

CEFR Level B2

At the **B2 level** there is a focus on effective argument. Students are able to account for and sustain their opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments. They can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options and can develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. They can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting their point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses. They are able to hold their own effectively in social discourse and understand in detail what is said to them in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment. They can initiate discourse, take their turn when appropriate and end a conversation when they need to, though they may not always do this elegantly. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. There is a new degree of language awareness. They are able to correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings, can make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for it/them and generally they can correct slips and errors if they become conscious of them.

Global

At the B2 level, students should be able to understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. They can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Listening

Students can understand standard speech spoken at a normal rate and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. They can understand the essentials of lectures and most TV news and current affairs programmes and can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.

Reading

At this level, students can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. They can understand contemporary literary prose and can adapt style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, using appropriate reference-sources selectively.

Spoken interaction

Students can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. They are able to take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts and can account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.

Spoken production

They can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples. They can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Writing

Students are able to write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to their interests. They can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. They can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.

Listening Proficiency scales

Students at the B2 level of proficiency can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard spoken language and can do this even when there is some noise in the background. They can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, unclear structure and/or idiomatic usage cause some problems. They can understand the main ideas of complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard language including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. They can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is clearly stated by the speaker. They can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of presentation which use complex ideas and language and can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard language at normal speed. They can understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in standard language and can identify the speaker's mood, tone, etc. They can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes such as documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard language. They can follow a lecture or talk within their own field, provided the presentation is clear.

Reading Proficiency scales

Students at the B2 level of proficiency can read correspondence relating to their fields of interest and easily understand the essential meaning. They can understand specialised articles outside their field, provided that they can use a dictionary to confirm terminology. They can read many kinds of texts quite easily at different speeds and in different ways according to their purpose in reading and the type of text. They have a broad reading vocabulary, but sometimes experience difficulty with less common words and phrases. They can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile. They can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.

Speaking Proficiency scales

Students at this level can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although they can be hesitant as they search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. They can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. They are able to express themselves with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and 'cul-de-sacs', they are able to keep going effectively without help. Students at this level have a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so. They have a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films. They have a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics and can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hindering communication. They show a relatively high degree of grammatical control and do not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. They communicate with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts, generally with good control though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express. They have acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation and can with some effort keep up with and contribute to group discussions even when speech is fast and colloquial. They can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker. They can express themselves appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation. They can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register. They are able to adjust to the changes of direction, style and emphasis normally found in conversation and can vary formulation of what they want to say. They can adapt their expressions to deal with less routine, even difficult, situations and can initiate discourse, take their turn when appropriate and end conversation when they need to, though they may not always do this elegantly. They can use stock phrases (e.g. 'That's a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say. They are able to intervene in a discussion on a familiar topic, using a suitable phrase to get the floor. They can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their main points with relevant supporting detail and examples and can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.

Writing Proficiency scales

Students at the B2 level of proficiency can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources. They can construct a chain of reasoned argument and can speculate about causes, consequences and hypothetical situations.

Level B2 Learner Outcomes

Students will be able to use the following:

Functions / notions

Describing experiences
Describing feelings and emotions
Describing hopes and plans
Giving precise information
Expressing abstract ideas
Expressing certainty, probability, doubt
Generalising and qualifying
Synthesizing, evaluating, glossing information
Speculating
Expressing opinions
Expressing agreement/ disagreement
Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference
Critiquing and reviewing
Developing an argument in academic discourse style

Discourse Functions

Checking understanding
Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming or continuing)
Taking the initiative in interaction
Control and delegation at start
Keeping interaction participants on topic
Taking initiative in non-control situation
Encouraging and inviting another speaker to continue / come in.
Invitation in one-to-one interaction
Invitation in group interaction
Interacting informally, reacting, expressing interest, sympathy, surprise

Discourse Markers

Linkers: sequential – past time
Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc.
Linkers: although, in spite of, despite
Discourse markers to structure formal speech

Verb forms

Simple past (narrative)
Past continuous (narrative)
Used to (narrative)
Would expressing habit in the past
Past perfect
Past perfect continuous
Future time (will & going to)
Future continuous (Prediction)

Future perfect
Future perfect continuous
Present Perfect
Present perfect continuous
Mixed conditionals
Wish
Extended phrasal verbs
All passive forms
Reported speech (range of tenses)
Relative clauses
Modals of Deduction and Speculation
Modals: can't have, needn't have
Articles
With abstract nouns
Adjectives and adverbs
Attitudinal adverbs
Collocation of intensifiers

Lexis

Contrasting opinions (on the one hand . . .)
Summarising exponents (briefly, all in all . . .)
Collocation
Colloquial language

Topics

Education
Film
Books and literature
News, lifestyles and current affairs
Media
Arts

Learner Training

- Alternative memory / associative techniques
- Word building
- Synonyms / antonyms
- Keeping a record of collocation
- Use of dictionary to distinguish separability of multi-word verbs



Learner Outcomes: Examples

Functions / notions

Describing experiences

I was walking the dog in the park when I heard a loud crash. I looked in the direction of the noise and saw that a huge tree had fallen down. There were some people screaming and calling for help and some children were trapped underneath one of the fallen branches.

Describing feelings and emotions

He was furious when he saw that his new bicycle had been damaged.

She screamed in anger at how stupid her brother had been.

Heather was delighted with her shot and her face glowed with pride.

Why should we suffer just because our neighbours like loud parties?

I don't think it's right for passengers to put their feet on the seats.

Describing hopes and plans

I am having a meeting with my boss on Friday.

How are you going to get to France?

How long are you going to Jamaica for?

I'd love to see the photos when you get back.

I'll call you soon.

I am going to go around the world when I've saved enough money.

I hope to get a job in Australia next year.

I've always wanted to visit the Taj Mahal.

Giving precise information

I'll meet you at 2pm in the children's section of Waterstones in Oxford Street.

In my job I mainly have to deal with clients, particularly arranging and following up on orders.

He was born in a little village in the North East of Estonia on the 22nd of October, 1928.

My degree was in economics, specialising in finance.

You need to place the pizza dough in a warm bowl, cover it with a cloth or place it somewhere warm, leave it to rise for 30 minutes or until it doubles in size.

Expressing abstract ideas

Corruption is widespread in that part of the world.

There is little respect for human rights during war time.

Education is the way out of poverty for many young people.

Expressing certainty, probability, doubt

I'm absolutely certain it's going to rain.

It's impossible to get him out of bed before 10 o'clock.

He's probably gone to the library.

We're definitely not going to Spain this year.

Are you sure we'll arrive in time?

Generalising and qualifying

On the whole I think it is a good idea.

Generally speaking, the teachers are very helpful

More often than not he shops in the High Street.

Taking into consideration the cost of travel, you might not want to buy a flat so far away.

We'll stay for a week or two, depending on the cost.

Provided that there is no rain, the concert will go ahead as planned.

Synthesizing, evaluating, glossing information

To sum up, the government will need to cut spending for the next five years.

All in all, it was a miserable performance.

To be fair, it was his own fault for parking where he shouldn't have.

In short, they were better than us at promoting their ideas.

Speculating

I wonder if John will be going to the party.

If she got the nomination, she could probably win if she gathered enough support.

What do you think would happen if they did discover oil there?

What if Teresa hadn't turned up?

Expressing opinions

If I were you, I'd just say no.

From her point of view, we have to do this as soon as possible

The way I see it is that you'll have to study very hard.

I feel we should do it.

I really don't think it's a good idea.

Expressing agreement/ disagreement

That's just what I was thinking.

You know, that's exactly what I think.

I totally agree.

That's a good point.

No I'm afraid I can't agree with you there.

You can't be serious!

Don't be silly!

That's ridiculous.

Expressing reaction, e.g. indifference

Why ask me?

Thank goodness

Fantastic idea!

Brilliant!

Great!

Whatever.

That's ridiculous!

How's that possible?

Really?

No way! I don't believe it.

Critiquing and reviewing

I think that 'Treasure Island' is still popular with children even though the language is rather dated.

In spite of its popularity I feel that 'The Beach' is a very overrated book which appeals mainly to gap-year students.

The film was a bit disappointing, really.

The best part was when

It was really good when

Developing an argument

To begin with it's a bigger problem than you think.

As far as I am concerned this has nothing to do with the issue.

The way I see it, the family is more important.

That's the reason I don't want to work there anymore.

In academic discourse style:

One reason why...

Another argument for/against . . . is . . .

X maintains that . . .

Y states that . . .

It could be argued/asserted that . . .

In conclusion . . .

Discourse Functions

Checking understanding

From speaker's point of view

Are you following me?

Let me know if you have any questions?

Does that make sense?

From listener's point of view

If I understood/understand you correctly, there are no planes at all on Saturday.

Do you mean I can't talk to the boss right now?

Are you trying to say you don't want to go out with me anymore?

Let me see whether I've understood you correctly.

So what you're really saying is . . .

Am I right in assuming . . .

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

Interrupting

Actually, . . .

I'm sorry but . . .

Just a minute!

Yes, I know, but . . . !

Hang on!

Hold on!

Changing the topic

Oh, by the way . . .

That reminds me . . .

This has nothing to do with what we are talking about but . . .

On another subject..



Talking about holidays, did you know that I'm off to Florida next week?
Before I forget . . .

Resuming

Anyway, I was telling you about John's party . . .

To get back to what I was saying . . .

Taking the initiative in interaction

Control and delegation at start

Andre, would you like begin?

Pilar, would you like to kick off?

Shall we begin?

During the meeting Jenny, can you tell us how the Human Resources reorganisation is coming along?

How does that affect your department, Rosa?

Let's move on, shall we?

Keeping interaction participants on topic

We don't have time to go into that matter right now.

Let's get back to the issue under discussion, shall we?

That's another topic, really.

Can we keep to the point, please.

Let's not get distracted.

Taking initiative in non-control situation

I'd like to say a few words here.

Yes, I think I can contribute to this point.

My expertise in this area might help to clarify the situation.

Perhaps, I could say something here.

Encouraging and inviting another speaker to continue, come in.

Carry on.

Go on.

Really?

Mmm...mmm...

Don't stop.

Tell me more...

What makes you say that?

What makes you think that?

I'm listening.

Invitation in one-to-one interaction

Don't you agree?

Is that okay with you?

How about you?

What do you reckon/think?

Invitation in group interaction

What do you think, Mario?

Let's hear what Gabriella has to say.

James might have something to say on this.

Fiona knows a lot about this.

Hey, you did something like that, didn't you?

Interacting informally, reacting, expressing interest, sympathy, surprise

Wow, that's fantastic.

Really? Tell me more.

Tell me all about it.

I don't believe it!

Oh wow!

Oh you poor thing.

That's awful. What a shame!

Discourse Markers

Linkers: sequential – past time

Subsequently, he went on to be one of our best salesmen.

Following this he decided to leave the country.

Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast etc.

I know it would be good fun to watch the late-night film. Nevertheless, I think we should all get an early night before the big event tomorrow.

I would like to tell you more. However, that is as much as I am allowed to reveal at this time. Consequently, he moved to London to be closer to his family.

Linkers: although, in spite of, despite

In spite of her illness during the course, she managed to qualify successfully.

Despite the rain, we all had a great time.

Although I was very young at the time, I remember what happened quite clearly.

Discourse markers to structure formal speech

I would like to begin by introducing my colleagues.

Furthermore, I believe that the best way forward is to provide more training.

Moreover, the idea that depression can only be cured by medication is now being challenged.

Consequently, we have to be prepared for a fall in profits next year.

Regarding our position on nuclear power, that has not changed.

Additionally, we will also provide support throughout the process.

In conclusion, we have agreed to give £3000 to charity.

Verb forms

Simple past (narrative)

To help pay for his keep and to help his family, Andrew, who was still only 15 years old, began working ten-hour days at a Kensington hotel washing dishes and cleaning the kitchen.

He earned just 6 pounds per week. The harsh working conditions and the cruelty of the kitchen staff had a strong influence on his later political outlook, and informed his work when he began his literary career, particularly the novel that made him famous, 'Working Boy'.

Past continuous (narrative)

Antonio was walking away from the crowd when the trouble started. He was trying to get home but the buses were not running. He was just crossing the bridge to safety when he heard the sound of breaking glass. He was telling himself not to get involved when a bottle smashed right beside him.

Used to (narrative)

We used to play at the park at the edge of the town.

Would expressing habit in the past

Every autumn we would steal apples from their garden. We would eat the sour fruit and come home holding our stomachs.

Past perfect

When I'd climbed to the top of the hill, I looked back down and saw something I hadn't seen before.

He had broken the vase when he had come in through the window.

He had had a terrible day up until that point.

Past perfect continuous

I was tired. I'd been working for sixteen hours.

They had been driving so fast that the police had difficulty stopping them.

Had they been waiting long?

Future

Future time (will & going to)

(Prediction)

You'll succeed where I've failed.

Here comes the bus now. We aren't going to be late after all.

Don't worry. He'll be here on time.

Future continuous (Prediction)

This time next year, I'll be working in Japan and earning good money.

I'll be visiting my mum on Thursday.

Will you be using the car tomorrow?

Future perfect

I'd better go and collect the girls.

They'll have finished school by now.

I'll call you at six. Will you have arrived by then? She won't have left by then.

Future perfect continuous

Julia will have been studying Economics for 5 years when she graduates next year.

You'll have been travelling for 4 days when you get to Bangkok. You'd better book a hotel and have a couple of days rest.

Present Perfect

Present perfect continuous

You've been spending a lot of time on the Internet recently.

They've been working very hard to get building completed on time.

Honestly, we haven't been wasting our time.

Have you been seeing Julie behind my back?

Conditionals

Mixed conditionals

If I had studied harder, I'd be at university now.

If I'd got that job I applied for I'd be working in Istanbul.

I would have driven you to the match if I didn't have so much work.

If I wasn't working in July, I would have suggested we go camping in France.

Wish

I wish I was rich.

I wish today wasn't Monday.

I wish I wasn't going into hospital tomorrow.

She wished she hadn't hurt his feelings.

Phrasal Verbs

Extended phrasal verb

Let's splash out on a bottle of champagne.
Watching that programme has put me off chicken.
I'll take you up on that offer.

Passives

All passive forms

I'm being eaten alive by these mosquitoes.
I wasn't told about the new rules.
I thought that I was being followed.
Did you think that you were being criticised?
The new treatment for malaria has been found to be very effective.

Other verb forms

Reported speech (range of tenses)

She said she'd been waiting for ages.
I knew we'd be late.
She thought she could do it all herself.
They reported that the volcano might erupt at any time.
They said it should be fun.
I told her I had to go.

Relative clauses

I've lost the books that I borrowed from the library.
Where is the man that sells second-hand records?
The children he played with thought he was much younger.
This is my cousin Maria, who teaches music.
Shelly and Byron's poetry, which used to be compulsory, has now been dropped from the syllabus.
She told us all about her new boyfriend, whom none of us knew anything about.
They ran quickly through the streets, all of which were covered in a thick blanket of snow.

Modals

Modals of Deduction and Speculation

You shouldn't have read her journal.
It should be private.
You should have asked her earlier.
It's too late now.
He shouldn't have any problem doing such a simple task. (Assumption)
The plane should have arrived by now. (Assumption)
I knew we might have to pay to get in.
You shouldn't have shouted at him.
He might have hit you.
The weather could have been better but we still had a good time.
You could have told me!

Modals: can't have, needn't have

It can't have been John you saw, because he was with me.
What can he have done with the keys?
He can't have lost them again.
You needn't have bothered getting here on time. He's always late.

Articles

With abstract nouns

History tended to be uninteresting when I was at school.
The early history of Scotland is full of betrayal.
Happiness in marriage is something you have to work at.
Education is not compulsory in many developing countries
The education I received was first-rate.
Charity begins at home.

Adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs

He scored a direct hit.
The train goes direct to London without even stopping at York.
There's no such thing as a free lunch.
Feel free to use it whenever you want.
He went straight to work.
Next draw a straight line across the top of the paper.

Attitudinal adverbs

Frankly, I couldn't care less.
Clearly, he was in the wrong.
Apparently, he was in line for promotion.
Fortunately, he had a spare pair of shoes with him.

Intensifiers

Collocation of intensifiers

After working all day and all night he was totally exhausted.
He was absolutely horrified when he realised what he had done.
She's completely hopeless when it comes to housework.
I am entirely satisfied that he followed the correct procedure.

Lexis

Contrasting opinions (on the one hand . . .)

The weather forecast is good.
Nevertheless, you always need to be careful in the mountains.
In spite of his age, he is still goes camping in the wild.
The story has been told many times before. Nonetheless, it is still a warning to us all.
Some students continue to live with their parents. However, I prefer to be independent.

Summarising exponents (briefly, all in all . . .)

In a word, it was a disaster.
We felt that the idea was, in general, a good one; the more we spend on advertising the higher our sales will be.
To sum up, if we can't make more money some people will have to lose their jobs.

Collocation

I'd prefer a dry wine.
The resort has a range of luxury accommodation to offer.
He's a very heavy smoker.
I'm retaking the exam next week.

Colloquial language

She's just been dumped by her boyfriend.
There's no hurry. Let's just chill out for an hour or two.

I can't be bothered with the hassle.
She fell and landed on her bum.

Topics

Education

Film

Books and literature

News, lifestyles and current affairs

Media

Arts

Learner Training

- Alternative memory / associative techniques
- Word building
- Synonyms / antonyms
- Keeping a record of collocation
- Use of dictionary to distinguish separability of multi-word verbs