

The Oxford Online Placement Test: What does it measure and how?

Language Focus: Use of English and Listening Ability

1. Overview of the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT)

1.1 Test Mandate

Oxford University Press (OUP) has provided schools and other educational institutions with a placement test for many years. The original pencil-and-paper placement test, the *Oxford Placement Test*, was developed by Dave Allan in 1985. In 2000, *the Quick Placement Test*, a CD-ROM delivered computer adaptive test was developed by Cambridge ESOL and distributed by OUP. By 2007, with the era of Internet-based testing fast becoming a viable option, the ELT Test Development Unit at OUP decided to investigate what schools and universities were looking for in an online placement test. To gather this information, a survey was administered online to a cross-section of existing OUP customers comprised of small to large private language schools, universities, and some corporate customers. Approximately 300 participants globally responded to the survey. Additional information was gathered by means of phone calls and/or face-to-face meetings.

The results of this research confirmed several assumptions about what customers were looking for in an online placement test, namely that the test should:

- a. measure more than knowledge of grammatical form—respondents also wanted the test to measure the learners' ability to listen and read in English;
- b. be relatively short, but with acceptable reliability;
- c. be straightforward to administer by means of an Internet link that could be accessed either on site with individual test taker login/password details, or remotely by means of email;
- d. report scores in relation to the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)*;
- e. provide detailed feedback about individual and group performance so that this information can be used to plan further learning;
- f. be amenable to being customized so that schools could collect data on test takers that might be useful when making placement decisions (e.g., adding results from a school's existing writing or speaking test, or asking test takers to update their details with previous tests they have taken).

This list of requirements provided a framework from which the design of the current test system could be informed.

1.2 Test Purposes

English language students already enrolled in or planning to begin a new class at a private language school, or those already registered for a university course, need to be placed quickly and efficiently into class levels at the start of the course. The *Oxford Online Placement Test* is designed with three goals in mind: (1) to measure the language knowledge that these students have and to place them as accurately and reliably as possible into levels that align with the *CEFR*; (2) to provide students, teachers, and institutions (i.e., the stakeholders) with detailed information, so that they can make informed decisions about teaching and learning; (3) to provide stakeholders with an online placement test that is highly practical (i.e., inexpensive, flexible, easy-to-use, and adaptable), and reliable in its measurement of students' abilities.

More specifically, the *OOPT* is designed to measure: (1) the test takers' knowledge of the second or foreign language (i.e., their grammatical and pragmatic knowledge); and (2) their ability to use this knowledge to communicate a range of meanings while listening and reading. To this end, the goal of the first section of the *OOPT* is to measure the students' knowledge of the grammatical and pragmatic resources underlying English language use. The decision to measure grammatical and pragmatic knowledge separately in the Use of English section is the result of considerable research evidence showing that grammatical knowledge (i.e., knowledge of grammatical forms and semantic meaning) is a strong predictor of the students' ability to communicate in pragmatically appropriate ways (Ameriks, 2009; Chang, 2002, 2004; Grabowski, 2009; Liao, 2009; Purpura, 1999, 2006). Therefore, it is important to have specific information on the students' grammatical and pragmatic ability if we expect to help them improve in these domains. This section of the test includes three language knowledge tasks. The first task primarily aims to measure grammatical forms; the second mainly to measure semantic meaning; the third is a test of grammatical form and meaning; and a fourth (to be included in the test by early 2010) is designed to measure the students' knowledge of the pragmatic (i.e., implied) meanings encoded in situated interactions.

The second section of the *OOPT* is designed to measure the test takers' listening ability. This section includes three tasks, each intended to measure the students' ability to understand both the literal meanings encoded within the listening text (i.e., endophoric-literal items) and the implied meanings encoded either within the text (i.e., endophoric implied items) or beyond the parameters of a listening text (i.e., exophoric-implied items). Listening ability in the *OOPT* is assessed by means of short and long dialogues, and an extended monologue.

2. The Development of the OOPT

2.1 Test Design

Given that the *OOPT* will be used as a basis for: (1) making inferences about the students' language knowledge and their ability to use this knowledge to understand listening (and reading) texts at multiple proficiency levels; and (2) providing detailed information to stakeholders in the support of teaching and learning—again at multiple proficiency levels, the *OOPT* was influenced by many sources of information in the design phase. The first source of information was a comprehensive model of communicative language ability—one that could be used as a basis for test development and validation. The *OOPT* used Purpura's (2004) model of language knowledge because it specifies two components of grammatical knowledge (i.e., grammatical form and semantic meaning) that jointly serve as the basis for conveying a range of implied meanings (e.g., contextual, sociocultural, etc.) in language use contexts. A second source of information for the *OOPT* design was OUP curricula. In this regard, a range of OUP coursebooks were surveyed and the language learning points indexed. These learning points were then mapped onto Purpura's model of language ability. Gaps in this list of learning points were supplied by a third source of information, pedagogical English grammars (e.g., Azar, 1998; Celce-Murcia & Larson-

Freeman, 1999; Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990; Parrott, 2000; Swan, 1995; Yule, 1998). A fourth source of information used was second language acquisition (SLA) research. The fifth source of information for the OOPT design involved a close examination of the grammar and listening level descriptors in the *CEFR*. The *CEFR* served, to the extent possible, as a basis for describing six levels of language proficiency. The final source of information used to design the OOPT was a survey of themes and topics in selected OUP and other ESL/EFL coursebooks. These themes and topics were used to contextualize test development. Each of these sources of design information is discussed in more detail below.

2.2 Theoretical Definition of Language Knowledge Underlying the OOPT

It is generally accepted that acquiring knowledge of a language in terms of its explicit or implicit rules of use is a key part of knowing and using a language. However, the effective use of grammar involves more than the recognition and use of correct grammatical *forms*; it also involves the recognition and use of the *literal meaning(s)* of the words arranged in syntax and the interlocutor's *intended meaning(s)* in relation to some context. The literal and intended meaning of an utterance in context is referred to as the *semantic meaning* of an utterance¹ (Purpura, 2004, 2007). In short, semantic meaning embodies the literal and intended meaning of an utterance, and is derived both from the sum of the meanings of the words arranged in syntax and from the ways in which the words are used to convey the speaker's intention in context. *Consider the following example:*

Table 1: Semantic meaning—the relationship between literal and intended meaning

Grammatical Form	Semantic Meaning			
	Literal Meaning (derived from the words in syntax)	Language Function (associated with literal meaning)	Intended Meaning (derived from the speaker's intention in context)	Language Function (associated with intended meaning in context)
Father: <i>Would you mind straightening up your room?</i>	Would it trouble you to clean up your room?	Could be... • Request for information OR • Request for action	Clean up your room!	Request for action, acknowledging potential imposition
Daughter: OK	[I'm not troubled] I'll do it.	[No need to acknowledge imposition] Expression of compliance	I'll do it!	Expression of compliance

(Based on Purpura, 2004, p. 66 and Purpura, 2007)

Beyond these grammatical forms and the literal and intended meanings associated with them, learners must be able to understand and convey a range of *implied* or *pragmatic meanings*, which can *only* be derived from the discourse context in which they are communicated. Wrapped around these are other contextual features which shape communication such as the formality of the situation in which communication occurs, the social relationships between the speakers, their social and cultural identities, their attitudinal and affective stance toward one another, the messages being conveyed, and so on. The more these factors come into play and the greater role that context plays in determining meaning, the more likely it is that the communication will carry a range of implied or codified meanings—layered on the semantic meaning of the utterances. This area of implied meaning moves the language in question away from grammatical forms and their semantic meaning into the area of *pragmatic* meaning. *Consider the following example in which grammatical form, semantic meaning, and pragmatic meaning are compared.*

¹“Semantic meaning” is sometime referred to as “grammatical meaning” (Purpura, 2004), utterance meaning, word and sentence meaning (Swain, 1980), linguistic meaning (Lado, 1961), form-meaning mappings, lexical-semantic-syntactic interfaces or the compositionality of the utterance.

Table 2: The relationship between form, semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning

Grammatical Form	Semantic Meaning				Pragmatic Meaning
	Literal Meaning (derived from the words in syntax)	Language Function(s) (associated with literal meaning)	Intended Meaning (derived from speaker's intention in context)	Language Function(s) (associated with intended meaning in context)	Other Implied Meanings (derived primarily from context)
Father: <i>Would you mind straightening up your room?</i>	F: Would it trouble you to clean up your room?	F: Could be... • Request for information OR • Request for action	F: Clean up your room!	F: Request for action acknowledging imposition	Sociolinguistic Meaning: F: Expression of politeness & respect given the imposition
Daughter: OK	D: [I'm not troubled]. I'll clean up my room	D: [No need to acknowledge imposition] Agreement to do as asked	D: I'll clean up my room.	D: Expression of compliance	Sociocultural Meaning: F: In this culture a father has the right to give a directive to his child, but to maintain harmony and respect, he will do so politely by acknowledging the potential imposition. D: Agreement to maintain harmony & to obey parent

(Based on Purpura, 2004, p. 66 and Purpura, 2007)

For many years now, language philosophers and applied linguists have recognized the importance of being able to use linguistic resources to communicate pragmatic meanings in diverse language use settings. Similarly, many language educators have highlighted the need to teach pragmatics in L2 classrooms and to investigate L2 pragmatic development (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2006; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Riggensbach & Wennerstrom 1999; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Soler & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Language testers, however, have been much more reticent to include an explicit pragmatic component in language tests on the grounds that the pragmatic component of communicative language ability is too complex or too impractical to assess. Recent work on the assessment of pragmatic ability (see Brown, 2001; Cohen, A.D. & Olshtain, E. (1993 to 1994); Cohen et al, 1986; Grabowski, 2007, 2009; Hudson et al., 1992, 1995; Kim, 2009; Liu, 2006; Purpura, 2004, 2007; Roever, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006; Yamashita, 1996, 2008), however, has shown that given the importance of being able to understand and convey a wide range of pragmatic meanings in all communication, failure to assess this component has serious implications for test validity in terms of construct underrepresentation.

Purpura (2004) has proposed a detailed theoretical definition of language knowledge that incorporates an interlocutor's knowledge of both grammar and pragmatics (see Figure 1). Grammatical knowledge in this model is defined in terms of grammatical forms and the literal and intended meanings (i.e., semantic meaning) they convey. Pragmatic knowledge is defined in terms of a range of meanings that can be simultaneously superimposed on the forms and their literal/intended meanings depending on the contextual factors of the language use situation. This model of language knowledge provides a useful resource for language assessment since the same underlying model of language knowledge can be specified at multiple proficiency levels. Also, this model offers a representation of language knowledge that addresses the role that context plays in creating meanings that may occur beyond those encoded in the forms alone. Finally, this model can be used to measure language knowledge on the subsentential or sentential levels (e.g., words, phrases or sentences occurring in relatively decontextualized, discrete-point grammar tasks) or on the discourse level (e.g., words, phrases and sentences occurring within or across texts such as those occurring in cloze tasks or in extended production tasks).

The model, shown below, used a comprehensive, theoretical depiction of language knowledge, which served as a basis for specifying language content in the *OOPT* at multiple proficiency levels. While this model provided examples of points that could be tested under each component, the exact determination of forms to be tested at different proficiency levels (from A1 to C2 on the *CEFR*) was based on several sources of information (see above).

Figure 1: Components of Grammatical and Pragmatic Knowledge (Purpura, 2004)

Grammatical Knowledge		Pragmatic Knowledge
Grammatical Form (Accuracy)	Grammatical Meaning (Meaningfulness)	Pragmatic Meanings (Appropriateness/Conventionality/ Naturalness/Acceptability)
SENTENTIAL LEVEL	SENTENTIAL LEVEL	SENTENTIAL OR DISCOURSE LEVELS
Phonological / graphological form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> segmental forms prosodic forms (stress, rhythm, intonation, volume) sound-spelling correspondences writing systems Lexical forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orthographic forms syntactic features and restrictions (nouns) morphological irregularity word formation (compounding, derivational affixation) countability and gender restrictions co-occurrence restrictions (*depend on, in spite of) formulaic forms Morphosyntactic forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inflectional affixes (-ed) derivational affixes (un-) syntactic structures (tense, aspect) simple, compound and complex sentences; voice, mood, word order 	Phonological / graphological meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimal pairs interrogatives, tags emphasis/contrast homophony (they're, there) homography (the wind, to wind) Lexical meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> denotation and connotation meanings of formulaic expressions meanings of false cognates semantic fields (attributes of words denoting physical attractiveness) prototypicality (words denoting physical attractiveness) polysemy (head of person/bed/table) collocation (table and chair) Morphosyntactic meanings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> time/duration reversive (pack/unpack) interrogation, passivization cause-effect, factual/counterfactual 	Contextual meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpersonal Sociolinguistic meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social identity markers (gender, age, status, group membership) cultural identity markers (dialect, nativeness) social meanings (power, politeness) register variation and modality (registers in speaking, writing) social norms, preferences, and expectations register variation and genres (academic, ESP) Sociocultural meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural meanings (cultural references, figurative meanings, metaphor) cultural norms, preferences, and expectations (seen in the use of speech acts, formulaic expressions, collocations) modality differences (speaking, writing) Psychological meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> affective stance (sarcasm, deference, importance, anger, impatience, irony, humour, criticism, understatement) Rhetorical meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coherence genres organizational modes
DISCOURSE OR SUPRASENTENTIAL LEVEL	DISCOURSE OR SUPRASENTENTIAL LEVEL	
Cohesive form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> referential forms (personal, demonstrative, comparative) substitution and ellipsis forms (repetition) logical connectors (therefore) adjacency pairs Information management form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prosody emphatic "do" marked word order (clefts) given/new organization parallelism Interactional form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discourse markers (oh, ah) communication management strategies (turn-taking, repairs, fillers, paraphrase, word coinage) 	Cohesive meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> possession, reciprocity spatial, temporal or psychological links informational links to avoid redundancy additive, contrast, causal Information management meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphatic meaning focal meaning contrastive meaning foregrounding Interactional meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> disagreement, alignment, hedging keeping the conversation moving, interruption, clarification repair by clarification 	
Low to High Context		High context

2.2 The OUP Curricula

In addition to Purpura's (2004) model of language knowledge, the development of the OOPT was informed by OUP curricula. In other words, the learning points from several OUP coursebooks were compiled in a list according to their *CEFR* level (A1 to C2)¹. Three types of information were listed: the grammar points covered, the vocabulary along with some topic areas, and instances of language use. The following shows the results of the survey for the A1/A2 levels.

Grammar covered at A1/A2 level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • countable and uncountable nouns • verbs and verb phrases • articles • adjectives • adverbs of frequency • how much/many and other quantifiers • subject and object pronouns • possessive adjectives/pronouns • demonstrative adjectives/pronouns • prepositions of time and place • comparative and superlative adjectives • intensifiers (quite, very) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present and past simple (regular/irregular verbs) • present continuous • going to (plans and predictions) • present perfect • can/can't, like + ing • Saxon genitive • some and any • telling the time • there is/are/was/were • would like to
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Vocabulary and topic areas at A1/A2 level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom words • correcting spelling • countries and nationalities • daily routine • days of the week • describing how you feel • describing likes and dislikes • describing personality • family • food and drink • free time activities • holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • houses and furniture • job • music • numbers > 1,000 • percentages • personal information • places in a city • shopping (buying clothes/a present) • talking about ability • time words and expressions (past and present) • weather
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Instances of language use

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greetings (formal and informal) • apologizing • shopping (<i>What size is this shirt?</i>) • checking into/out of a • making a dinner invitation hotel • making an offer (Can I help you?) • planning e.g. a holiday • making small talk • making a suggestion (a meeting) • talking about past experiences • talking about the weather • thanking someone • making a reservation • describing a person or a place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking about daily routines (<i>How often do you..?</i>) • asking about preferences/likes and dislikes/opinions • asking/talking about food and drink • asking for/giving directions or instruction • asking for/offering something to someone • describing/talking about your home town/country • expressing and finding out about attitudes • asking about/given personal information (<i>Where do you work?</i>) • giving instructions • talking about past experiences
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¹In addition to the OUP coursebooks, the learning points from other ESL/EFL coursebooks were consulted (e.g., Azar, 1998; Purpura & Pinkley, 1999, 2000).

2.3 Pedagogical English Grammars

A third source of information used in determining content for the *OOPT* involved pedagogical English grammars. Several grammars were consulted throughout the test development process in order to provide a comprehensive list of learning points beyond what was found in the course books. The grammars most consulted were: Allsopp, 1983; Azar, 1998; Celce-Murcia & Larson-Freeman, 1999; Greenbaum & Quirk, 1990; Swan, 1995.

2.4 SLA Research

Another source of information for designing items for the *OOPT* was SLA research. One of the most compelling findings of SLA research relates to the developmental patterns—that is, the general sequence that a language learner follows on the way to acquisition. The *OOPT* was informed by research relating to the order in which various linguistic features (e.g. morphemes) are acquired—the **developmental orders** as well as by research investigating the different stages learners go through to acquire a particular linguistic feature—the **developmental sequences**.

The findings on the **order of acquisition** of a number of English morphemes have been summarized by Kwon (2005), as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Order of Acquisition of English Morphemes in Major L2 Studies

L2 Studies				
Dulay & Burt (1974b)	Bailey, Madden, & Krashen (1974)	Larsen-Freeman (1975)	Hakuta (1976)	Rosansky (1976)
Children (Spanish & Chinese)	Adults (classified as Spanish and non-Spanish)	Adults (Arabic, Japanese, Persian, and Spanish)	Child (Japanese)	Children, Adolescents, Adults (Spanish)
N=60 Span.; 55 Chin.	N=73	N=24	N=1	N=6
1 Art.	1 Pres. Prog.	1 Pres. Prog.	2 Pres. Prog.	1 Pres. Prog.
2 Copula	2 Plural	2 Copula	2 Copula	2
3 Prog.	3 Contr. Copula	3 Art.	2 Aux.	3
4 Simple Plural	4 Art.	4 Aux.	4.5 in	4 Art.
5 Aux.	5 Past Irreg.	5 Short Plural	4.5 to	5 Copula
6 Past Reg.	6 Poss.	6 Past Reg.	6 Past Aux.	6 Aux.
7 Past Irreg.	7 Contr. Aux	7 Sing.	7 on	7 Poss.
8 Long Plural	8 3rd Pers. Pres.	8 Past Irreg.	8 Poss.	8 Past Irreg.
9 Poss.		9 Long Plural	9 Past Irreg.	9 Long Plural
10 3rd Pers. Sing.		10 Poss.	10 Plural	10 Past Reg.
			11 Art.	11 3rd Pers.Reg.
			12 3rd Pers. Reg.	
			13 Past Reg.	
			14 Gonna Aux.	

¹ Adapted from Kwon, 2005, who cited Jeong, 2002. Abbreviations are as follows: Pres. Prog., Present Progressive; Art., Article; Contr. Cop., Contracted Copula; Aux., Auxiliary; Past Irreg., Past Irregular; Poss., Possessive; Past Reg., Past Regular; Uncontr. Cop., Uncontracted Copula; Sing., Singular; 3rd Pers. Sing., and 3rd Person Singular. Note that rank order numbers that repeat within a given column (study) indicate a tie for two or more positions, in which case an average point score is assigned to each morpheme. Thus, for example, in a tie for 2nd and 3rd (Brown, 1973), each morpheme is given a rank score of 2.5.

In addition to developmental order research, SLA researchers have also examined **developmental sequences** or the general stages in the sequence of acquisition of one particular morpheme. The developmental sequences research is particularly useful in constructing items that attempt to measure different levels of grammatical knowledge on the interlanguage continuum.

Tables 4 to 10 present research findings on the sequence of acquisition of L2 English.

Table 4: Summary of general stages in the sequence of acquisition in L2 English negation (Schumann, 1979; Wode, 1978)

Stage	Description	Example
1	External negation: the negative element (usually 'no' or 'not') is placed at the beginning of the utterance.	No bicycle. I no like it. Not my friend.
2	Internal negation: the negator 'no', 'not' or 'don't' is placed between the subject and the verb. However, 'don't' is not marked for person, number, or tense and it may even be used before modals.	He don't like it. Mariana not coming today. I don't can sing.
3	The negative element is placed after auxiliary verbs. 'Don't' Don't' is still unanalyzed	I can't play that one. She don't like rice. He was not happy.
4	'Do' is marked for tense, person, and number as in TL rule. Learners may continue to mark tense, person, and number on both the auxiliary and the verb	We didn't have supper. It doesn't work. I didn't went there. She doesn't wants there.

Table 5: Summary of general stages in the sequence of acquisition in L2 English question formation (Pienemann, Johnston, & Brindley, 1988)

Stage	Description	Example
1	Rising intonation: single words, formulae or sentence fragments	Four children? A dog?
2	Rising intonation: declarative word order, no inversion, no fronting	He work today? The boys throw the shoes?
3	Fronting: <i>wh</i> -fronting, no inversion (+/-AUX) <i>do</i> -fronting other-fronting	What he (is) saying? Does in this picture there is four astronauts? Is the picture has two planets on top?
4	"Overinversion"	Do you know where is it?
5	Differentiation inversion in <i>wh</i> - + copula and yes/no questions inversion in <i>wh</i> - questions	Where is the sun? How do you say "proche"?
6	Complex questions question tag negative question embedded question	It's better, isn't? Why can't you go? Does she like where she lives?

Table 6: Summary of general stages in the sequence of acquisition in L2 English relative clauses (accessibility hierarchy, Keenan & Comrie, 1977)

Stage	Description	Example
1	Subject	The girl who was sick went home.
2	Direct object	The story that I read was long.
3	Indirect object	The man who[m] I gave the present to was absent.
4	Object of preposition	I found the book that John was talking about.
5	Possessive (Genitive)	I know the woman whose father is visiting.
6	Object of comparison	The person that Susan is taller than is Mary.

Table 7: Summary of general stages in the sequence of acquisition in L2 English possessive determiners (Zobl, 1984)

Stage	Description	Example
1	Pre-emergence: no use of <i>his</i> and <i>her</i> . Definite article or <i>your</i> used for all persons, genders, and numbers.	The little boy play with the bicycle. He have band-aid on the arm, the leg, the stomach. This boy cry in the arm of your mother. There is one girl talk with your dad.
2	Emergence: strong preferences for the use of only one of the forms (either <i>her</i> or <i>his</i>)	The mother is dressing her little boy, and she put her clothes, her pant, her coat, and then she finish. The girl making hisself beautiful. She put the make-up on his hand, on his head, and his father is surprise.
3	Post-emergence: differentiated use of <i>his</i> and <i>her</i> , but not when the object possessed has natural gender.	The girl fell on her bicycle. She look his father and cry. The dad put her little girl on his shoulder, and after, on his back.
4	Error free use of <i>his</i> and <i>her</i> in all contexts including natural gender and body parts.	The little girl with her dad play together. And the dad take his girl on his shoulder and he hurt his back.

Table 8: Temporal expressions: tense-aspect (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000)

Stage	Description
1	Pragmatic stage: Scaffolding Chronological order Implicit Ordering
2	Lexical stage: Adverbials
3	Morphological stage: Emergence of morphology to mark temporal relations

—————▶ Form Oriented

Table 9: Reference to past events (Meisel, 1987)

Stage	Description	Example
1	Reference to events in the order in which they occurred; mention of time or place to show that the event occurred in the past.	My son come. He work in restaurant. Viet Nam. We work too hard.
2	Grammatical morpheme attached to the verb; frequent form-meaning mismatch.	Me working long time. Now stop.
3	Irregular past tense forms used before the regular past is used reliably.	We went to school every day. We spoke Spanish.
4	The regular <i>-ed</i> ending overgeneralized; the wrong past tense form used (e.g., the present perfect instead of the simple past).	My sister caught a big fish. She has lived here since fifteen years.

Table 10: Emergence of the past progressive (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000)

Stage	Description	Example
1	Bare progressive	He walking
2	Present progressive	He is walking
3	Past progressive	He was walking

2.5 The CEFR Level Descriptors for Grammar and Listening

The *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* provides a set of very broad descriptors describing what a learner typically, at any particular level of grammatical or listening ability (from A1 to C2), *can do* in practical terms. These descriptors are very broad and are not intended to be used as a syllabus or as a basis for constructing test items. Rather, they provide further evidence of the perceived level of the test items so that from a validation perspective, standard setting activities can seek to identify the typical test performance that corresponds to students who match the relevant *CEFR* profile. Thus, the *CEFR* descriptors were used as a point of reference for what students might be able to do with the language (not what they know) at different proficiency levels.

The following are some of the original *CEFR* descriptors used in the *OOPT*. *An extensive list of descriptors were used in the design phase of the test, but a specific set of 50 were used as part of the piloting phase.*

A1 Beginner + [Basic user - Breakthrough]

- Can understand carefully selected simple vocabulary and use some of this in everyday situations (e.g. going shopping).
- Can handle some present simple and continuous verb forms and a few past simple forms.
- Can understand the main message of a tightly-controlled simple reading text with one or two unknown words.
- Can understand the main message of a short simple listening text.
- Can deal with basic social and function language related to survival skills (e.g. making simple requests or giving basic information such as numbers and dates, days, and prices), but may have some difficulties doing this.

A1 > A2 Elementary [Basic user - Waystage]

- Can understand and use vocabulary adequate for everyday situations (e.g. shopping, eating, or going out, traveling).
- Can handle basic grammatical forms some present simple and continuous verb forms and some past simple forms talk about future plans and can use simple comparatives.
- Can understand the main message of and some specific information in a controlled simple reading text with some unfamiliar words.
- Can understand the main message of and extract some information from a short simple listening text.

B1 > B2 Intermediate [Independent user- Vantage]

- Uses accurately and appropriately vocabulary adequate for understanding and responding to a range of familiar and some unfamiliar topics and can identify appropriate lexical items.
- Can handle with reasonable accuracy simple and some more complex grammatical forms.
- Can understand standard spoken language on both familiar and unfamiliar topics relating to personal social academic life or work.

C1 Upper-Intermediate [Proficient user – Effective operational command]

- Uses accurately and appropriately a wide range of vocabulary for unfamiliar topics. Can also use some metaphoric language and idioms.
- Has control of a wide range of more complex grammatical forms.
- Can understand a wide range of lengthy complex texts relating to social, professional or academic life. Can identify points of detail including attitudes as well as stated opinions.
- Can understand extended speech on abstract and complex topics and can follow interaction in discussions and debates.

C2 Advanced [Proficient user - Mastery]

- Uses accurately with precision a wide range of vocabulary for unfamiliar and abstract topics. Can use metaphoric language idioms and colloquialisms and can convey finer shades of meaning.
- Has very good control of a wide range of complex grammatical forms.
- Can understand all forms of written language relating to social professional or academic life including manuals specialised articles and literary works.
- Can understand any kind of spoken language including abstract and complex topics and follow quick-speed interaction in discussions and debates.

One major drawback of the *CEFR* descriptors is that while they describe what a learner might be able to do at a particular level, they do not indicate what a learner needs to *know* in order to use the language at these different proficiency levels. They also do not describe what a learner *cannot do*. Knowing what a learner needs to *learn* is a critical first step in helping teachers and learners with information that can be used to promote further teaching and learning. As a result, the grammar and listening proficiency scales of the *OOPT* are designed to provide learners with information on what they might be able to do at the different proficiency levels, but they also describe what learners specifically need to know at a given proficiency level and what they still need to learn. The proficiency descriptors for grammatical knowledge and listening ability are provided in Appendix 1 and 2. *An example of an OOPT proficiency descriptor for B2 is provided below.*

Table 11: Proficiency Descriptor for B2 Grammatical Knowledge

B2	<i>Is likely to demonstrate considerable control of grammatical form.</i>	<i>Is likely to demonstrate considerable level of communicative meaningfulness.</i>
<p><i>High Intermediate [Independent user- Vantage]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to be able to handle, with accuracy and relative consistency, a fairly wide range of grammatical forms responding to familiar and unfamiliar topics. <p>More specifically... In addition to those forms at the lower levels, learners at the B2 level are likely to have accurate and reasonably consistent control of the following B2 forms:</p> <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>setup</i>), phrasal verbs (turn something <i>off</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (break up <i>with</i>), adjectives and adjective phrases (worried <i>about</i>), comparisons (be <i>just like</i>), formulaic expressions (no <i>big deal</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (the better-prepared worker), tense and aspect (present, past, and future—perfect and continuous), modals and phrasal modals (<i>ought to have</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>according to</i>), adjectives and adjective phrases (<i>unaware of</i>), comparisons (<i>the more...the less</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>rid oneself of</i>), questions and tags (e.g., embedded questions, tags with all tenses), conditionals (e.g., third, reduced), passive voice (present, past, and future—perfect and continuous), complements and complementation (<i>postpone my going, had something done</i>), adverbs and adverbials (e.g. present and past participial phrases), reported speech (<i>He told me not to</i>), mood (<i>suggest he go</i>), among others;</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>regardless</i>), relative clauses (<i>whose</i>), among others;</p> <p>Information management addressing the use of: focus and emphasis (e.g., cleft sentences), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays an expectedly occasional pattern of errors with regard to some of the forms at this level; • Errors generally persist in lexical and morphosyntactic form including nouns and noun phrases (e.g., articles), tense and aspect, prepositions, conditionals, complements and complementation, passives, reported speech, among others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to use a broad range of grammatical forms to communicate a wide range of literal and intended meanings with topics appropriate to this level (e.g. personal, social, academic life, or work). • Is likely to be able to identify overall meaning and specific details related to attitudes, opinions, and text structure • Errors in grammatical form hardly ever obscure communication. • Knowledge of lexis consists of a range of medium to high frequency words used to communicate complex meanings in various situations. • Is likely to have minor problems with lexical choice, but able to get the point across with reasonable accuracy in most situations.

Each level test of the *OOPT* was designed to measure language knowledge and listening ability at one of six *CEFR* levels (A1 to C2). To make this possible the items and tasks in the item bank had to meet two criteria. They had to: (1) map onto the model of language knowledge proposed above and (2) span the *CEFR* levels A1 to C2 in terms of their item difficulties. The specific content for individual level tests was aligned with the content specified at each level of the *CEFR*. This content and the presumed levels they measured are detailed in the test item specifications for each item type at each *CEFR* level.

There were some overlapping items and tasks in each level item bank. For example the easier B1 items appear in the A2 bank as more difficult items. This ensures that the item bank is linked vertically, but will also allow for any error in the initial classification so that borderline test takers can show that they are at the next or lower level, if necessary. This approach will ensure uniformly constructed level tests that properly cover the construct as well as make best use of all items in the item bank.

3. The Use of English Section of the OOPT

The Use of English Section is designed to measure how much learners know about grammatical forms, and the meanings (e.g., word meanings, phrasal meanings, sentence meanings) that these forms encode. It currently consists of three task types. To help put the test items into context, each question in Tasks 1 and 2 are illustrated by a photograph.

The OOPT has the following item foci depending on the proficiency level being measured.

<p>Noun phrase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-determiners (quantifiers—<i>all both</i>; fractions—<i>such a</i>) • determiners (articles—countability definite/indefinite/generic reference V + NP—<i>give birth</i> prep + NP—<i>on fire</i>; possessives—<i>my</i>; demonstratives—<i>this</i>; quantifiers—<i>some every neither enough</i>) • post-determiners (ordinals—<i>another</i>; quantifiers—<i>much few most</i>; phrasal quantifiers—<i>a lot of</i>; collectives—<i>a flock of</i>); partitives—<i>a glass of</i>) • nouns (countability affixation compounding—<i>daylight math teacher passer-by breakdown</i>; possessive 's) 	<p>Pronouns & reference (cohesion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal—<i>I me mine myself</i> • demonstrative—<i>this</i> • reciprocal—<i>each other one another</i> • relative—<i>who</i> [see relatives below] • indefinite—<i>someone</i> • interrogative—<i>who?</i>
<p>Tense and aspect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple aspect: present past future • perfective aspect: present past future • progressive aspect: present past future • perfective progressive aspect • subject-verb agreement 	<p>Questions & responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms—with auxiliaries the copula and other verbs • yes/no wh- tags • negative questions • short answers • uninverted questions—<i>You want what?</i>
<p>Modals & phrasal modals (be able to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms—present past future perfective progressive perfective progressive • probability—<i>may must likely possible</i> • prediction—<i>will could certain</i> • necessity—<i>must have to</i> • obligation—<i>should supposed to</i> • requests—<i>can may</i> • advice—<i>ought to had better should</i> 	<p>Conditionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forms—present past future • factual conditionals—<i>if I wash, you dry; if it's freezing the plants are dying;</i> • future conditionals—<i>if it snows I'll stay.</i> • hypothetical conditionals—<i>if I had time I'd go</i> • counterfactual conditionals—<i>if my mother were alive I'd go.</i> • subject/operator inversion—<i>had I known</i> • <i>unless; even if; whether; if only</i> • <i>hope vs wish</i>
<p>Phrasal verbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form—2-word 3-word • particles—<i>turn off the light quickly</i> vs. prepositions/adverbs—<i>turn quickly off the road</i> • separability—<i>turn up the TV; turn the TV up; turn it up (*turn up it)</i> 	<p>Passive voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form—present past future perfective progressive perfective progressive • other passives—<i>get something done; have something done</i> • focus construction: passive vs. active use • ergative or change-of-state verbs: <i>the window broke</i> • agent vs agentless passives
<p>Prepositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compounding—<i>outdo overdo downplay</i> • co-occurrence w/V Adj./N—<i>rely on; free from; in case of</i> • spatial relationships—<i>at the store</i> • temporal relationships—<i>at 5 pm</i> • other relationships—<i>at 0 degrees; at full speed; laugh at; talk at; by bus; for him; to Paris; told of; with a rock; with him.</i> • idiomatic—<i>good at doing</i> 	<p>Complements & complementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V + direct/indirect objects with/without pronouns • Vs with direct objects only in postprepositional position—<i>explain/introduce D.O to I.O</i> • <i>too many books (for him) to...</i> • <i>so many books (to VP) (that) + complement</i> • <i>such a big bill (that) + complement</i> • <i>strong enough (for NP) (infinitive complement)</i> • <i>that-complements—claim that insists that</i> • bare infinitives—<i>let him perform</i> • infinitive complements—<i>advise someone to; try to avoid; want (him) to; believe him to be/have been;</i> • gerund complements—<i>prefer going;</i> • <i>heard him perform/performing</i> • <i>forgot to buy vs forgot buying</i> • aspectual options—<i>I'd prefer to be relaxing now.</i> • causatives—<i>had/made him do; got him to do; had/got it done</i>

Adjectives

- formation (-ous -ive)
- reference adj—*main idea future king*;
- predicative adj—*asleep faint bound make me crazy*)
- particles—*a much-loved story*;
- adj order (*the lovely little black plastic Cher doll*)
- adj + prep—*good at*

Logical connectors

- subordinators—*after although insofar as so that*
- conjunctive adverbials—*therefore in contrast*
- coordinating conjunctions—*and but*
- relationships expressing time—*after*; location—*where*; manner—*as*; purpose—*so that*; reason—*since*; simultaneous—*while*; conditional—*even if*; concessive—*even though*; additive—*furthermore*; conclusive—*in sum*
- ellipsis—*I can too so/neither can I*
- pro-forms—*I'm from Paris and he's from there too*.
- gapping—*I did the dishes and Mary the laundry*.
- *both...and; either...or; neither...nor*

Relative clauses

- Uses—subject NP—*the book that is...*; direct object NP—*the book that I like...*; indirect object NP—*to whom I gave...*; oblique obj. NP—*the girl with whom you ...*; genitive NP—*the girl whose book I ...*; object NP of an comparison—*the guy that I was shorter than...*
- relative pronoun features—subject/object/determiner; human/non-human; possessive/non-possessive
- restrictive (defining) vs nonrestrictive (non-defining)

Nonreferential It and There

- time—*it's 1 o'clock*; distance—*it's 2 miles*; weather—*it's rainy*; environment—*it's noisy in here*
- existence—*there is/are; there exists; there arose*
- deictic *there*—*there's the dog*; non-referential *there*—*there's a dog watches over the house; what is there to do?*

Comparisons

- comparatives—*bigger than; a bigger bill than*;
- irregular comparative forms—*better*
- equatives—*as/so big as similar to as/so many books as*
- superlatives
- comparatives with n(ever)

Adverbials

- forms—adv. clause adv. phrase PP
- placement—sentence final—*he's sick in bed* sentence initial—*maybe he's sick* sentence medial—*he's often late*
- adverbial clauses expressing time condition cause concessive manner
- adverbial participles—present—*working hard I..*; perfective—*having worked hard I...*; perfective-progressive—*having been working...*;

Reported speech

- backshifting—*she says/has said she is..; she said she was*;
- subjunctives—*I recommend/propose/ask that you go (now tomorrow)*
- indirect imperatives—*he asked that I remain*
- indirect questions—*he asked if/what/how I wanted*

Focus and emphasis

- Emphasis—emphatic *do*—*I do understand*; reflexive pronouns—*I saw the president myself*; emphatic *own*—*my very own car*;
- marked word order—*him I see; never have I; sitting here are a few; at the desk was my son; into the house ran the mouse*
- Cleft sentences—*It's John who...; what he wants is...*

Task 1 – Testing knowledge of grammatical forms

Task 1 is designed to measure the test takers' knowledge of grammar at their appropriate level of proficiency based on the *CEFR*. In this task, test takers are asked to read a short gapped dialogue and then complete the dialogue by selecting one of four option choices. An example is shown below.

Example: Testing knowledge of grammatical forms at the A2 level (elementary)

Select a word or phrase to complete the conversation shown below.

1



Woman: I always travel by bus.

Man: Why?

Woman: Because it's than the train.

- A cheap
- B cheaper
- C as cheap
- D cheapest

This item tests the learners' knowledge of the comparative form.

Task 2 – Testing knowledge of meaning

Task 2 is designed to measure the test takers' ability to use grammatical forms in order to understand the meanings communicated by speakers in a short, minimally-contextualized exchange. The meanings vary on a cline from very explicit, where the meaning can be determined from the words in the sentence, to very implicit (also referred to as "implied" or "pragmatic"), where the meaning of the utterance can *only* be determined from the context. Being able to understand *not only* the words of an utterance, *but also* their collective meaning(s) as intended by the speaker in context, is a critical feature of being able to communicate in a language. These meanings are tested at each test taker's level of proficiency—again, based on the *CEFR*.

Example: Testing knowledge of literal and intended meaning at the A1 level (beginner)

Read the dialogue. Then, select the correct answer from the options below.

1 What does the customer mean?

- A I'll have a chicken salad.
- B I really like chicken salad.
- C I always have chicken salad.



Waitress: What can I get you?
Customer: I'd like a chicken salad.

This item tests the learners' understanding of literal meaning. Here the statement "I'd like a chicken salad" has the same literal meaning as "I'll have a chicken salad".

Example: Testing knowledge of intended meaning at the A1 level (beginner)

Read the dialogue. Then, select the correct answer from the options below.

1 What does the woman mean?

- A I'd like some coffee.
- B I have some coffee.
- C I don't drink tea.



Man: Would you like tea or coffee?
Woman: Coffee would be great. Thanks.

In this example, the woman is responding to an offer made by the man. In “accepting the offer”, she says, “Coffee would be great.” By saying this, her intended meaning in this context is: “I’d like some coffee.”

Example: Testing knowledge of implied meaning at the A2 level (elementary)

Read the dialogue. Then, select the correct answer from the options below.

1 What does the man mean?

- A I don't like talking to you.
- B I'll talk to you in five minutes.
- C I don't have very long to talk to you.



Woman: Can I talk to you?
Man: Well, I have to leave in five minutes.

In this example, the woman asks the man to talk. He agrees, but says he only has five minutes, thereby implying that the conversation needs to be limited to five minutes. In the dialogue, he only says, “Well, I have to leave in five minutes.” His intended meaning in this context is to grant the woman’s request, which is not explicated stated, but implied. On a different level, by mentioning only when he needs to leave, he wishes to communicate the following: “Yes let’s talk as long as we can do so within five minutes.”

It is often difficult to separate the literal meaning of an utterance from the speaker’s intended meaning in context. The intended meaning is often referred to as the language function. For this reason, we say any utterance encodes both “literal and intended” meaning. At the same time, when there is sufficient context, a speaker’s utterance can communicate a range of other meanings that are not stated, but implied. We call these “pragmatic” meanings.

Task 3 – Testing knowledge of form and meaning

Task 3 is designed to test whether test takers can understand a long passage with gaps and whether they have sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to correctly complete these gaps. In other words, we say this task type measures the test takers' knowledge of both grammatical form and meaning. Test takers from the A1 (beginner) to B2 levels (intermediate) of proficiency are asked to fill in only one word; those from the C1 (upper-intermediate) to the C2 levels (advanced) are asked to supply more words.

Example: Testing knowledge of grammatical form and meaning across a passage at the A2 level (elementary)

Complete the text below. Write **ONE** word only into each space. There is an example (0) at the beginning.

<p>Hi! I'm having a great time (0) <u>in</u> Rome. It's hot and sunny and the people 1 <input type="text"/> very friendly. Yesterday, we 2 <input type="text"/> to the Coliseum. It was very old 3 <input type="text"/> really interesting. This afternoon we're going shopping in the local markets. Tomorrow we're 4 <input type="text"/> to leave Rome in 5 <input type="text"/> morning and travel 6 <input type="text"/> train to Venice. We've got some friends there. They're going to take 7 <input type="text"/> to St Mark's Square. I'd also like a trip on a gondola! See you soon</p>	 <p>Tim Smith 101A Wentworth Road Wimbledon London W1 2NQ</p>
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The correct answer in gap 1 is "are/seem/appear." In this case the learners need to determine what word would meaningfully complete the idea being expressed by the writer. The learners must also know that the verb should be in the present tense and given the subject "people", the verb would require a plural form. Given these two dimensions, we say this item measures both form and meaning.

Task 4 – Testing knowledge of pragmatic meaning

This task is currently in development and will be included in the test by late 2009, early 2010.

4. The Listening Section of the OOPT

The Listening Section of the test is designed to present test takers with different types of listening passages from which they will need to identify the literal, intended, and implied meanings being communicated in what they hear. In other words, test takers need to understand what is said (literal meaning) in the passage, what is understood “between the lines” (intended meaning), and what is communicated “beyond the lines”, drawing on the individual, social, cultural, affective, or attitudinal meanings of the situation. Just like the Use of English section, the listening section is geared to each test taker’s overall level of proficiency.

The Listening Section contains three task types. The first presents test takers with a number of short dialogues, each followed by a single four-option multiple-choice question. The second task type presents test takers with a longer dialogue; the third with a monologue. After test takers listen, they are asked to answer one or two multiple-choice questions. Test takers are given approximately 15 listening questions, depending on their level. They may listen to the recording twice.

Example: Understanding literal meaning at the B1 level (pre-intermediate)

When they click the “play” button, test takers hear:

Man: We went to that new Italian restaurant the other day.

Woman: What – er... Antonio’s?

Man: Yeah.

Woman: What’s it like?

Man: It’s good – I had some really nice pasta. The waiter wasn’t that great, but it was all pretty cheap.

Woman: Was it busy?

Man: No, hardly anybody there. It was really quiet.

Test takers see the question as shown below:

Read the sentences below. Then, listen to the short conversation.
Select the correct answer from the options below. You will have time to play the recording twice.



1 A man is talking about a restaurant he went to. What does he say about it?

- A The meal was expensive.
- B The service was quick.
- C The place was noisy.
- D The food was good.

How does the Oxford Online Placement Test work?

The *Oxford Online Placement Test* is a computer adaptive test. This means that it adapts to the ability level of each test taker and only presents the candidate with questions that are at his or her ability level. It does this by selecting each item for a test taker, based on how they answered the previous question. Getting a question correct means that test taker's next question will be a more difficult one. Getting a question wrong will result in the system selecting an easier question. In this way, the test homes in on each test taker's ability and level and can thus construct tests for each test taker to quickly identify their *CEFR* level. By using an adaptive testing format, the *Oxford Online Placement Test* can be much shorter than a conventional, pencil-and-paper placement test since each test taker only answers questions appropriate for his or her level of language ability.

Using this computer adaptive approach, each test taker is taking a test that is uniquely designed to measure his or her ability level within a certain domain (e.g., knowledge of grammatical forms). This is possible because the difficulty level of these items has already been determined through pretesting and piloting involving thousands of students from around the world and through prior statistical analyses. In this way, items can be precisely matched up with test takers' abilities.

Justifying the use of the Oxford Online Placement Test

The *Oxford Online Placement Test* claims to measure test takers' communicative language ability so that the scores from the exam can be used to make relatively accurate placement decisions in a language program that is aligned with the *CEFR*. In order to provide defensible evidence that score-based interpretations about language ability from this assessment are justified for use in placing students at the appropriate proficiency levels, an interpretative argument for the Oxford Online Placement Test must be constructed. This argument is based on a series of claims about test score interpretation and use. For example, a claim about the quality of the test would suggest that the test scores constitute a reliable measure of language ability; and a claim about test score utilization might suggest that the scores provide an accurate means of placing students into a language program from A1 to C2. The process of providing evidence to justify test interpretations and use is called "validation".

The validation process for the design phase of the *Oxford Online Placement Test* began with an extensive program of research. The initial phases involved a domain analysis to determine what content might need to appear on the test from A1 to C2. Other item and test analyses were performed after the pretests had been administered. In examining claims of the quality of the test, the statistical characteristics of the items, the measures and the pretest forms were investigated from a number of approaches. Further information relating to the justification of test score interpretation and test use of the *Oxford Online Placement Test* is available on the Oxford English Testing website at: www.oxfordenglishtesting.com.

Oxford University Press has a continuous research program to maintain and develop the *Oxford Online Placement Test*. If you would like to be involved, you are very welcome to contact eltpretesting@oup.com.

How do administrators or teachers administer the Oxford Online Placement Test?

You, the administrators and teachers, manage the testing process using the *Oxford English Testing Learning Management System* (OLMS). This system provides you with a comprehensive tool set that, for example, allows you to create different groups/classes for testing and then takes you through a simple set of steps for assigning placement tests to these groups. Tests can either be taken in your institution's computer lab with your colleagues overseeing the session, or at the test taker's home. If so desired, the test can even be taken before the test taker arrives at your institution. As the OLMS allows you to send multiple emails at the click of a button, you can provide test takers with the URL of the login page along with their unique login and password details so that they can take the test at their convenience.

How long does the Oxford Online Placement Test take?

There is no set time limit for the placement test although teachers may impose one, if so desired. In this case, they will need to inform test takers at the start of the test. Based on the pilot results, examinees typically finish the placement test in around 30 to 40 minutes. Nonetheless, it is recommended that test takers be allowed to complete the test in their own time.

The test taker's results show how long he or she has spent on each section of the test. You might want to use this information to place students with similar results into distinct classes when one has completed the test much more quickly than the other.

Scoring the Oxford Online Placement Test

The test is instantly scored and the results displayed in the OLMS Manage Placement Results page where you can see the scores, time taken, and *CEFR* level for the Use of English and Listening sections, and a combined score, time taken, and *CEFR* level for the whole placement test. You can then sort the results, select the test takers, and move them into their class. You can also save and print class lists for teachers to use.

Using the results

The placement test results are reported on a scale of 0 to 120 with 20 points corresponding to each *CEFR* level (e.g., a score of 15 would correspond to the *CEFR* A1 level). For detailed information on how to use placement test scores and on what analyses this score interpretation is based, please see the paper "*The Oxford Online Placement Test: The Meaning of OOPT Scores*" by Alastair Pollitt. This is available on the **Information for Teachers** page.

Note about the author

James E. Purpura is an Associate Professor of Language and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. In addition to directing the TESOL and Applied Linguistics Programs, Jim teaches courses in language assessment, language program evaluation, and research design in applied linguistics. He received his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from UCLA.

Jim is an “expert member” of the European Association of Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA). He was President of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) in 2007 and 2008. He is currently an Associate Editor for *Language Assessment Quarterly*. He has served as consultant for Educational Testing Association (Princeton, NY) and Cambridge ESOL. Jim has lectured extensively on language assessment matters throughout the world.

Jim’s scholarly publications include *Assessing Grammar* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), *Strategy Use and Second Language Test Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), ‘The impact of large-scale and classroom-based language assessments on the individual’ in C. Weir & L. Taylor (Eds.), *Language testing matters: Investigating the wider social and educational impact of assessment – Proceedings of the ALTE Cambridge Conference, April 2008*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), ‘Assessing communicative language ability: Models and components’ in N. Hornberger & E. Shohamy (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, Vol 7. Language Testing and Assessment* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2008), ‘Language Assessments: Gate-keepers or Door-openers? (with L. Bachman) in B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics* (Blackwell Publishing, 2008), ‘Investigating the effects of strategy use and second language test performance with high- and low-ability test takers: A structural equation modeling approach in *Language Testing* (1998), and ‘An analysis of the relationships between test takers’ cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and second language test performance’ (*Language Learning*).

Jim taught ESL/EFL for 16 years (France, Spain, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.). He was the Academic Director of the Binational Center (Institute of North American Studies) in Barcelona for a number of years.

Appendix A: Common European Framework of Reference
Grammatical Knowledge Scale for the Oxford Online Placement Test

	Grammatical Precision	Grammatical Meaningfulness
<p>C2 <i>Proficient</i> [Proficient user - Mastery]</p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate consistently high level of grammatical control.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is likely to be able to handle with accuracy and consistency a very wide range of grammatical forms responding to familiar or unfamiliar, and abstract or complex topics. <p>More specifically...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to those forms at the lower levels, learners at the C2 level are likely to have consistently accurate control of the following C2 forms: <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>letdown, outskirts</i>), low frequency phrasal verbs (<i>follow through on</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (comprised of), adjectives and adjective phrases (unbeknownst to), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (<i>a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity</i>), tense and aspect (<i>it's time I bought</i>), modals and phrasal modals (<i>ought not to have worried</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>with regards to</i>), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>serendipitous</i>), comparisons (<i>no sooner had I...</i>), pronouns and reference (devoted to <i>one another</i>), questions and tags (<i>when to go</i>), conditionals (e.g., past subjunctive), complements and complementation (<i>I appreciate your taking</i>), adverbs and adverbials (<i>swimmingly</i>), mood (e.g., past passive subjunctive)</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (a bus, <i>let along a taxi</i>), relative clauses (comparison--<i>the only one I was shorter than</i>), among others:</p> <p>Information management addressing the use of: focus and emphasis (she <i>did</i> say it), (inversion--<i>under no circumstances are you to open</i>), conditionals (<i>Had I known</i>), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays the occasional error with regard to form at this level; Errors generally may include articles, prepositions, infrequently-used phrasal verbs, collocations, complementation, among others. Errors may occasionally have to do with usage defined in terms of naturalness or conventionality. 	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate consistently high level of communicative meaningfulness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is likely to use all available grammatical resources to communicate a wide range of literal and intended meanings with a range of topics that may be familiar or unfamiliar and abstract or complex. Is likely to be able to use metaphor, idioms, and colloquialisms to convey finer shades of meaning. Is likely to use grammatical resources to communicate in a wide range of registers, including social, academic, professional Errors in grammatical form might obscure precision but never communication. Knowledge of lexis is extensive and consists of high and low frequency words communicating shades of meaning; Is likely to have very minor problems with lexical choice, but able to get the point across with accuracy in most situations.
<p>C1 <i>Advanced</i> [Proficient user – Effective operational command]</p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate high level of grammatical control.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is consistently likely to handle with accuracy and consistency a wide range of grammatical forms responding to a wide range of familiar or unfamiliar and abstract or complex. <p>More specifically...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to those forms at the lower levels, learners at the C1 level are likely to have accurate and consistent control of the following C1 forms: <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>the runaway horse</i>), low frequency phrasal verbs (putting it <i>off</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (involved <i>in/with</i>), adjectives and adjective phrases (unbeknownst to), lower frequency formulaic expressions (<i>long time no see</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (e.g., article usage—<i>the Rhine, Spain</i>), tense and aspect (present, past, and future—progressive and continuous), modals and phrasal modals (<i>present and past</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>with respect</i>)</p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate high level of communicative meaningfulness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is likely to use a broad range of grammatical forms to communicate a wide range of literal and intended meanings with a range of topics that may be familiar or unfamiliar and abstract or complex. Is likely to be able to use metaphor, idioms, and colloquialisms to convey finer shades of meaning. Is likely to use grammatical resources to communicate in a fairly wide range of registers, including social, academic, professional Errors in grammatical form might obscure precision but never communication.

<p>C1</p> <p>Advanced [Proficient user – Effective operational command]</p>	<p>to), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>costly</i>), comparisons (<i>lesser of two evils</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>the ladder...</i>), questions and tags (<i>shouldn't you have...?</i>), conditionals (<i>if only...</i>), complements and complementation (<i>insist on + his/him</i> <i>Ving it to me</i>), adverbs and adverbials (<i>hardly</i> a day goes by), mood (e.g., past subjunctive);</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>despite</i> the fact that), relative clauses (<i>whose</i>), among others;</p> <p>Information management addressing the use of: focus and emphasis (<i>inversion--under no circumstances are you to open</i>), nouns and noun phrases (cleft sentences--<i>the thing that I love most about the city is...</i>), conditionals (<i>Had I known</i>), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays occasional errors with regard to form at this level; • Errors generally occur in lexical, morphological or cohesive forms including articles, prepositions, infrequently-used phrasal verbs, collocations, complementation, among others. • Errors may occasionally have to do with usage defined in terms of naturalness or conventionality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of lexis is extensive and consists of high and low frequency words communicating shades of meaning; • Is likely to have minor problems with lexical choice, but able to get the point across with accuracy in most situations.
<p>B2</p> <p>High Intermediate [Independent user- Vantage]</p>	<p>Is likely to demonstrate considerable control of grammatical form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to be able to handle, with accuracy and relative consistency, a fairly wide range of grammatical forms responding to familiar and unfamiliar topics. <p>More specifically...</p> <p>In addition to those forms at the lower levels, learners at the B2 level are likely to have accurate and reasonably consistent control of the following B2 forms:</p> <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>setup</i>), phrasal verbs (turn something <i>off</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>break up with</i>), adjectives and adjective phrases (<i>worried about</i>), comparisons (<i>be just like</i>), formulaic expressions (<i>no big deal</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (the better-prepared worker), tense and aspect (present, past, and future—perfect and continuous), modals and phrasal modals (<i>ought to have</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>according to</i>), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>unaware of</i>), comparisons (<i>the more...the less</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>rid oneself of</i>), questions and tags (e.g., embedded questions, tags with all tenses), conditionals (e.g. third, reduced), passive voice (present, past, and future—perfect and continuous), complements and complementation (<i>postpone my going, had something done</i>), adverbs and adverbials (e.g. present and past participial phrases), reported speech (<i>He told me not to</i>), mood (<i>suggest he go</i>), among others;</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>regardless</i>), relative clauses (<i>whose</i>), among others;</p> <p>Information management addressing the use of: focus and emphasis (e.g., cleft sentences), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays an expectedly occasional pattern of errors with regard to some of the forms at this level; • Errors generally persist in lexical and morphosyntactic form including nouns and noun phrases (e.g., articles), tense and aspect, prepositions, conditionals, complements and complementation, passives, reported speech, among others. 	<p>Is likely to demonstrate considerable level of communicative meaningfulness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to use a broad range of grammatical forms to communicate a wide range of literal and intended meanings with topics appropriate to this level (e.g. personal, social, academic life, or work). • <i>Is likely to be able to identify overall meaning and specific details related to attitudes, opinions, and text structure</i> • <i>Errors in grammatical form hardly ever obscure communication.</i> • <i>Knowledge of lexis consists of a range of medium to high frequency words used to communicate complex meanings in various situations.</i> • <i>Is likely to have minor problems with lexical choice, but able to get the point across with reasonable accuracy in most situations.</i>

<p>B1</p> <p><i>Low Intermediate [Independent user- Vantage]</i></p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate moderate control of grammatical form</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to handle with reasonable accuracy simple and some more complex grammatical forms responding to a range of familiar and some unfamiliar topics. <p>More specifically...</p> <p>In addition to those forms at the lower levels, learners at the B1 level are likely to have reasonably accurate control of the following B1 forms:</p> <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>glass of milk</i>), common phrasal verbs (turn something <i>off</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (break up <i>with</i>), adjectives and adjective phrases (worried <i>about</i>), comparisons (be <i>just like</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (<i>breakdown, table top</i>), tense and aspect (present, past, and future—perfect and continuous), modals (<i>could, must</i>) and phrasal modals (<i>ought to</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>because of</i>), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>afraid of</i>), non-referential <i>it</i> and <i>there</i> (e.g., impersonal expressions), comparisons (<i>the same size as</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>me, mine</i>), questions and tags (<i>did they?</i>), conditionals (<i>if...will/would</i>), passive voice (present, past), complements and complementation (enjoy <i>going</i>, like <i>to swim/swimming</i>), adverbs and adverbials (<i>any longer, up to now</i>), reported speech, mood (imperatives), among others;</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>although, unless</i>), relative clauses (<i>whose</i>);</p> <p>Information management addressing the use of: focus and emphasis (I saw...<i>myself</i>), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are likely to display an expectedly frequent pattern of errors with regard to many of the forms at this level, but less so at lower levels; • Errors generally persist in lexical and morphosyntactic form including nouns and noun phrases (articles), tense and aspect, prepositions, logical connectors, complements and complementation, among others. 	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate moderate level of communicative meaningfulness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to use basic and some more complex grammatical forms to communicate a wider range of literal and intended meanings with topics appropriate to this level (e.g. personal, social, academic life, or work). • Is likely to be able to identify overall meaning and specific details related to attitudes, opinions, and text structure • Errors in grammatical form sometimes obscure communication. • Knowledge of lexis consists of relatively medium frequency words used to communicate in familiar and unfamiliar situations. • Is likely to have some problems with lexical choice, but able to get the point across with reasonable accuracy in predictable situations.
<p>A2</p> <p><i>High beginner [Basic user - Waystage]</i></p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate basic control of grammatical form</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to handle with reasonable accuracy a relatively limited number of simple and a few complex grammatical forms; and depend a lot on formulaic (<i>Have a nice weekend</i>) or chunked expressions (<i>How do you say...?</i>) <p>More specifically...</p> <p>In addition to those forms at the A1 level, learners at the A2 level are likely to have reasonably accurate control of the following A2-level forms:</p> <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (e.g., compound nouns, phrasal nouns—<i>piece of paper, baby-sitter</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>on the left</i>), question words (<i>which</i>), formulaic expressions (<i>sorry to hear</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (e.g., irregular plurals), tense and aspect (present, past, future), modals (<i>should do</i>) and phrasal modals (<i>have got to</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>in front of, in the front of</i>), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>better, interested in</i>), non-referential <i>it</i> and <i>there</i> (there is/are), comparisons (<i>cheapest of, as... as, the same as</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>me, mine</i>), questions and tags (...can you?), conditionals (<i>if...will</i>), complements and complementation (<i>want to +V</i>), adverbs and adverbials (<i>quite</i>), mood (imperatives), among others;</p>	<p><i>Is likely to demonstrate basic level of communicative meaningfulness.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to use basic and a few complex grammatical forms to communicate a limited range of literal and intended meanings with topics appropriate to this level (e.g. personal, social, academic life, or work). • Except in simple sentences, errors in grammatical form often obscure communication. • Knowledge of lexis is still relatively basic and consists of relatively high frequency words used to communicate basic meanings in everyday situations. • Has frequent errors in word choice in terms of conveying intended meaning. • Only able to use informal registers with some routinized politeness conventions.

<p>A2 <i>High beginner</i> [Basic user - Waystage]</p>	<p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>after that</i>), relative clauses (<i>that</i>), focus and emphasis (<i>me too</i>), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are likely to display an expectedly frequent pattern of errors with regard to many of the forms at this level, but less so at the A1 level; • Errors generally persist in lexical and morphosyntactic form including words and their collocations, tense and aspect, question formation, subject/verb agreement, among others. • Although there is some use of cohesive forms, they may still be relatively simple (time, space, addition). 	
<p>A1 <i>Beginner</i> [Basic user - Breakthrough]</p>	<p>Is likely to demonstrate very basic control of grammatical form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to handle with reasonable accuracy a very limited number of simple grammatical forms; and depend heavily on formulaic (nice to meet you) or chunked expressions (I'd like a...). <p>More specifically...</p> <p>Learners at the A1 level are likely to have reasonably accurate control of the following forms:</p> <p>Lexical forms addressing the use of: nouns/noun phrases (<i>a lot of</i>), prepositions/prepositional phrases (<i>on Saturday</i>), question words (<i>Who</i>), formulaic expressions (<i>thanks a lot</i>), co-occurrence restrictions (<i>talk to</i>), among others;</p> <p>Morphological forms addressing the use of: nouns and noun phrases (<i>boy, boys</i>), tense and aspect (present, past, <i>going to future</i>), modals (<i>can I have</i>) and phrasal modals (<i>have to</i>), prepositions and prepositional phrases (<i>in, on</i>), adjectives and adjectives phrases (<i>young</i>), non-referential <i>it</i> and <i>there</i> (what time is <i>it</i>), pronouns and reference (<i>ask me</i>), questions and tags (<i>are you...?</i>), complements and complementation (<i>like + NP</i>), adverbs and adverbials (<i>slowly</i>), mood (e.g., imperatives), among others;</p> <p>Cohesive forms addressing the use of: logical connectors and conjunctions (<i>and, or</i>), focus and emphasis (<i>I do too</i>), among others.</p> <p>However...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are likely to display an expectedly pervasive pattern of errors in all but the very basic forms; • Errors generally persist in lexical and morphosyntactic form including words and their collocations, tense and aspect, question formation, subject/verb agreement, among others. • Although there is some use of cohesive forms, they may be simple and repetitive. 	<p>Is likely to demonstrate very basic level of communicative meaningfulness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is likely to be able to use very basic grammatical forms to communicate a limited range of literal and intended meanings in survival skill situations (e.g., asking and giving basic information, going shopping, making simple requests), but will often encounter difficulties in doing so. • Except in very simple sentences, errors in grammatical form almost always obscure communication. • Knowledge of lexis is very basic and consists of very high frequency words used to communicate simple meanings in everyday situations. • Is only able to use conversational and informal registers. • Has very frequent errors in word choice in terms of conveying intended meaning. • Only able to use informal registers.

Appendix B: Common European Framework of Reference Listening Scale for the Oxford Online Placement Test

A1	<p>Can understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very basic literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • very basic contextual, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural meanings implied within the listening text • some meanings that revolve around familiar, everyday topics (e.g., simple service encounters, family, school/work, daily routines) speech at significantly slower than native speaker speed
A2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous level plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • a very limited range of contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural and psychological (e.g., affect) meanings implied within the listening text • some meanings that revolve around mostly familiar, everyday topics (e.g., comparison shopping, past events, holidays) • speech at slower than native speaker speed
B1	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wider range of literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • a wider range of contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural and psychological (e.g., affect) meanings implied within or sometimes beyond the listening text • a limited range of rhetorical meanings • meanings that revolve around familiar and unfamiliar topics (e.g., music, biographies, travel) • speech at slightly slower than native speaker speed
B2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a broad range of literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • a broad range of fairly complex contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, psychological (e.g., affect) and rhetorical meanings implied within or sometimes beyond the listening text • meanings that revolve around familiar and unfamiliar topics (e.g., cultural differences, science and technology, history) • speech at native speaker speed
C1	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an extensive range of literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • an extensive range of complex contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, psychological (e.g., affect) and rhetorical meanings implied within or sometimes beyond the listening text • meanings that revolve around a wide range of simple and complex topics (e.g., communications, science and technology, culture) • speech at native speaker speed
C2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the full range of literal and intended meanings explicitly mentioned in the listening text • the full range of complex contextual, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, psychological (e.g., affect) and rhetorical meanings implied within or sometimes beyond the listening text • speech at native speaker speed

Appendix C: Summary descriptors displayed to users when reviewing test scores: Grammar

Use of English	
A1	<p>Can typically, in familiar settings, e.g. daily routine, school, work, family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand basic words and phrases • understand relationships between speakers • use basic grammatical forms, sometimes with errors, to communicate literal and intended meanings • use high frequency vocabulary, often with errors • use a few simple linking words, often with repetition • use informal register
A2	<p>In addition to competencies from previous level, can typically, in familiar and some unfamiliar settings, e.g. shopping, past events, holidays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand intended meanings • understand situations and interpersonal relations • understand basic expression of feelings, opinions, advice and problems • use basic and some complex grammatical forms, sometimes with errors, to communicate literal and intended meanings • use relatively high frequency vocabulary, sometimes with errors • use some simple linking words and phrases • use informal register, and a few routine polite expressions
B1	<p>In addition to competencies from previous levels, can typically, in familiar and some less familiar settings, e.g. technology, current affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand intended meanings • understand simple meanings implied within or beyond the text • understand situations and interpersonal relations • understand expression of persuasion, warning, reasons, agreement • use all basic and a range of complex grammatical forms, sometimes with errors, to communicate literal and intended meanings • use medium frequency vocabulary, sometimes with errors • use a range of linking words and phrases • use informal register effectively, and several routine polite expressions
B2	<p>In addition to competencies from previous levels, can typically in familiar and unfamiliar settings, e.g. customs and traditions, history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand a wide range of intended meanings • understand a range of meanings implied within or beyond the text • understand a wide range of attitudinal meanings • understand the organization of the text • use a wide range of grammatical forms, with occasional errors, to communicate literal and intended meanings • use a wide range of vocabulary, occasionally with errors • use a wide range of linking words and phrases • use familiar formal registers effectively
C1	<p>In addition to competencies from previous levels, can typically, in complex and some abstract settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand a very wide range of intended meanings • understand complex meanings implied within or beyond the text • understand a wide range of complex attitudinal meanings • understand complex cohesion and coherence in extended speech • use a very wide range of grammatical forms, with very few errors, to communicate literal, intended and abstract meanings • use an extensive range of vocabulary, including metaphorical meaning, with very occasional errors • use a wide range of complex cohesive devices • use a range of registers effectively
C2	<p>In addition to competencies from previous levels, can typically, in all complex or abstract settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand a full range of intended meanings • understand a full range of meanings implied within or beyond the text • understand a full range of complex attitudinal meanings • understand very complex cohesion and coherence in extended speech • use a complete range of grammatical forms, with accuracy, to communicate literal, intended and abstract meanings • use an extensive range of vocabulary effectively, including metaphorical meaning • use an extensive range of complex cohesive devices effectively • use a wide range of registers effectively

Appendix C: Summary descriptors displayed to users when reviewing test scores: Listening

A1	<p>Can understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very basic meanings of basic words, phrases and sentences in the listening text (e.g., introductions, descriptions of self or others) • some meanings implied in the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context) • meanings that revolve around familiar, everyday topics (e.g., introductions, daily routines, family, school/work) • speech at significantly slower than native speaker speed
A2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous level plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic literal and intended meanings expressed within the listening text (e.g., basic expression of feelings, opinions, advice and problems) • a very limited range of meanings implied within the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context, the tone of the conversation) • some meanings that revolve around mostly familiar, everyday topics (e.g., service encounters, comparison shopping, past events, travel) • speech at slower than native speaker speed
B1	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wider range of literal and intended meanings expressed within the listening text (e.g., expressions of persuasion, warning, reasons, or agreement) • a wider range of meanings implied within or beyond the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context, the tone of the conversation, or the purpose and organization of the listening text) • meanings that revolve around familiar and unfamiliar topics (e.g., music, biographies, travel) • speech at slightly slower than native speaker speed
B2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a broad range of literal and intended meanings expressed within the listening text • a wide range of meanings implied within or beyond the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context, the tone of the conversation, or the purpose and organization of the listening text) • meanings that revolve around familiar and unfamiliar topics (e.g., cultural differences, science and technology, history) • speech at native speaker speed
C1	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an extensive range of literal and intended meanings expressed within the listening text • an extensive range of meanings implied within or beyond the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context, the tone of the conversation, or the purpose and organization of the listening text) • meanings that revolve around a wide range of simple and complex topics (e.g., communications, science and technology, culture) • speech at native speaker speed
C2	<p>Can understand all descriptors from previous levels plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the full range of literal and intended meanings expressed within the listening text • the full range of meanings implied within or beyond the listening text that involve the situation itself (e.g., the relationships between speakers, the local or cultural context, the tone of the conversation, or the purpose and organization of the listening text) • meanings that revolve around any topic, simple and complex • speech at native speaker speed

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