

EVALUATION OF CHALLENGES 4 RE: Common Europe Framework

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Introduction

Challenges 4 covers virtually all descriptors at higher and lower Threshold (B.1.1 and B.1.2). As with the previous levels, it is important to remember that, while *Challenges 4* contains activities that present and practise language, tasks and strategies relating to 'can do' statements, this does not automatically mean that students will be able to fulfil them. This will depend on the students, their previous learning experiences, the number of hours of class etc. There is also always going to be an important gap between the input that learners receive and what they are capable of actually achieving.

At each level, *Challenges* covers the basic CEF objectives for the corresponding CEF level and a few for the next level. The rationale behind this is that, as mentioned before, students need time to assimilate both language and strategies before they can be said to be actually capable of carrying out the performance objectives established by the CEF. In *Challenges 4* a few of those from B.2. are covered.

The only specifications that are not covered are those related to work or adult situations which would be beyond teenage learners both cognitively and experientially. For example, *Challenges 4* does not cover descriptions of jobs or study experiences which are clearly not relevant to most 11-16-year-old students.

On the other hand, *Challenges 4* does cover areas which are not reflected in the CEF descriptors. This is particularly the case in writing where project work is important (e.g. writing a poster and describing a famous person).

Although *Challenges* takes into account the specifications of the UCLES exams as part of the broader European framework, it is most definitely *not* an exam book. It would be relevant for any educational system with its own exams that are informed by the CEF.

TOPICS

How well does the book cover 'the topics which are the subject of discourse, conversation, reflection or composition' (CEF p. 51/2)

1. *personal identification* M1 – your turn / personal blogs / opinions M2- personal news M5- interviews
2. *house and home* M3 – communities – houses/neighbourhoods
3. *environment*: M1 – animal communication / M5- planet water shortages / M6 – save the planet – going green/fair trade
4. *daily life*: M1- communication (mobiles/Internet etc) / M2 – news / M3 volunteering (scouts/getting involved)
5. *free time/entertainment*: M2 – teenage magazines / M3- going out / M9 – films / books / TV / M10- art /films
sci-fi
6. *travel*: M4- travel brochures / M5- holiday destinations
7. *relations with other people*: M1- keeping in touch / M3 – relationship network/traditional communities / M10-
love and romance
8. *health and body care*: story – shampoo
9. *education* (covered in Ch3)
10. *shopping* M4 – shopping / ebay M6 – fair trade / shopping in the UK
11. *food and drink* M5 – tea and coffee
12. *services*
13. *places* M3 – communities / M5- natural wonders / M9 – Easter Island
14. *language* M1- whistling/drums/smoke signals
15. *weather* M6- weather forecast / climate change
16. *science/ technology* * not in CEF list
M1- history of communication / blogs M2- robot fish / M9 – archaeology
17. *history* * not in CEF list
M2 Cleopatra/Columbus/Fawkes / M4- history of money / M5- shipwreck
M7- fashion in the 20s / history of body art / M8 history of sport / M9 – prehistory / history of Easter Island

B.1 THRESHOLD

B. 1 ‘the first feature is the ability to maintain interaction and get across what you want in a range of contexts... the second is the ability to cope flexibly with the problems of everyday life (e.g. less routine situations on public transport) (p. 34)

B.1.2 (strong Threshold) – ‘additional descriptors which focus on quantities of information’ (e.g provide concrete information in an interview)

1. SPEAKING

Evaluation

Level 4 covers the specifications in B.1.1 and B.1.2 apart from those that are obviously very adult or work-related or those that have been covered in Challenges 3. A couple of specifications from B.2. are covered.

Speaking- Production	
B.1 Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.	Description – M5 p. 48 Ex 10 M5 p. 50 oral linkers M7 P.71 describing people M10 p.95 – describing scenes M10 p.99
Can reasonably fluently related a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences .e.g. an accident. Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.	M5 p. 50 M3 personal news M2 p.21 Covered in Ch3
Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.	M10 P. 103 wishes General – ‘would like to’ questions
Can describe events, real or imagined.	M2 p. 17 – picture cues M2 p.19 news
Can narrate a story.	Covered in Ch3
Can give a straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within his/her field which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision. Can take follow up questions, but may have to ask for repetition if the speech was rapid.	M5 p. 51 Covered in Ch3
B.1.1. Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can work out how to communicate the main point(s)	Speak out spots M5 p. 51 - strategies

<p>he/she wants to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what he/she can recall or finds the means to express.</p> <p>Can use a simple word meaning something similar to the concept he/she wants to convey and invites 'correction'.</p> <p>Can 'foreignise' a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation.</p> <p>Can ask for confirmation that a form used is correct.</p> <p>Can start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.</p>	<p>M3 p. 34</p> <p>M3 p. 34</p> <p>M3 p.34</p> <p>M3 p. 34</p> <p>M4 p. 44 – communication problems</p>
<p>B.1.2 Can develop an argument well enough to be followed, without difficulty, most of the time.</p> <p>Can rehearse and try out new expressions and combinations, inviting feedback.</p> <p>Can define the features of something concrete for which he/she can't remember the word.</p> <p>Can convey meaning by qualifying a word meaning something similar (e.g. a truck for people = a bus).</p> <p>Can correct mix-ups with tenses or expressions that lead to misunderstandings provided the interlocutor indicates there is a problem.</p>	<p>Speak out activities</p> <p>M5 – presentation p.51</p> <p>Covered in Ch3</p> <p>M3 p. 34</p> <p>Covered in Ch3</p> <p>M5 p. 51 – self-correction</p>

<p>B.2</p> <p>Can use circumlocution and paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure.</p> <p>Can correct slips and errors if he/she becomes conscious of them or if they have led to misunderstandings.</p> <p>B.2.1 Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p>	<p>M3 p.34</p> <p>M4 p. 44</p> <p>M5 p. 51</p>
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Evaluation

Level 4 covers nearly all the specifications in B.1.1 and B.1.2 apart from those that are obviously very adult or work-related or those that have been covered in Challenges 3. A couple of specifications from B.2 are covered.

Speaking- Interaction	
<p>B.1 Can follow clearly articulated speech, directed at him/her in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.</p> <p>Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.</p> <p>Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to.</p> <p>Can express and respond to feelings such as surprise,</p>	<p>General</p> <p>General</p> <p>General</p> <p>M2 p. 21 - reactions</p>

<p>happiness, sadness, interest and indifference. Can put over a point of view clearly but has difficulty engaging in debate. Can take part in routine discussions of familiar subjects which are conducted in clearly articulated speech in the standard dialect and which involves the exchange of factual information, receiving instructions or the discussion of solutions to practical problems. Can deal with most transactions likely to arise whilst travelling.</p> <p>Can cope with less routine situations in shops, post offices, banks, eg returning an unsatisfactory purchase. Can make a complaint.</p>	<p>M1 p.11 opinions M3 p.30 Covered in Ch3 M4. p.40 M4 p. 40</p>
<p>B.1.1. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g family, hobbies, work, travel). Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest. Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards solutions to problems or practical questions of where to go, what to do, how to organise an outing. Can express belief, opinion, agreement and disagreement politely. Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards possible solutions or the question of what to do next, giving brief reasons and explanations. Can invite others to give their views on how to proceed. Can find out and pass on straightforward factual information. Can ask for and follow detailed information. Can ask for and follow detailed directions. Can obtain more detailed information. Can take initiatives in an interview, expand and develop ideas with little help or prodding from the interviewer. Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.</p>	<p>General M1 p.11 M3- p. 30 arrangements M1 p. 11 M3- p. 30 arrangements M1 p.11 Information gaps Information gaps Covered in Ch2 M9 p.91 M6 p. 61 M9 p. 91 M10 p. 100 M6 p. 61</p>
<p>B.1.2. Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests</p> <p>Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations-and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books and music. Can give brief comments on the views of others.</p>	<p>General General Speak outs – e.g. p. 65 M1 p.11 M8 p. 80</p>

<p>Can compare and discuss alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go or which to choose etc.</p> <p>Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives.</p> <p>Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her own field with some confidence.</p>	<p>M3- p.30</p> <p>M8 p.80</p> <p>Information gaps</p>
<p>Can summarise and give his/her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail.</p> <p>Can provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation but does so with limited precision.</p>	<p>Covered in Ch3</p> <p>M6 p.61 – interview (informal)</p>
<p>Can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended.</p> <p>Can intervene in a discussion on a familiar topic, using a suitable phrase to get the floor.</p> <p>Can exploit a basic repertoire of language and strategies to help keep a conversation or discussion going.</p>	<p>M6 p. 61</p> <p>M9 p. 91</p> <p>M10 p.100</p> <p>M3 p. 34 / M4. p.44</p>
<p>Can ask follow-up questions to check he/she has understood what a speaker intended to say and get clarification of ambiguous points.</p>	<p>M6 p. 61</p>

<p>B.2.</p> <p>Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly.</p>	<p>M10 p. 100</p>
<p>B.2.1</p> <p>Can explain a problem which has arisen and make it clear that the provider of the service/customer must make a concession.</p>	<p>M4 p. 40</p>

2. WRITING

Evaluation

Level 4 covers the specifications in B.1.1. and B.1.2. that are not work related. Covers a couple of specifications from B.2.

<p>B.1 Can write straightforward connected texts / detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, but linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</p> <p>Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text.</p> <p>Can write a description of an event, a recent trip- real or imagined.</p> <p>Can narrate a story.</p> <p>Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as</p>	<p>General – linking syllabus</p> <p>M1 – p. 7 blogs</p> <p>M3- description of an event</p> <p>M10 – story</p> <p>General</p>
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<p>concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.</p> <p>Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important.</p> <p>Can write notes conveying simple information of immediate relevance to friends, service people, teachers and others who feature in his/her everyday life, getting across comprehensively the points he/she feels are important.</p>	<p>M4- complaint</p> <p>M2- personal letter</p> <p>M4- email of complaint</p>
<p>B.1.1 Can write very brief reports to a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.</p> <p>Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail.</p>	<p>M8 – survey/report</p> <p>M2 – personal news</p> <p>M3- feelings</p>
<p>B.1.2. Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest.</p> <p>Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.</p> <p>Can write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music or films.</p>	<p>M6- ‘for and against’ essay</p> <p>M1- article M5- article about own country</p> <p>M2- personal letter</p> <p>Ch 3 (book and film reviews)</p>

<p>B.2.1.</p> <p>Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest.</p> <p>Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of different options.</p>	<p>M1 p. 13 M5 p. 53</p> <p>M7 p. 73</p> <p>M6. p.62</p>
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3. LISTENING

Evaluation

Nearly all of the specifications can be followed at B.1.1. and B.1.2. level. One from B.2.

<p>B.1. Can generally follow the main points of an extended NS discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.</p> <p>Can follow detailed directions.</p> <p>Can extrapolate meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar</p>	<p>General – dialogues e.g. M4 p. 41</p> <p>M7- street survey p. 65</p> <p>Covered in Ch2/3</p> <p>M3- p. 31 working out meaning</p>
<p>B.1.1. Can understand main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc including short narratives.</p> <p>Can follow in outline short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.</p>	<p>E.g. M3- description of life</p> <p>M10 short narrative</p> <p>M4 – talk (money and teenagers)</p> <p>M6- talk about otters</p> <p>M2 – radio news</p>

<p>Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can follow films with lots of visuals and action which are delivered clearly in straightforward language.</p> <p>Can catch the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.</p>	<p>M6 – weather forecast M8- sports programme/report Challenges video</p> <p>Challenges video</p>
<p>B.1.2. Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday topics identifying both general messages and specific details, provided a speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.</p> <p>Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.</p> <p>Can understand the information content of broadcasted audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear, standard speech.</p> <p>Can understand a large part of many TV programmes on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.</p>	<p>General – documentaries / talks</p> <p>M4 – talk (money and teenagers) M6- talk about otters E.g. M5 – documentary – water Challenges video</p>

<p>B.2. Can understand a clearly structured lecture on a familiar subject, and can take notes on points which strike him/her as important, even though he/she tends to concentrate on the words themselves and therefore to miss some information.</p>	<p>M9 p. 91</p>
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4. READING

Evaluation

Level 4 covers most of these at B.1.1. and B.1.2. apart from technical instructions. A couple of those at B.2. are covered.

<p>B.1 Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.</p> <p>Can understand the description of events, feelings, and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.</p> <p>B.1.1. Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material such as letters and brochures.</p>	<p>General – factual texts (e.g. across cultures) M8- p.78 – taking notes M2- personal letter M9- narrative (Sherlock Holmes/love story)</p> <p>General – letters / brochures (e.g. M5 natural wonders) / M6 p. 58 - brochure</p>
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<p>Can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.</p> <p>B.1.2. Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information and gather information from different parts of a text or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task.</p> <p>Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts.</p> <p>Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail.</p>	<p>M2- p. 17/18 – newspaper reports Challenges website – extensive reading</p> <p>M3- p. 29 M6- p. 59 M6- text builder – p. 62</p>
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<p>B.2. Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.</p> <p>B.2.1. Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adapt particular stances or viewpoints.</p>	<p>Challenges 3 website</p> <p>M6. p.62</p>
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