A common framework

Was bedeuten die mysteriösen Abkürzungen A2 und B1 auf Ihren Lehrwerken? Sie geben das Sprachniveau an. Wir erklären, woher sie kommen, und was genau sie definieren. `medium www.`

How can one measure and compare levels of language competence? For years, different countries, language schools, examination boards and publishers used their own systems, with vague or varying terms such as "elementary", "intermediate" and "advanced", and with various scoring methods. For learners, teachers and employers, comparisons between courses, products and qualifications were often impossible.

As a result, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) was developed by language experts for the Council of Europe. At the heart of the CEFR are six "common reference levels", from A1 up to C2. These levels are described by "can do" statements (or "descriptors") about learners' ability. Global statements can be made for each level, as can specific statements for listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction and spoken production.

Most language courses, products and examinations now relate their own levels to those of the CEFR. *Spotlight*, too, gives approximate CEFR equivalents for its three language levels, "easy", "medium" and "difficult":

`easy` approximately at CEFR level **A2**
`medium` approximately at CEFR level **B1–B2**
`difficult` approximately at CEFR level **C1–C2**

Further information

BOOKS

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, Council of Europe, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-00531-9, €26.70.*

Insights from the Common European Framework, **Keith Morrow (ed.)**, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-3-06-804488-9, €22.95.*

* Available from `www.SprachenShop.de`

WEBSITE

● Download the text of the CEFR from the Council of Europe website: *www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp*

assessment [əˈsesmənt]	Beurteilung
Council of Europe [ˌkaʊnsəl əv ˈjʊərəp]	Europarat
examination board [ɪɡˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən ˌbɔːd]	Prüfungsgremium
Framework: Common European ~ of Reference [ˈfreɪmwɜːk]	Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen (GER)
scoring [ˈskɔːrɪŋ]	Bewertungs-/Einstufungs-

Language levels and the Common European Framework (CEFR)

CEFR level		Traditional description*	CEFR "can do" statements (descriptors) for reading**
Proficient user	**C2** Mastery	upper advanced	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialized articles and literary works.
	C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	lower advanced	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialized articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.
Independent user	**B2** Vantage	upper intermediate	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.
	B1 Threshold	lower intermediate	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high-frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
Basic user	**A2** Waystage	elementary	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables, and I can understand short simple personal letters.
	A1 Breakthrough	beginner	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.

* Not all publishers or language schools use the same descriptions for these levels.
** Taken from the CEFR self-assessment on pages 26–27 of *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment,* Council of Europe © Council of Europe