



Mapping the TOEIC® Tests on the CEFR

Mapping the TOEIC® Tests on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

BACKGROUND

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 listening, reading, speaking and writing 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

One of the purposes of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the TOEIC tests corresponding to each level. Minimum scores were identified separately for listening, reading, speaking and writing.

- The TOEIC Listening and Reading test measures receptive skills in the context of daily life and the global workplace
- The TOEIC Speaking and Writing tests measure productive skills in the context of daily life and the global workplace.

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.

For this study, the panel consisted of 22 experts (English-language instructors, administrators or directors of language programs, and language testing experts) from 10 different European countries.

RESULTS

The expert panel was asked to recommend minimum test scores (cut scores) for each of the six CEFR levels (A1 through C2). Because it was possible that not all panelists would believe that a test section addressed each CEFR level, ETS established a criterion whereby at least two-thirds (67 percent) of the 22 panelists had to indicate that it was appropriate to recommend a cut score for a level. The table below presents the recommended minimum score for each test section at each CEFR proficiency level for the tests reviewed.

INTERPRETING RESULTS

Employers, institutions, English programs and learners can interpret the recommended minimum scores on the TOEIC tests by referring to the score descriptor information on the resource pages of the TOEIC website at www.ets.org/toeic. 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.

Test/Test Sections	Score Scale Range	Minimum Score				
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
TOEIC Listening and Reading Test¹						
Listening	5 – 495	60	110	275	400	490
Reading	5 – 495	60	115	275	385	455 ³
TOEIC Speaking and Writing Tests²						
Speaking	0 – 200	50	90	120	160	180 ⁴
Writing	0 – 200	30	70	120	150	180 ⁴

¹ TOEIC Listening and Reading scores are reported in five-point increments.

² TOEIC Speaking and Writing scores are reported in 10-point increments. No total score is reported.

³ TOEIC Reading C1 minimum score is based on 45 percent of the panelists.

⁴ TOEIC Speaking and Writing scores were adjusted from the recommended study values.

TECHNICAL REPORT

This standard-setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Richard J. Tannenbaum, Ph.D., and E. Caroline Wylie.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS STUDY:

Contact your ETS Preferred Network (EPN) office via www.toeicglobal.com/contact or email us at TOEIC@ets.org.