



UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROJECT 2020

**TEACHER'S GUIDE: USING THE CEFR
AND**

UKRAINIAN - ENGLISH LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS



A1.1



A1.2



A2.1



A2.2



B1.1



B1.2+



UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROJECT © 2020

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The European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages are tools to promote the Council of Europe's language education policy. Further information about the Council of Europe's work to develop the ELP and to promote languages and intercultural understanding can be found at: www.coe.int/portfolio



Table of Contents

Preface	1
What is the CEFR?	4
Initial Assessment: Assigning a CEFR Level.	6
Ongoing Assessment: CEFR-based Language Portfolios.	12
Language Portfolios: Three Distinct Parts.	14
Using Language Portfolios in the Classroom	15
Language Portfolios Beyond the Classroom.	16
Reference Lists	18

Attachments:

11 x 17 Ukrainian CEFR-based Chart with Descriptors

11 x 17 English CEFR-based Chart with Descriptors





PREFACE

~ Nadia Prokopchuk ~

Saskatchewan CEFR Background

In February 2006 a former colleague, Dr. Joan Boyer, and I took a bold step forward. We facilitated a meeting to introduce language teachers in Saskatchewan to the Common European Framework of Reference, or CEFR. As provincial language consultants working for the Ministry of Education, we were very excited about the prospect of using an international reference framework to monitor and assess language progress. We believed that the CEFR would transform instruction and assessment practices in all language learning programs, regardless of status (official, heritage, or indigenous) or program type (immersion, bilingual, or core). During interprovincial meetings with other language consultants, we learned that discussions were taking place at the national level regarding a Canadian Languages Portfolio based on the CEFR. These discussions were further supported by the release of Dr. Laurens Vandergrift's document *Proposal for a framework of reference for languages in Canada* in May 2006 by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

That first meeting in 2006 planted the seed that allowed for promotion of the CEFR as a language framework for two target audiences in Saskatchewan: Heritage Language educators and English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers. During the next decade, three provincial initiatives were put into motion:

- A 2007-09 pilot project for development of CEFR-based heritage language portfolios, designed to assess the dual language progress of students enrolled in the Ukrainian-English Bilingual Program in Saskatchewan;
- The 2012 implementation of the [Common Framework of Reference \(CFR\)](#) by the Ministry of Education, enabling schools across the province to monitor the initial language skills and ongoing progress of EAL learners; and,
- A 2015 project to create [CEFR-based Self-Assessment Templates](#) for use in more than 30 provincial heritage language schools registered with the Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages (SOHL).

Ukrainian Language Assessment Project

This Teacher's Guide is linked to the 2007-09 pilot project introduced to bilingual program educators in Saskatchewan. As CEFR-based materials were required in both Ukrainian and English, I turned to my language education colleague, Dr. Olena Huzar, of the Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University in Ternopil, Ukraine. Dr. Huzar agreed to become my project partner. For more than a decade, Dr. Huzar has provided high quality Ukrainian translations as well as unique insights that have improved the results of this project. I am very grateful to Dr. Huzar for her expertise and continued dedication to this work.

In 2017, the time was right to embark on a renewed CEFR initiative for Ukrainian language educators titled *The Ukrainian Language Assessment Project*. In my new role as an academic instructor at the University of Saskatchewan, I was able to reach out to academic personnel at



the Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage (PCUH) at St. Thomas More College to inquire about support for the project. The PCUH academic team was very supportive and a three-year project proposal was approved. The main goal of the project was to strengthen Ukrainian language assessment practices in school-based, community-based, and university language programs through use of the CEFR.

Work on the project began in fall of 2017. A symposium took place in Saskatoon, with 25 invited representatives from across Canada and from the Ukrainian Language Education Centre at the University of Alberta. Representatives participated in a dialogue about use of the CEFR in Canada and Ukraine. They discussed the benefits of using the CEFR as an interprovincial reference tool to monitor and assess the language abilities of students learning Ukrainian **within Canada**. As an added benefit for Canadian students, the CEFR allowed for alignment with assessment tools used **in Ukraine**. An international pathway for program transitions would be created for students continuing their language studies abroad.

Symposium participants were asked to provide input for the next stages of the assessment project. From the input, **two projects** were initiated and completed in the two years following the symposium:

- publication of an electronic document containing a collection of student writing samples at various stages of the CEFR, and
- production of CEFR-based charts in Ukrainian and English, containing skill descriptors for levels A1-A2-B1 designed to reflect the Canadian context and environmental norms for students who speak English as a first language.

Thanks to the collaboration and support of teachers at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual Elementary School in Saskatoon, samples of student writing at various levels of the CEFR were collected for the **first project**. The samples were organized into a document titled *Elementary Grades 1-8 CEFR-Based Student Writing Samples*. The document was shared at two national conferences of Ukrainian educators in 2018 and 2019. At each conference, participants examined the samples through a CEFR lens. They came away with an understanding of the value of using a standard, objective set of descriptors to assess the writing progress of Ukrainian language students.

CEFR Charts With Descriptors

This Teacher's Guide reflects the results of the **second project**, production of CEFR-based charts of descriptors for Ukrainian language learners in Canada. The charts, available in Ukrainian and English, begin by focusing on each student's Ukrainian language profile. Immediately below the profile is a wide selection of descriptors for *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*. Descriptors were collected from several sources (acknowledged in the References section), with the end product being a comprehensive list of ways that students can demonstrate **'what they know and can do'** using the Ukrainian language. The descriptors illustrate the stages of progress from elementary to independent language user.

Ukrainian language educators may select **some or all** of the descriptors to create their own progress reports in electronic or paper form. The 11 x 17 charts are attached to the end of this document.



CEFR DESCRIPTORS

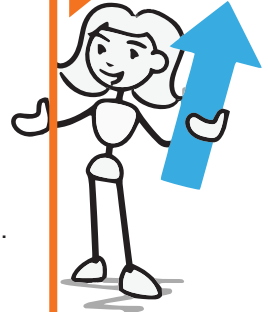
- Highlight skills and abilities within the **first three levels** of the scale (A1, A2 and B1). Most students in Canada will progress through these levels. Native speakers have the ability to move beyond B1.

DESCRIPTORS

- Are further divided into sub-sets
A1.1- A1.2;
A2.1-A2.2;
B1.1- B1.2.
- Offer detailed descriptions of skills in the four strands: **listening, speaking, reading, and writing.**

DESCRIPTORS

- Clearly explain what students **know and are able to do** with the language they have learned through Ukrainian language study and interactions.



This project supports teachers, students, and parents involved in Ukrainian language education programs in Canada. The CEFR is a fair, transparent, and positive assessment scale that has the power to motivate and encourage students along each step of their language learning journey.

A Note About “Pysanka Icons” in the CEFR Charts

The pysanka (Ukrainian Easter egg) icons present a visual depiction of the growing complexity of a student’s language skills at each level of the CEFR.

Cross & Diamond: Represent the student’s immediate world (‘All about me, my home, family, surroundings’).

Dots & Flowers: Represent increasing proficiency beyond familiar, everyday language to unfamiliar topics and academic areas of study.



A1.1



A1.2



A2.1



A2.2



B1.1



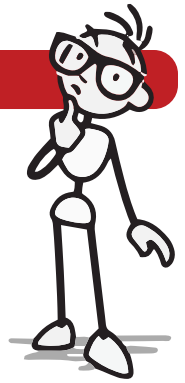
B1.2+

Illustrations: Nadia Prokopchuk



WHAT IS THE CEFR?

The Common European Framework of Reference, or CEFR, is a user-friendly international language reference scale for monitoring and recording skills and abilities in various languages. Development of the CEFR scale began more than four decades ago in Europe. In 2010, the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada produced a document supporting use of the CEFR for languages in Canada.



		A1 (A1.1, A1.2)	A2 (A2.1, A2.2)	B1 (B1.1, B1.2)
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
SPEAKING	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
WRITING	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.



The scale and its descriptors are updated regularly by the Language Division of the Council of Europe to maintain **validity and reliability** for a global target audience. Six levels in the full scale, **A1 to C2**, describe what a language learner is able to do using each of the languages in his/her language repertoire. The six levels contain four skill strands: **listening, speaking (production and interaction), reading, and writing**. Language teachers and learners can be assured of **consistency and objectivity** when using the scale to monitor and assess language progress.

B2 (B2.1, B2.2)		C1 (C1.1, C1.2)		C2 (C2.1, C2.2)			
I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	Listening	UNDERSTANDING			
I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	Reading				
I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	Spoken Interaction	SPEAKING			
I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	Spoken Production				
I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.	Writing	WRITING			



INITIAL ASSESSMENT: ASSIGNING A CEFR LEVEL

In-school and after-school Ukrainian language programs have a dynamic blend of language learners at various levels of proficiency. Within the same language class, teachers may have language beginners, some recent arrivals from Ukraine, and Canadian students who speak Ukrainian as a heritage language. Diversity has become the norm in language classrooms. Being aware of the full range of each student's language abilities is an important first step in supporting language learners.

In Canada, we have gained new knowledge about best practices in classrooms with diverse student populations thanks to the work of language specialists such as Dr. Jim Cummins and Elizabeth Coelho. Dr. Cummins' distinction between conversational (everyday) language and academic language is well-known globally and his research is quoted often by language specialists. A webcast of Dr. Cummins explaining this distinction is shared [here](#) and again in the references for this document. On the CEFR scale, levels A1-A2 reflect 'conversational' language, while level B1 and beyond is language for 'academic' needs. The quote below from author Elizabeth Coelho offers a concise explanation of the terms.

Jim Cummins, an expert on second language acquisition among school-aged students, distinguishes between two important aspects of L2 development: "everyday language proficiency" and "academic language proficiency".

- *Everyday language refers to conversational fluency and simple reading and writing tasks. Learners use everyday language in familiar, supported contexts. There may be a personal relationship between the speakers, or they may be interacting in familiar and practiced roles. The interaction is often face-to-face, providing an opportunity to ask questions and clarify meaning. The content is usually familiar and conceptually undemanding. Sentence structure is simple, and vocabulary consists of common one-and-two-syllable everyday words (e.g., word, child, later, and homework). Most students develop everyday language skills within the first two years of immersion..."*
- *Academic language is the kind of language required to achieve academic success. Proficiency in academic language is required to understand "teacher talk", lectures, and other educational presentations, as well as to read textbooks, write reports, and complete research projects and other academic tasks. Learners are required to use academic language in more formal situations, often with no opportunity for interaction (e.g., when listening to a lecture or reading a textbook). The content is often unfamiliar and conceptually demanding, and the vocabulary usually includes many multi-syllable words..."*

In Coelho, E. (2016). Adding English: A Guide to Teaching in Multilingual Classrooms. pp. 165-166

Coelho, a former ESL policy developer with the Ontario Ministry of Education and author of two books on English language learning, has also contributed to our collective knowledge about language teaching and learning. In her book *Language and Learning in Multilingual Classrooms: A Practical Approach* (2012), Coelho highlights the importance of initial assessment of language abilities and introduces several steps for conducting this type of assessment with language learners. Coelho's steps for **initial assessment** have been adapted for Ukrainian language learners in the section that follows.

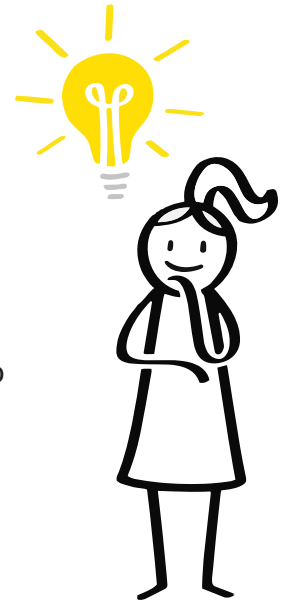


You may wonder...how can an “initial assessment” help teachers of Ukrainian?

After completing an initial assessment of the language skills that each student brings into the classroom at the start of a new year, teachers have a more precise snapshot of the skills and abilities of their students on the CEFR scale. Following initial assessment, teachers should review their unit and lesson plans. Are the language outcomes and learning activities suitable for all students in the room?

The instructional plans that a teacher creates *prior* to initial assessment may no longer reflect the real needs of students *as revealed* by the initial assessment.

Adjustments based on student need become very important to each student’s progress. For example, fluent speakers will need to be challenged with appropriate readings and resources, while language beginners will need to receive additional support at a more basic level. Using the knowledge gained from initial assessment, teachers can revise language outcomes to make their outcomes more realistic and attainable.



The acronym [SMART](#) is helpful for ensuring that language learning outcomes are **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound**.



The steps that follow have been adapted from Coelho’s recommendations. They offer a guide to the initial assessment process.



STEP ONE: ASSESS WRITING SKILLS

a. First Task: Label items in a picture.

Select a picture on a common or familiar theme (e.g., food, family, nature). Ask the student to label items in the picture in Ukrainian. If the student can label the picture, continue by asking the student to:

- Write a few sentences, a descriptive paragraph, or a story about the picture.
- Use a bilingual dictionary as required for their writing (and if age-appropriate).

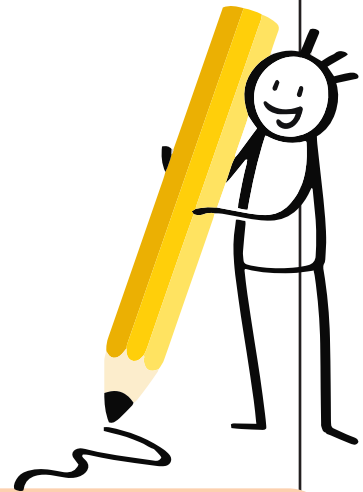
When assessing the writing, use a holistic approach. First, consider the writer's age, level of detail in the writing, organization of thoughts, and flow of information. Then consider vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Take note of the student's ability to use a bilingual dictionary (Ukrainian-English or English-Ukrainian). Does the student search out words with ease?

b. Second Task: Write one or more paragraphs.

If the student seems comfortable with written language, gather a second sample, by asking the student to:

- Write a few sentences or a paragraph to introduce himself/herself.
- Describe a favourite place or an important event (1-2 paragraphs).

The teacher should make note of the following: How long does it take the student to produce the piece of writing? Does the student check and edit the piece? Is a dictionary used? How simple or complex is the language used in the writing? Several conclusions about the student's writing skills along the CEFR are reasonable, as shown in the chart.



PreA1.1	No labelling; student has not been introduced to written language.
A1.1	Student labels the picture and can produce one or two simple sentences.
A1.2	Student introduces himself/herself and produces several simple sentences. Student may use a dictionary to search out vocabulary.
A2.1 or higher	Student describes a favourite place or important event. Language flows easily, although errors may occur. Student may use a dictionary to check for meaning, spelling, or accuracy.

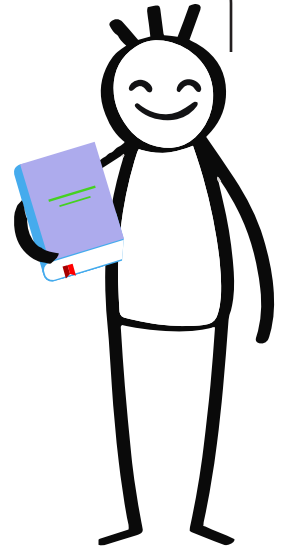


STEP TWO: ASSESS READING SKILLS

Present a few samples of written text to the student. Allow the student to select the text that he/she is comfortable reading aloud. Ensure that samples reflect a range of reading levels and interests (e.g., basic greetings, friendly conversation, announcement, news item, concert review, sports story, poem, or an excerpt from a novel).

- Provide a few minutes for preparation.
- Ask the student to read the text out loud.

This is not meant to be a comprehension exercise. Rather, you will learn something about the student's familiarity with print, his/her ability to decode, place stresses on the correct parts of words or phrases in sentences, and read aloud with confidence, understanding, and fluency. Reading comprehension exercises are given in Step Four.



STEP THREE: ASSESS ORAL SKILLS

a. Picture Prompt

A picture prompt is an image that invites the student to comment on what is seen in the picture. When selecting an image, teachers must keep in mind the student's background and prior experiences. For example, a student who has grown up in a warm climate (e.g., Brazil) may not be able to relate to an image of skating or skiing in Canada. Images used for picture prompts must be relevant or meaningful.

Proceed with oral language assessment, as follows:

- Provide a set of pictures showing people of various ages involved in different activities.
- Ask the student to select a picture and to talk about what is in the picture. Some students might point and name objects in the picture, while others might describe the picture in some detail. Students with greater oral fluency can be prompted to create a story, using the picture as a 'beginning' or 'ending'.



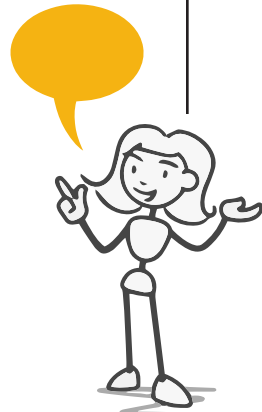
STEP THREE: ASSESS ORAL SKILLS CONTINUED

b. Informal Interview

Ask simple, open-ended questions to get a sense of the student's conversational skills. Make note of the student's fluency, pronunciation, accuracy with grammar and word choice, and overall ability to communicate effectively. Some sample questions are given below.

- Як тебе звати? (Яке твоє ім'я? Як ти називаєшся?)
- Скільки тобі років?
- Де ти живеш? (Скажи свою адресу.)
- В якому класі ти навчаєшся у школі? (В якій ти класі у школі?)
- Як називається твоя школа?
- Де ти вивчаєш українську мову?
- В якому місяці твій день народження?
- Чи ти маєш мобілку? Скажи, який в тебе номер телефону.
- Скажи, який номер телефону до вашої хати (або до мами або тата).
- Яка твоя улюблена розвага? (Що ти любиш робити, коли маєш вільний час?)
- Розкажи дещо про свою родину (сім'ю).
- Докінчи це речення: Я щасливий/щаслива тому що....
- Розкажи дещо про одну з наступних тем:
 - а) Мої вакації.
 - б) Мій день народження.
 - в) Моя школа.
 - г) Улюблена гра (спортова, комп'ютерна, настільна, карти, і т.п.).
 - г) Улюблене свято.

Do not expect students to answer questions in complete sentences. This is unnatural even for a native speaker. Short phrases that make sense and follow the topic are an indication that the student understands the question and can produce a meaningful response. If a student does answer in full sentences, the teacher will certainly be able to gather more evidence of the student's oral language abilities. Be prepared to move on to a new question or adjust questions if a student appears to be confused.





STEP FOUR: READING COMPREHENSION

Provide a selection of short reading passages with age-appropriate content and at various levels of difficulty.

- Ask the student to choose a passage and read it silently.
- Ask the student to talk about what he/she read. You can provide prompts or ask questions to encourage the student to retell or summarize the content.
- Ask the student to connect the passage to prior knowledge or experiences (e.g., Чи тобі колись таке сталося? Коли? Чи ти таке вже бачив/бачила?)
- Proceed to more challenging questions involving analysis, inference, or synthesis (Якби тобі таке сталося, що б ти робив/робила? Поясни, чому ти так думаєш. Вгадай, що буде далі...)
- If the student is able to talk about the content quite easily, encourage him/her to try a more challenging reading passage.
- If you have time limitations, a quiz format could be used with students, e.g., true-false questions, matching, fill-in-the-blank, short answer questions.

DETERMINING A STUDENT'S CEFR LEVEL

Following initial assessment and analysis of results, the teacher will have a snapshot of each student's Ukrainian language skills and abilities at the time of assessment. To assist teachers with the analysis, descriptors and corresponding CEFR levels have been provided in the charts attached to this document.

The student's initial level should be recorded in the individual profile on the top right-hand side of the CEFR assessment chart. This is the student's baseline or starting point at the beginning of the term.

Students make progress with language learning in one of two ways along the CEFR scale:

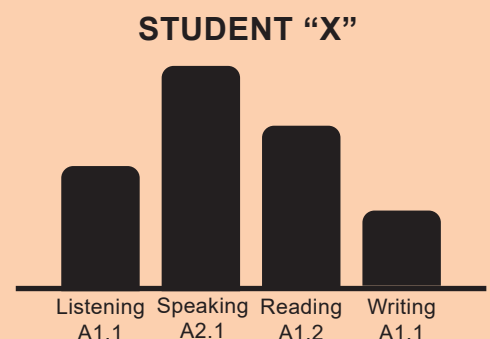
- by gaining skills within the same level (e.g., within A1.1), or
- by increasing their skills and moving to a new level (e.g., from A1.1 to A1.2).

The good news for students, teachers, and parents is that even small steps forward, such as success with one or two descriptors, is positive and illustrates language growth.

NOTE: STUDENT ABILITIES ARE RARELY EQUAL IN THE FOUR SKILL AREAS

The CEFR reflects how language progresses over time as students interact with others and gain new skills to meet their needs at home, at school, and in the community. It is rare for students to have equal strengths across all four skills areas. An 'average level' should be assigned to reflect the student's baseline skills.

Example: The bar graph illustrates that Student 'X' has well-established speaking skills in Ukrainian along the CEFR scale but needs help with skill development in other areas, particularly writing. An average level would be **A1.2**.





ONGOING ASSESSMENT: CEFR-BASED LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS

Language Portfolios – A Brief Description

The Language Portfolio (LP) is a user-friendly, CEFR-based document for recording language progress over time in a first language and additional languages. It is a personal document that helps learners to reflect on language learning and intercultural experiences, regardless of whether the learning experiences have taken place through **formal** study programs in school, after-school (рідна школа), or at the post-secondary level, or **informally** through family, friends, the cultural community, or travel. Portfolios may be used by students of all ages from the primary grades to university and beyond.

Pedagogical Use in the Language Classroom

If teachers choose to use LPs with their students, there are some pedagogical guidelines to consider. The LP is intended to be used as a **learning tool** in the language classroom, offering a way to monitor and update progress for each language learner. The LP can become a regular part of classroom activities. It must be stressed that **LPs are the property of the language student** – not the teacher. The LP is much like a journal in which students think deeply about their language learning journey. They self-reflect on their progress and recognize where gaps exist in conversations, reading, or writing. Further themes, tasks, and activities may be added by classroom teachers, and pages may be copied as needed to record progress

The process of reviewing an LP provides a unique opportunity for teachers, students, and parents to plan learning activities, discuss language projects, and record and monitor progress in all languages in a comparative manner. Students are often amazed at the extent of their language skills in a dominant language (e.g., English) and how much progress has been made in the language being studied (e.g., Ukrainian).





Recognizing a Range of Skills and Abilities

As stated previously, there is always a considerable range in language proficiency across skill areas. This is particularly true in today's Ukrainian language classrooms, which have a blend of English speakers who are learning Ukrainian and newcomers whose native language is Ukrainian. It is recommended that language teachers plan learning activities in Ukrainian while keeping the following factors in mind:

- Learning activities and resources should be selected based on **prior learning and language knowledge**, as evidenced in the initial assessment.
- Language instruction must make sense in the 'here and now'; that is, topics should be concrete, not abstract, and should have immediate and transparent **relevance** for the language student.
- Language learning should be **meaningful** in relation to the other significant parts of the student's life in Canada, such as:
 - day-to-day living
 - family responsibilities
 - community participation
 - health and well-being
 - cultural and spiritual values.
- Language activities should allow for the use of cognates and translanguaging from a first or dominant language to the language being learned. For most Canadian students, there will be a reliance on English vocabulary to support Ukrainian language learning. For more information on translanguaging, see Hamman, L., Beck, E., Donaldson, A. (2018).

Self-assessment of linguistic proficiency: A pedagogical shift

LPs present a pedagogical shift in language learning. Students are asked to be **active participants in self-assessment**. It is not the sole responsibility of the teacher to assess the student's language skills, but rather, it becomes the student's responsibility to record which languages are known and the types of skills the student has in these languages. Perhaps the student has only rudimentary conversational skills, or perhaps the student has learned to read and write the alphabet. The process of thinking about and recording these language skills is part of self-awareness. The teacher becomes a '**guide on the side**' in this process. Over time, students can determine which strategies are most effective for their learning, where and when language progress has been made, and where there is room for improvement.





LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS: THREE DISTINCT PARTS

Every LP, whether designed for young students, teenagers, or adults, contains three distinct parts – a Language Passport, a Language Biography, and a Dossier.

In Europe, each country's version of the LP must be approved by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe (Link: <http://www.coe.int/portfolio>). Approved versions of LPs can be viewed on the web page of the [European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe](#). Canadian versions of LPs do not have a formal approval process.

Language Passport

The **Language Passport** is an overview of the languages a student knows, or is learning. It refers to home and school contexts as a way of emphasizing the importance of all language learning experiences. The passport is particularly valuable when students move from school to school or when teachers change.

Language Biography

The second section of the LP is the **Language Biography**. This section is the tool that responds to and propels the learning process forward. It is while working with the Biography that the individual student articulates and notes learning targets, monitors the learning process, records successes and difficulties, assesses the effectiveness of language use, and re-defines goals for improvement in the future.

The Language Biography does not contain the complete list of descriptors that appear in CEFR reference documents. Rather, the Biography is a limited selection of descriptors that reflect what has been learned in the past or is currently being learned by the student.

Students are asked to reflect on whether they can use the language in everyday situations or to fulfill very specific needs or goals. By completing this section, students become more aware of:

- what they know and are able to do with their language skills; and,
- how they can improve their language skills in the future.

Dossier

The final section of the LP is the **Dossier**, which is an organized space for saving samples of work, records of personal vocabulary, and other pieces of evidence produced by the student. The student is responsible for making decisions about what to include, what to remove, and what to consider for future placement in the dossier. This active engagement in decision-making helps students to relate their entries in the first two sections to the examples chosen for the Dossier.

The Dossier may contain information about the student and his/her family, personal interests, hobbies, and favourite things. Many other items of importance or personal relevance can be added to the Dossier. Some suggestions are: pictures or photos, souvenirs, e-mail or text messages, selected written work, audio or video recordings, results of project work, personal word lists, posters, or book reviews.



USING LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS IN THE CLASSROOM

Making time for the LP

Teachers may wonder how to allocate time for LPs in their language learning programs. Given that the LP is the property of the student, teachers can begin by introducing the purpose of LPs to their students. Students will need words of encouragement and support as they learn to document their own language learning. Use of the LP will gradually increase each student's capacity for reflection and self-assessment, thus enabling students to gradually take more responsibility for their own learning.

The LP is SMART because it allows students to reach learning outcomes that are:



The LP can become part of any language learning program and be integrated into teaching materials and resources. The LP remains the exclusive property of the student, who may receive guidance or assistance from the language teacher as required.

How often should students work with the LP?

There are two aspects to this question that need to be considered by the teacher, namely: (a) how often should students record language progress in the LP and update the content of their Dossier, and (b) how often should the teacher devote teaching time to the LP as a learning tool. Class time is needed to review student learning, to reflect on learning outcomes, set sights on new language targets, and provide guidance on dossier items.

To get the most benefit from using the LP, students need to work with it at regular intervals throughout the year, reflect on what they have learned and think about what they will be learning in the days ahead. Students can evaluate their progress in pairs or with the teacher. They can mark when they have achieved their goals and also put evidence of their achievements in the Dossier.

- Students evaluate their progress in pairs or with the teacher. They can mark when they have achieved their goals and place evidence of their achievements in the Dossier.
- Teachers and students reflect on the 'can do' statements that have not been marked and set new targets for learning. Teachers invite students to help select new topics of study for the coming weeks.
- Teachers help students to think about the work they have been doing, how they have been learning, and what skills have been achieved. Students may need some guidance in these areas.



- Parents can be invited to participate in affirming or reporting some of the language skills exhibited by the student at home or in the community.
- Most language learning in the classroom can be applied to the 'can do' statements. Classroom learning or after-school assignments can include time for student self-assessment and the selection of items placed for the Dossier.

LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Working with the LP helps to develop a whole-school and a community approach to language learning and intercultural awareness. It is recommended that information about the LP be shared with parents. Teachers may also share their experiences in working with the LP with colleagues. Consider these possibilities:

- Meet regularly with other teachers in your school or other schools who use the LP.
- Prepare a joint presentation on the LP with another colleague for staff members.
- Prepare an exhibition of student work with the LP.
- Write about the LP for your school bulletin, an outside journal, or newspaper.
- Make a presentation at a school division meeting or a parents' night. Use the information sheet provided to explain the purpose and value of LPs in your language program.





PARENT INFORMATION SHEET: LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO

What is the Languages Portfolio (LP)? It is a personal document that can:

- show a range of competence in different languages and experience with other cultures;
- guide the student's progress in a first language or additional languages.

There are three main sections which the student can fill in at regular intervals.

1. The Language Passport is a record of the student's attainment of different language skills and shows cultural experiences in and out of school;
2. The Language Biography is a personalized learning diary, showing specific capabilities in language learning through 'can do' statements;
3. The Dossier is a record of the student's work in each language. It can be a file folder, box, or album. The dossier should be updated with new items at regular intervals through the year.

Is the LP only for students?

Language Portfolios can be used in elementary school, secondary school, during post-secondary education and in adult life.

How can the student use the LP?

The LP helps to inform students about their language skills. Each student records how well he or she can understand and communicate in other languages. In addition, students develop the ability to reflect on and assess personal growth in languages over time.

How can parents help?

Parents can support their children by reinforcing the value of communication in more than one language. Review the LP together and provide help if required. Suggest items that the student might add to the LP dossier.

Ask your child to demonstrate his/her language skills by reading to you or teaching you some new words or phrases. Look at the LP before meetings with teachers and then discuss your child's progress based on information from the Portfolio.

What happens when the student changes classes or schools?

The LP is a valuable tool in transition as it tells the next teacher or school what a student can do in the language he/she has been learning, thus helping to avoid unnecessary repetition of work.



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