

Mapping scores from the TOEIC® Link™ assessments onto levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

How to read your score report:

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment provides a common basis for describing the skills needed to reach different levels of language proficiency, and is used by language instructors, educators, curriculum designers and agencies working in the field of language development. The CEFR describes language proficiency across six levels for listening, reading, speaking, writing, and other aspects of language knowledge and skills:

- A1–A2 (Basic User)
- B1–B2 (Independent User)
- C1–C2 (Proficient User)

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language assessment. When language assessment scores can be related to CEFR levels, and this relationship can be adequately justified, the meaning of assessment scores and what candidates at minimum score levels are likely able to do may be clearer.

TOEIC Link

The TOEIC Link assessments are designed to evaluate the general English language proficiency of individuals whose first language is not English, in the contexts of the workplace and everyday life. The TOEIC Link assessments provide a measurement of four English language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) for users who would like a quick, convenient, and fully online assessment solution. The TOEIC Link online assessments measure four skills on a scale of 0-25 (in increments of 1), through modular assessment (i.e. the four skills can be administered together, in any combination, or alone).

ETS's goal

The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the score ranges on the TOEIC Link assessments corresponding to the levels of language proficiency targeted by the assessments, CEFR levels A1 to C1. This required identifying minimum scores for CEFR levels A2 to C1.

Standard-setting study

Standard setting is the process by which a panel of informed experts makes score requirement recommendations that correspond with the level of knowledge, skill, proficiency, mastery, or readiness candidates need to be placed in a certain category or level. The outcome of standard setting is recommended minimum score requirement(s), or cut score(s). In this particular study, the minimum scores for each CEFR level are presented as the lower limits of the level for each assessment.

This study used a diverse international panel of 14 experts with extensive experience (on average, 18 years) in English-language teaching, curriculum development and/or assessment.

CEFR level mapping

SCORE RANGE	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Listening 0 - 25	0 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25
Reading 0 - 25	0 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25
Speaking 0 - 25	0 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25
Writing 0 - 25	0 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

Results

The table above presents the recommended score range for each assessment at each of the five CEFR levels, A1 through C1. The recommended score range is based on the judgment of the expert panel after extensive analysis and discussion, along with additional relevant information. A scaling procedure was used to align the recommended score ranges across assessments.

Interpreting results

Employers, institutions, English programs, and learners can interpret the recommended minimum scores on the TOEIC Link assessments by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR. Following best practices, the mapping study identified the CEFR descriptor scales most relevant to the knowledge and skills assessed by each TOEIC Link assessment. Details are provided in the technical report.

The results represent the recommendations of informed experts using recognized standard-setting approaches. However, they should be considered guidelines, as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

Technical report

This standard-setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Kathryn Hille, Jonathan Schmidgall, Saerhim Oh and Renka Ohta. The technical report is forthcoming.

For information about this study:

Contact your ETS Preferred Network (EPN) office via www.ets.org/epn_directory or email at TOEIC@ets.org.