

The Languages Ladder ‘Can Do’ statements:

The Languages Ladder statements endorse language learning in all phases from primary through to adult.

They have been developed alongside the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages and have been integrated into the revised National Curriculum levels. They reflect performance descriptors for GCSE/AS/A Levels and are mapped against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Within each stage the grades are progressive but may address different aspects of each skill. To complete a stage, learners should be able to show evidence of all three grades making up that stage.

LISTENING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases.
	Grade 2	I can understand a range of familiar spoken phrases.
	Grade 3	I can understand the main points from a short spoken passage made up of familiar language.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a spoken passage made up of familiar language in simple sentences.
	Grade 5	I can understand the main points and opinions in spoken passages made up of familiar material from various contexts.
	Grade 6	I can understand the difference between present and past and future events in a range of spoken material.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can understand longer passages and recognise people's points of view.
	Grade 8	I can understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.
	Grade 9	I can understand the gist of a range of authentic passages in familiar contexts.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage or conversation involving one or more speakers.
	Grade 11	I can understand the main points of authentic spoken passages and conversations in a range of different contexts.
	Grade 12	I can identify the majority of points and am able to infer the meaning of a range of authentic passages and conversations spoken at near native speed.

Proficiency	Grade 13	I can understand extended speech of moderate length and complexity involving one or more speakers and can summarise the key points.
	Grade 14	I can understand extended speech of some degree of complexity and abstraction involving a number of speakers and can summarise the key points.
	Grade 15	I can understand extended speech in unfamiliar contexts and can summarise the key points and most of the details.
Mastery	Grade 16	I can understand almost everything I hear, including in familiar specialised contexts, and, if required, can report back on what I have heard.
	Grade 17	I can understand virtually everything I hear and, if required, can report back comprehensively on what I have heard.

ON COMPLETING THIS STAGE:

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

You should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You may need to listen several times to get the information you need, depending on how fast and clearly the speaker talks. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

You should be able to understand standard speech relating to a range of predictable everyday matters, providing that it is spoken clearly and directly. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic passages on familiar matters. You should be able to follow much of what is said at near normal speed on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral or written summary of what you have heard.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. You should be able to understand the majority of what you hear in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Proficiency – grades 13 - 15

You should be able to access a range of extracts, including discussions and conversations in different styles e.g. factual, journalistic, non-specialist technical. You should be able to recognise the speaker's perspective.

Mastery – grades 16-17

You should be able to access a range of extracts, discussions and conversations in different styles, engaging with subtleties of meaning and nuance in the language.

SPEAKING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can say and repeat single words and short simple phrases.
	Grade 2	I can answer simple questions and give basic information.
	Grade 3	I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can take part in a simple conversation and I can express my opinions.
	Grade 5	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, including expressing my opinions.
	Grade 6	I can give a short prepared talk, expressing opinions and answering simple questions about it, using a variety of structures.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can answer unprepared questions in a conversation or following a presentation.
	Grade 8	I can narrate events, tell a story or relate the plot of a book or film and give my opinions about it.
	Grade 9	I can take part in a discussion, giving and justifying my opinions and ideas.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions.
	Grade 11	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and argue my viewpoints with some degree of success.
	Grade 12	I can participate in discussions relating to a variety of situations and topics, taking the initiative where appropriate.

Proficiency	Grade 13	I can sustain a conversation and can find ways of expressing myself with relative ease.
	Grade 14	I can play a pro-active role in discussions on a range of topics in an appropriate register and can make myself understood with relative ease.
	Grade 15	I can take a leading role in discussions speaking coherently in a wide variety of situations.
Mastery	Grade 16	I can communicate with ease in both formal and informal situations, using a wide range and variety of language appropriately.
	Grade 17	I can communicate effortlessly and confidently in most situations, showing a command of language which enables me to express finer shades of meaning.

ON COMPLETING THIS STAGE:

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

You should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your pronunciation may not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

You should be able to use and adapt learnt language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. Your pronunciation should be clearly understandable and you should be able to maintain a simple conversation using strategies such as asking for clarification or repetition. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. You should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your pronunciation and intonation should be generally accurate. You should be able to maintain a conversation on familiar matters or in predictable situations using a range of language and structures.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. You should be able to communicate confidently using a wide ranging vocabulary. Your pronunciation and intonation will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Proficiency – grades 13–15

You should be able to communicate confidently and express yourself with relative ease with appropriate interventions. Your pronunciation and intonation will be accurate – any inaccuracies will not impede communication. You should be able to present a point of view effectively, using a range of language appropriate to the situation.

Mastery – grades 16–17

You should be able to communicate effortlessly and confidently and express yourself with ease, using appropriate interventions and backtracking when necessary. Your pronunciation and intonation will be accurate. You should be able to present information and arguments skilfully, using a sophisticated range of stylistic resources.

READING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases.
	Grade 2	I can understand and read out familiar written phrases.
	Grade 3	I can understand the main points from a short written text in clear printed script.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from short written texts in familiar contexts.
	Grade 5	I can understand the main points and opinions in written texts from various contexts.
	Grade 6	I can understand the difference between present, past and future events in a range of texts.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can understand longer texts and recognise people's points of view.
	Grade 8	I can understand texts including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.
	Grade 9	I can understand a wide range of authentic texts in familiar contexts.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can understand authentic written texts of moderate length and complexity. I can produce a summary covering the majority of points.
	Grade 11	I can understand authentic texts of some degree of complexity and abstraction in a range of different contexts. I can produce a summary covering most essential points.
	Grade 12	I can understand and am able to infer the meaning of a range of more complex texts. I can produce a detailed report covering all essential points.

Proficiency	Grade 13	I can understand a range of texts, of moderate length and complexity, including specialised texts written for a non-specialist audience, and note the key points.
	Grade 14	I can understand a range of texts of some degree of complexity and abstraction including specialised texts written for a non-specialist audience, and note the key points.
	Grade 15	I can understand texts outside my field of expertise and note the key points and most of the details.
Mastery	Grade 16	I can understand and interpret almost everything I read, including texts in familiar specialised contexts, and, if required, report back on what I have read.
	Grade 17	I can understand and interpret virtually everything I read and, if required, translate or report back comprehensively on what I have read.

ON COMPLETING THIS STAGE:

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

You should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

You should be able to understand standard language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to read clear handwritten text. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic texts on familiar matters. You should be able to follow much of what you read on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral or written summary or translation of what you have read.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. You should be able to understand the majority of what you read in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Proficiency – grades 13–15

You should be able to access a range of texts in different styles e.g. factual, literary, journalistic, technical, written for a non-specialist audience etc. You should be able to recognise the writer's perspective.

Mastery – grades 16–17

You should be able to access a range of texts in different styles, engaging with subtleties of meaning and nuance in the language. You should be able to demonstrate a sophisticated level of dictionary use – both mono and bilingual – and appropriate use of reference materials to fill in any gaps in knowledge or understanding.

WRITING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can write or copy simple words or symbols correctly.
	Grade 2	I can write one or two short sentences to a model and fill in the words on a simple form.
	Grade 3	I can write a few short sentences with support, using expressions which I have already learnt.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can write a short text on a familiar topic, adapting language which I have already learnt.
	Grade 5	I can write a short text on a range of familiar topics, using simple sentences.
	Grade 6	I can write a text, giving and seeking information and opinions, using a variety of structures.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can write a text, e.g. a report, article or story, conveying opinions and points of view.
	Grade 8	I can produce formal and informal texts in an appropriate style on familiar topics.
	Grade 9	I can communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can structure my writing to produce a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for a specific purpose e.g. a letter to an employer or an account of a visit.
	Grade 11	I can write coherent text, in an appropriate register, for different purposes, including communicating information, ideas and opinions e.g. a review, an article or a report.
	Grade 12	I can write extended text using a wide range of language in a variety of registers covering more specialised contexts e.g. work-related or in a specialised area of study.

Proficiency	Grade 13	I can produce extended texts or reports on a range of topics in an appropriate register, using a range of appropriate concrete and abstract vocabulary.
	Grade 14	I can produce extended texts or reports on a range of topics in a variety of registers, using a wide range of language forms.
	Grade 15	I can produce well-structured text of some length which clearly expresses an argument or specific viewpoint, using a wide range and variety of language.
Mastery	Grade 16	I can communicate with ease, producing texts for a range of purposes, using a sophisticated range and variety of structures.
	Grade 17	I can communicate fluently and effortlessly in writing in most situations, showing a command of language which enables me to express finer shades of meaning. I can create or translate texts accurately showing an appropriate sensitivity to style and register.

ON COMPLETING THIS STAGE:

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

You should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your spelling may not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

You should be able to use and adapt learnt language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to write simple texts using descriptive language, with spelling that is generally accurate. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. You should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your spelling should be generally accurate. You should be able to write on familiar matters or in predictable situations using a range of language and structures.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. You should be able to write confidently using a wide ranging vocabulary and more complex structures. Your spelling will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries and communities where the language is spoken.

Proficiency – grades 13–15

You should be able to write confidently and express yourself with relative ease. Your writing will be accurate – any inaccuracies will not impede communication – and in the appropriate register. You should be able to present a point of view effectively, using a range of language appropriate to the situation.

Mastery – grades 16–17

You should be able to write confidently and express yourself with ease creating more complex and, where appropriate, specialist texts. Your writing will be accurate and in the appropriate register. You should be able to demonstrate a sophisticated level of dictionary use – both mono and bilingual – and appropriate use of reference materials to fill in any gaps in knowledge or understanding. You should be able to deploy information and arguments skilfully, using an extensive range of stylistic resources.