

Mayfair School of English – Level Descriptors

C2

GLOBAL

At the C2 level of proficiency, students can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. They can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. They are able to express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more

LISTENING

I can understand any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast speed, even in a noisy environment.

I can appreciate irony and sarcasm and draw appropriate conclusions about their use.

I can understand any interlocutor, given an opportunity to adjust to a non-standard accent or dialect.

I can fully appreciate the sociocultural implications of language used by other speakers and can react accordingly.

I can follow debates, discussions, specialised lectures and presentations that contain a high degree of colloquial expressions, regional usage, or unfamiliar terminology.

I can fully appreciate films, plays, TV and the radio, including humour, nuance, and implied meaning.

I can extract necessary information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements or instructions, e.g. in a station with a train going past, in a sports stadium, etc.

READING

I can understand any kind of text including those written in a very colloquial style and containing many idiomatic expressions or slang.

I can scan quickly through complex texts from a variety of genres, including unfamiliar ones; I can read several texts in parallel to integrate information from them.

I can understand texts (for example newspaper columns and satirical glosses) in which much is said in an indirect and ambiguous way and which contain hidden value judgements.

I can understand complex reports, manuals and contracts, including finer shades of meaning and differentiation, plus issues that are implied rather than stated.

I can understand and interpret critically classical as well as contemporary literary texts in different genres. [New]

I can easily understand any formal correspondence, including on specialized or legal matters.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can converse comfortably, appropriately and without limitations in casual conversation, at social events and in more formal discussions and debates.

I can employ irony and understatement in an appropriate manner.
I can easily keep up with extended debate, even when this is highly idiomatic. I can contribute to formal discussion of complex issues articulately and persuasively.
When arguing for or against a case, I can convey finer shades of meaning precisely in order to give emphasis differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.
I can argue a case on a complex issue, adapting the structure, content and emphasis in order to convince particular listeners of the validity of my argument.
I can give a smoothly flowing, elaborate presentation on a complex topic, and can handle difficult, unpredictable and even hostile questioning.
I can summarise orally information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts accurately, coherently and concisely without including unnecessary detail.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can produce written work that shows good organizational structure, with an understanding of the style and content appropriate to the task. I can produce text which is proof-read and lay out in accordance with relevant conventions.
I can write stories and descriptions in a clear, sophisticated style appropriate to the genre.
I can write a well-structured critical review of a paper or a project giving reasons for my opinion.
I can write papers that present the background and context, describing procedures and/or proposals, evaluating outcomes and drawing conclusions, whilst following the appropriate conventions throughout.
I can write clear, well-structured complex letters in an appropriate style, for example an application, request, or offer to authorities or commercial clients.
In a letter I can express myself in a consciously ironical, ambiguous and humorous way.

STRATEGIES

I can interact naturally, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues without effort, and interweaving my contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn taking, referencing, etc.
I can substitute an equivalent term for a word I can't recall without the listener noticing.
I can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
I can edit my written work to achieve the effect I want in a more differentiated and appropriate style.

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I can reformulate ideas in differing ways to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity.
I can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of expressions to qualify statements and pinpoint the extent to which something is the case.
I can make full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors in order to organize what I say and write.

I can consistently maintain grammatical control of complex language even when my attention is otherwise engaged.

I can express myself naturally and effortlessly; I only need to pause occasionally in order to select precisely the right words.

I have a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, including emotional, allusive and joking usage, with a high degree of awareness of implied meaning and meaning by association

C1

GLOBAL

At the C1 level of proficiency, students should be able to understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. They can express themselves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. They can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. They can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

LISTENING

I can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics of academic or vocational relevance.

I can generally understand everybody I talk to, though I may need to confirm some details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.

I can follow extended discussion even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.

I can follow most lectures, discussions and debates both within and outside my field.

I can understand in detail an argument in a discussion programme.

I can understand complex technical information, such as instructions for operating equipment and specifications for products and services I know about.

READING

I can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, though I may want time to reread them.

I can scan relatively quickly through books and articles within my field of interests and assess their relevance to my needs.

I can understand complex texts where stated opinions and implied points of view are discussed.

I can understand lengthy, complex manuals, instructions, regulations and contracts in my field.

I can read extensively, for example enjoying novels without consulting a dictionary unless I want to note precise meaning, usage or pronunciation.

I can understand formal letters connected or unconnected to my field if I can occasionally check with a dictionary.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can express myself fluently and appropriately, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances and my relationship to the person I am talking to. I can keep up with animated discussions on abstract and complex topics with a number of speakers and can participate effectively even when people start talking simultaneously.

I can understand and exchange complex, detailed information on topics with which I am not personally familiar, pinpointing key areas where further explanation or clarification is needed.

I can use the telephone for a variety of purposes, including solving problems and misunderstandings though I may need to ask for clarification if the accent is unfamiliar.

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can give clear, well-structured descriptions of complex subjects.

I can develop an argument systematically in well-structured speech, highlighting significant points, and concluding appropriately.

I can give a clear, well-structured presentation on a complex subject in my field, expanding and supporting points of view with appropriate reasons and examples.

I can put together information from different sources and relate it in a coherent summary.

I can summarise orally long, demanding texts.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can write clear, well-structured texts on complex topics in an appropriate style with good grammatical control.

I can write clear, detailed, well-developed short stories and descriptions of personal experiences.

I can present points of view in a paper, developing an argument, highlighting the most important points, and supporting my reasoning with examples.

I can express myself clearly and appropriately in personal correspondence, describing experiences, feelings and reactions in depth.

STRATEGIES

I can select from a readily available range of expressions to preface my remarks appropriately and to follow up what other people say. (New)

I do not have to restrict what I want say at all; if I can't find one expression I can substitute with another.

I can monitor my speech and writing to repair slips and improve formulation.

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I have a good command of a broad vocabulary. I do sometimes have to search for expressions but can then find alternatives to express what I want to say.

I can formulate statements in a very precise manner in order to indicate my degree of agreement, certainty, concern, satisfaction, etc.

I can produce clear, well-structured speech and writing, linking my ideas into coherent text.

I maintain a high degree of grammatical control in speech and writing.

I can express myself fluently and spontaneously, except occasionally, when speaking about a conceptually difficult subject.

I can use language flexibly and appropriately, adjusting my expression depending who I am talking or writing to.

B2

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

I can understand the main ideas of complex speech on concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in my field of specialisation.

I can understand in detail what is said to me in standard spoken language.

I can with some effort catch much of what is said around me, but may find it difficult to understand a discussion between several speakers who do not modify their language in any way.

I can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of complex academic or professional presentation in my field.

I can follow TV drama and the majority of films in standard dialect.

I can understand TV news, current affairs, documentaries, interviews, talk shows, etc.

I can understand announcements and messages spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.

READING

I can read with a large degree of independence, using dictionaries and other reference sources selectively when necessary.

I can rapidly grasp the content and the significance of news, articles and reports on topics connected with my interests or my job, and decide if a closer reading is worthwhile.

I can understand articles, reports and reviews in which the writers express specific points of view (e.g., political commentary, critiques of exhibitions, plays, films, etc).

I can understand lengthy instructions, for example in a user manual for a TV or digital camera, for installing software, as long as I can reread difficult sections.

I can read short stories and novels written in a straightforward language and style, making use of a dictionary, if I am familiar with the story and/or the writer.

I can understand the main points in formal and informal letters relating to my personal and professional interests, with occasional use of a dictionary.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can take an active part in conversation, expressing clearly my points of view, ideas or feelings naturally with effective turn-taking.

I can evaluate advantages & disadvantages, and participate in reaching a decision in formal or informal discussion.

I can sustain my opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.

I can find out and pass on detailed information reliably, face-to-face and on the phone, asking follow up questions and getting clarification or elaboration when necessary.

I can make a complaint effectively, explaining the problem and demanding appropriate action.

I can use the telephone to find out detailed information, provided the other person speaks clearly, and ask follow up questions to check that I have understood a point fully.

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my fields of interest.

I can develop a clear argument, linking my ideas logically and expanding and supporting my points with appropriate examples.

I can present a topical issue in a critical manner and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

I can summarise information and arguments from a number of sources, such as articles or reports, discussions, interviews, presentations, etc.

I can summarise orally the plot and sequence of events in a film or play.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can write at length about topical issues, even though complex concepts may be oversimplified, and can correct many of my mistakes in the process.

I can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to my field of interest

I can write a paper giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

I can express news, views and feelings in correspondence, and respond to those of the other person.

I can write standard formal letters requesting or communicating relevant information, following a template.

STRATEGIES

I can use standard phrases like "That's a difficult question to answer" to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what to say.

I can help a discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.

I can generally cover gaps in vocabulary and structure with paraphrases.

I can generally correct slips and errors if I become aware of them or if they have led to misunderstandings. I can make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for them.

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I have a sufficient range of vocabulary to vary formulation and avoid repetition when expressing myself on matters connected to my field and on most general topics.

I can explain the details of an event, idea or problem reliably.

I can link what I say or write into clear, well-organised text, though I may not always do this smoothly so there may be some "jumps." (New)

I can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings.

I can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although I can be hesitant as I search for expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.

I 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.

B1

GLOBAL

Students can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken and can produce a simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. They can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans

LISTENING

I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar, everyday subjects, provided there is an opportunity to get repetition or clarification sometimes.

I can understand what is said to me in everyday conversations, but I sometimes need help in clarifying particular details.

I can understand the main points of discussion on familiar topics in everyday situations when people speak clearly, but I sometimes need help in understanding details.

I can follow clearly spoken, straightforward short talks on familiar topics.

I can understand the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

I can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for familiar types of equipment.

READING

I can understand the main points in straightforward factual texts on subjects of personal or professional interest well enough to talk about them afterwards.

I can find and understand the information I need in brochures, leaflets and other short texts relating to my interests.

I can understand the main points in short newspaper and magazine articles about current and familiar topics.

I can follow simple instructions, for example for a game, using familiar types of equipment or cooking a meal.

I can understand simplified versions of novels, and follow the story line in short stories with a clear structure, with some effort and regular use of a dictionary.

I can understand private letters about events, feelings and wishes well enough to write back.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.

I can express and respond to feelings and attitudes like surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and disinterest.

I can give or seek personal opinions in an informal discussion with friends, agreeing and disagreeing politely.

I can help to solve practical problems, saying what I think and asking others what they think.

I can find out and pass on uncomplicated factual information.

I can ask for and follow detailed directions.

I can manage unexpected things that could happen on holiday, e.g. needing a dentist or getting a bike repaired.

I can make arrangements on the telephone or in person, e.g. booking flights, hotels, rental cars, restaurants, cinemas, etc.

I can have simple telephone conversations with people I know.

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can give descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects related to my interests. I can talk in detail about my experiences, feelings and reactions.

I can briefly explain and justify my opinions.

I can give a short prepared presentation on a very familiar area (e.g. "My country") and answer clear questions.

I can relate the main content of short texts I have read.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can write short, comprehensible connected texts on familiar subjects.

I can write simple texts about experiences or events, for example about a trip, describing my feelings and reactions.

Working to a standard format, I can write very brief reports which pass on routine factual information on matters relating to my field.

I can write emails, faxes or text messages to friends or colleagues, relating news and giving or asking for simple information.

I can write a short formal letter asking for or giving simple information.

STRATEGIES

I can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.

I can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm that we understand each other.

When I can't think of a word, I can use a word meaning something similar and invite "correction" from the person I am talking to.

I can ask for confirmation that a form is correct and correct some basic mistakes if I have time to do so.

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I know enough vocabulary to talk about my family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, news and current events.

When I explain something, I can make the other person understand the points that are most important to me.

I can link a series of short phrases into a connected, sequence of points.

I can express myself reasonably accurately in familiar, predictable situations.
I can keep a conversation going, but sometimes have to pause to plan and correct what I am saying.
I can use simple expressions politely in a neutral way in everyday situations.

A2

GLOBAL

Students at this level can understand sentences and frequently-used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). They can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. They can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

LISTENING

I can understand simple information and questions about family, people, homes, work and hobbies.

I can understand what people say to me in simple, everyday conversation, if they speak clearly and slowly and give me help.

I can understand short conversations about family, hobbies and daily life, provided that people speak slowly and clearly.

I can follow changes of topic in TV news reports and understand the main information.

I can understand short, clear and simple messages at the airport, railway station etc. For example: "The train to London leaves at 4:30".

I can understand the main information in announcements if people talk very clearly. For example: weather reports, etc

READING

I can understand short, simple texts containing familiar vocabulary including international words.

I can find the most important information in advertisements, information leaflets, webpages, catalogues, timetables etc.

I can understand the main points in short, simple news items and descriptions if I already know something about the subject. For example: news about sport or famous people.

I can understand clear instructions. For example: how to use a telephone, a cash machine or a drinks machine.

I can understand the main points in short, simple, everyday stories, especially if there is visual support.

I can understand short simple messages from friends. For example: e-mails, web chats, postcards or short letters.

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can ask people how they feel in different situations. For example: "Are you hungry?" or "Are you ok?" and say how I feel.

I can ask and answer simple questions about home and country, work and free time, likes, and dislikes.

I can ask and answer simple questions about a past event. For example the time and place of a party, who was at the party and what happened there.

I can make and accept invitations, or refuse invitations politely.

I can make and accept apologies.

I can discuss plans with other people. For example: what to do, where to go and when to meet.

I can ask for and give directions using a map or plan.

I can communicate in everyday situations, for example: ordering food and drink, shopping or using post offices and banks.

I can use buses, trains and taxis ask for basic information about travel and buy tickets.

I can use standard phrases to answer the phone, exchange simple information, and have a short telephone conversation with someone I know. For example to arrange to meet them.

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can describe myself, my family and other people.

I can describe my education, my present or last job. I can describe my hobbies and interests.

I can describe my home and where I live.

I can describe what I did at the weekend or on my last holiday.

I can talk about my plans for the weekend or on my next holiday.

I can explain why I like or dislike something.

If I have time to prepare, I can give basic information about something I know well, for example: a country, a sports team, a band, etc.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can write about myself using simple language. For example: information about my family, school, job, hobbies, etc.

I can write about things and people I know well using simple language. For example: descriptions of friends, what happened during the day.

I can complete a questionnaire with information about my educational background, my job, my interests and my skills.

I can write a simple message, for example to make or change an invitation or an appointment to meet.

I can write a short message to friends to give them personal news or to ask them a question. For example: a text message or a postcard.

STRATEGIES

I can start a conversation.

I can say what exactly I don't understand and ask simply for clarification.

When I can't think of a word in a shop, I can point to something and ask for help.

I can check written sentences to look for mistakes (e.g. subject-verb agreement; pronoun and article agreement).

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I have enough vocabulary to communicate in simple everyday situations.

I can communicate what I want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information; in other situations I generally have to compromise the message.

I can link ideas with simple connectors. For example: "and", "but" and "because".
I can use correctly simple phrases I have learnt for specific situations, but I often make basic mistakes – for example mixing up tenses and forgetting to use the right endings.

I can make myself understood with short, simple phrases, but I often need to stop, try with different words – or repeat more clearly what I said.

I can talk to people politely in short social exchanges, using everyday forms of greeting and address.

A1

GLOBAL

Students at this level can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. They can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they live, people they know and things they have. They can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

LISTENING

I can understand simple words and phrases, like "excuse me", "sorry", "thank you", etc.

I can understand the days of the week and months of the year.

I can understand times and dates.

I can understand numbers and prices.

I can understand basic greetings and leave taking, like "Hello", "good bye", "good morning", etc.

I can understand simple personal questions when people speak slowly and clearly. (e.g. "What's your name?", "How old are you?", "What's your address?")

When listening to a conversation, I can understand words and short sentences, provided that people speak very slowly and very clearly.

I can recognise my flight number in short, clear and simple messages at international airports.

READING

I can recognise names, words and phrases I know and use them to understand very simple sentences if there are pictures.

I can understand words and phrases on everyday signs (for example "station", "car park", "no parking", "no smoking", "keep left").

I can understand simple forms well enough to give basic personal details (e.g., name, address, date of birth).

I can understand very simple instructions if they are supported by pictures and if I know this type of instructions.

In everyday situations I can understand simple messages written by friends or colleagues, for example "back at 4 o'clock".

SPOKEN INTERACTION

I can use basic greeting and leave taking expressions.

I can ask how people are.

I can interact in a simple way, asking and answering basic questions, if I can repeat, repair and get help.

I can ask and answer (simple personal) questions, like "What's your name?", "How old are you?" if the other person speaks slowly and is very helpful.

I can ask people questions about where they live, people they know, things they have, etc. and answer such questions addressed to me provided they are articulated slowly and clearly.

I can buy things in shops where pointing or other gestures can support what I say.

I can use and understand simple numbers in everyday conversations (for example in prices or telephone numbers).

I can answer the phone, give my name and answer very simple questions (e.g. "When is Mrs Jones back?").

SPOKEN PRODUCTION

I can give personal information (address, telephone number, nationality, age, family, and hobbies).

I can very simply describe myself and my family.

I can very simply describe where I live.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION

I can write about myself and where I live, using short, simple phrases.

I can understand a hotel registration form well enough to give the most important information about myself (name, surname, date of birth, nationality).

I can write a greeting card, for example a birthday card.

STRATEGIES

I can establish contact with people using simple words and phrases and gestures.

I can say when I do not understand.

I can very simply ask somebody to repeat what they said.

QUALITY OF LANGUAGE

I have a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases about family and personal details, plus simple everyday situations.

I can communicate very basic information about myself and my family in a simple way.

I can join simple phrases with words like "and" or "then".

I can use memorised, short phrases for specific purposes with reasonable accuracy.

I can speak in very short phrases and isolated words.

I can use the simplest everyday polite forms of greetings and farewells; introductions; saying "please", "thank you", "sorry", etc.