



Mapping TOEFL® iBT, TOEIC® and TOEIC Bridge™ on the Common European Framework Reference

Executive Summary

Background

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

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

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language tests. If a test score can be one of the levels of the CEFR, what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do becomes clear.

ETS's Goal

The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the Internet-based TOEFL® iBT (*Test of English as a Foreign Language*™) and the TOEIC® (*Test of English for International Communication*™) test corresponding to each level. Minimum scores were identified separately for speaking, listening, writing and reading. Minimum scores were also to be identified for the TOEIC Bridge™ test corresponding to CEFR levels A1, A2 and B1.

- The TOEFL iBT measures the ability to use and combine listening, reading, speaking and writing skills to communicate in an academic environment.

- The TOEIC® Listening and Reading test measures the receptive skills of people working in an international environment.
- The TOEIC® Speaking and Writing tests measure the productive skills of people working in an international environment.
- The TOEIC Bridge test measures the emerging receptive skills (listening and reading comprehension) of early learners in an international environment.

Standard-setting Study

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

Two panels of English-language instructors, administrators or directors of language programs and language testing experts from various European countries participated. Panel 1 focused on TOEFL iBT and consisted of 23 experts from 16 countries. Panel 2 focused on the TOEIC and TOEIC Bridge tests and consisted of 22 experts from ten countries. Five experts served on both panels for consistency.



Results

Both expert panels were able to make connections between the construct of the tests and the CEFR. The table below presents the recommended score ranges and the minimum score for each modality at each CEFR proficiency level for the three tests reviewed.

Panel 1 determined the TOEFL iBT Speaking section spans the widest range of proficiency (from A1 level to C1 level) and the Reading section was the only section that reached the C2 level. Overall, the results suggest that the TOEFL iBT is best used to discriminate at the B1 to C1 levels of the CEFR, which is consistent with the claims of the test.

Panel 2 concluded the TOEIC Listening, Speaking and Writing sections ranged from the A1 level to the C1 level and the Reading section ranged from the A1 level to the B2 level. They also established that TOEIC *Bridge* ranges from the A1 level to the B1 level. Again, these results are consistent with the claims of the tests.

Interpreting Results

Institutions, employers, English programs and learners can interpret the recommended minimum scores on the TOEFL iBT, TOEIC and TOEIC *Bridge* tests by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR at www.ets.org/results/cefr.html. The results represent the recommendations of informed experts using recognized standard-setting approaches. However, they should be considered guidelines as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

Technical Report Forthcoming

This standard-setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Richard J. Tannenbaum Ph.D. and E. Caroline Wylie Ph.D. in October 2006. A full technical report detailing methods and results will be available from ETS in March 2007 at www.etseurope.org, www.ets.org/ell, www.ets.org/toefl and www.ets.org/toEIC.

Test/Test Section	Total Score Scale Range	Minimum Score					
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
TOEFL iBT Total¹	0–120			57–86	87–109	110–120	
TOEFL iBT Reading	0–30			8	22	28	29
TOEFL iBT Listening	0–30			13	21	26	
TOEFL iBT Speaking	0–30	8	13	19	23	28	
TOEFL iBT Writing	0–30		11	17	21	28	
TOEIC Listening and Reading Total²	10–990	120–220	225–545	550–780	785–990		
TOEIC Listening	5–495	60	110	275	400	490	
TOEIC Reading	5–495	60	115	275	385		
TOEIC Speaking and Writing³							
TOEIC Speaking	0–200	30	70	120	150	200	
TOEIC Writing	0–200	50	90	120	160	200	
TOEIC Bridge⁴							
TOEIC <i>Bridge</i> Listening	10–90	46	70	86			
TOEIC <i>Bridge</i> Reading	10–90	46	64	84			

¹ TOEFL scores are reported in 1-point increments.

² TOEIC Listening and Reading scores are reported in 5-point increments.

³ TOEIC Speaking and Writing scores are reported in 10-point increments. No total score is reported.

⁴ TOEIC *Bridge* scores are reported in 2-point increments. No total score is reported.

For information about this study or to request a copy of the technical report:

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