe (2001), the CEFR is intended to 'provide a common metalanguage for the language education profession in order to facilitate communication, networking, mobility and the recognition of courses taken and examinations passed.' The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, with accompanying descriptors for each of the six levels to indicate progressive mastery.

EnglishScore was designed from the start to align to CEFR. A recently convened panel of experts conducted a standard-setting exercise to confirm the alignment, with results available [here](#) (British Council EnglishScore, 2022).



CEFR	EnglishScore
C1	599
B2	500
B1	400
A2	300
A1	200
Pre A1	100
	0

## Workplace guidelines

### How to set required scores with EnglishScore

1. Identify which job roles require English language skills. Some job roles may have very similar requirements, so they can be grouped together for the levelling activity.
2. For each job role (or job group), identify the required English language skills. This can be done through a combination of:
  - a. reviewing the role description
  - b. consultation with HR
  - c. surveys/discussion with the employees and their managers.
3. As part of this review, it is also important to identify which skills are required (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and the levels required for each one, e.g. some roles may require advanced speaking and listening skills, but comparatively lower reading and writing skills.
4. Using the questionnaire on the next page, place a tick (✓) next to the most appropriate answers. The column with the highest number of ticks indicates the most appropriate required CEFR level.
5. Using the table on the next page, read the descriptors relevant for the indicated CEFR level to confirm that it most accurately matches the job role or group.

This will give you the recommended EnglishScore score range and associated CEFR level.

Where a job role overlaps two or more bands, the decision maker should use their best judgement. Other factors such as the talent pool available, language training available and other support for the role can also influence the decision.

Note that these decisions are best judgments and always include a degree of uncertainty.

## Employee levelling questionnaire

Find out what CEFR level is required for a job

This questionnaire should be used by employers when considering the desired or required level of English language proficiency for a specific job role. It may be completed by:

- employees in the current role
- managers preparing a job description
- senior executives when considering the English needs of particular departments.

Please read each question in **purple** carefully and place a tick (✓) in the appropriate area. The column with the highest number of ticks is likely the most appropriate required CEFR level and should be cross-referenced with the CEFR descriptors in the next section.

An interactive, digital copy of this questionnaire may be accessed [here](#).

CEFR	<A2	A2	B1	B2	C1
<b>English proficiency required</b>	None	Minimal	Intermediate	Advanced	Proficient
<i>Overall description of English language proficiency and impact on the business.</i>	Employee does not require English at all in routine activities. If miscommunication happens, there is no serious consequence for the business.	Limited day-to-day use of English, e.g. back office roles that are not customer-facing. If miscommunication happens, there is no serious consequence for the business.	Uses some English day to day, either internally or with customers. If miscommunication happens, there are minor consequences for the business.	Uses English every day, with a mix of audiences. Miscommunication could cause some reputational or financial loss.	Uses English every day, often in high-stakes situations where there are major consequences for the business if miscommunications occur.
<b>1. Does this person need to give and understand instructions in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to give or receive instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> follows basic instructions for routine business activities	<input type="checkbox"/> follows instructions for routine business activities and gives basic instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> gives and receives more advanced and detailed instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> creates and follows detailed instructions for complex tasks

<b>2. Does this person need to have face-to-face conversations in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to have conversations	<input type="checkbox"/> has conversations on basic, routine business topics	<input type="checkbox"/> has conversations on basic, routine business topics and responds to common issues	<input type="checkbox"/> has conversations on routine and complex business topics; responds to inquiries and complaints and solves problems	<input type="checkbox"/> has fluent, professional, complex conversations with minimal miscommunication
<b>3. Does this person need to have phone conversations in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to make phone calls	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to make and receive very simple, low-stakes phone calls; can leave messages if required	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to make and receive phone calls with time to prepare	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to make and receive complex, lengthy phone calls	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to make and receive non-routine, complex, lengthy phone calls
<b>4. Does this person need to read and send emails in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to read or send emails	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to read and send emails on basic, routine business interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to read and send emails on basic, routine business interactions and respond to common issues	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to read and send emails on routine business interactions; needs to respond to inquiries, complaints and solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to read and send professional emails with minimal errors

<b>5. Does this person need to attend meetings/discussions in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to attend or understand meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to attends meetings with basic instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> attends meetings; can contribute if prepared	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to follow complex discussions; can give opinions when asked	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to lead meetings; can contribute to and facilitate discussions
<b>6. Does this person need to write reports in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to write reports	<input type="checkbox"/> writes simple notes with basic information	<input type="checkbox"/> writes short memos and notes; also writes simple reports using a template	<input type="checkbox"/> writes detailed reports with recommendations and opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> writes complex, detailed, lengthy reports
<b>7. Does this person need to deliver presentations in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to give presentations	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to give presentations	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to give simple presentations on topics related to their role	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to give detailed presentations on topics related to their role	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to give detailed, extended presentations
<b>8. Does this person need to take part in negotiations in English?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to join negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/> does not need to join negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/> can take part in very simple, low-stakes negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/> can run negotiations with time to prepare	<input type="checkbox"/> needs to run complex negotiations, including outlining details, presenting options, summarising, etc.

## CEFR descriptors

CEFR <A2	CEFR A2 (low)	CEFR A2 (high)	CEFR B1 (low)	CEFR B1 (high)	CEFR B2 (low)	CEFR B2 (high)	CEFR C1
ENGLISHSCORE 0–199	ENGLISHSCORE 200–249	ENGLISHSCORE 250–299	ENGLISHSCORE 300–349	ENGLISHSCORE 350–399	ENGLISHSCORE 400–449	ENGLISHSCORE 450–499	ENGLISHSCORE –599
<p>Does not use English day to day, except in very limited, predictable situations, e.g. introductions</p> <p>Asks and answers simple questions about very familiar, personal topics, e.g. family, daily routine, job</p> <p>Reads and understands very simple notices and other texts</p> <p>Needs to complete very simple forms with personal information, e.g. name, address, phone number, time sheet</p> <p>Writes simple sentences about personal topics, e.g. where they live, their job</p>	<p>Limited day-to-day use of English, e.g. back office roles that are not customer-facing</p> <p>Uses English with customers in routine and predictable scenarios, e.g. greeting people</p> <p>Requires basic understanding of written English, e.g. reading simple agendas, very simple work-related emails</p> <p>Follows simple spoken instructions related to their role</p>	<p>Limited day-to-day use of English, e.g. back office roles that are not customer-facing</p> <p>Uses English with customers in routine and predictable scenarios, e.g. greeting people</p> <p>Requires basic understanding of written English, e.g. reading payslips and other HR docs, following simple written instructions</p> <p>Writes simple notes with details like names, phone numbers, times</p> <p>Needs to make and receive very simple, low-stakes phone calls and can leave messages if required</p>	<p>Uses some English day to day, either internally or with customers</p> <p>Handles routine/predictable scenarios, plus occasionally some more complex ones, e.g. customer requests (face to face or over the phone).</p> <p>Provides simple instructions to co-workers (written or spoken)</p> <p>Writes short memos and notes for colleagues on familiar topics</p> <p>Reads and responds to simple correspondence from customers</p> <p>Reads and</p>	<p>Uses some English day to day, either internally or with customers</p> <p>Handles routine/predictable scenarios, plus occasionally some more complex ones, e.g. customer requests (face to face or over the phone)</p> <p>Writes simple reports and other work-related documents (with a template), giving and justifying points</p> <p>Gives simple presentations on familiar work-related topics</p> <p>Needs to summarise the main action points from a meeting (spoken and written)</p>	<p>Uses English every day, with a mix of audiences</p> <p>Mid- to upper managerial roles, where English is required to communicate with customers or others within the company</p> <p>Handles some difficult conversations and written correspondence (internally and externally), e.g. customer requests, complaints</p> <p>Discusses details of work-related tasks and raises concerns, issues, etc.</p> <p>Needs to adjust communication dependent on the audience and uses adaptation strategies to adjust</p>	<p>Uses English every day, with a mix of audiences</p> <p>Mid- to upper managerial roles, where English is required to communicate with customers or others within the company</p> <p>Writes and reads detailed action plans for dealing and resolving issues</p> <p>Writes detailed reports and gives detailed updates on work-related projects</p> <p>Gives detailed presentations on topics related to their role</p> <p>Needs to adjust communication dependent on the</p>	<p>Uses English every day, often in high-stakes situations</p> <p>Mid- to upper managerial roles, where English is required to communicate with customers or others within the company</p> <p>Produces and understands advanced technical language related to their field</p> <p>Follows complex, extended discussions, only occasionally requiring clarification</p> <p>Reads/writes complex, lengthy texts, e.g. reports, strategy documents</p> <p>Needs to adjust communication</p>

<p>Follows very simple instructions and commands, e.g. basic directions</p>		<p>Uses simple scripts to initiate conversations with colleagues and customers</p> <p>Completes simple forms related to their role and work, e.g. orders</p>	<p>understands very simple reports related to their role</p> <p>Follows routine meetings and presentations but doesn't contribute (beyond basic observations, and given time to prepare)</p> <p>Gives simple updates, description of problems, etc. to managers and colleagues (written or spoken)</p> <p>Writes simple agendas and minutes of meetings</p> <p>Builds basic rapport/makes small talk internally and externally</p> <p>Gives and receives simple advice for a work-related situation</p>	<p>Gives limited opinions in work meetings</p> <p>Writes updates of issues, project summaries and plans, events, etc.</p> <p>Asks for and gives simple feedback on work-related products, ideas</p>	<p>communication based on the person's language level</p> <p>Gives presentations on familiar topics related to their role</p> <p>Participates in meetings and facilitates discussions</p> <p>Gives managers a detailed update (written or spoken)</p> <p>Runs simple negotiations (internally and externally) given time to prepare</p> <p>Builds rapport in most situations</p> <p>Produces short reports focused on facts and in areas familiar to them</p> <p>Writes up meeting minutes/summarises meetings</p>	<p>audience and uses adaptation strategies to adjust communication based on the person's language level</p> <p>Writes detailed guidelines for the workplace – roles, instructions, policies, etc.</p> <p>Leads discussions ensuring a consensus is reached, documented, etc.</p> <p>Switches between formal and informal language (written and spoken) smoothly, depending on the context</p> <p>Follows in-depth, complex discussions</p> <p>Builds rapport in difficult situations, e.g. negotiations</p> <p>Miscommunication could cause some reputational or financial loss</p>	<p>dependent on the audience and uses adaptation strategies to adjust communication based on the person's language level</p> <p>Gives detailed, extended presentations</p> <p>Runs negotiations, including outlining details, presenting options, summarising, etc.</p> <p>Builds rapport in complex situations, e.g. large power disparities</p> <p>Miscommunication could cause reputational or financial loss</p>
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					Miscommunication could cause some reputational or financial loss		
					Gives feedback on proposals to colleagues		

## CEFR mapping

### How are tests mapped to the Common European Framework (CEFR)?

Language tests are mapped to the CEFR using human judgement exercises. A panel of experts decides where a particular test taker or test item sits on the CEFR scale, and these judgments are then used to determine how the overall test maps to the CEFR. Judges on these panels are selected based on their knowledge of language assessment and the CEFR. As there is often some variation in judges' responses (given it is a 'best judgement'), the most reliable mapping is achieved using a wide range of judges and repeating the mapping exercise multiple times to arrive at a consensus.

### How do CEFR levels relate to different test scores?

CEFR mapping activities are conducted by different test providers, using different panels and mapping approaches. Each test also has a different design, purpose and testing method, making it difficult to provide exact comparisons.

However, for individuals and organisations accustomed to a particular standard, this chart can be used to inform decisions about acceptable EnglishScore results.

CEFR	EnglishScore	TOEIC	IELTS	TOEFL ITP	Versant Professional English Test
A1	100–199	120–220			22–29
A2	200–299	225–545		337–460	30–42
B1	300–399	550–780	4.0–5.0	460–543	43–58
B2	400–499	785–940	5.0–7.0	543–627	59–75
C1	500–599	945–990	7.0–8.0	627–677	76–84
C2			8.5–9.0		85–90

*This chart can be used only for approximate comparison. The ranges published are directly from the test providers' publicly released findings from standard-setting exercises.*

## Contact Information

### About the British Council

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2019–20, we connected with 80 million people directly and with 791 million overall, including online and through our broadcasts and publications.

### About EnglishScore

EnglishScore is a global test and certificate of English for employment from the British Council and has more than 2 million new users per year across 150 countries.

Designed to help millions of people to unlock the potential that the English language gives them, the EnglishScore mobile test can be taken from anywhere, at any time, with results available immediately.

The free Core Skills test assesses proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening and can take up to 40 minutes to complete. A speaking test is also available to assess pronunciation, fluency and communication skills.

Test results are reported using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the global standard used by many other international tests, such as TOEFL ITP, TOEIC and IELTS.

Test-takers also have the opportunity to purchase a certificate to prove their level to employers and organisations.

## Contact EnglishScore

For questions about the test, including content development, test scoring, security or certification, please contact:

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## Bibliography

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