

# CEFR FACTS

## WHAT IS THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR)?

The CEFR is a research-based framework conceived in the early 1990s under the direction of the Council of Europe in response to the challenge of creating a common description of second-language proficiency that could be used internationally. The CEFR is neither a program nor a curriculum/syllabus; it is a tool that describes the competences needed by second-language learners in order to be able to communicate effectively. In recent years, FSL teachers across the province have been involved in exploring the impact of the CEFR on instruction and in developing action-oriented tasks.

Visit [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment \(CEFR\)](#) for more information.

## WHY THE CEFR?

A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, K–12 underlines the value of using the CEFR. It states: “In Ontario, this reference tool is recognized as a valuable asset for informing instruction and assessment practices in FSL education” (p. 4). As educators gain an understanding of the CEFR, they pause and reflect on teaching strategies that result in improved proficiency for students.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF THE CEFR?

The CEFR describes competences of the second-language learner in five areas: spoken production, spoken interaction, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, the six levels of proficiency are described in terms of “can-do” statements. Here are simplified descriptions of the six levels. The learner can:

- **A1** - Comprehend and use familiar simple words and expressions.
- **A2** - Understand and communicate in frequently used isolated sentences in their immediate environment (e.g., shopping, life at school and family).
- **B1** - Understand the main points of everyday communication and deal with most situations that are familiar or of personal interest.
- **B2** - Understand concrete and abstract concepts and interact with a degree of ease and spontaneity in the target language.
- **C1/C2** - Understand with ease virtually everything heard or read and express himself/herself spontaneously, fluently and precisely in complex situations.

It is important to note that there is no correlation between the levels of proficiency of the CEFR and grade level. There is also no correlation between the levels of the CEFR and the levels and categories of the provincial achievement chart. Learners will use CEFR descriptors to help them identify their current proficiency level and to set goals to move forward. This aligns with Growing Success, which establishes goal setting as a fundamental element of assessment and evaluation. Students need to develop their “self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning” (Growing Success, p. 6).

## THE DELF

Students can choose to take the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) at the CEFR level appropriate to their learning. The DELF is a lifelong certification, and certain levels afford special opportunities, like being able to attend French-speaking universities. For more information, visit [Destination DELF Ontario's Parent Portal](#).