

Mapping the TOEFL ITP® Tests onto the Common European Framework of Reference



Executive Summary

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

The CEFR describes language proficiency 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. In other words, if a test score corresponds to one of the levels of the CEFR, it becomes clearer what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do.

ETS's Goal

The TOEFL ITP® tests use an academic context to evaluate the English-language proficiency of nonnative English speakers. Designed specifically for institutions to administer to their students, the TOEFL ITP tests measure listening and reading ability, as well as knowledge of structure and written expression, in both academic and social contexts. The TOEFL ITP Speaking test evaluates the skills needed to speak English in everyday situations, as well as some basic campus and academic settings.

Mapping the TOEFL ITP tests Level 1 and 2

The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the TOEFL ITP tests that correspond to the A2, B1 and B2 levels of the CEFR. Minimum scores were identified separately for the Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension sections.

Standard-setting Study

Standard setting is a process by which a panel of informed experts engages in a systematic set of procedures to recommend minimum test scores (cut scores) that differentiate among levels of proficiency. For the TOEFL ITP tests, minimum scores were recommended for the A2, B1 and B2 CEFR levels for each of the three TOEFL ITP test sections (Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension).

For this study, the panel consisted of 18 experts (English-language instructors, administrators, directors or coordinators of ESL schools, departments or programs) from 14 countries.

A modified Angoff standard-setting approach was followed to identify the minimum test scores.

TOEFL ITP Level 1

CEFR Levels	Total Cut Score	Listening Comprehension	Structure and Written Expression	Reading Comprehension
C1	620	62	64	60
B2	543	55	53	55
B1	433	46	43	41
A2	343	38	32	33

TOEFL ITP Level 2

CEFR Levels	Total Cut Score	Listening Comprehension	Structure and Written Expression	Reading Comprehension
B1	433	46	43	41
A2	343	38	32	33

Interpreting Results

Users of the TOEFL ITP tests can interpret the recommended minimum scores by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR, which can be found on page 24 at www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

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

Mapping the TOEFL ITP® Speaking test

To help you interpret TOEFL ITP Speaking scores, ETS conducted a score mapping study to the levels of the CEFR and developed score descriptors.

Post-study Adjustments

Subsequent to this study, several ministries of education expressed the need to have a TOEFL ITP recommended cut score for the C1 level of the CEFR. The C1 level reflects the beginning of the Proficient User band. Because the C1 level was not part of the standard-setting study, we estimated a C1 cut score using information from a previous standard-setting study mapping TOEFL® PBT (paper-based) scores to the CEFR, and analyses of test-taker responses used to create concordance tables between scores on TOEFL PBT and TOEFL® CBT (computer-based) tests and between scores on the TOEFL CBT and TOEFL iBT® tests. (The TOEFL iBT test is administered via the Internet.) The estimated TOEFL ITP C1 cut score is 627. The section cut scores for the CEFR C1 level were estimated from recent TOEFL ITP test results.

The tables below present the scaled cut scores for the TOEFL ITP tests:

Technical Report

This standard-setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Richard J. Tannenbaum, Ph.D., and Patricia A. Baron, Ed.D., in November 2011.

CEFR Levels	Speaking test
C1	64
B2	58
B1	48
A2	41

For more information about the TOEFL ITP tests, visit www.etsglobal.org



Copyright © 2023 by ETS. All rights reserved. ETS, the ETS logo, TOEFL and TOEFL iBT are registered trademarks of ETS in the United States and other countries, used under license. MAR21



GLOBAL
A subsidiary of ETS