

The International Baccalaureate
Diploma Programme: Referencing
selected IB DP English, French,
German, and Spanish subjects to the
Common European Framework of
Reference for Languages (CEFR)

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND
BENCHMARKING REPORT

Submitted to the International Baccalaureate Organisation
by Ecctis

Commercial in confidence

August 2023

Acronyms

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DP	Diploma Programme
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HL	Higher Level
IB	International Baccalaureate
N20	November 2020
N22	November 2022
M21	May 2021
SL	Standard Level

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Published by:
Ecctis
Suffolk House, 68-70 Suffolk Road
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Executive Summary

Ecctis has conducted a benchmarking and comparative analysis of selected International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP) Language A and Language B subjects (in English, French, German, and Spanish) to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR). Group 1 subjects (Language A) focus on developing critical thinking skills in relation to different texts and the way in which language is used in them; Group 2 subjects (Language B) focus primarily on the development of language competence.

Language A findings

The results show that B2 CEFR level (commonly required for university admission) in **Language A: language and literature** and **Language A: literature** is reported at the threshold of IB grade 4 at both Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL). In the Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature, all analysed subjects were found to report between B1 and C2 at HL and between B1 and C1 at SL. The figures below provide a summary, for the Language A subjects analysed by Ecctis, of the relationship found between IB grades and reported CEFR levels of language proficiency.

CEFR Level	English A: Language and Literature		English A: Literature		French A: Language and Literature		French A: Literature		German A: Language and Literature		German A: Literature		Spanish A: Language and Literature		Spanish A: Literature	
	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL
C2	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7
C1	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6	7 6	6
B2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
B1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
A2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
A1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

* CEFR level not reported by any IB grade in this subject

Language B findings

Regarding Language B, students achieving a grade 5 in HL or a grade 6 (English, French, Spanish) and 7 (German) in SL will have attained CEFR B2 proficiency. In most **Language B** languages analysed – English, French, and Spanish – Ecctis also found grade 6 to report B2 level proficiency at SL. German B was the only language found to report B2 at only grade 7 at SL. Although some variation between languages was found at specific grades in Language B, Ecctis concluded that all Language B languages report a CEFR proficiency range between A2+ and C1 at HL and between A2 and B2+ at SL.

The figures below provide a summary, for the Language B subjects analysed by Ecctis, of the relationship found between IB grades and reported CEFR levels of language proficiency.

CEFR Level	English B		French B		German B		Spanish B	
	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL
C2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
C1	*	7	*	7	*	7	*	7
B2+	7	6	7	6	*	6	7	6
B2	6	5	6	5	7	5	6	5
B1+	5	4	5	4	6	4	5	4
B1	4	3	4	3	5	3	4	3
	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	2
A2+	2		2		3		2	
A2		*		*	2			*
A1	*		*		*		*	

* CEFR level not reported by any IB grade in this subject

Context

Ecctis was commissioned by the IB to undertake an independent comparative study of a selection of DP language subjects (in English, French, German, and Spanish) to the CEFR.

The CEFR was published by the Council of Europe in 2001.¹ It is widely used in the development and referencing of language syllabi, qualifications, assessment, and other learning materials. It is also commonly used by universities to express language proficiency

¹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg.

requirements for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate study. The CEFR is designed to provide a common and neutral basis for all languages to define levels of language proficiency.

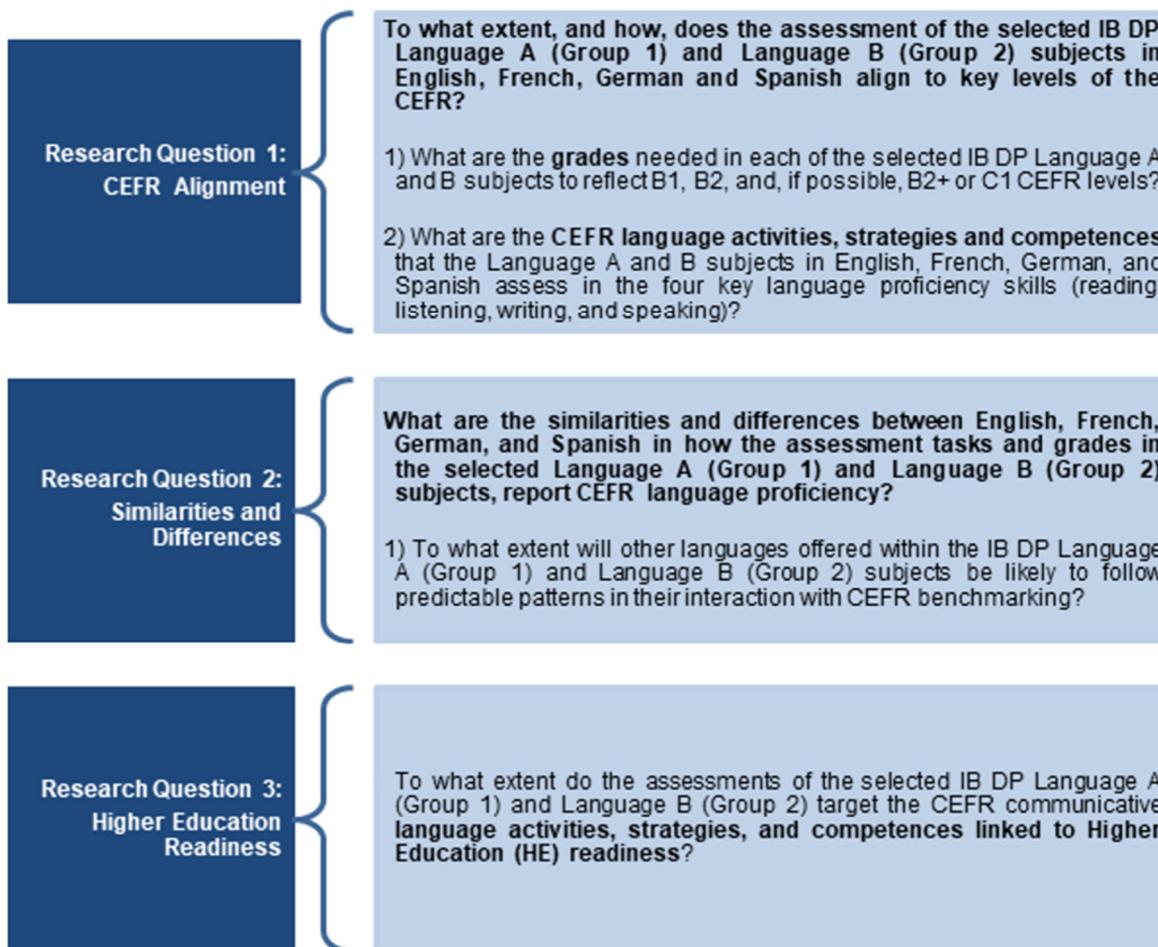
The subjects reviewed in this project are presented in the table below. All subjects were analysed at both SL and HL.

Subject group	Subject	English		French		German		Spanish	
		SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL
Studies in language and literature (Group 1)	Language A: literature	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Language A: language and literature	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Language acquisition (Group 2)	Language B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Aims and Research Questions

The aim of the study was to establish how the level of English, French, German, and Spanish language proficiency reported by each subject, and indicated by associated subject grades, compared to CEFR levels. The overarching goal was to support greater stakeholder understanding of the level of language proficiency assessed by these subjects. In benchmarking the selected subjects against the CEFR, the study focused on establishing the grades needed in each of the selected IB DP subjects to reflect B1, B2, and, if possible, B2+ or C1 CEFR levels, with B2 being the level most typically sought for university entry.

The Research Questions of the study were as follows:

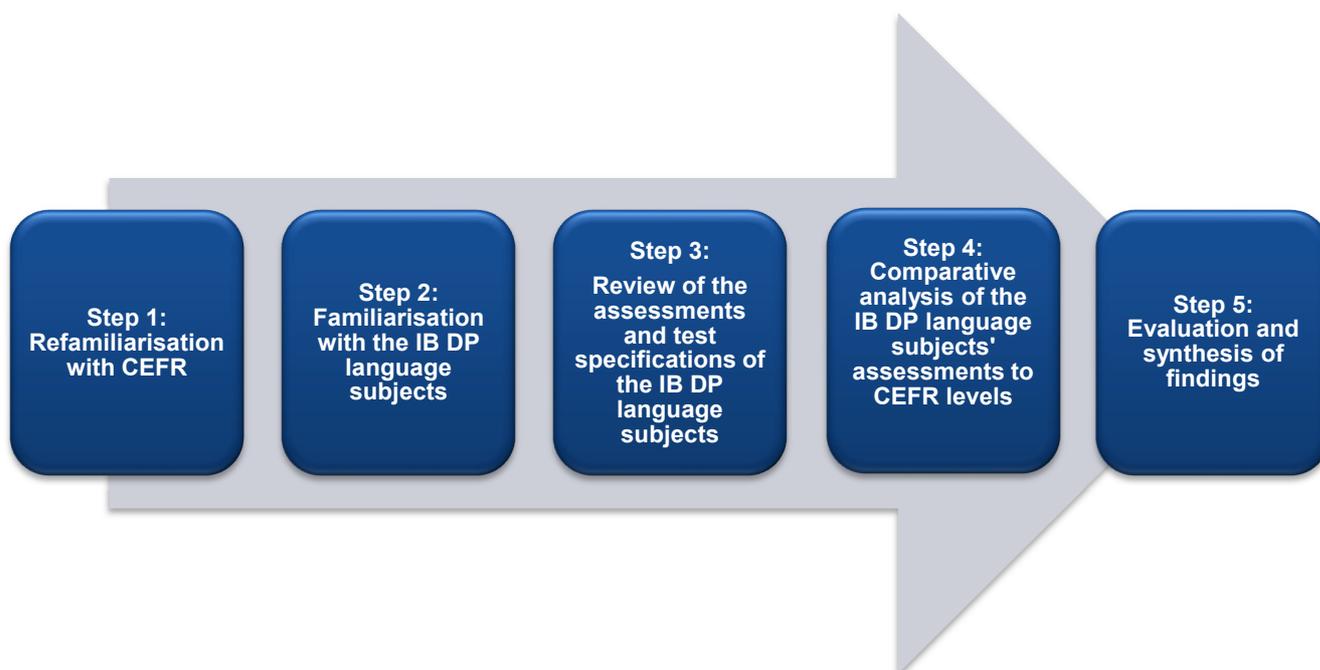


Methodological approach

The methodology employed by Ecctis in this study has been informed closely by the *Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment – A Manual* (Council of Europe, 2009). The comparative analysis and benchmarking of the IB DP Language A and Language B subjects to the CEFR made reference to a wide range of CEFR communicative language activities, communicative language competences, and communicative language strategies for reading and listening comprehension, spoken and written production, interaction and mediation.

The assessment papers reviewed were from the May 2021 examination (M21) for the Language A subjects (Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature) and the November 2020 (N20) (reading and listening), November 2022 (N22) (reading and listening) and May 2021 (M21) (speaking and writing) examinations for the Language B subjects. Looking across multiple assessment cycles for Language B, supported Ecctis to build confidence in the overall findings.

The methodological approach of the study is outlined in the diagram below.



Key findings

RQ1: To what extent, and how, does the assessment of the selected IB DP subjects align to the key levels of the CEFR?

The independent review and analysis of the Language A and Language B assessments and test specifications found that all analysed subjects have sound assessment in place to assess students' skills. Specifically, each subject assesses the skills shown in the table below. All analysed subjects also have a threshold grade that reports CEFR B2 proficiency – this is also shown in the table below.

IB DP Subject	Language A: language & literature		Language A: literature		Language B	
	HL: 4 (English, French, German, Spanish)	SL: 4 (English, French, German, Spanish)	HL: 4 (English, French, German, Spanish)	SL: 4 (English, French, German, Spanish)	HL: 5 (English, French, German, Spanish)	SL: 6 (English, French, Spanish) SL: 7 (German)
CEFR B2 threshold grade						
Skills assessed:						
Reading		✓		✓		✓
Listening		✗		✗		✓
Writing		✓		✓		✓
Speaking		✓*		✓*		✓

* Language A subjects assess spoken production; mark schemes do not specifically reward spoken interaction.

The analysis of the IB DP Language A subjects (Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature) found that the B2 level threshold is reported at IB grade 4 for both SL and HL subjects across English, French, German, and Spanish. For the IB DP Language B subjects, the comparative analysis indicated that the B2 level threshold is reported at IB grade 5 for HL across English, French, German, and Spanish. The B2 level threshold is reported at IB grade 6 in the English, French and Spanish Language B SL but it is reported

at the IB grade 7 in the German Language B SL. Therefore, Ecctis' judgement that can be applied generally across all languages is that B2 proficiency is reported by at least grade 7 in Language B SL. The boxes below present the summary of the key findings for Research Question 1.

Key Finding i – Language A Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, the Language A subjects analysed report different CEFR levels at SL and HL. At SL, all four languages report proficiency at B1 to C1 levels and the grade threshold for B2 proficiency is 4. At HL, all four languages report proficiency at B1 to C2 levels and the grade threshold for B2 proficiency is also 4.

Key Finding ii – Language A Skills Assessed

In all four languages analysed here, both Language A courses fully assess reading and writing skills. Listening skills are not directly assessed and although spoken production skills are assessed, spoken interaction is not specifically rewarded in the marking criteria. Both Language A curricula include assessment of a wide range of CEFR-related activities, strategies, and competences within these assessed skill areas.

Key Finding iii – Language B SL Reading

Despite some variety between the 2020 and 2022 assessment cycles, Language B SL Paper 2 (reading comprehension) was found in English, French, and Spanish to have tasks pitched between CEFR levels A2+ and B2. German B SL was found to have tasks pitched between A2+ and B1+, as Text C (reading comprehension) in German B SL did not reach B2 level in either assessment cycle.

Key Finding iv – Language B HL Reading

Language B HL Paper 2 (reading comprehension) was found to have tasks pitched between CEFR levels B1+ and C1 in English, French, German, and Spanish.

Key Finding v – Language B SL Listening

In Language B SL Paper 2 (listening comprehension), English, French, German, and Spanish all contained tasks pitched at B1 and B1+, but the presence of A2, A2+, and B2 varied between languages and between the 2020 and 2022 assessment cycles.

Key Finding vi – Language B HL Listening

In Language B HL Paper 2 (listening comprehension), English, French, German, and Spanish all contained tasks pitched at B2 level. The presence of B1, B1+, B2+, and C1 tasks varied between languages. English, French, and Spanish contained a steady progression of demand, whereas German B heavily deployed B2 and B2+ tasks.

Key Finding vii – Language B SL Writing

From CEFR mapping of the Language B SL Paper 1 (writing) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2+ in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1 and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Key Finding viii – Language B HL Writing

From CEFR mapping of the Language B HL Paper 1 (writing) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2+ in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1 and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Key Finding ix – Language B SL Speaking and interactive skills

From CEFR mapping of the Language B SL Internal Assessment (speaking and interactive skills) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2 in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1, B2+, and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Key Finding x – Language B HL Speaking and interactive skills

From CEFR mapping of the Language B HL Internal Assessment (speaking and interactive skills) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2 in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1, B2+, and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Key Finding xi – Language B HL Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, Language B HL reports B2 proficiency at the grade threshold of 5. All four languages also report between A2+ and C1 levels.

Key Finding xii – Language B SL Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, Language B SL reports different CEFR levels in relation to receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Taking this into account, and the evidence drawn from considering multiple assessment cycles, overall, all four languages report between A2 and B2+ levels. The B2 grade threshold for English, French, and Spanish is 6, while it is 7 for German.

Key Finding xiii – Language B Assessment Consistency (across years)

Language B SL assessments in receptive skills (paper 2) demonstrate tasks pitched at different levels between 2020 and 2022. The IB has indicated to Ecctis that the 2022 pattern is representative of how the assessment design will be continued in future.

Key Finding xiv – Language B Skills Assessed

Language B assesses all four key language proficiency skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). Furthermore, a wide range of activities, strategies, and competences described in the CEFR are actively assessed, including those related to production, reception, mediation, interaction, and others.

RQ2: What are the similarities and differences between English, French, German, and Spanish in how the assessments tasks and grades, in the selected IB DP subjects, report CEFR language proficiency?

The degree of consistency found between the four languages considered by Ecctis (English, French, German, and Spanish) varied between Language A and Language B. The Language A subjects had uniform top-level findings for all four languages, as the key CEFR-proficiency components are driven by the common marking criteria of the assessments. Language B showed some small, but also some more significant, differences and variations between languages. Particularly at SL, Language B demonstrated variability with the level of proficiency tested across the receptive skills.

Across all languages, the analysis found that grade 4 in Language B HL reflected B1+ level, grade 5 reflected B2 level, grade 6 reflected B2+ level and grade 7 reflected C1 level. Additionally, across all languages, the analysis indicated that grade 4 in Language B SL reflected B1 level. Grade 5 in English, French, and Spanish B SL reflected B1+ level whereas, in German B SL, grades 5 and 6 reflected B1+ level. Grades 6 and 7 in English, French and Spanish B SL reflected B2 level, whereas grade 7 in German B SL reflected B2 level.

Key Finding xv – Consistency Across Languages

The degree of consistency found between the four languages considered by Ecctis (English, French, German, and Spanish) varied between Language A and Language B. The Language A courses had uniform top-level findings for all four languages, as the key CEFR-proficiency components are driven by the common marking criteria. Language B showed some small, but also some more significant, differences between languages. Particularly at SL, Language B demonstrated variability with the level of proficiency tested across receptive skills.

RQ3: To what extent do the assessments of the selected IB DP subjects target the CEFR communicative language activities, strategies and competences linked to Higher Education (HE) readiness?

Key Finding xvi – Higher Education Readiness

Many components of language proficiency described in the CEFR are linked to Higher Education readiness, particularly at B2 level. Ecctis' detailed analysis of the Language A: language and literature, Language A: literature and Language B assessments found that the majority of the activities, strategies, and competences linked to HE readiness are notably present in the assessments of these subjects. However, there are also some areas where the IB assessments do not overlap with these particular aspects of the CEFR.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) was published by the Council of Europe in 2001.² It is widely used in the development and referencing of language syllabi, qualifications, assessment, and other learning materials. Additionally, it is commonly used by universities today to express English and other language proficiency requirements for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate study. The CEFR is designed to provide a common and neutral basis for all languages to define levels of language proficiency.

This study, commissioned by the International Baccalaureate (IB), intends to provide an independent comparative study of a selection of IB Diploma Programme (DP) English, French, German, and Spanish language subjects to the CEFR, in order to establish how the language levels assessed in each course, and the associated grades, compare to levels on the CEFR.

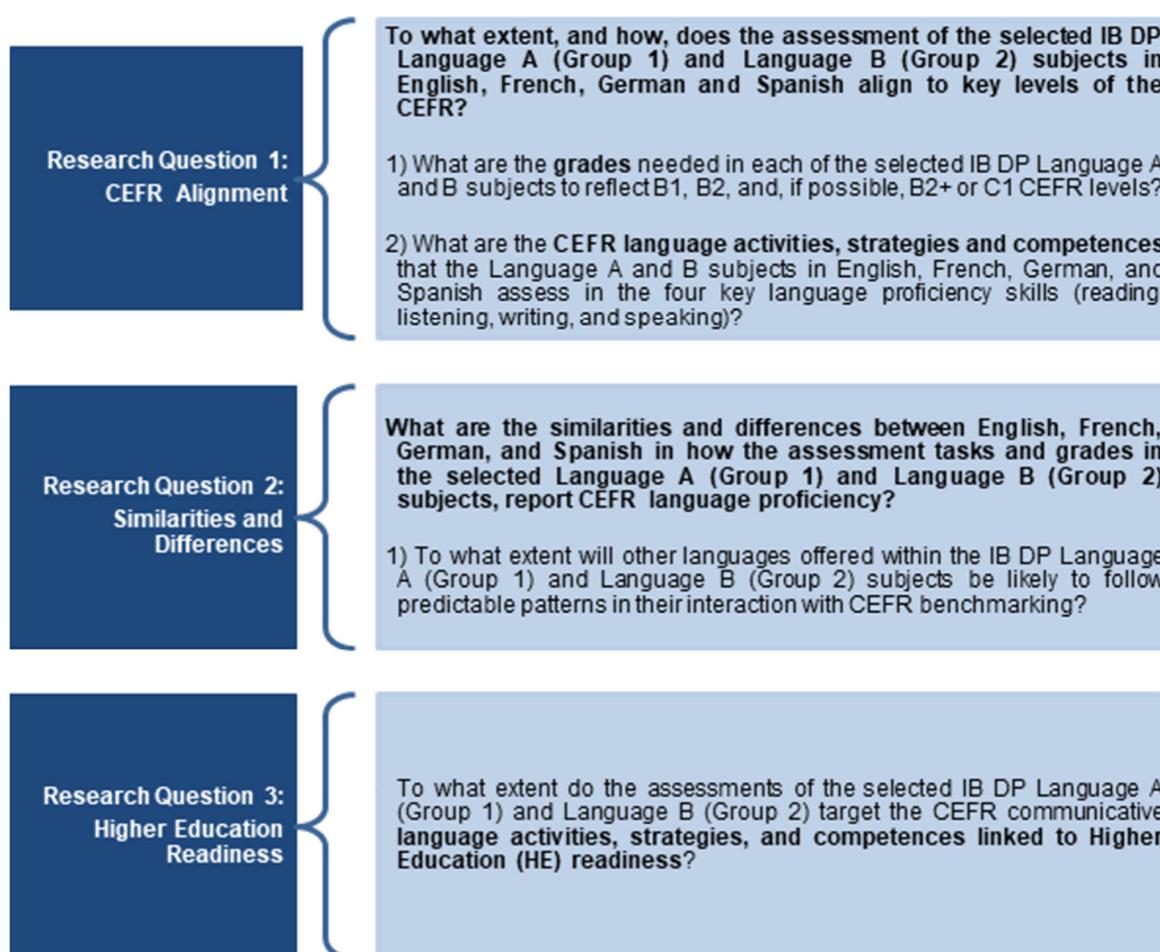
1.2. Aims of the project

Ectis has been commissioned by the IB to conduct a benchmarking exercise of the assessment tasks, test specifications and associated mark schemes of the IB DP Language A (Group 1) including the Language A: language and literature subject and the Language A: literature subject, and Language B (Group 2) subjects in four European languages – English, French, German, and Spanish – to the CEFR.³ The overarching aim is support greater stakeholder understanding of the level of language skills assessed by these IB DP Language A and Language B subjects. The Research Questions of this study are the following:

² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg.

³ Council of Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR Levels. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions> [Accessed on 14/12/2022]

Figure 1: Research questions



This study provides an independent evaluation of the subjects' assessments and how they align to key levels of the CEFR, thereby enabling higher education admissions staff and other stakeholders to make informed decisions on applicants that have completed these IB DP subjects. These subjects may be taken as part of the IB DP, as part of the IB Career-related Programme (CP), or as standalone subjects.⁴

The IB subjects that are covered by the study are as follows:

⁴ CP aims to support students for both their further academic studies and specialised training. Therefore, the language subjects included in the Studies in language and literature group (including the Language A: language and literature subjects) can support students attending the CP to develop their linguistic, analysis, evaluation, critical and creative thinking skills through studying a variety of literature texts. CP also focuses on language development through ensuring that students are exposed to an additional language for a minimum of 50 hours. Students in the CP can undertake language development subjects included in the Language acquisition group (Language B subject) which focus on the development of students' language competences. This can be achieved through an extension to students' DP language acquisition course where students can undertake the course through a school-designed language development course, an external provider or through monitored self-directed study.

Table 1: IB subjects reviewed in this study

Subject group	Course	English		French		German		Spanish	
		SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL	SL	HL
Studies in language and literature (Group 1)	Language A: literature	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Language A: language and literature	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Language acquisition (Group 2)	Language B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

This selection includes subjects under both the Studies in language and literature group – focused on developing critical thinking skills in relation to different texts and the way in which language is used in them, and subjects under the Language Acquisition group – focused primarily on the development of language competence. IB DP subjects are offered at both Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL). HL subjects encompass greater depth of study.⁵

The subjects in the Studies in language and literature group (Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature) are not specifically designed solely for language acquisition, they are designed to be taken by students who are ‘academically competent’ in the language and explicitly assess linguistic proficiency alongside other criteria. The language profile of students at the outset of Language A (Group 1) subjects will vary, but their receptive, productive, and interactive skills should be strong, and the expectation is that the course will consolidate them further.⁶

Language B subjects are designed for students with some previous experience of the target language. According to the IB documentation, in Language B, students further develop their ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes, and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works, as appropriate to the level of the course.

In benchmarking the selected subjects against the CEFR, the study focused on establishing the grades needed in each of the selected IB subjects to reflect B1, B2, and, if possible, B2+ or C1 CEFR levels, with B2 being the level most typically sought for undergraduate study. As a result, Ecctis conducted an analytical exercise, using CEFR levels as a benchmark, to identify which grades in IB DP language subjects report language proficiency at those CEFR levels.

1.3. Structure of the report

[Section 2](#) presents a detailed overview of the **methodological process** used in the study, including an overview of the CEFR and how it was used during the comparative analysis.

⁵ <https://www.ibo.org/university-admission/support-students-transition-to-higher-education/course-selection-guidance/>

⁶ <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/language-and-literature/>

[Section 3](#) summarises the analysis of and key findings related to the **Language A: language and literature** subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish.

[Section 4](#) summarises the analysis of and key findings related to the **Language A: literature** subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish.

[Section 5](#) summarises the analysis of and key findings related to the **Language B** subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish.

[Section 6](#) brings together the **key findings and conclusions** of the comparative analysis for each language reviewed as part of the study, but also presents cross-language findings which emerged from the evaluation and synthesis of the findings from each subject and language.

[Section 7](#) provides guidance and **recommendations** where analysis found that there is scope for potential improvement of the question construct and mark schemes of the assessment papers.

Additionally, there are six appendices to this report which are included in a separate document. Many provide supplementary information or examples of Ecctis' detailed analysis. More specifically:

Appendix 1 provides a detailed overview of the IB DP Language A and B subjects including their aims, content, learning outcomes, assessment objectives, and assessment methods and criteria.

Appendix 2 presents a detailed overview of the comparative analysis of the English B reading, listening, speaking and interactive skills, and writing skills to the CEFR. Additionally, Appendix 2 includes the review and comparative analysis of the November 2022 (N22) paper 2 examinations for English B reading and listening.

Appendix 3 presents a detailed overview of the comparative analysis of one text of reading and listening per level (SL and HL) and the overview and comparative analysis of one student sample of speaking and interactive skills and writing per level (SL and HL) of the French B examinations to CEFR.

Appendix 4 presents a detailed overview of the comparative analysis of one text of reading and listening per level (SL and HL) and the overview and comparative analysis of one student sample of speaking and interactive skills and writing per level (SL and HL) of the German B examinations to CEFR.

Appendix 5 presents a detailed overview of the comparative analysis of one text of reading and listening per level (SL and HL) and the overview and comparative analysis of one student sample of speaking and interactive skills and writing per level (SL and HL) of the Spanish B examinations to CEFR.

Appendix 6 presents Ecctis' analysis of the overarching IB grade descriptors in each subject, illustrating Ecctis' process and broad findings on alignment between IB grade descriptors and CEFR levels.

1.4. Navigating the report

As this report contains a large number of sections, and considerable detail in some areas, the following advice is intended to support readers to identify a route through the report that aligns with their interests.

Interested in top-level findings across all subjects: Ecctis recommends reading the Executive Summary, Introduction, and Section 6: Key Findings.

Interested in more detailed findings across all or specific subjects: Ecctis recommends reading the Executive Summary, Introduction, Section 6: Key Findings, and also to make use of the blue findings boxes interspersed throughout Sections 3 to 5. Figure 3 in section 2.2 will also support the reader to comprehend Ecctis' methodology.

Interested in the full study, including full details of the methods used by Ecctis: all sections of the report may be of interest, though the blue findings boxes in Sections 3 to 5 may still be used to see synthesised findings. The appendices in accompanying documents may also be of interest, to see further examples of Ecctis' method being used.

2. Methodology

2.1. Overview of the CEFR

The CEFR was published by the Council of Europe in 2001.⁷ It is widely used in the development and referencing of language syllabi, qualifications, assessment, and other learning materials. Additionally, it is commonly used by universities today to express English and other language proficiency requirements for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate study. One of the aims of the CEFR is to support the collaboration among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in different countries and provide a solid foundation for the common recognition of language skills and qualifications to support learners, teachers, curriculum and assessment designers, educational administration, and examination bodies to come together and synchronise their efforts to support students.⁸

The CEFR is designed to provide a common and neutral basis for all languages to define levels of language proficiency. It consists of language related competence descriptors, referred to as ‘can do’ statements. These descriptors illustrate what an individual with proficiency at a given level of the CEFR should be able to do in terms of spoken and written production and interaction, listening and reading comprehension and outline the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences that students can develop in their chosen language. There are six main language proficiency levels in the CEFR: levels A1 and A2 which refer to a basic language user, levels B1 and B2 which refer to an independent language user, and levels C1 and C2 referring to a proficient language user.⁹ The table below presents the CEFR global descriptors at each level.

Table 2: CEFR Common Reference Levels: global scale¹⁰

CEFR Common Reference Levels: global scale¹¹

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce

⁷ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg.

⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 22.

⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume.

¹⁰ Council of Europe, n.d. *Global Scale – Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference Levels*. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale> [Accessed August 2022].

¹¹ Council of Europe, n.d. *Global Scale – Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference Levels*. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale> [Accessed August 2022].

CEFR Common Reference Levels: global scale¹¹

		clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple, connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The CEFR B2 level descriptor, highlighted in the table above, is the level of language proficiency required by many universities for admission. In order to successfully enter university level programmes, a learner should be proficient in a language to a minimum level of CEFR B2 in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Research has shown that the B2 level is the most commonly required level in European university entrance exams and admission for second language learners (Deygers et al, 2018). Several studies, in a number of countries, have found that the B2 level constitutes the minimum language proficiency and acquisition level that international students and second language learners need to have and demonstrate in order to enter HEIs in Europe, as students with a lower CEFR levels often present lower levels of academic progression and success (Carlsen, 2018; Deygers et al, 2018).

The CEFR uses specific terminology to describe competences, general competences, communicative language competences, communicative language activities, language processes, and communicative language strategies. The definitions of these terms, along with examples for each term, are included in the table below.

Table 3: CEFR Communicative Language Competences, Activities and Strategies definitions¹²

Term	Description	Example
Competences	Competences are the sum and the interplay of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions.	An example of a competence is problem solving, where an individual has to follow a specific process and steps in order to find solutions to a specific problem and overcome potential obstacles they face during this process.
General competences	General competences are those not specific to language, but which are called upon for actions of all kinds, including communicative language activities. In the CEFR, general competences refer to students' declarative knowledge (<i>savoir</i>) which refers to students' knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, skills including practical and intercultural skills (<i>savoir faire</i>), students' attitudes and awareness defined as existential competence (<i>savoir être</i>) and their ability to learn (<i>savoir apprendre</i>). ¹³	An example of a general competence is the ability of an individual to collaborate and engage in teamwork when they need to complete a collaborative project. In order to achieve successful collaboration and teamwork, individuals have to employ different communicative language activities such as reading, listening, speaking and writing in order to communicate with the others in their team.
Communicative language competences	<p>Communicative language competences are those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means.</p> <p>According to CEFR the communicative language competences include the linguistic competences such as General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control, Phonological control and Orthographic control, the sociolinguistic competences such as the Sociolinguistic appropriateness and the pragmatic competence including Flexibility, Turntaking, Thematic Development, Coherence and cohesion, Propositional precision and Fluency.</p>	<p>An example of a communicative language competence is when an individual engages in a conversation through turntaking instead of interrupting the other person who is speaking.</p> <p>Another example of a communicative language competence is an individual's ability to write an essay and effectively develop and present a theme, ideas, a narrative, and an argument in a logically structure following relevant discourse conventions.</p>

¹² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg, pp.9-10.

¹³ Piccardo E. et al. (2011), Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Term	Description	Example
Communicative language activities	<p>Communicative language activities involve the exercise of one's communicative language competence in a specific domain in processing (receptively and/or productively) one or more texts in order to carry out a task.</p> <p>According to CEFR, there are various activities related to receptive skills (reading and listening), productive skills (speaking and writing), interaction and mediation.</p>	<p>An example of a language activity related to reading involves an individual's Overall reading comprehension which includes their ability to understand both written and signed texts in order to read for purpose or read particular genres with specific functions.</p>
Language processes	<p>Language processes refer to the chain of events, neurological and physiological, involved in the production and reception of speech and writing.</p>	<p>Producing text in speaking requires individuals to employ a variety of neurological and cognitive resources in order to be able to achieve language comprehension, understand the tone that they need to produce a text but also selecting and maintaining information in order to be able to develop flexibility in fluently speaking and achieving greater language comprehension.</p>
Communicative language strategies	<p>A strategy is any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task which they set for themselves or with which they are confronted.</p> <p>According to CEFR, communicative language strategies are seen in as a kind of hinge between communicative language competences and communicative language activities. Similarly to the communicative language activities, the CEFR outlines that there are a number of communicative language strategies in relation to reception (reading and listening), production (speaking and writing), interaction and mediation.</p>	<p>An example of a reception language strategy according to CEFR is the individual's ability to identify cues and infer by exploiting illustrations, headings, formats and position of information within a text, deducing meaning from a linguistic context and exploiting linguistic cues on numbers, words, prefixes and suffixes, and temporal and logical connectors.</p>

To communicate with each other, individuals employ a wide range and an interplay of **general competences** such as general knowledge acquired from their academic and/or professional experiences and sociocultural and intercultural competences. According to CEFR, these general competences include students' declarative knowledge (savoir), skills and know how (savoir-faire), existential competence, attitudes and awareness (savoir-être) and the ability to learn (savoir apprendre).

Additionally, individuals employ a variety of **communicative language competences** including linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences as well as **communicative language strategies**. To complete a task, individuals need to deploy a combination of both general competences and communicative language competences and strategies.

Individuals often engage in **communicative language activities** which involve language processes that allow them to produce and/or receive texts in relation to specific topics and domains. According to CEFR, **domains** refer to social contexts and situations in which individuals operate. There are four domains according to CEFR which have been developed to reflect the major topics in language teaching and learning environments: **the public, personal, educational, and occupational domains**.

The **communicative language activities** allow individuals to activate communicative language competences and communicative language strategies that seem most appropriate to carry out specific tasks in a specific context and domain, with the aim to further develop a range of general and communicative competences.¹⁴

Linguistic competence focuses on language usage and knowledge of the language as a system and more specifically on the students' linguistic range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range and control, orthographic control, phonological control, sound articulation and prosodic features. **Sociolinguistic competence** focuses on students' knowledge and skills required to manage the social aspect of language use, including sociolinguistic appropriateness.

Pragmatic competence is concerned with the use of language in the construction of a text and students' knowledge of the principles of language use such as their ability to design and structure texts (discourse competence), the ability to conduct communicative functions (functional competence) and the knowledge of interactional and transactional schemata (design competence).¹⁵ Pragmatic competence includes the communicative language competences of flexibility (referring to students' ability to adjust the language to new contexts), turn taking (referring to students' ability to start, maintain and end a conversation), thematic development (referring to students' ability to develop a story and an argument by presenting their ideas in a logical structure), coherence and cohesion (focusing on students' ability to link their ideas using logical and temporal connectors to achieve cohesion), propositional precision (focusing on students' ability to use language with detail and precision), and fluency (referring to students' ability to express themselves with spontaneity and maintain a discussion).¹⁶

As a result, the **overall language proficiency profile** of an individual, according to CEFR, involves a combination of communicative language competences, including the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic language competences. Additionally, the overall language

¹⁴ Piccardo E. et al. (2011), Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

¹⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 129-142.

¹⁶ Ibid.

proficiency profile of an individual according to CEFR includes communicative language activities and communicative language strategies in relation to reception, production, interaction, and mediation.

Reception refers to students' ability to receive, understand and process text input in audio and written form to understand the meaning and the purpose behind that text.¹⁷ **Production** refers to students' ability to produce and develop text through writing and speaking activities.¹⁸ Written production encompasses activities such as writing reports, articles or letters, or creative writing. Spoken production activities may include giving a speech or presentation and reading a written text aloud. **Interaction** involves the co-construction of knowledge and discourse through activities that involve two or more students, aiming to develop students' learning through collaboration and exchange of knowledge through oral and written interaction.¹⁹ Finally, **mediation** refers to students' ability to construct and convey meaning through oral or written individual or collaborative activities.²⁰

All these communicative language competences, communicative language activities and communicative language strategies are illustrated in the CEFR descriptive scheme. This scheme outlines that the overall language proficiency that a student needs in order to perform a task which requires communication is determined by the mobilisation of a combination of communicative competences (including linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic), communicative language activities and communicative language strategies in relation to reception, production, interaction and mediation. However, language learners already have general competences such as their knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness (*savoir*), practical and intercultural skills (*savoir faire*), attitudes and awareness (*savoir être*) and ability to learn (*savoir apprendre*) which are also mobilised when they perform a task which requires communication.

The figure below presents the structure of the CEFR descriptive scheme.

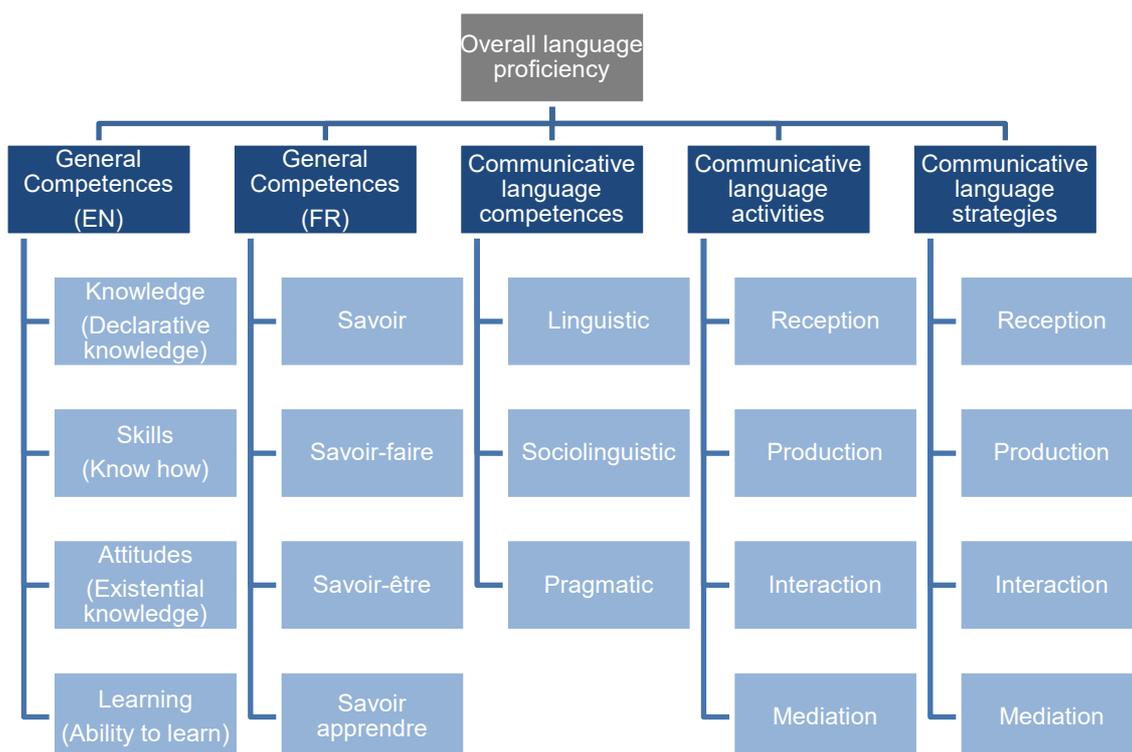
¹⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 48.

¹⁸ Ibid. p.60.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.70.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 90.

Figure 2: The structure of the CEFR descriptive scheme²¹



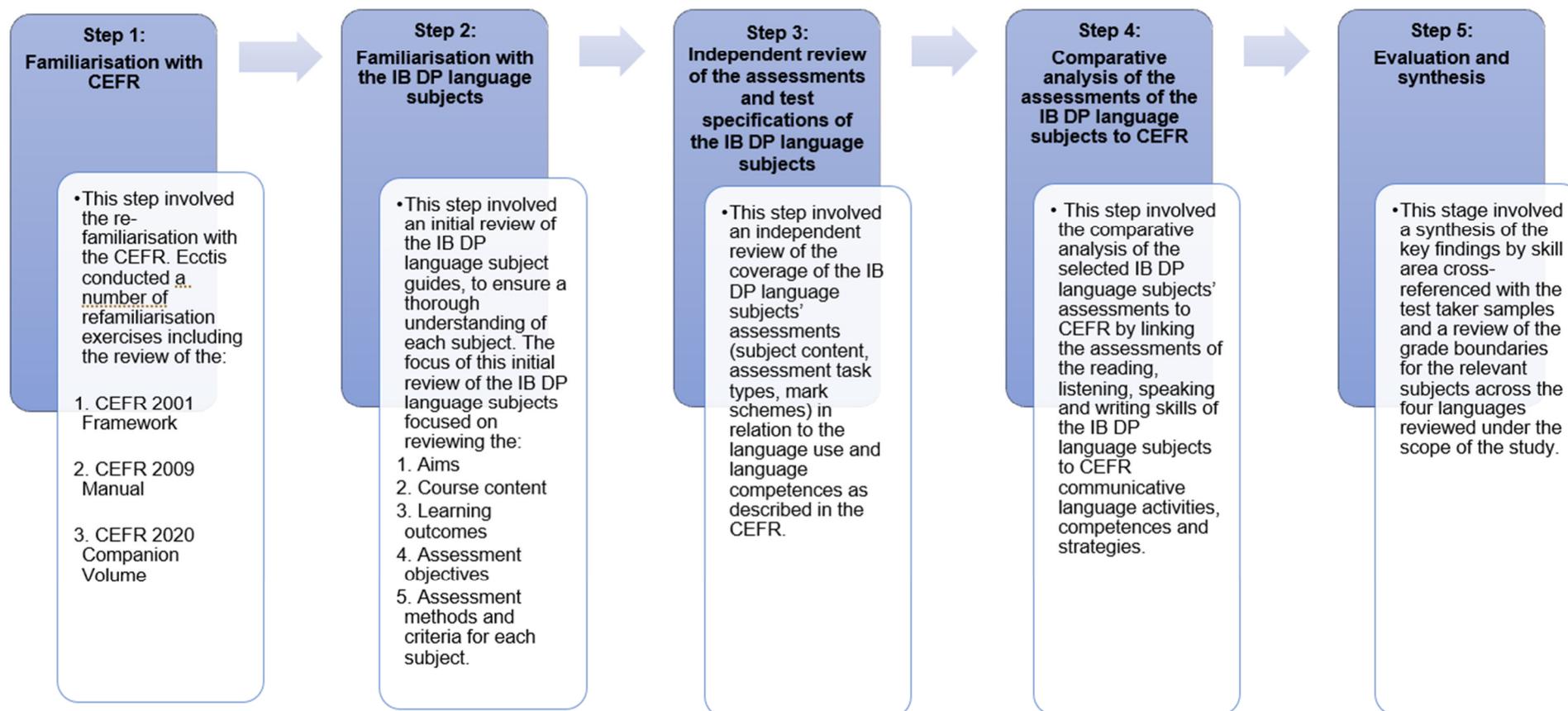
2.2. Overview of the methodological process

The methodology employed by Ecctis in this study is designed to ensure a robust and transparent evaluation of the aforementioned IB DP language subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish against the CEFR. This is based on an analysis of the language skills developed and assessed through the subjects in comparison to those associated with the reference levels of the CEFR. More specifically, the process employed by Ecctis to map the selected IB DP Language A and B subjects to the CEFR has been informed closely by the Council of Europe guidance, *Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) – A Manual* (hereafter, the CEFR Manual).²² Ecctis' CEFR benchmarking process is presented in the figure below.

²¹ General competences: 'Savoir' refers to declarative knowledge, e.g. the formal knowledge someone has gained from academic learning. 'Savoir faire' refers to skills and the ability to carry out certain activities or processes. 'Savoir-être' refers to existential ability or skills, relating to an individual's personality and attitudes. 'Savoir apprendre' refers to knowing how to learn, and how to integrate new knowledge into an existing knowledge base.

²² Council of Europe, 2009.

Figure 3: Overview of the methodological process



2.2.1 Step 1: Refamiliarization with CEFR

The first methodological step was the familiarization with the CEFR. For the purposes of the study, Ecctis used the original CEFR documentation which is the 2001 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Ecctis also used the most up to date CEFR documentation to conduct the comparative analysis, including the CEFR 2020 Companion Volume, as this constitutes the most recent document published by the Council of Europe. The CEFR 2020 Companion Volume includes some updates and changes that were introduced to several CEFR descriptors.²³ As part of the study, Ecctis conducted several familiarization exercises including the review of the CEFR 2020 Companion Volume, and the review of the CEFR descriptors for each level, taking into consideration the salient characteristics of each level.

2.2.2 Step 2: Familiarisation with the IB DP language subject documentation

The next step of the methodological process was to conduct an initial review of the IB DP Language subject guides, including the Language A: language and literature, Language A: literature and Language B guides, to ensure a thorough understanding of each subject. The Language A: language and literature, Language A: literature and Language B for both HL and SL subject guides include information regarding the aims of the subject, the course content, learning outcomes and assessment objectives, information about assessment methods and assessment criteria. The guides are identical for all languages within each subject. A course profile for each of the three subjects was created, differentiating information specific to the HL and SL subjects where necessary. The aim of this initial review was to obtain the following information for each course:

- **Aims:** Acknowledging that the IB DP subjects can be either studies in language and literature (Language A subjects), or language acquisition courses (Language B subject) and understanding the aims of the course is important to contextualise what the IB is looking to achieve in relation to language knowledge and skills within it. It is also useful to understand the age and educational background of the learners.
- **Course content:** Reviewing course content was important in order to better understand what students cover in the courses and therefore the expected domains, topics, and themes students would likely be familiar with for the assessment.
- **Learning outcomes and assessment objectives:** Learning outcomes set out the intended knowledge, skills, and competences expected on successful completion of a course. Assessment objectives set out the key knowledge, skills and competences to be formally assessed. Review of the learning outcomes (accessed through what the IB describes as 'aims') and assessment objectives helped to provide a clear picture of the types of language and related skills to be assessed by the IB DP subjects.
- **Assessment methods and criteria:** Substantial emphasis was placed on reviewing the assessment methods of the IB DP subjects, reviewing whole external

²³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume.

assessments, guidelines on internal assessments, mark schemes, and assessment criteria.

The re-familiarisation with the CEFR and the familiarising with the IB DP language subjects indicated that there are some differences in the way that the CEFR and the IB define students' skills. More specifically, the CEFR refers to students' skills as modes of communication including reception, production, interaction, and mediation, whereas the IB uses the term students' skills in relation to listening, reading, speaking and interactive skills, and writing skills.

2.2.3 Step 3: Independent review of the assessments and test specifications of the IB DP language subjects

Although the subject guides for both HL and SL of the Language A: language and literature, Language A: literature and Language B are identical for each language within each subject, the assessment items for each language are different.

This step involved the detailed independent review of the selected IB DP language subjects' assessments and test specifications to the CEFR. Ecctis conducted an independent review of the coverage of the IB DP language subjects' assessments (subject content, assessment task types, question types, input text analysis, mark schemes) in relation to the language use and communicative language activities, competences, and strategies as described in CEFR. To achieve that, Ecctis conducted the following:

- A review of the **overall assessment** for each IB DP language subject, including:
 - the weighting of external and internal assessment to the overall course grade
 - the number and type of summative assessments for each course, along with the weighting and duration of each assessment,
 - identification of the skills facets the assessments seek to test with reference to the CEFR communicative language activities and strategies for reception, production interaction and mediation as well as the CEFR communicative language competences.
- A **detailed review of past examination papers**, assessment tasks, and associated mark schemes and assessment criteria including:
 - The type(s) of questions posed in each, categorising wherever possible into the response types set out in the CEFR Manual,²⁴ as well as the specific communicative language activities, strategies, and competences assessed in each IB DP assessment item
 - The number of questions, together with the mark allocation for each question
 - Any resources available to the student (e.g. dictionary or key terms/definitions provided to them in the exam)
 - A review of the mark schemes and assessment criteria to determine the specific skills being graded, and the expected language skills at each level of achievement

²⁴ Extended answer (text / monologue); Gap fill sentence; Gapped text / cloze, selected response; Interaction with examiner; Interaction with peers; Matching; Multiple-choice; Open gapped text / cloze; Ordering; Sentence completion; Short answer to open question(s); True / False; Other. Council of Europe (2009), p. 126.

- The type of linguistic skills assessed and how varying levels of linguistic competence were reflected in the grading system. This included a detailed analysis of each assessment item, with the intention to identify the modes of communication (reception, production, interaction, and mediation) and the levels of language use and language competence that are assessed. Particular considerations for each mode are provided in detail in [section 2.2.4](#) below.
- A **review of marked student work** to observe the application of the assessment criteria in practice and enable student responses and scores to be compared against CEFR, where appropriate, to support wider analysis of assessment and marking.

The tables below provide an overview of the IB DP Language A (Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature) and Language B assessment papers analysed for each one of the language subjects reviewed for the purposes of the study.

Table 4: Language A: language and literature assessment papers analysed across all languages reviewed in the project

Language A: language and literature			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
English, French, German, and Spanish Language A: language and literature	HL	M21	Paper 1: Guided textual analysis
			Paper 2: Comparative essay
			Higher Level Essay
			Individual Oral
English, French, German, and Spanish Language A: language and literature	SL	M21	Paper 1: Guided textual analysis
			Paper 2: Comparative essay
			Individual Oral

Table 5: Language A: literature assessment papers analysed across all languages reviewed in the project

Language A: literature			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
English, French, German, and Spanish Language A: literature	HL	M21	Paper 1: Guided literary analysis
			Paper 2: Comparative essay
			Higher level (HL) essay
			Individual oral
English, French, German, and Spanish Language A: literature	SL	M21	Paper 1: Guided literary analysis
			Paper 2: Comparative essay
			Individual oral

Table 6: Language B assessment papers analysed across all languages reviewed in the project

Language B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
English, French, German, and Spanish Language B	HL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)
	SL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)
		N22	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)

The Language B SL and HL reading and listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis is from the N20 examination. Whilst the N20 listening comprehension examination was part of the first batch of papers authored, it was not sat, but it was used as specimen material when the rollout of the examination got delayed. In addition, the project team reviewed the Language B SL Paper 2 (reading and listening) from the N22 examination. The Language B SL and HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) as well as writing skills assessment (Paper 1) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from the M21 examination. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 (for both HL and SL) and N22 (only for SL) examinations and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for both SL and HL.

For Language B, where the findings in relation to CEFR levels of different IB grades showed more variation than the more consistent findings in Language A, this ability to cross-check multiple assessment cycles was key in building confidence in the overall findings.

2.2.4 Step 4: Comparative analysis of the IB DP language subject test specifications against CEFR

This section includes the detailed methodological process and steps that Ecctis followed to conduct the comparative analysis of the IB DP Language A and B subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish to CEFR.

The CEFR consists of global descriptors (as outlined in [section 2.1](#)) and more detailed descriptors which are grouped according to a specific area of linguistic competence. Ecctis' analysis focused on the alignment of each skill area (e.g. speaking, writing, reading, and listening) assessed in the selected IB DP language subjects to detailed CEFR descriptors, to more closely evaluate which areas of linguistic competence were being assessed. As the CEFR is a competence-based framework, a holistic view was required to determine whether a CEFR descriptor could be considered well-aligned with an IB assessment. Each CEFR

descriptor features several indicators. Whilst it is not a requirement to meet all indicators within the descriptor, the overarching area of linguistic competence must be met.

Language A: language and literature, and Language A: literature

As the Language A (Group 1) subjects comprise some language proficiency skills but also some skills of wider critical understanding, analysis, and evaluation of various source types, the overarching CEFR referencing process is higher level in some places compared to the detailed scrutiny of every component of the Language B assessments.

The review and comparative analysis of both Language A subjects involved the following key stages:

- **Stage 1:** Review of all tasks within the assessment papers, including input texts, prompts, expected answer format, and instructions.
- **Stage 2:** Identification, with particular reference to assessment criteria, of which language proficiency activities, strategies, and competences are assessed by each assessment component.
- **Stage 3:** Comparing assessed skills and levels of performance to the CEFR level descriptors, to ascertain minimum CEFR proficiency that can access assessment tasks and the range of CEFR levels aligned with bands of the assessment criteria.
- **Stage 4:** Review of student samples to ensure that Ecctis' assessment criteria mapping to CEFR is aligned with the practical marking of assessment papers.

The methodological approach firstly involved reviewing the core components of the IB Language A: language and literature and the Language A: literature including the number and type of examinations, question type and text types (where applicable) for both the SL and the HL programmes. Consideration was also made to the range of modalities (reading, listening, writing and / or speaking) assessed by the different tasks set in the exams and internal assessment components, including whether more than one modality is assessed by a particular task.

Where input texts are set in reading tasks, a review based on selected past papers was conducted to evaluate the linguistic features of the texts and their relative complexity in relation to CEFR requirements, using relevant descriptors. The questions and tasks set in relation to the texts were also considered, when determining the type and range of skills assessed in reference to CEFR. An overall estimate of the range of proficiency assessed and targeted was subsequently made on the level(s) of ability required to a) read and understand the text b) carry out the reading comprehension and writing task(s) set in the exams and assessment components. It is important to note that some input texts and tasks were found not to assess the full range of CEFR levels, and some were observed to assess a narrower range than others – this was considered when subsequently interpreting assessment criteria and referencing levels of performance on the task relative to CEFR.

The next stage involved a comparative analysis of the IB assessment criteria and scoring rubric against relevant CEFR descriptors. Firstly, it was important to consider whether particular assessment criteria assess particular modalities, including instances where two modalities may be assessed either by the same or different criteria. Each scoring range within the IB level descriptors for each criterion was compared to the most applicable CEFR

descriptors to determine the best fit CEFR level of proficiency, demonstrated by each level of performance on the task. The complexity level of the input texts for reading tasks as well as the task types and level of response expected were also considered when judging the most appropriate CEFR level indicative of performance levels at each scoring range. Through this approach, CEFR communicative activities, strategies and competences were identified for each task and the appropriate levels of proficiency within those scales that are rewarded by each band of the marking criteria were ascertained. More information on how this contributed to final judgements on alignment between Language A grades and CEFR levels is provided in the section of Grades, below.

Language B

The review and comparative analysis of the Language B subjects to CEFR involved an independent review of the coverage of the IB DP Language B HL and SL assessments for reading, listening, speaking and interactive skills, and writing. The review and comparative analysis focused on mapping the assessed content and topics covered, the task types, the mark schemes, the input text, and the output text of the Language B HL and SL assessments against the CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences.

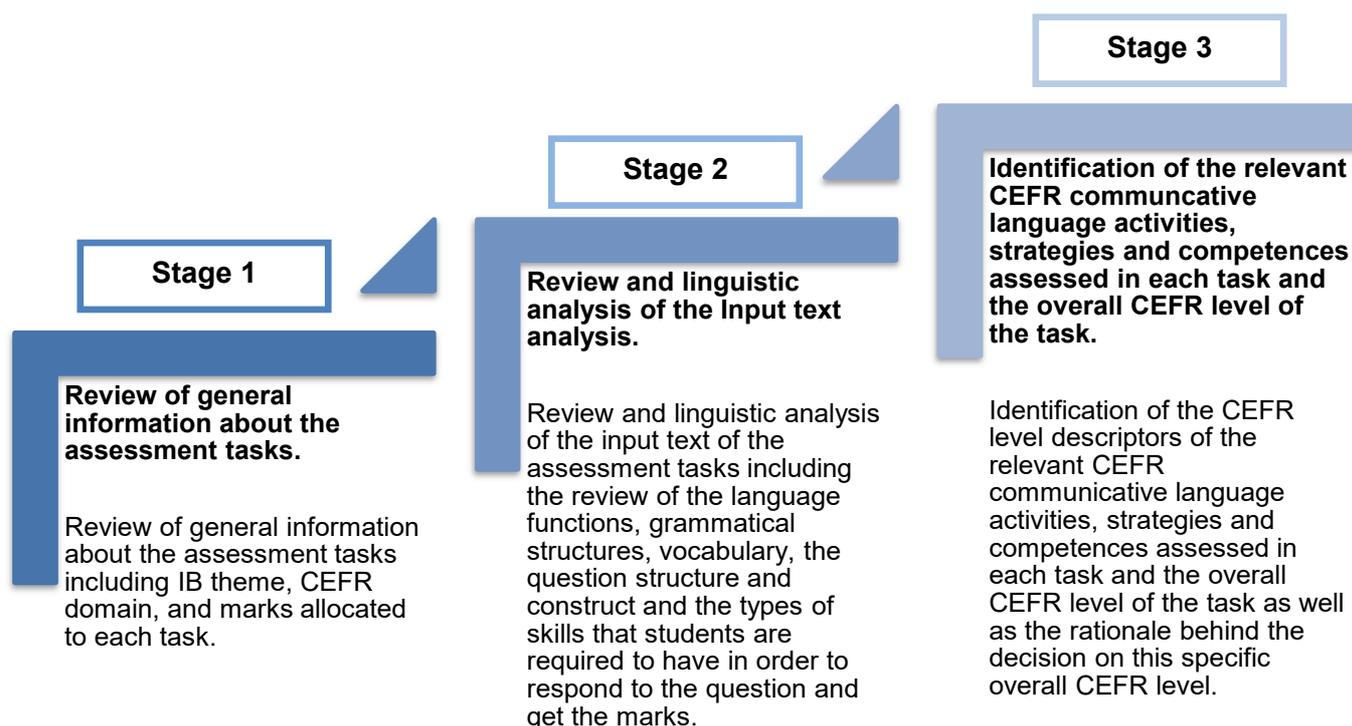
For the **receptive skills (reading and listening)**, the review and comparative analysis comprised of three stages:

- **Stage 1: Review of general information about the assessment task.** This included an overview of the task, the IB themes and optional recommended topics and CEFR domains covered, and the marks allocated to the task.
- **Stage 2: Review and analysis of the input text of the assessment task, including the analysis of the task, instructions, and question construct.** This stage included the review and analysis of the question type, the audio or written text type, the listening or reading skills assessed in the task, the language functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the input text of the task, the input text's quality and wordcount, the structure and the presentation of the input text. In terms of listening tasks, the project team reviewed and analysed their natural phonological features, but also with a focus on distortion (whether deliberate, e.g., overlapping turns, or due to recording quality issues), speed of delivery, and frequency of exposure (e.g., number of times played), accent of the speakers, pace, and quality of the audio recording. More specifically, input texts were analysed by the project team against relevant CEFR descriptors. Key considerations included the linguistic complexity in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of the input text; the text domain and topic(s) of the input text; the authenticity; the discourse type; the text length; and the structure and presentation of the input text.
- **Stage 3: Identification of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences assessed in the task.** More specifically, this stage included the identification and selection of the CEFR level descriptor of the relevant CEFR communicative language activities, strategies and competences that are representative, reflected and assessed in each task and that students are required to demonstrate to be awarded the mark in each task. Based on that, the project team determined the overall CEFR level of the task by providing a rationale on the overall CEFR level findings indicating the reasons why the task is not a level below or above

the overall CEFR level found. The overall CEFR level of each text included in the Language B reading and listening comprehension assessment (SL and HL) was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text.

The figure below illustrates the methodological steps of the comparative analysis of the Language B SL and HL receptive skills (reading and listening/Paper 2) to CEFR.

Figure 4: CEFR comparative analysis process of Language B receptive skills (reading and listening/Paper 2)



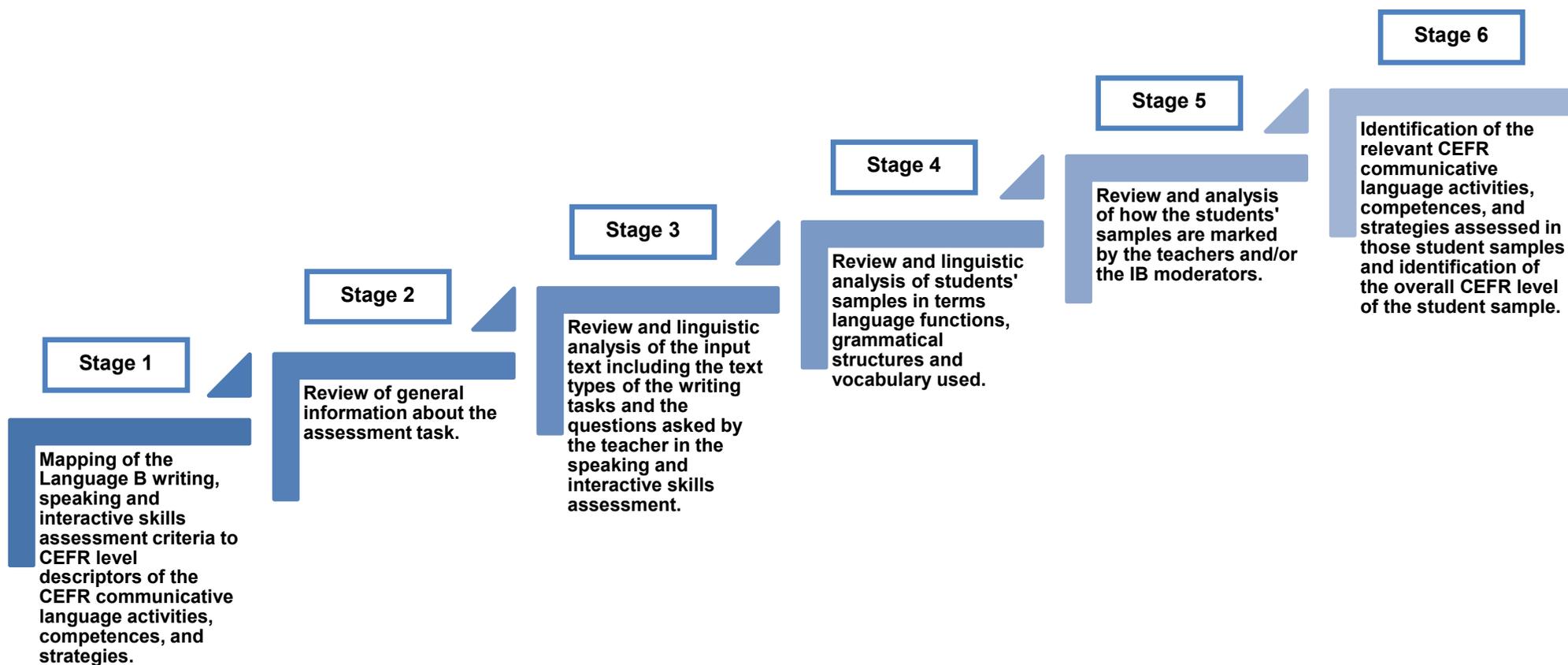
For the **productive skills (speaking and interactive skills, as well as writing)**, the review and comparative analysis comprised of six stages.

- **Stage 1: Review, comparative analysis, and mapping of the speaking and writing Language B mark schemes against the CEFR levels and descriptors of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences.** The Language B SL and HL mark schemes for speaking and writing include three criteria for speaking and interactive skills and three criteria for writing. Each criterion includes different bands, and each band has specific marks and level descriptors allocated to them. After reviewing the assessment criteria and mark schemes for both speaking and interactive skills as well as writing, the project team used specific CEFR communicative language activities, strategies and competences which aligned with each assessment criterion. Following that, the project team looked at each band of each criterion with its allocated marks and level descriptors and aligned them with a relevant CEFR level. This was a mapping exercise.

- **Stage 2: Review of general information about the assessment task.** This stage included an overview of the task, the IB themes and optional recommended topics and CEFR domains covered, and the marks allocated to the task.
- **Stage 3: Review and analysis of the input text of the assessment task, including the analysis of the task, instructions, and question construct.** This stage included the review and analysis of the question text type in relation to the writing assessment (Paper 1), review and analysis of the questions asked by the teacher in the speaking assessment, the review of the writing, speaking and interactive skills that are being assessed in those text types and the questions asked by the teacher, the linguistic analysis of the input text including the language functions, grammatical structures, and vocabulary of the text types in the writing assessment and questions asked by the teacher in the speaking and interactive skills assessment, as well as the quality of the input text.
- **Stage 4: Review and analysis of student samples.** This stage included the review and analysis of the speaking and writing output text of the student samples and more specifically a review and linguistic analysis of the language functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the output texts produced by the students. Additionally, in this stage the project team marked the speaking and writing student samples against each one of the Language B speaking and writing criteria. In this stage the project team marked the student samples against each criterion and allocated a CEFR level of how this marking translates into CEFR levels. These CEFR levels were based on the CEFR levels identified for each band of each criterion determined at Stage 1 (see above).
- **Stage 5: Review and analysis of how student samples are marked.** This stage included the review of how the student samples were marked by the examiners against each one of the Language B speaking and interactive skills as well as writing criteria. Additionally, this stage included a mapping exercise of how the marked student samples translate into CEFR levels which were based on the CEFR levels for each band of each criterion determined at Stage 1 (see above).
- **Stage 6: Identification of the relevant CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences assessed in the task.** This stage included the identification and selection of the CEFR level and descriptor of the relevant CEFR communicative language activities, strategies and competences that are representative and reflected in the task. Based on that, the project team determined the overall CEFR level of the task by providing a rationale on the overall CEFR level findings indicating the reasons why the task is not a level below or above the overall CEFR level found. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the Language B writing (Paper 1), speaking and interactive skills assessment (internal assessment) (SL and HL) was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis.

The figure below illustrates the methodological steps of the comparative analysis of the Language B SL and HL productive skills (writing, speaking and interactive skills/ Paper 1 and internal assessment) to CEFR.

Figure 5: CEFR comparative analysis process of Language B productive skills (speaking and interactive skills as well as writing)



Grades

Following the comparative analysis of the IB DP language subjects to CEFR, Ecctis conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the grading in order to determine which grades in the Language A and Language B subjects reflect different CEFR levels, and to identify which IB DP threshold grade reports the CEFR B2 level language proficiency.

The qualitative analysis of the IB DP Language A and Language B overarching grade descriptors involved the review of the wording of each descriptor, and the identification of relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences (including level descriptors) that align with the wording of each of the Language A and Language B grade descriptors. Although some aspects of IB grading (for instance grade boundaries for specific assessment papers) may shift between assessment cycles, these grade descriptors provide a consistent guideline for the level of achievement linked to each IB grade, per subject. As such, this analysis was a foundational component in the mapping of CEFR proficiency levels to IB subject grades. An overview and the results of this mapping process is presented in Appendix 6.

To supplement this analysis of the grade descriptors, Ecctis also received grade boundary information from the IB in relation to the assessment papers analysed. Ecctis used this grade boundary information, along with Ecctis' detailed CEFR-alignment judgments of each IB assessment item, to check the findings of the grade descriptor analysis and verify that students at each IB grade would have gained the appropriate number of marks to indicate their proficiency at specified CEFR levels.

In relation to Language B, to conduct the quantitative analysis of the receptive skills (paper 2) of the grading and grade boundaries, Ecctis measured the number of sub-questions that reflected each CEFR level and mapped them against the average grade boundaries of each paper that were provided by the IB. Furthermore, to conduct the quantitative analysis of the productive skills (paper 1 and internal assessment) of the Language B grading and grade boundaries, Ecctis used the mark scheme analysis and more specifically the mapping of the assessment criteria for writing and speaking against the CEFR levels. Following that, Ecctis mapped each one of the band level descriptors and the CEFR levels that they reflect to the average grade boundaries for speaking and writing for SL and HL that were provided by the IB.

For Language A subjects, a similar process was carried out. In all assessment papers for Language A, the assessment criteria are band-based, meaning that the links between marks achieved and CEFR-proficiency-level evidenced was primarily based on aligning each band of each assessment criterion to CEFR levels. With this information established (and with wider context about input texts considered), the data was compared to information provided by the IB in relation to grade boundaries for each paper, and for the subjects as a whole, to reach overarching conclusions on the alignment between CEFR levels and IB Language A grades.

For all subjects, grade boundary findings were also cross-checked with student samples in order to ascertain that the quantitative and qualitative findings from grade descriptor analysis and item and assessment criteria analysis are accurately reflected in the practical experience of marking.

2.2.5 Step 5: Evaluation and synthesis of findings

Having objectively reviewed the specifications, assessments, and marking criteria and completed the comparative analysis of all selected IB DP Language subjects, the final stage was to summarise Ecctis' findings per subject and language and provide any recommendations. This involved a synthesis of key findings and identification of cross-cutting themes as well as subject and language specific findings and recommendations.

2.2.6 Quality Assurance

As highlighted in the CEFR Manual, 'Linking of a test to the CEFR cannot be valid unless the examination or test that is the subject of the linking can demonstrate validity in its own right'.²⁵ Ecctis approached the analysis of the validity of the selected IB DP language assessments from two perspectives.

Firstly, Ecctis drew upon our own detailed and repeated analysis of IB quality assurance processes, curricula design and implementation features, and subject-specific details which have taken place in recent years. For example, it was possible and appropriate to recognise continuity from the detailed quality assurance analysis conducted in the 2016 UK NARIC²⁶ study 'Benchmarking Selected IB Diploma Programme Language Courses to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages', with additional confidence provided by the detailed and rigorous analyses of IB curricula (and their underpinning processes and design features) that have taken place in the interim period.

Secondly, in conducting the analysis of these selected IB DP language subjects, Ecctis reviewed the content and marking approaches of each assessment paper. This provided a rigorous additional check that the assessment processes linked to these subjects were sufficiently valid to support the CEFR benchmarking process. Recommendations for improvements have been identified in some areas (and these are articulated in Section 7), but none of these are challenges to the overall validity of the assessments in question. Rather, they are recommendations for how assessment design may be able to align even further with the IB's stated goals for each subject in relation to evidencing a range of student language proficiency.

For a detailed explanation of the quality assurance procedures relevant to these assessments, please see Appendix 3 of 'Benchmarking Selected IB Diploma Programme Language Courses to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages'.²⁷

²⁵ Council of Europe, 2009. Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR): A Manual, p.9.

²⁶ Ecctis projects, at this time, were disseminated under the name 'UK NARIC'.

²⁷ <https://ibo.org/research/outcomes-research/diploma-studies/benchmarking-selected-international-baccalaureate-diploma-programme-language-courses-to-the-common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-2016/>.

2.2.7 Limitation of the methodological approach

This section provides an overview of the limitations of the methodological approach of the study and describes how limitations were mitigated.

One of the limitations of the study was that the assessment papers reviewed for the Language B subjects across English, French, German, and Spanish were from different examination years. More specifically, the project team reviewed Paper 2 (reading and listening comprehension) from the Language B N20 examination for both SL and HL and from N22 examination for SL, Paper 1 (writing) and internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) from the M21 examination for both SL and HL. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 and N22 examination and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for Language B SL and HL.

Although it may have been ideal to have all components available from a single year, the review and comparative analysis of the assessment tasks, test specifications and associated mark schemes from different examination years allowed the project team to capture information, details, similarities, and differences across the different examination years as well as changes in the assessment and differences in the levels of consistency across examination years between 2020 to 2022. The ability to check and cross-check findings across these assessment cycles allowed Ecctis to strengthen the validity of the data through triangulating of findings. This proved particularly pertinent to our analysis of Language B, as indications of variability between languages in the 2020 assessments led Ecctis to wish to observe the evolution of the assessment approach in subsequent years. In Language A this proved unnecessary because the CEFR alignment demonstrated strong consistency between the assessment papers of different languages and was primarily driven by the shared assessment criteria.

An arguable limitation of the study is that Ecctis did not take a corpus linguistics approach to crunching large quantities of student output data (for example, running thousands of scripts through a programme that automatically assigns CEFR levels to text). There are several CEFR benchmarking studies which adopt this more quantitative approach to linguistic analysis focusing on reviewing a larger dataset of assessment papers and student samples through statistical analysis. These studies usually employ the Text Inspector software, or similar, which is an automated online tool. This approach to CEFR benchmarking and linguistic analysis allows comparative analysis of assessment papers in-breadth. Instead, Ecctis' study adopted a qualitative methodological process of CEFR benchmarking and linguistic comparative analysis to identify the overall CEFR level that is reported by the IB assessments through a granular analysis of items, mark schemes, input and output texts, and grade descriptors and grading information.

The qualitative methodological approach of the study was largely informed by the CEFR 2009 Manual. The qualitative linguistic analysis of a specific number of assessment papers, assessment tasks, test specifications, question types, oral and written production and interaction student samples supported an in-depth review of the language functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary included in the input text and assessed in the

assessment questions and tasks as well as demonstrated in the written and oral student samples. In comparison with the quantitative approaches to CEFR benchmarking, a qualitative approach allows a more in-depth exploration of the interplay of question demand, the communicative language processes, activities, strategies, and competences that a student needs to have in order to be awarded a specific IB grade. The CEFR descriptors are formulated as 'can do' statements which are not holistically or contextually interpreted by automated corpus linguistics programmes. A purely qualitative approach can attempt to align student output to CEFR levels, but Ecctis' approach focused on the holistic analysis of input texts, questions, student approaches to each question and how marks are practically gained, and the skills rewarded by marking criteria – providing a thorough CEFR benchmarking from the perspective of assessment design, assessment implementation, and assessment-taking.

3. Overview and Summary Analysis– Language A: language and literature

The following section contains two parts. The first part of this section includes an overview of the course specifications of the Language A: language and literature subject, including a review of the course’s aims, content, assessment objectives and assessment methods, providing information about the external and internal assessment and each paper. The second part of this section includes the summary of analysis and the key findings from the paper and sample analysis of the Language A: language and literature subject for English, French, German, and Spanish.

3.1 Overview of Language A: language and literature

Language A: language and literature constitutes one of three subjects in the IB DP Studies in language and literature subject group.²⁸ DP contains a mandatory Studies in language and literature course requiring students to take one of the three subjects in this cluster. The subject is offered at SL and HL: the former requires 150 teaching hours and the study of at least four literary texts, whereas the latter entails 240 teaching hours and a minimum of six studied works of literature.²⁹

In terms of subject content, literary and non-literary texts are included on the course.³⁰ Communicative content from various media outlets is used for analytical purposes, and links to culture and identity are explored through texts.³¹ The approaches to textual analysis are designed to cover a range of methods and theoretical traditions such as: sociolinguistics, media studies, literary theory, and critical discourse analysis. The course also aims to focus on the performative aspects of narrative, dialogue, and texts, as well as on the development of receptive, productive, and interactive language skills.³²

3.1.1 Aims

The aims of Language A: language and literature are presented in the following table:

Table 7: Language A: language and literature aims³³

Number	Aims of IB DP Language A: language and literature SL and HL
1	Engage with a range of texts, in a variety of media and forms, from different periods, styles, and cultures.
2	Develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and performing.
3	Develop skills in interpretation, analysis and evaluation.
4	Develop sensitivity to the formal and aesthetic qualities of texts and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings.

²⁸ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p.7.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp.18-20.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p.6.

³¹ *Ibid.* p.7.

³² *Ibid.* p.27.

³³ *Ibid.* p.14.

Number	Aims of IB DP Language A: language and literature SL and HL
5	Develop an understanding of relationships between texts and a variety of perspectives, cultural contexts, and local and global issues and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings.
6	Develop an understanding of the relationships between studies in language and literature and other disciplines.
7	Communicate and collaborate in a confident and creative way.
8	Foster a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of language and literature.

3.1.2 Course content and intended learning outcomes

Course content

Course content is categorised and sorted into three broad syllabus components or areas of exploration. The three broad areas consist of Readers, writers and texts, Time and space and Intertextuality: connecting texts.³⁴ There are also seven central concepts which, although not independently assessed, help to provide structure to the teaching and learning of the subjects, continuity in relation to the three areas of exploration and are relevant to the study of both literary and non-literary texts. The seven concepts are as follows: identity, culture, creativity, communication, perspective, transformation, representation. These seven concepts are fundamental part of the syllabus and are intended to ‘provide sustained lines of inquiry that ran through the three areas of exploration’.³⁵

These three areas are prescribed and must be adhered to in the teaching of the Language A: language and literature subjects. Each area of exploration focuses on a different approach to the study of a text, includes guiding conceptual questions to demonstrate the content to be addressed and has discernible connections to the IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK).³⁶

Whilst it is suggested that each of the three areas receive 50 hours of teaching time at SL and 80 hours at HL, this is not prescriptive as the areas of exploration will likely overlap in the study of each text.³⁷ Therefore, teachers are free to engage with the areas of exploration in a flexible way, organising and structuring learning subjects in a way that best suits the needs of their students.

At least four literary works should be studied at SL and at least six studied at HL; there are certain requirements regarding the texts to be selected at each level.³⁸ More information regarding the texts to be selected for each level can be found in Appendix 2. In terms of non-literary texts, for both SL and HL, as wide a range of non-literary text types as possible must be selected, ensuring that any authors from the prescribed reading list are not included.³⁹

The time allocated to the study of non-literary texts and literary works should be equal, either within each area of exploration or in the course as a whole. However, there are no further stipulations as to the specific text types that must be studied in each of the three areas.

³⁴ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p.19.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.* pp.23-26.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p.18.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.20.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.22.

There are also no restrictions concerning the assessment components to be covered in each area of exploration, meaning that students have the freedom to select the works used for their assessment tasks with the exemption that they cannot use the same work in more than one assessment component.⁴⁰ More information on the course content of Language A: language and literature can be found in Appendix 1.

Learning outcomes

By following any one of the three studies in language and literature subjects, at either SL or HL, students are expected to use and develop a range of linguistic skills: receptive skills, productive skills, and interactive skills.⁴¹ Firstly, it is anticipated that receptive skills will be evidenced as students focus on textual detail, evaluating, interpreting, analysing, and comparing a range of texts. In addition, students will consider textual conventions and deduce meaning, including that which is beyond the literal. Secondly, students will have opportunities to develop productive skills in oral and written formats. Specifically, students will present and develop their ideas and opinions, construct and support complex arguments, whilst also demonstrating a range of other skills, including description, narration, persuasion, and evaluation. In addition to exploring existing texts, students will also be encouraged to engage in written and performative activities to transform and re-create existing works.⁴² Finally, students are also expected to develop interactive skills in oral and written formats.

In the context of speaking, students should demonstrate the ability to use and adjust language, tone of voice, body language and gesture, appropriate to the audience, purpose, and the opinions of others. Regarding written contexts, students will be able to maintain written conversation, engaging with texts and using different registers and platforms. As in all IB programmes, conceptual understanding is a key learning outcome of all DP language programme subject groups; the development of linguistic skills and conceptual understanding of language are considered complimentary.⁴³ More information about the learning outcomes of Language A: language and literature can be found in Appendix 1.

3.1.3 Assessment objectives, methods and marking

Assessment objectives are statements that refer to the knowledge, skills, and competences that individuals are expected to be able to demonstrate when they are assessed for a course. The assessment objectives of the Language A: language and literature course are the same for both HL and SL. The assessment objectives of Language A: language and literature are presented in the following table:

Table 8: Language A: language and literature assessment objectives⁴⁴

Number	Assessment Objectives of IB DP Language A: language and literature SL and HL	Paper that assesses this Assessment Objective
1	Know, understand and interpret: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of texts, works and/or performances, and their meanings and implications 	Paper 1 – writing Paper 2 – writing Internal Assessment

⁴⁰ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. pp. 19-26.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.27.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 28.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 16-17.

Number	Assessment Objectives of IB DP Language A: language and literature SL and HL	Paper that assesses this Assessment Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contexts in which texts are written and/or received • elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft • features of particular text types and literary forms. 	HL essay
2	Analyse and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ways in which the use of language creates meaning • uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques • relationships among different texts • ways in which texts may offer perspectives on human concerns. 	Paper 1 – writing Paper 2 – writing Internal Assessment HL essay
3	Communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways • in a range of styles, registers and for a variety of purposes and situations • (for literature and performance only) ideas, emotion, character and atmosphere through performance. 	Paper 1 – writing Paper 2 – writing Internal Assessment HL essay

Ecctis reviewed the assessment methods used in the Language A: language and literature subject for both HL and SL. The objective of the review of the assessment methods is to identify whether the methods of assessment provide an adequate evaluation of the key skills that the course aims to assess. Assessment in the Language A: language and literature consists of both external and internal assessment. External assessment focuses on assessing a written guided textual analysis of previously unseen non-literary passage(s) and a written comparative essay of two literary works studied in the course. Internal assessment is comprised of an individual oral examination, assessing the analysis of a global issue of the student's choice in both a non-literary body of work and a literary work.⁴⁵

External Assessment

In both Language A: language and literature SL and HL, external assessment consists of Paper 1 which assesses students' non-literary textual analysis and Paper 2 which assesses students' comparative analysis of two literary works. Students sitting the HL examination are required to submit an additional essay, as coursework, which contributes to the body of external assessment.

The aim of Paper 1 is to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of text types, their ability to interpret a text and draw conclusions about the content. In addition, Paper 1 aims to gauge students' ability to analyse and evaluate the choices of the writer and the subsequent impact on the meaning of the passage. Furthermore, Paper 1 also allows students' to be assessed on their ability to use the conventions of a formal essay, including appropriately selected language and a well-organised response.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 34.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 16-17.

In both SL and HL, Paper 1 constitutes 35% of the external assessment, yet at SL Paper 1 carries a maximum mark of 20, whereas at HL Paper 1 carries a maximum mark of 40. The duration of Paper 1 at SL and HL, also differs; in SL the duration is one hour and 15 minutes, whereas in HL the duration of Paper 1 is two hours and 15 minutes. Another difference between Paper 1 at SL and HL is the requirements of the task; at SL, students are required to select one of two non-literary passages to analyse, whereas HL students must analyse both of the two passages provided.⁴⁷

There are four assessment criteria for Paper 1 which are common for both SL and HL. These include Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus and organisation and Criterion D: Language.⁴⁸ More information about the assessment criteria of Paper 1 can be found in Appendix 1.

Paper 2, at both SL and HL, focuses on the students' ability to analyse literary texts. Specifically, students must demonstrate their understanding of each text and their skills of interpretation. At the same time, students are required to present the similarities and differences between the two extracts, in relation to a specific focus. In addition, Paper 2 evaluates the students' ability to successfully structure a coherent essay, which provides a balanced comparison of the two extracts, considering the specific examination question.⁴⁹

In both SL and HL, Paper 2 is assigned a total of 30 marks and has a duration of one hour 45 minutes. On the contrary, the weighting of the examination differs between SL and HL; at SL Paper 2 contributes 35% to the total for external assessment, whereas at HL Paper 2 contributes only 25% towards external assessment.⁵⁰

There are four assessment criteria for Paper 2 which are common for both SL and HL. These include Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus and organisation and Criterion D: Language.⁵¹ More information about the assessment criteria of Paper 2 can be found in Appendix 1.

Higher Level Essay

The Higher Level Essay is a fourth assessment component, which is unique to the HL external assessment. The essay comprises a written coursework task of approximately 1,200 to 1,500 words. Depending on the nature of the body of work selected, the objective of the Higher Level Essay is to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the nature of linguistic or literary study. Students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the work selected, in the context of their line of inquiry. Over an extended period, students explore a line of inquiry of their choice, in relation to a non-literary body of work or a literary work that they have studied in class; both choices must be stated at the beginning of the essay.⁵²

⁴⁷ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. pp. 34-35.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 37.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 16-17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 34-35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 39.

⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 16-17.

When selecting the text, students cannot use the same texts used in the internal assessment or the texts that they plan to discuss in Paper 2. In the case of short literary texts, such as short stories or poems, the student should refer to more than one work by the same author, where only one needs to have been studied in class; the same applies to the selection of non-literary texts. Although not mandatory, the student may wish to refer to the seven course concepts to help them develop their line of inquiry. The task is assigned 20 marks and contributes 20% to the overall external assessment mark. More information on the assessment of the Higher Level Essay can be found in Appendix 1.

Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is compulsory for both SL and HL students studying Language A: language and literature subjects and is in the form of an individual oral examination. The aim of internal assessment in Language A: language and literature, for both SL and HL, is to assess students' ability to respond to a prompt, by presenting and discussing the representation of a global issue in one literary work and one non-literary body of work; the global issue and works are to be selected by the student. At both levels, 40 marks are allocated to the oral assessment. However, at SL, the oral assessment constitutes 30% to the final assessment of the SL course, whereas at HL, the oral assessment only constitutes 20%.⁵³

The individual oral can take place at any time in the course, as long as a significant number of texts have been studied in class; the recommendation states that the last part of the first year, or first part of the second, may be most appropriate. The duration of both the SL and HL oral assessment is 15 minutes; students must deliver a prepared oral response of 10 minutes, with a subsequent 5 minutes of further questioning from the examiner. When selecting the non-literary body of work and the literary work, any text studied up until the time of the exam can be selected, but subsequently cannot be used in any other assessments. Students must select an extract of no more than 40 consecutive words, in which they feel that the global issue is particularly present.

The objective of the individual oral is for the student to present a well-supported argument, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the works and about the ways in which the extracts represent and explore the global issue chosen. There are four identical assessment criteria for the SL and HL oral assessment. These assessment criteria include Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus and organisation and Criterion D: Language.⁵⁴ More information on the assessment criteria of the oral assessment can be found in Appendix 1.

3.1.4 Grading and grade boundaries

Language A is graded on a 1-7 scale (with 1 representing the lowest achievement and 7 the highest). Both SL and HL are graded on the same scale. The grade descriptors of Language A are the same for both SL and HL. A single output grade for the subject is provided upon

⁵³ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. pp. 34-35.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 59.

successful completion, though individual assessment papers are also graded on the 1-7 scale in order to ascertain the final weighted result.

Each grade for Language A has an overarching descriptor attached to it and the IB sets its grade boundaries differently for different assessment components and different subjects. For instance, exam papers boundaries are reviewed and adjusted as necessary in each examination session, whereas Internal Assessment and Higher Level Essays boundaries are fixed and consistent across different sessions. Grade boundary information was shared with Ecctis for the purposes of mapping CEFR levels to grade thresholds.

3.2 Summary Analysis – Language A: language and literature (SL & HL)

Box 1: Key findings on Language A: language and literature (SL and HL) across all languages reviewed in the project

Key findings Language A: language and literature (SL and HL) across English, French, German, and Spanish

- Regarding the **Paper 1 Guided textual analysis**, Ecctis found that the **HL paper** is likely to report on **C2 level** of language proficiency overall in the highest mark bands, whereas the **SL paper** (where only one of the two texts is chosen) may not always report **C2 level** reading proficiency. This is because students may select to analyse only the input text that does not require **C2 level** reading comprehension.
- In relation to **Paper 2 Comparative Essay**, Ecctis found that the score required for a student to achieve grade 4 on Paper 2, was found to be broadly comparable to the level of proficiency expected at **CEFR B2 level for both SL and HL**. Additionally, Ecctis found that the score required for a student to achieve **grade 6** broadly aligns to **CEFR C1 level for both SL and HL** and the **grade 7** may broadly relate to **CEFR C2 level for both SL and HL**.
- In relation to the **Higher Level Essay**, Ecctis found that the score required for a student to achieve the **grades 4 and 5** align to the level observed to reflect an overall **CEFR B2 level of proficiency**. Additionally, the analysis indicated that the score required for a student to achieve a **grade 6** aligns to an overall **CEFR C1 level of proficiency** and the score required to achieve a **grade 7** aligns to an overall **CEFR C2 level of proficiency**.
- Regarding the **individual oral**, the review and comparative analysis found that it may provide assessment for spoken production **up to CEFR C1 level for both SL and HL**. The length of the presentation and the fact that only one work and one body of work are selected limits the assessment of literary criticism and evaluation to C1 level, as C2 level generally also requires analysis and appreciation of a broader range of texts and may require more than the allotted time to demonstrate. Furthermore, speaking *interaction* is not explicit within the descriptors, limiting the degree to which the IB assessment can assess speaking proficiency in full.

3.2.1 Language A: Language and Literature External Components

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Analysis and Findings

In the Language and Literature Paper 1, Guided Textual Analysis, students are expected to analyse a wide range of literary and non-literary texts in a variety of media. There is a focus on interpreting communicative acts across literary form and textual type as well as investigating the nature of language itself and the ways in which it shapes and is influenced by identity and culture. The assessment also draws upon the student's knowledge of literary theory, sociolinguistics, media studies and critical discourse analysis and their application of this knowledge to the interpretation and analysis of specific texts.⁵⁵

Language and Literature Paper 1, Guided Textual Analysis, at HL is 2 hours and 15 minutes in duration and contains two texts and two tasks, each of which is worth 20 marks. Therefore, the total number of marks for the paper is 40.⁵⁶ At SL, the duration of the paper is 1 hour and 15 minutes. Paper 1 sets two texts and tasks each worth 20 marks and asks students to choose one, the total number of marks for the paper is 20 marks. Paper 1 is weighted at 35% of the final mark at both HL and SL.⁵⁷ The texts set, and the tasks, are the same for both SL and HL papers, with the main difference being that students are required to select one of the two tasks at SL whilst at HL they are expected to complete both tasks.

Ecctis reviewed past papers in order to understand what components of the assessment relate to the testing of language proficiency (as opposed to other skills which fall outside of the remit of this CEFR-based analysis). Ecctis also ascertained what level of language proficiency was required in order to meaningfully access the assessment and what levels of proficiency could be substantively reported by the assessment items and marking scheme.

As the input texts can vary significantly in this assessment (in terms of form, length, complexity, and many other factors), the most significant feature of the assessment specification to analyse from a language proficiency perspective was judged to be the marking criteria. These describe the specific skills rewarded with marks and therefore enable the assessed language proficiency levels to be identified.

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Marking Criteria

The marking criteria for paper 1 are identical at HL and SL.⁵⁸

The marks for the guided textual analysis are allocated across four assessment criteria, each of which are worth five marks.

- Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation (5 marks)
- Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation (5 marks)
- Criterion C: Focus and organisation (5 marks)
- Criterion D: Language (5 marks).

⁵⁵ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 37-39; pp. 46-48.

Criterion A: Understanding and Interpretation is intended to encompass assessment of how well the student demonstrates an understanding of the text, how well they can draw reasoned conclusions about it, and whether those conclusions are well supported by references to the text. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states ‘The response demonstrates a thorough and perceptive understanding of the literal meaning of the text. There is a convincing and insightful interpretation of larger implications and subtleties of the text. References to the text are well-chosen and effectively support the student’s ideas.’⁵⁹

It is evident from this descriptor that some aspects of the criterion are not directly linked to language proficiency only. For example, the ability to be convincing in one’s interpretation requires a series of analytical and synthesis-related skills that encompass linguistic competences that are not encapsulated by a proficiency-related framework such as the CEFR. However, there are also multiple language proficiency activities, strategies, and competences embedded within this criterion.

Most notably, this criterion rewards CEFR reading-related skills such as Overall reading comprehension, Reading for orientation, Reading for information and argument, Reading as a leisure activity and Identifying cues and inferring. There are also mediation skills included within the descriptor. For example, Overall mediation and Mediating a text. Finally, there are also written skills such as Overall written production, and potentially Creative writing, that are rewarded by this criterion’s descriptors.

A score of 3/5 for Criterion A most closely relates to CEFR B2 level of Reading comprehension (Reading for information and argument) in that the student can demonstrate an understanding of the literal meaning of the text and there is a satisfactory interpretation of some implications of the text.⁶⁰ This level of reading comprehension corresponds broadly with the CEFR B2 descriptor, which expects individuals to read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes and understand articles concerned with contemporary problems.⁶¹ Depending on the exact input text, the precise proficiency level rewarded by a score of 3/5 could vary. For example, students would need to demonstrate some understanding of the key points and themes inherent in a text, which in some cases more than others may require understanding of figurative language and low frequency idioms.

A score of 4/5 broadly aligns with what may be expected at a C1 level of proficiency in demonstrating a full literal understanding of the text as well as understanding many implications.⁶²

A score of 5/5 reflects an understanding of the subtleties inherent within the text, which could indicate a C2 level of proficiency reflected by the descriptor ‘Can understand the finer points and implications of a complex report or article’, although it should be noted that not all texts

⁵⁹ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 38.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 38.

⁶¹ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁶² Ibid. p. 56.

within paper 1 are particularly long and some may not require the full level of understanding of specialised vocabulary and structures expected across different types of text at C2.⁶³

A score of 2/5 could provide evidence of a B1 level of proficiency as the response demonstrates some understanding of the literal meaning of the text, although the level of the text itself, in some cases, may require C1 level of proficiency to understand in its entirety. The 2/5 level of response compares well with the CEFR B1 descriptor 'Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail' regarding the student's understanding of the narrative at this level.⁶⁴

Scores below a 2 are not possible to link with CEFR levels of proficiency in reading comprehension, given the possibility for having significantly misunderstood the text to score a 1/5 and the negative terms in which the descriptor is written.

Criterion B: Analysis and Evaluation is specifically intended to assess the extent to which a student is able to analyse and evaluate textual features and authorial choices, with reference to how these influence meaning at higher mark levels. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'The response demonstrates an insightful and convincing analysis of textual features and/or authorial choices. There is a very good evaluation of how such features and/or choices shape meaning.'⁶⁵

As with Criterion A, there are some skills invoked here which are not strictly and only tied to language proficiency. For example, the insightfulness of an analysis and the quality of evaluation in relation to the shaping of meaning are typically not encapsulated within the CEFR's proficiency-based descriptors. However, there are also several proficiency-related activities, strategies, and competences included within the descriptors of Criterion B. These include Overall reading comprehension, Reading for information and argument, Identifying cues and inferring, Overall written production, Creative writing, Expressing a personal response to creative texts, Analysis and criticism of creative texts, Linking to previous knowledge, and Amplifying a dense text. Overall, the CEFR descriptors for Analysis and criticism of creative texts are most applicable.⁶⁶

A score of 2/5 may be sufficient to demonstrate analysis at B2 level, given that at this level there is some appropriate analysis of textual features and/or authorial choices, which implies understanding of different structures in a creative text as highlighted at CEFR B2.⁶⁷

A score of 3/5 may more closely reflect C1 level in terms of analysis, given that the student needs to demonstrate a satisfactory analysis of authorial choices as this involves identifying and exploring finer points of detail within a complex text.

⁶³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 56.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 57.

⁶⁵ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 38.

⁶⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 107.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 108.

A score of 4/5 may be sufficient to demonstrate a C2 level in reading for argument and persuasion, as at this level an insightful response with appreciation of implicit meaning is expected.

As with Criterion A, marks of 0 or 1 cannot be concretely linked to language proficiency levels due to their negatively worded construction.

Criterion C: Focus and Organization is specifically intended to assess how well organised, coherent and focused the ideas are within a student's response. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'The presentation of ideas is effectively organized and coherent. The response is well focused.'⁶⁸

Writing-related CEFR activities, strategies, and competences are the most relevant to this descriptor. For example, the marking descriptors can be linked to Overall written production, Creative writing, Reports and essays, and Planning. There are also implicit links to the quality of reading comprehension which enables a coherent written response and to the scales which describe responses to literature.

At CEFR B2, individuals 'Can use a number of cohesive devices to link his/her sentences into clear, coherent text, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a longer text', and this level of structural control is also reflected by a score of 3/5 in the Criterion C descriptors 'The presentation of ideas is adequately organized in a generally coherent manner. There is some focus in the response.'⁶⁹

A score of 4/5 is indicative of CEFR C1 level descriptor, as the mark scheme states 'The presentation of ideas is well organized and mostly coherent. The response is adequately focused.'⁷⁰

At CEFR B1 level, individuals can structure shorter, discrete items of text, whilst longer texts may be disjointed, reflecting the 2/5 descriptor in regard to Criterion C, which indicates some level of organisation albeit with a lack of focus in the presentation of ideas.

Criterion D: Language is specifically intended to assess the clarity, variety, and accuracy of language, as well as the appropriacy of chosen register and style in the response. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'Language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are effective and appropriate to the task.'⁷¹

Criterion D relates most directly to writing proficiency CEFR descriptors. For example, Overall written production, Creative writing, Reports and essays, and Planning. There is also clear alignment with some components of Sociolinguistic appropriateness competence and

⁶⁸ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 39.

⁶⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 171.; International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 39.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

other competences such as General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, and Vocabulary control.

In comparison with CEFR writing descriptors, the IB descriptors refer to similar skills, covering aspects of clarity, accuracy in spelling and grammar, range, and complexity of vocabulary as well as tone, structure, register and style.

A score of 2/5 demonstrates linkages with B2 level of ability overall. The IB descriptor 'Language is sometimes clear and carefully chosen; grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction are fairly accurate, although errors and inconsistencies are apparent; the register and style are to some extent appropriate to the task' in the most part meets with expectations at a CEFR B2 level of writing proficiency in terms of accuracy, which states 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstandings.'⁷²

A score of 3/5 reflects a level of accuracy despite some minor lapses which also relates to CEFR C1 level descriptor for accuracy in writing 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; occasional errors in grammar, collocations and idioms.'⁷³

As with other criteria analysed above, a score below 2 cannot be accurately linked with a CEFR level of proficiency, given that the descriptors at this level are largely negatively written and do not compare well with the positive framing of the CEFR descriptors at A1, A2 and B1 levels.

The table below provides an overarching summary of the comparisons between the marks for the different paper 1 criteria and CEFR levels of language proficiency. In some cases, the precise threshold levels cannot be identified to the level of one mark because the complexity of the input text would impact the required proficiency level to demonstrate key features of the IB criterion descriptor.

Table 9: Overarching summary of comparison of paper 1 marking criteria to CEFR levels

Marking criteria	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	2	2/3	3/4	5
Criterion B	N/A	1	2	3	4
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
<i>Total out of 20 marks</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>9/10</i>	<i>13/14</i>	<i>18</i>

As the input text also has some impact on the level of proficiency assessed in paper 1, the section below analyses these input texts.

⁷² International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 39.; Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 132.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 187.

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Input Text Analysis

In relation to the input texts, HL and SL students are presented with the same two texts in paper 1. The difference between the two levels is that HL students are required to respond to both texts (separately) whereas SL students can select one from the two texts.

The texts are previously unseen, non-literary texts. As such, they are different in each assessment cycle and different for each language. Therefore, an example past paper for each language is analysed below.

English A

For the purposes of this analysis, the M21 Paper was selected as the basis for comparison.

Text 1

The first text from the analysed paper is an article taken from a newspaper on BuzzFeed News website, an international news organization for readers looking for something original. The student is informed that the article is featured in the 'Reader' section, which focuses on culture and criticism. The text itself deals with themes that include identity, intersectionality, change, and growing up.

Students are expected to answer the question 'How is the narrative structure used to explore ideas about identity?'. Students are permitted to create an alternative line of inquiry if they should wish, but this does not change the marking criteria, so this question is indicative of how students will engage with the text.

The text itself contains many vocabulary items and grammatical features that typically require a CEFR C1 level of proficiency in reading comprehension. For example, shifts in verb tense, reported speech, and use of figurative language such as irony and metaphor are evident and expected to be understood and analysed in response to the task. Structurally, the text is chronological and comprises short paragraphs, potentially allowing those with lower levels of reading comprehension ability (at B1 / B2 level) to access the text at some level. Nevertheless, the ability to understand the more nuanced aspects of the text including the use of irony and metaphor links explicitly with the C2 level descriptor for reading comprehension.

It should be noted that the question itself is fairly broadly defined, so could be considered to be pitched at B2 level of reading comprehension ability. The requirement to explore different narrative devices and how these explore key themes within a complex text specifically reflects key competences at B2 and C1 level descriptors, whereas, at B1 level, the texts and the required tasks and information required are expected to be more structured and signalled. In terms of the written response required by the question, this again is pitched at least at B2 level, which expects individuals to be able to 'write an essay or report that develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail'.

In summary, comparisons can only be drawn in relation to CEFR B1-C2 levels overall. The input text contains language and themes which are complex and as such may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-A2 levels of proficiency.

Overall, the nature of this input text would not be likely to meaningfully alter the relationship between the criterion marks and CEFR levels established by the criterion analysis above.

Text 2

The input text is an extract from a comic, showing a series of cartoons with accompanying text. The word count is 100-200 words, so the text is considerably shorter than that set for Task 1. Nevertheless, the language used contains quoted speech and colloquialisms as well as figurative language and abstract themes, for example 'thought tube' and 'uploading consciousness', which require a high level of reading comprehension ability at C1 level. Themes are complex and abstract and include technophilia and technophobia, methods and degrees of communication and connection, and the impact of technology on society.

The task itself involves analysing the connection between the text and the images and exploring the ways in which both are used to convey the author's message. This involves understanding and interpreting figurative language and visual representations. The text is very short compared with the first input text, so, although there are demands placed on understanding figurative language in line with C1 level of English proficiency, the level of textual analysis and abilities to scan and interpret longer texts is not assessed in this part of the paper.

Given that the criteria used for assessing the task for Text 2 are the same as the ones used for Text 1, the findings are very similar in terms of overall comparability of scores to CEFR. However, there is arguably more emphasis on writing ability in this section of the paper, given that the amount of text required to be understood and analysed is relatively short and that visual images are also expected to be evaluated in conjunction with the text.

Overall, this input text could have the potential to slightly impact the relationship between the criterion marks and CEFR levels established by the criterion analysis above. Regarding Criterion A, as the text required to be understood is not particularly complex (structurally) or lengthy nor does it include stylistic variations or nuances, it may not provide as much scope for assessing CEFR C2 level in reading comprehension as Text 1. Additionally, 5/5 marks for Criterion A may therefore report C1 level rather than C2 level proficiency in responses to this specific item.

French A

For the purposes of this analysis, the M21 Paper was selected as the basis for comparison.

Text 1

The first text from the analysed paper is an advertisement. The student is informed that the advertisement was published in 1980, in a number of widely circulated French magazines. The advertisement is comprised of an image, with a slogan, and an accompanying text explaining a product for sale. Both elements of the advertisement deal with themes that include food and drink, intangible heritage, and technological innovation.

Students are expected to analyse the symbols, style and vocabulary found within the advertisement images and the accompanying texts. In particular, they are required to

comment upon how these elements aim to convince the target audience to purchase the featured product.

The text itself contains many vocabulary items and grammatical features that typically require CEFR levels ranging from B1 to C1 levels. For example, there are instances of more nuanced, figurative, and metaphorical language, with technical vocabulary reaching C1 level. Nevertheless, a B1 level of vocabulary proficiency would be sufficient for understanding the general gist of the advertisement; students are required to comment on the style of the images and text, as opposed to a purely in-depth linguistic analysis. Structurally, the main body of text is short in length, at only 119 words, and comprises short paragraphs, potentially allowing those with lower levels of reading comprehension ability (at B1/ B2 level) to access the text at some level. In terms of Overall reading comprehension, a student would need a B2 level of proficiency for a sufficient level of general understanding and a sufficiently broad active reading vocabulary; the text does not require the understanding of vocabulary linked to literary writings or specialised academic publications mentioned in certain C1 level descriptors.

It should be noted that the question itself is quite broad in scope, so could be considered to be pitched at B2 level of reading comprehension ability. The requirement to explore how different aspects of the text relate to a target audience, and how they echo the overall purpose of the text, specifically reflects key competences of B2 level descriptors, whereas, at B1 level, the texts and the required tasks are expected to be more straightforward and factual. In terms of the written response required by the question, this again is pitched at least at B2 level, which expects individuals to be able to 'produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail'.

In summary, comparisons can only be drawn in relation to CEFR B1-C1 levels overall. The input text contains language and demands analysis which are complex and as such may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-A2 levels of proficiency.

Text 2

The input text is an extract from *Dictionnaire amoureux du Québec* by Denise Bombardier, in which the author details their experiences in Quebec and the history of the region. The total word count is 417 words, so the text is considerably longer than that set for Text 1. The language used contains a wide range of vocabulary, such as synonyms of words less commonly encountered and a requirement to deduce connotative meaning from idiomatic expressions and figurative language. For example, the expressions '*séduit au premier coup d'oeil*' and '*pincement au coeur*' are used, the comprehension of which requires a high level of reading comprehension ability and vocabulary range at CEFR C1 and C2 levels. Themes are moderately complex and include the history of Quebec, tangible heritage, architecture, travel, past experiences, language, immigration, and migration.

The task itself involves analysing the similarities and differences between the input text and the conventional format of a dictionary made up of proper nouns. This involves an understanding and textual analysis of two different text types and figurative language, as well as scanning and interpreting a longer text. The demands of this task, position it at a C1 level of language proficiency. As well as being a lengthy text, the input text is also literary in

nature and complex due to the range of grammatical complexity used, which also positions the task at C1 level for reading comprehension ability. In addition, it is necessary for the individual to consider subtle distinctions of style and implicit meaning, which reflect the demands of CEFR C1 level, at least. As such, students with B2+ level alone, would struggle to access the content of the text, as a 'broad active reading vocabulary' and the mere locating of 'relevant details' is not sufficient to conduct the level of analysis required.

In summary, comparisons can only be drawn in relation to CEFR C1-C2 levels overall. The input text contains language and grammatical structures which are complex and as such they may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-B2 levels of proficiency.

Spanish A

For the purposes of this analysis, the M21 Paper was selected as the basis for comparison.

Text 1

The first text from the analysed paper is an article written by a journalist, published in a Spanish language edition of *The New York Times*. The article includes an image of the subject, which helps to contextualise the content. In addition, there is also a glossary of three terms from the text, with definitions provided to support reader comprehension. The themes covered in the article comprise Mexican culture, festivals and celebrations, and cultural appropriation.

Students are expected to analyse the presentation of the theme of cultural appropriation in the text. In particular, students are required to write about the way in which the reader of the article is informed of the theme.

The text itself contains many vocabulary items and grammatical structures that typically require CEFR levels of reading comprehension proficiency ranging from B2 to C2 levels. Within the text, there are frequent descriptions and cultural information of a factual nature; those with lower levels of reading comprehension ability, such as CEFR B2 level, are likely to find this material accessible. In addition, there are examples of synonyms for less commonly encountered language and a need to decipher connotative meanings in the opinions shared; these features would require CEFR C1 and C2 levels of proficiency, respectively.

The task question is very specific, requiring interpretation and recognition of tone and author objective. There are elements of B2, C1 and C2 CEFR levels of overall reading comprehension ability in the demands of this task. Students would need a broad active reading vocabulary to access the majority of input text content, as at B2 level. Furthermore, the requirement to explore attitudes in a lengthy text and a newspaper text type, with complex grammatical structures and low frequency lexis, requires a CEFR C1 level of reading comprehension proficiency to ensure adequate understanding. The ability to understand the more nuanced aspects of the text, including the need to make subtle distinctions of style and negotiate implicit opinions, links explicitly with the C2 level descriptor for reading comprehension.

In summary, comparisons can only be drawn in relation to CEFR B2-C2 levels overall. The input text contains language and themes which are complex and as such may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-B1 levels of proficiency.

Text 2

The input text is an extract from a comic, showing an image with a series of text-filled speech bubbles. The word count is 55 words, so the text is considerably shorter than that set for Text 1. The language used contains a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, such as the present simple and conditional tenses and a few examples of low frequency lexis. For example, the expressions '*hijo mío*' and '*tus anhelos*' present a subsequent need for a broad active reading vocabulary, which requires a level of reading comprehension ability at B2 level; in turn, this would enable a good general understanding of meaning. Themes in the comic are fairly simple and include family, communication, and technology.

The task itself involves analysing how the theme of generational differences is presented between the characters in the cartoon, analysing the connection between the text and the image, and exploring the ways in which both are used to convey the author's message. Although short, the input text is literary in nature which adds a degree of complexity. Within the text, there is even the use of verb conjugations specific to Argentinian Spanish, which present elements of CEFR C1 level reading comprehension proficiency. This is particularly relevant, as the dialectical verb conjugations appear in the final part of the text, which happens to be the text conveying the moral behind the cartoon. It is worth noting that, although these linguistic forms add complexity to the text, it is not essential to have an in-depth understanding of all content to access the gist. The text is very short compared with the first input text, so, although there are demands placed on understanding complex structures in line with C1 level of language proficiency, the level of textual analysis and abilities to scan and interpret longer texts is not assessed in this part of the paper.

Given that the criteria used for assessing the task for Text 2 is the same as that used for Text 1 the findings are very similar in terms of overall comparability of scores to CEFR. However, there is arguably more emphasis on writing ability in this section of the paper, given that the amount of text required to be understood and analysed is relatively short and that visual images are also expected to be evaluated in conjunction with the text.

In summary, comparisons can only be drawn in relation to CEFR B2-C1 levels overall. The input text contains some language and grammatical structures which are complex and as such may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-B1 levels of proficiency.

German A

For the purposes of this analysis, the M21 Paper was selected as the basis for comparison.

Text 1

The first text from the analysed paper is a magazine column called '*Der Mann und das Holz*'. It was written by Thomas Bernhard Braun and published in a country life magazine called *Landlust*. The text deals with themes such as living in the country, staying fit, interacting with neighbours, and modern life.

Students are expected to analyse how humour is used in the text and illustrations to characterise the author, and to explain what effect this might have on the reader.

The text itself contains many vocabulary items and grammatical features that require a C1 level of proficiency to be fully understood. Although the sentence length is often short, and easily comprehensible features such as ellipsis help to guide the reader towards ironic statements, the appreciation of humour would require a detailed understanding of specific vocabulary and the overall gist throughout.

A student with B2 level proficiency would be likely to be able to access the majority of the meaning, particularly as repetition is a key element of the humour (meaning that words and idioms can be followed across the text multiple times to appreciate the meaning). However, the question could not be answered particularly successfully without a full appreciation of the humorous and idiomatic elements – potentially requiring C1 level comprehension in places. Some elements of vocabulary may require C2 level comprehension to fully appreciate (*'die heimelige Flamme'*). A B1 level student would likely be able to understand the broad meaning, though would struggle to access the idiom-based humour.

In summary, comparisons can be drawn in relation to CEFR B1-C2 level overall, with best access to overall meaning being at B2 level and above. The understanding of humour and subtlety in the text, which is key to being able to answer the question, would make the task inaccessible to students with A1-A2 levels of proficiency.

Overall, the nature of this input text would not be likely to meaningfully alter the relationship between the criterion marks and CEFR levels established by the criterion analysis above.

Text 2

The input text is an advertising poster that was used on billboards and in magazines in Germany. The tag line reads *'Sag es mit deinem Projekt'* and features a woman holding a drill and standing triumphantly over a crib that she has made herself. Apart from the tag line and the branding of the company in question, there is almost no text accompanying the image.

The question asks students to explain how the slogan and the image tell an implicit story that will appeal to a target audience.

Students at B1 level and above would be able to easily access the meaning of the text and understand how this interacts with the image. There are no C2-level components in relation to vocabulary, grammar, or any other reading comprehension feature. Perhaps the most challenging piece of vocabulary comes in the contextual introduction to the text: the word *'Auftraggeber'*, meaning client. However, even if a student is unable to interpret this word, the wider context would still be accessible.

The text is very short compared with the first input text, so, although there are demands placed on understanding implied meaning – which could enable students at C1 level to demonstrate their aptitude – the level of textual analysis and abilities to scan and interpret longer texts is not assessed in this part of the paper.

Overall, this input text could have the potential to slightly impact the relationship between the criterion marks and CEFR levels established by the criterion analysis above. In regard to Criterion A, as the text required to be understood is not particularly complex (structurally) or lengthy nor does it include stylistic variations or nuances, it may not provide as much scope for assessing CEFR C2 level in reading comprehension as Text 1.

Overall Findings on Paper 1

As seen from the input text examples analysed above, it is often the case that one input text, of the two available in paper 1, is more likely than the other to be able to report C2 level proficiency, due primarily to additional length and textual complexity requiring C2 level reading proficiency to process and understand the full nuance. Therefore, Ecctis has found that the HL paper is likely to report on C2 level of language proficiency overall in the highest mark bands, whereas the SL paper (where only one of the two texts is chosen) may not always report C2 level reading proficiency. This is because students may elect to analyse only the input text that does not require C2 level reading comprehension. Based on this, the final alignment between grades and CEFR levels in this paper are slightly different at SL and HL, despite the same marking criteria being applicable to both.

Grade boundaries for HL Paper 1 indicate (based on the previous grade boundaries in which the paper was marked out of 20) that 17-18 marks is generally required to be graded a 7 overall for that component. This equates broadly with the level of proficiency generally found to be indicative of a CEFR C2 level of proficiency in reading and writing. A score of 14 is the average threshold for obtaining an overall score of 6, whereas scores of 11/12 are normally expected to be graded a 5. The C1 level of proficiency (on the tasks found to reflect a score of 13-14), may range from between the top end of a 5 and a 6 on the HL paper. Scoring 8 marks is typically required to be graded a 4 overall on this component, which is similar to the number of marks found to broadly reflect a CEFR B2 level of language proficiency on the HL paper (9/20). Scoring 5-6 marks is the average threshold to obtain a 3, a level of performance on the paper found to relate to CEFR B1 level. Scores below this level may be obtained by students performing below the level of the test.

Considering the SL papers and past grading results, a score of 14/15 is required to be graded a 6, which was also found to be reflective of CEFR C1 overall. The score required to obtain a 4 on the SL paper is 9, which relates broadly to CEFR B2 level, whilst a score of 12 is required to be graded a 5 – there is some overlap as a score of 5 overlaps between the total number of marks indicative of a B2 level and that reflective of CEFR C1 level capability on the HL paper. It is not possible to confirm comparability to CEFR C2 level for the SL Paper, given that the student only has to select one input text which may not assess the full range of reading comprehension skills required at CEFR C2 level.

Based on this, the overall relationship between paper 1 grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 10: Overall relationship between paper 1 grades and CEFR levels

	Language and Literature Paper 1 Grades: HL	Language and Literature Paper 1 Grades: SL
CEFR C2	7	Not reported
CEFR C1	Upper end of a 5 / 6	6
CEFR B2	4 / lower end of a 5	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3	3
CEFR A1-A2	Not reported	Not reported

Paper 2: Comparative Essay: Analysis and Findings

The task for Paper 2 is an extended, comparative essay to be written in response to the student's selection of one from a choice of four questions, the paper is 1 hour and 45 minutes in duration. Both SL and HL students are set the same paper and marked according to the same mark scheme. The questions invite students to comparatively analyse two works of literature they have studied, by engaging in an in-depth discussion relating to one or more identified themes. The paper is weighted at 35% of the final grade for SL, and 25% of the final grade for HL.⁷⁴

CEFR analysis findings

It should be noted that the requirements of the paper to read up to six literary texts (four for SL), in full, from a set list of authors, may require at least a CEFR B2 level to understand and appreciate the narrative, characters, and aesthetic features of language involved in these texts. This is reflected by the CEFR descriptors for Reading as a leisure activity which specifies CEFR B2 level as the level at which a student 'can read for pleasure with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts (e.g. magazines, more straightforward novels, history books, biographies, travelogues, guides, lyrics, poems), using appropriate reference sources selectively'.⁷⁵ Whilst newspapers, articles and short texts or novels can be read and understood at CEFR B1 level, the ability to read and understand literary novels in full would not necessarily be expected at this level of proficiency. To fully understand every idiom and the significance of every piece of figurative language may even require C2 level proficiency, though this differentiation is discussed further in relation to the assessment criteria below.

The task itself involves an analytical comparison between two texts. The ability to effectively engage in a discussion, where multiple viewpoints and comparisons are expressed, may be associated with at least a CEFR B2 level of proficiency, although a more descriptive account highlighting a basic understanding of a plot and characters may be achievable at CEFR B1 level.

Paper 2: Comparative Essay: Marking Criteria

Regarding the assessment criteria, out of a total of 30 marks, students are assessed on their response to the task according to four criteria as follows:⁷⁶

- Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation (10 marks)
- Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation (10 marks)
- Criterion C: Focus and organisation (5 marks)

⁷⁴ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. pp. 34-35.

⁷⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 59.

⁷⁶ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 39.

- Criterion D: Language (5 marks).

Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation is intended to encompass assessment of how much knowledge and understanding the student shows of the works and the extent to which students use that understanding to draw out similarities and differences in relation to the question. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (9-10/10) which states ‘There is perceptive knowledge and understanding of the works and a persuasive interpretation of their implications in relation to the question answered. The essay offers an insightful interpretation of the similarities and differences between the works used in relation to the question.’⁷⁷

Comparisons can be made between Criterion A and CEFR reading comprehension descriptors. These include descriptors for Reading as a leisure activity, Expressing a personal response to creative texts as well as Analysis and criticism of creative texts. Overall written production, and other writing-based activities, strategies, and competences will also have relevance for a marker judging the extent to which interpretations are phrased persuasively and ordered so as to make them insightful.

A score of 3/10 for Criterion A indicates some understanding of the chosen texts, whilst demonstrating a fairly superficial comparison. This relates to CEFR B1 level in regard to response to literary works, which highlights the ability to provide basic descriptions and explanations for characters and events at this level.

A score of 5/10 indicates a satisfactory response to the task, with a knowledge and understanding of the two selected texts, indicative of the CEFR B2 level descriptor which states ‘Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments’.⁷⁸

Additionally, the CEFR C1 level, highlights the student’s ability to provide a detailed personal response to literary works as well as being able to effectively interpret themes and plot, characters, and events, and it is broadly indicated by a score of 7 for Criterion A.⁷⁹

The CEFR C2 level descriptor (Analysis and criticism of creative texts) describes an ability to appreciate subtle nuances in style and grasp the full implicit meaning of literary texts. This ability is most clearly expressed in the 9-10 descriptor for the set task which refers to demonstrating a persuasive account of the implications, although there could be some overlap with an 8/10 of the previous descriptor.

Criterion B: Analysis and Evaluation is intended to encompass assessment of the extent to which the student is able to analyse and evaluate the choices of language, techniques, and style in relation to meaning and how effectively comparisons and contrasts of the texts are analysed and evaluated. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by

⁷⁷ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 40.

⁷⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 106.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

the highest mark descriptor (9-10/10) which states 'The essay demonstrates a consistently insightful and convincing analysis of textual features and/or broader authorial choices. There is a very good evaluation of how such features and/or choices contribute to meaning. There is a very good comparison and contrast of the authors' choices in the works selected.'⁸⁰

Comparisons can be made between Criterion B and many of the same reading and writing activities, strategies, and competences related to Criterion A. From a language/literature-analysis-skills perspective, the two criteria can address different aspects of the knowledge-to-evaluation taxonomy. However, from a CEFR perspective, many of the same language proficiency competences underpin both criteria.

The CEFR B1 level reading descriptors indicate that although some understanding and identification of key features (i.e. characters, plot and events) may be expected, effective analysis and evaluation of texts would not be evidenced at this level.⁸¹ Therefore, a score of 2/10, indicating a purely descriptive approach with little evidence of analysis would be indicative of CEFR B1 level.

The CEFR B2 level may be reflected by a score of 5/10 as this indicates evidence of the ability to provide detailed account of key features and to provide an adequate comparison and analysis between two works of literature as referenced in the CEFR B2 level descriptor (Analysis and criticism of creative texts).⁸²

The CEFR C1 level can be demonstrated by a score of 7/10, as the IB descriptor refers to a more insightful analysis of the two works and importantly at C1 level, the ability to analyse authorial choices.

Furthermore, a score of 9 highlights a very good level of evaluation and ability to analyse texts which relates directly to the skill specified at C2 level according to which the student 'Can critically evaluate the way in which structure, language and rhetorical devices are exploited in a work for a particular purpose and give a reasoned argument on their appropriateness and effectiveness'.⁸³

Criterion C: Focus and Organization is intended to assess how well structured, balanced and focused the presentation of ideas is. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'The essay maintains a clear and sustained focus on the task; treatment of the works is well-balanced. The development of ideas is logical and convincing; ideas are connected in a cogent manner.'⁸⁴

From a language proficiency and CEFR perspective, there are substantial overlaps between Criterion C of paper 2 and Criterion C of paper 1. Writing-related activities, strategies, and competences are the most immediately relevant – such as Overall written production,

⁸⁰ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 41.

⁸¹ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 108.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 107.

⁸⁴ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 41.

Creative writing, Reports and essays, and Planning – though there are also implicit links to reading skills as a foundation for the treatment the student gives the texts in question.

Criterion D: Language is intended to assess clarity, variety, and accuracy of language, as well as appropriacy of register and style. The criterion is identical to Criterion D in paper 1, analysed above.

From a language-proficiency perspective, many of these criteria have similarities to those analysed in relation to paper 1, above. Therefore, some of the findings related to CEFR activities, strategies, and competences from that paper also apply here. Focus, organisation, and language descriptors are very similar to those used for Paper 1: Guided Reading. Therefore, the score comparisons established also apply to Paper 2 for Criteria C and D and these comparisons are reflected in the table below which summarises comparable scores in the IB Paper 2 to CEFR levels:

Table 11: Overall relationship between paper 2 criteria and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	3	5	7	9
Criterion B	N/A	2	5	7	9
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
<i>Total out of 30 marks</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>8/30</i>	<i>15/30</i>	<i>23/30</i>	<i>27/30</i>

Overall Findings on Paper 2

Grade boundaries for the Paper 2 (which a previous version scored out of 25) indicate that typically around 20% of the marks are required to score a 2 and 36% of the marks to gain a 3, meaning that 8/30 (the minimum score found comparable to CEFR B1 level) falls between these two levels for Paper 2. A score of 44% is typically required to score a 4 overall on Paper 2, whereas 15/30 was found to be broadly comparable to the level of proficiency expected at CEFR B2 level referring to the above analysis. Additionally, 68% of the marks are typically required to score a 6 overall, this may relate broadly to CEFR C1 level (which was found to relate closely to the level of performance indicative of scoring 23/30 – 70%), whilst 80% according to the grade boundary data is required to score a 7.

Based on this, the overall links between grades for this paper and CEFR levels are as follows:

Table 12: Overall relationship between paper 2 grades and CEFR levels

	Language and Literature Paper 2 Grades: HL	Language and Literature Paper 2 Grades: SL
CEFR C2	7	7
CEFR C1	6	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5	4 / 5
CEFR B1	Upper end of a 2 / 3	Upper end of a 2 / 3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A	N/A

Higher Level Essay: Analysis and Findings

At HL, students are required to write a 1,200-1,500 word formal essay which develops a particular line of inquiry of their own choice in connection with a non-literary body of work or a literary work studied during the course. The HL essay provides assessment of the student's ability to respond critically and creatively to literary texts, by exploring a literary or language line of inquiry over an extended period of time. The essay requires students to construct a focused, analytical argument with supporting references and citations. The skills assessed relate specifically to CEFR descriptors for reading, including Reading for pleasure, Expressing a personal response to creative texts as well as Analysis and criticism of creative texts. CEFR descriptors for writing ability also relate specifically to the skills assessed in the HL Essay. This component is worth 20 marks and weighted at 20% of the HL Language and Literature.⁸⁵

Higher Level Essay Marking Criteria

The criteria for the assessment of the essay, with a maximum of 20 marks, are as follows.⁸⁶

- Criterion A Knowledge, understanding and interpretation (5 marks)
- Criterion B Analysis and evaluation (5 marks)
- Criterion C Focus, organisation and development (5 marks)
- Criterion D Language (5 marks).

Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation is intended to assess how well the student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the work or body of work, how far this enables them to draw conclusions in relation to the line of inquiry, and how well supported the essay is by references to the work/body. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'There is excellent knowledge and understanding of the work or body of work shown through the essay and a persuasive interpretation of their implications in relation to the chosen line of inquiry. References to the work or body of work are well-chosen and effectively support the student's ideas in relation to the chosen line of inquiry.'⁸⁷

The key CEFR activities, strategies and competences linked to this criterion relate firstly to reading comprehension (to form the foundation of the understanding) and then to written production (to articulate and offer an interpretation). These include: Overall reading comprehension, Reading for orientation, Reading as a leisure activity, Identifying cues and inferring, Overall written production, Creative writing, Reports and essays, and Planning. There are also mediation skills included within the descriptor. For example, these include Overall mediation, Processing text and Mediating a text.

A score of 2/5 for this criterion is indicative of the CEFR descriptors at B1. At this level there should be some understanding demonstrated of the text as well as a number of accurate references, this relates to CEFR B1 level descriptors that state 'Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and

⁸⁵ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 35.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 50.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 51.

explain the significance of events and the connection between them' and 'Can describe the key themes'.⁸⁸

A score of 3/5 is more indicative of the CEFR B2 level in responding to and understanding literary texts. At this level, there is some interpretation and understanding of the implications of the work in question according to the IB descriptors and this compares with the expectation at CEFR B2 level that individuals can draw comparisons and explain the relevance of the connections between texts and narratives.

At CEFR C1 level, a greater level of criticality is expected in regard to the understanding of texts which compares well with the IB descriptors at 4/5, which requires the student to provide 'a sustained interpretation of its implications'.⁸⁹

The descriptor for 5/5 marks on this criterion also aligns well with the CEFR descriptors at the C2 level. The specific references to 'excellent' understanding and 'persuasive' interpretation align well with the C2 level descriptor for Reports and essays, which has a focus on smooth, flowing, critical, and effective articulation of interpretations, opinions and ideas.⁹⁰

Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation is intended to assess the extent to which the student can analyse and evaluate how the author shapes meaning, in relation to the inquiry, through language choices, techniques and styles. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'The essay demonstrates a consistently insightful and convincing analysis and evaluation of textual features and the author's broader choices in relation to the chosen line of inquiry'.⁹¹

As with Criterion B in papers 1 and 2, a wide range of activities, strategies, and competences are linked to this part of the assessment (as well as the criterion encompassing skills outside of language proficiency). Key CEFR scales include Overall reading comprehension, Reading for information and argument, Identifying cues and inferring, Overall written production, Creative writing, Expressing a personal response to creative texts, Analysis and criticism of creative texts, Linking to previous knowledge, and Amplifying a dense text. Overall, the CEFR descriptors for analysis and criticism of creative texts are most applicable.

A score of 1/5 may be appropriate for CEFR B1 level, because at this level of ability, it may be expected that an individual can describe events and characters but not analyse and evaluate them. A score of 1/5 similarly requires a description but little in the way of analysis.

A score of 2/5 for analysis and evaluation is comparable with CEFR B2 level in that individuals at this level would be expected to engage in some analytical discourse but also with descriptive sections.

⁸⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 108.

⁸⁹ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 51.

⁹⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 68.

⁹¹ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 52.

A score of 3/5 reflects a satisfactory level of analysis throughout the essay, reflecting the ability to critically analyse texts indicative of C1 level.

A 4/5 indicates an insightful approach as well as a thorough evaluation, indicative of C2 level of critical literary analysis 'Can give a critical appraisal of work of different periods and genres (novels, poems, plays), appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning'.⁹²

Criterion C: Focus, organization and development is intended to assess how organised, focused, and developed the presentation of ideas is and how well examples are integrated within the essay. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'The essay is effectively organized and cohesive. The line of inquiry is well developed. Supporting examples are well integrated into the structure of the sentences and paragraphs.'⁹³

In terms of key language proficiency activities, strategies, and competences linked to this criterion, they are largely the same as for Criterion C in papers 1 and 2 (as the criterion is substantially the same in core meaning). However, the Reports and essays written production activity scale is particularly relevant in the context of this HL essay. The descriptors of this criterion align effectively from marks 2/5 to 5/5 with B1-C2 levels on that particular CEFR activity.

The descriptor for 1/5 on this IB criterion is phrased through what the student is unable to do ('no discernible line of inquiry'; 'examples are not integrated'), making alignment with any points on the CEFR scale unreliable.⁹⁴

Criterion D: Language is intended to assess the clarity, variety, and accuracy of language, as well as the appropriacy of chosen register and style in the essay. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (5/5) which states 'Language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style are effective and appropriate to the task.'⁹⁵ This criterion is identical to other Criterion D in other assessment components, therefore, for a breakdown of its relationship to CEFR-based language proficiency, please see above.

The table below provides an overarching summary of the comparisons between the marks for the different HL essay criteria and CEFR levels of language proficiency.

⁹² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 107.

⁹³ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 52.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 53.

Table 13: Overall relationship between HL Essay criteria and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion B	N/A	1	2	3	4
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
Total out of 20 marks	N/A	6/20	10/20	14/20	18/20

Overall findings on Higher Level Essay

The overall relationship between Higher Level essay grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 14: Overall referencing to CEFR table for Higher Level essay

	Language and Literature Higher Level Essay
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	Not reported

3.2.2 Language A: Language and Literature Internal Component

Individual Oral

The internal assessment comprises an individual oral component. At SL and HL, an oral presentation is required, lasting 10 minutes, followed by a discussion led by the teacher lasting 5 minutes. The task involves responding to the following prompt from the examiner 'Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of one of the works and one of the bodies of work that you have studied'.⁹⁶ At both levels, 40 marks are allocated to this assessment. At SL, the assessment contributes 30% towards the overall mark for SL Language and Literature, whereas at HL the assessment contributes 20% to the final mark.⁹⁷

Assessment criteria at both levels are identical. The individual oral is intended to assess the student's ability to form a well-supported argument about the ways in which both the work and the body of work represent and explore the global issue. Students must select two extracts, from one non-literary body of work and one from a literary work, that clearly show significant moments when this global issue is being focused on. Texts selected can be literary or non-literary (one of each must be selected in this course) but must allow for some exploration of a global theme.

CEFR analysis findings

The task set for the oral allows for a range of CEFR levels to be assessed from B1 to C2 levels, particularly in terms of oral production. The potential complexity of the task and its open-ended nature allows for a broad range of levels of proficiency in delivering oral

⁹⁶ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 56.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 34-35.

presentations to be assessed. More specifically, of particular relevance here are the CEFR descriptors for Sustained monologue and the descriptors for Addressing an audience. The discussion component may also assess skills outlined in the CEFR descriptors for spoken interaction include Understanding an interlocutor, Formal discussion and Turn taking. The timeframe may limit the potential for discussion and interaction at C2 level as it is only 5 minutes in duration.

In terms of reading skills, the descriptors for Expressing a personal response to creative texts as well as Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) are also relevant when considering the skills and content assessed in the oral component. These, and other reading comprehension or mediation descriptors, have relevance because they build the foundation of comprehension that enables the spoken output to gain marks against the criteria.

Individual Oral: Marking Criteria

Students are marked out of 40 and assessed according to four criteria in the oral as follows:⁹⁸

- Criterion A Knowledge, understanding and interpretation (10 marks)
- Criterion B Analysis and evaluation (10 marks)
- Criterion C Focus and organisation (10 marks)
- Criterion D Language (10 marks).

Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation is intended to encompass assessment of how much knowledge and understanding the student shows of the extracts, works and bodies of work concerned, including the extent to which their ideas are supported by reference to said texts. This criterion also aims to assess the extent to which students use this understanding to draw conclusions in relation to the global issue in question. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (9-10/10) which states that ‘There is excellent knowledge and understanding of the extracts and of the work and body of work and a persuasive interpretation of their implications in relation to the global issue. References to the extracts and to the work and body of work are well-chosen and effectively support the student’s ideas.’⁹⁹

Comparisons can be made between Criterion A and CEFR reading comprehension and mediation descriptors. These include the CEFR descriptors for Reading as a leisure activity, Expressing a personal response to creative texts, as well as Analysis and criticism of creative texts. Overall oral production, and other oral interaction-based activities, strategies, and competences will also have relevance for a marker judging the extent to which interpretations are phrased persuasively and ordered so as to make them insightful.

A score of 3 for knowledge and understanding indicates some knowledge of the texts and an ability to identify global issues, whilst providing some accurate references. This level of understanding relates to CEFR B1 level descriptors for the analysis of creative texts ‘Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in

⁹⁸ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 59.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 60.

everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connection between them'.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, scoring a 5 indicates a satisfactory understanding, and an ability to interpret events and themes between two texts. This is also an explicit ability at CEFR B2 level where the descriptor makes direct reference to demonstrating the ability to compare two texts and consider the connections and thematic linkages between them as well as being able to accurately support one's ideas with references and examples.¹⁰¹

A sustained interpretation of the themes and their implications is expected to score a 7/10 for this criterion, and this more closely reflects the CEFR C1 level descriptor for textual criticism and analysis which states that the student 'Can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres'.¹⁰² Additionally, the C2 level descriptors implies a broader level of textual analysis, which encompass many different aspects of a text, that may not be assessed in the space of a 10-minute presentation alone.

Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation is intended to encompass assessment of the extent to which the student is able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the extracts, works and bodies of work concerned. This criterion also aims to assess the extent to which students can analyse and evaluate the ways in which the authorial choices present the global issue introduced in the question. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (9-10/10) which states 'Analysis and evaluation of the extracts and their work and body of work are relevant and insightful. There is a thorough and nuanced understanding of how authorial choices are used to present the global issue.'¹⁰³

Comparisons can be made between Criterion B and many of the same reading, mediation and oral production activities, strategies, and competences related to Criterion A. From a language/literature-analysis-skills perspective, the two criteria are able to address different aspects of the knowledge-to-evaluation taxonomy. However, from a CEFR perspective, many of the same language proficiency competences underpin both criteria.

In regard to Criterion B (analysis) at CEFR B1 level, it is expected that individuals are mainly descriptive in their approach to texts, a score of 2 which states that the oral is descriptive and contains no analysis is the closest comparator.

At CEFR B2 Level, descriptors indicate some ability to engage in analysis, although elements of description would also be expected at this level so a score of 4/10 may be most reflective of B2.

¹⁰⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 108.

¹⁰¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 108.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 107.

¹⁰³ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 60.

A score of 7 is reflective of C1 level descriptors where the individual is expected to 'critically appraise a wide variety of texts', whilst acknowledging that the subject matter of the oral covers two main texts.

Criterion C: Focus and organisation is intended to assess the extent to which the student can deliver a structured, well-balanced, and focused oral performance, in addition to connecting their ideas in a cohesive manner. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (9-10/ 10) which states 'The oral maintains a clear and sustained focus on the task; treatment of the extracts and work and body of work is well-balanced. The development of ideas is logical and convincing; ideas are connected in a cogent manner.'¹⁰⁴

From a language proficiency and CEFR perspective, there are substantial overlaps between Criterion C of the individual oral assessment, and Criterion C of the Higher Level Essay, paper 2 and paper 1. This is particularly evident in the pragmatism-related activities, strategies, and competences, such as Planning, Coherence and cohesion, and Thematic development; these descriptors account for the expected clarity of focus, organisation and cohesion of response, and the well-balanced integration of supporting examples.

Of specific relevance to an oral performance are the Sustained monologue: putting a case and Overall oral production descriptors, which reference the systematic development of an argument. There are also implicit links to the aforementioned reading and mediation skills as a foundation for the way in which the student approaches and analyses the texts in question, including Overall reading comprehension, Reading as a leisure activity and Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature).

A score of 4/10 may best represent the level of proficiency in the areas of sustaining a monologue (putting a case) and overall oral production at CEFR B1 level, as at this level the student can put forward an argument that can be followed in the most part, presenting it as a linear sequence of points. This reflects the band 3-4 descriptor which indicates that the oral only sometimes focuses on the task and that it shows some connections between ideas.

The IB score range 5-6 states that 'The development of ideas is mostly logical; ideas are generally connected in a cohesive manner' which perhaps most closely aligns with the CEFR B2 level descriptor stating, 'Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail'.^{105 106}

Moreover, 'Can argue a case on a complex issue, formulating points precisely and employing emphasis effectively' is a CEFR C1 level skill, which may reflect the performance required to score a 7 which indicates that ideas highlight 'effective cohesion' at this level.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 61.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 61.

¹⁰⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

¹⁰⁷ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 64.

The score descriptor for a 9 best reflects the CEFR C2 level descriptor for spoken production overall 'Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured discourse with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points'.¹⁰⁸

Criterion D: Language is intended to assess clarity, variety, and accuracy of language, as well as appropriacy of register and style. The overarching meaning of the criterion is encompassed by the highest mark descriptor (9-10/ 10) which states that 'The language is clear, accurate and varied; occasional errors do not hinder communication. Vocabulary and syntax are varied and create effect. Elements of style (for example, register, tone and rhetorical devices) are appropriate to the task and enhance the oral.'¹⁰⁹

From a language-proficiency perspective, many aspects of this criterion have similarities to those analysed in relation to paper 1 and paper 2, above. Therefore, some of the findings related to CEFR activities, strategies, and competences from that paper also apply here. For example, there is clear alignment with some components of the CEFR scales of Sociolinguistic appropriateness competence and other Linguistic competences such as General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, and Vocabulary control. There are also elements of Planning and Overall oral production descriptors in terms of the expected level of clarity.

A score of 3/10 for accuracy relates to the descriptor for range, accuracy, and fluency for spoken production, as at this level language is mostly accurate although there may be some errors which do hinder communication.

A score of 5/10 compares closely to CEFR B2 level because errors at this level do not hinder communication. Nevertheless vocabulary, syntax and delivery are all generally accurate with minor slips, reflective of a CEFR B2 level of accuracy in spoken production.

At CEFR C1 level errors are generally rare, even in complex language, which is also the case for students scoring from 7/10 and above in the oral component.

An enhanced ability to vary the style of the presentation is expected to score a 9 which could indicate ability at C2 level for accuracy.

In summary, the scores for the four criteria in comparison with the CEFR levels are given in the table below. It is important to note that while the task does allow for the assessment of spoken interaction, the descriptors used in the IB assessment do not explicitly refer to the ability to engage in interaction or discussion nor is there separate criteria to assess this element. Therefore, comparisons are drawn (for Criteria C and D) with spoken production descriptors in the most part.

¹⁰⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 62.

¹⁰⁹ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Language and Literature Guide*. p. 62.

Table 15: Overall relationship between oral component criteria and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	3	5	7	N/A
Criterion B	N/A	2	4	7	N/A
Criterion C	N/A	3	5	7	9
Criterion D	N/A	3	5	7	9
Total out of 40 marks	N/A	11	19	28	N/A

Overall, the oral may provide assessment for spoken production up to CEFR C1 level. The length of the presentation and the fact that only one work and one body of work are selected limits the assessment of literary criticism and evaluation to C1 level, as C2 level generally also requires analysis and appreciation of a broader range of texts and may require more than the allotted time to demonstrate. Furthermore, speaking interaction is not explicit within the descriptors, limiting the degree to which the IB assessment can assess speaking proficiency in full.

Overall findings on Individual Oral

The overall relationship between Individual Oral grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 16: Overall referencing to CEFR table for oral component

	Language and Literature HL/SL Oral
CEFR C2	Not reported
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	Upper 2 / 3
CEFR A1-A2	Not reported

3.2.3 Overall findings on Language and Literature A: SL

The following table summarises the marks deemed comparable to demonstrate CEFR levels of proficiency from the CEFR B1 to C1 levels in the SL Language and Literature (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 17: Overall relationship between SL Language and Literature marks and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Paper 1	N/A	6 (10.5)	10 (17.5)	14 (24.5)	N/A
Paper 2	N/A	8 (9.3)	15 (17.5)	23 (26.8)	27
Oral	N/A	11 (8.85)	19 (14.25)	28 (21)	N/A
Total	N/A	25	44	65	N/A
Total as a percentage (with weightings applied)	N/A	28.65%	49.25%	72.3%	N/A*

*As only one of the three components allows scope for assessing CEFR C2 level, no overall comparison to CEFR C2 level is possible for the SL.

The following table summarises the average total grade thresholds required to score from 1-7 points in the SL:

Table 18: Summary of grade thresholds for SL Language and Literature A

Grade boundary Min. mark	Paper 1 (35%)	Paper 2 (35%)	Oral (New – 30%)	Overall: New thresholds	Overall: Old thresholds
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	4	7	15%	15%
3	6	8	13	31%	29%
4	9	11	19	46%	43%
5	12	14	24	59%	56%
6	15	18	29	73%	68%
7	17	21	34	85%	81%
Total marks	20	25	40		

The percentage required to score a 4 is 46%, which broadly compares with 49% calculated to be comparable to CEFR B2 level of language proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking. A percentage score of 59% is required to score a 5 whereas a score of 73% is required to score a 6. A score of 6 therefore closely reflects the overall level indicative of CEFR C1 level based on our analysis. The range of skills indicated at CEFR C2 level of language proficiency are not fully assessed at SL, when reviewing the programme and assessment as a whole. The overall findings are summarised below:

Table 19: Overall referencing to CEFR table for SL English Language and Literature A

	SL Language and Literature Grade
CEFR C2	N/A
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

The above applies to reading, writing, and speaking (production) abilities. Listening comprehension is not covered sufficiently to enable a referencing against CEFR levels. Although speaking interaction is included in the oral, descriptors do not explicitly assess ability at interaction.

3.2.4 Overall findings on Language and Literature: HL

The following table summarises the marks considered comparable to demonstrate CEFR levels of proficiency from CEFR B1 to C2 level in the HL Language and Literature (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 20: Overall relationship between HL Language and Literature A marks and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Paper 1	N/A	12 (10.5)	18 (15.75)	27 (23.63)	36 (31.5)
Paper 2	N/A	8 (6.67)	15 (12.5)	23 (19.17)	27 (22.5)
Oral	N/A	11 (5.5)	19 (9.5)	28 (14)	N/A (18)
HL Essay	N/A	6 (6)	10 (10)	14 (14)	18 (18)
Total	N/A	31	53	78	97
<i>Total as a percentage (with weightings applied)</i>	N/A	28.67%	47.75%	70.8%	90%

The following table summarises the average total grade thresholds required to score from 1-7 points in the SL (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 21: Summary of grade thresholds for HL Language and Literature A

Grade boundary Min. mark	Paper 1 (35%)	Paper 2 (25%)	Oral (New – 20%)	HL Essay (20%)	Overall: New thresholds	Overall: Old thresholds
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	3 (5.25)	5	7 (3.5)	4	17.75%	14
3	5 (8.75)	9	13 (6.5)	7	31.25%	28
4	8 (14)	11	19 (9.5)	10	45%	42
5	11 (19.25)	14	24 (12)	13	58.25%	55
6	14 (24.5)	17	29 (14.5)	15	71%	67
7	17 (29.75)	20	34 (17)	18	85%	80
Total marks	20	25	40	20		

A score of 45% would be required to score a 4 overall, this compares with an overall 47.75% deemed comparable to a CEFR B2 level of language proficiency. Despite the 2.75% variation, overall, a 4 may be considered to be comparable to CEFR B2 level in terms of proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking (production). A score of 31.25% is required to score a 3, relating broadly to the score determined to be indicative of a CEFR B1 level of proficiency. Furthermore, a score of 71% is the average threshold to score a 6, also indicative of a C1 level of language proficiency. Unlike SL, C2 proficiency is reported by a 7 overall as the HL essay and the differences noted in relation to paper 1 input texts create broader presence of C2 level across assessment components within the top marking bands. Based on this, the relationship between overall HL grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 22: Overall referencing to CEFR table for HL English Language and Literature A

	Language and Literature HL Grades
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

The above applies to reading, writing, and speaking (production) abilities. Listening comprehension is not covered sufficiently to enable a referencing against CEFR levels. Although speaking interaction is included in the oral, descriptors do not explicitly assess ability at spoken interaction.

4. Overview and Summary Analysis – Language A: Literature

The following section contains two parts. The first part of this section includes an overview of the course specifications of the Language A: literature subject, including a review of the course's aims, content, assessment objectives and assessment methods, providing information about the external and internal assessment and each paper. The second part of this section includes the summary of analysis and the key findings from the analysis of the Language A: literature subject for English, French, German, and Spanish.

4.1 Overview of Language A: literature

Language A: literature constitutes one of three courses in the IB Studies in Language and Literature subject group.¹¹⁰ The DP contains a mandatory Studies in language and literature course requiring students to take one of the three subjects in this cluster. Language A: literature is offered at SL and HL: the former requires 150 teaching hours and the study of at least nine literary texts, the latter entails 240 teaching hours and a minimum of 13 studied works of literature.¹¹¹

Only literary texts and works of literature are used on the Language A: literature course.¹¹² The subject focuses on the aesthetic features of literary language, the performative aspects of texts, and materialist approaches to literary criticism. The selection of texts is based on facilitating a cross-cultural and diachronic analyses of literary works where students can consider the processes of negotiating meaning within particular cultural-historical conjunctures.¹¹³ The course also aims to focus on the development of receptive, productive, and interactive language skills.¹¹⁴

4.1.1 Aims

The aims of IB DP Language A: literature are the same with those of the Language A: language and literature. More information about the aims of the Language A: literature subject is presented in [section 3.1.1](#).

4.1.2 Content and intended learning outcomes

Course content

Similar to the Language A: language and literature subject, the course content of Language A: literature is categorised and sorted into three broad syllabus components or areas of exploration. More information regarding the areas of exploration is presented in [section 3.1.2](#) above.

¹¹⁰ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. p.7.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.7, p.18.

¹¹² Ibid. p.7.

¹¹³ Ibid. p.20.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p.27.

In the Language A: literature subject at least nine literary works should be studied at SL and at least thirteen studied at HL; there are certain requirements regarding the texts to be selected at each level.¹¹⁵

At SL, a minimum of four texts must be written originally in the language being studied and a minimum of three must be translated from a different language into the language of study; all of these texts must be written by an author on the prescribed reading list. The other two works can be chosen more freely and may be translated into the language of study. In addition, there should be a minimum of two works that fall into each of the three areas of exploration, covering three literary forms, three periods, three countries or regions and at least two continents.¹¹⁶

At HL, a minimum of five texts must be written originally in the language being studied and four others must be translated from a different language into the language of study; all of these texts must be written by an author on the prescribed reading list. The other four works can be chosen more freely and may be translated into the language of study. In addition, there should be a minimum of three works that fall into each of the three areas of exploration, covering four literary forms, three periods, four countries or regions and at least two continents.¹¹⁷ In order to facilitate adherence to the aforementioned requirements, teachers should endeavour to include a balance of literary forms, periods, and places.

Learning outcomes

The broad learning outcomes that students are expected to develop and demonstrate in the Language A: literature subject are the same as those in the Language A: language and literature subject. By following any one of the three studies language and literature subjects, at either SL or HL, are expected to use and develop a range of linguistic skills: receptive skills, productive skills, and interactive skills as well as conceptual understanding. More information on the learning outcomes and skills that students are required to develop and demonstrate in the Language A: literature subject can be found in [section 3.1.2](#).

4.1.3 Assessment methods and marking

Assessment objectives are statements that refer to the knowledge, skills, and competences that individuals are expected to be able to demonstrate when they are assessed for a course. The assessment objectives of the Language A: literature subject are the same for both SL and HL. The assessment objectives of Language A: literature are the same as those of the Language A: language and literature subject presented in the [section 3.1.3](#).

Ecctis reviewed the assessment methods used in the Language A: literature subject for both HL and SL. The objective of the review of the assessment methods is to identify whether the methods of assessment provide an adequate evaluation of the key skills that the course aims to assess. Assessment in the Language A: literature subject consists of both external and internal assessment. External assessment focuses on assessing a written guided literary analysis of literary passage(s) and a written comparative essay of two literary works

¹¹⁵ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. p. 20.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 21-22.

studied in the course, with an additional Higher Level essay for HL students. Internal assessment is comprised of an individual oral examination, assessing the analysis of a global issue of the student's choice in two literary works.

External assessment

In both Language A: literature SL and HL, external assessment consists of paper 1 which assesses students' guided literary analysis and paper 2 which assesses students' comparative analysis of two literary works. Students sitting the HL examination are required to submit an additional essay is submitted, as coursework, which contributes to the body of external assessment.

The aim of paper 1 is to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of literary forms, their ability to interpret a text or extract and to draw conclusions about the content. In addition, paper 1 aims to gauge students' ability to analyse and evaluate the choices of the writer and the subsequent impact on the meaning of the literary passage. Furthermore, paper 1 also allows students' to be assessed on their ability to use the conventions of a formal essay, including appropriately selected language and a well-organised response.

In both SL and HL, paper 1 constitutes 35% of the external assessment, yet at SL paper 1 carries a maximum mark of 20, whereas at HL paper 1 carries a maximum mark of 40. The duration of paper 1 at SL and HL, also differs; in SL the duration is one hour and 15 minutes, whereas in HL the duration of paper 1 is two hours and 15 minutes. Another difference between paper 1 at SL and HL is the requirements of the task; at SL, students are required to select and analyse one of two passages, from two different literary forms, whereas HL students must analyse both of the two literary passages provided.

There are four assessment criteria for paper 1 which are common for both SL and HL. These include Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus and organisation and Criterion D: Language. The assessment criteria of paper 1 of Language A: literature are the same as those of paper 1 of Language A: language and literature. More information on the assessment criteria of Language A: literature can be found in Appendix 1.

Paper 2, at both SL and HL, focuses on the students' ability to analyse literary works. Specifically, students must demonstrate their understanding of each text and their skills of interpretation. At the same time, students are required to present the similarities and differences between the two extracts, in relation to a specific focus. In addition, paper 2 evaluates the students' ability to successfully structure a coherent essay, which provides a balanced comparison of the two extracts, considering the specific examination question.¹¹⁸

In both SL and HL, paper 2 is assigned a total of 30 marks and has a duration of one hour and 45 minutes. On the contrary, the weighting of the examination differs between SL and HL; at SL paper 2 contributes 35% to the total for external assessment, whereas at HL paper 2 contributes only 25% towards the external assessment.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁹ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. pp. 34-35.

There are four assessment criteria for paper 2 which are common for both SL and HL. These include Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus and organisation and Criterion D: Language. The mark allocation and level descriptors are identical for both SL and HL, in each criterion.¹²⁰ The assessment criteria of paper 2 of Language A: literature are the same as those of paper 2 of Language A: language and literature. More information on the assessment criteria of Language A: literature can be found in Appendix 1.

Higher Level Essay

Similar to Language A: language and literature, Higher Level Essay in the Language A: literature subject is a fourth assessment component, which is unique to the HL external assessment. More specifically, in Language A: literature the objective of the HL essay is to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the nature of literary study; students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the work selected, in the context of their line of inquiry.

Similar to the Higher Level Essay in Language A: language and literature, the assessment criteria of the Higher Level Essay in Language A: literature include Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation, Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation, Criterion C: Focus, organisation and development, and Criterion D: Language.¹²¹ More information on the assessment criteria of the Higher Level Essay can be found in Appendix 1.

Internal assessment

Internal assessment is compulsory for both SL and HL students studying Language A: literature courses and it is in the form of an individual oral examination. Internal assessment in Language A: literature has the same structure, format, assessment criteria and marks with the internal assessment conducted in the Language A: language and literature subject.

Similar to Language A: language and literature, the aim of internal assessment in Language A: literature, for both SL and HL, is to assess students' ability to respond to a prompt, by presenting and discussing the representation of a global issue in one literary work written originally in the language being studied and one literary work studied in translation; the global issue and works are to be selected by the student.¹²² More information about the internal assessment of Language A: literature can be found in [section 3.1.3](#).

4.1.4 Grading and grade boundaries

As Language A: literature is included in the language and literature group similarly to the Language A: language and literature subject, the grade descriptors of this course are the same as the Language A: language and literature. For more information regarding that, please refer to [section 3.1.4](#).

¹²⁰ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. pp. 40-43; International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. pp. 49-52.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 50-53.

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 57.

4.2 Summary Analysis – Language A: literature (SL & HL)

Box 2: Key findings on Language A: literature (SL and HL) across all languages reviewed in the project

Key findings Language A: literature (SL and HL) across English, French, German, and Spanish

- The analysis of the **Paper 1 Guided textual analysis for both SL and HL** indicated that **grade 4** aligns to the level observed to reflect an overall **CEFR B2 level of proficiency** in reading and writing in response to the tasks. The analysis also found that the typical score required for a student to obtain a **grade 3** was found to be broadly comparable to the level of language competence expected at **CEFR B1 level**. The analysis also found that the score required for a student to receive a **grade 6** was found to be broadly comparable to **CEFR C1 level** and the score required for a student to receive a **grade 7**, was found to broadly align with **CEFR C2 level**.
- In relation to **Paper 2 for both SL and HL**, the analysis found that the **grade 3 observed to reflect CEFR B1 level**, and the **grade 4** was found to be broadly comparable to the level of language proficiency expected at **CEFR B2 level**. Additionally, the analysis found that a **grade 6** overall, may relate broadly to **CEFR C1 level** and a **grade 7** may broadly align to **CEFR C2 level**.
- In relation to the **Higher Level Essay**, Ecctis found that the score required for a student to achieve the **grades 4 and 5** align to the level observed to reflect an overall **CEFR B2 level of proficiency**. Additionally, the analysis indicated that the score required for a student to achieve a **grade 6** aligns to an overall **CEFR C1 level of proficiency** and the score required to achieve a **grade 7** aligns to an overall **CEFR C2 level of proficiency**.
- Regarding the **Individual oral for both SL and HL**, the analysis found that it may provide assessment for spoken production up to **CEFR C1 level**. The fact that only two texts are selected, and the relative brevity of the presentation, limits the assessment of literary criticism and evaluation to **C1 level**, as C2 level generally also requires analysis and appreciation of a broader range of texts (which may require a longer time to fully evidence). Furthermore, speaking interaction is not explicit within the descriptors, limiting the degree to which the IB assessment can assess speaking proficiency in full.

4.2.1 Language A: Literature External Components

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Analysis and Findings

SL students are asked to conduct a guided analysis of one of two extracts from literary texts. The time allocated is 1 hour and 15 minutes and the total number of marks for the paper is 20, the weighting is 35% towards the final mark for Literature A. Additionally, HL students are presented with the same two texts, but they are required to conduct a guided analysis on both texts. The time allocated for the assessment is 2 hours and 15 minutes and the total number of marks is therefore 40. The tasks are the same for both HL and SL students.

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Input Text Analysis

The input texts for paper 1 are two previously unseen literary passages. Looking across past papers in English, Spanish, French, and German these were universally found to be of roughly 300-550 words in length (where they take the form of passages from novels or plays) and shorter in the case of poetry. Across all samples analysed, both texts were found to be rich with both accessible and literal meanings as well as figurative, idiomatic, or conceptually implicit meanings that present the opportunity for students to extend their comprehension and analysis beyond the surface level.

The complexity of the input texts is also impacted by the nature of the questions that are posed about them. In all cases reviewed, the questions prompt the student (either explicitly or implicitly), to apply comprehension of literary devices to the way they shape meaning in the specific text. For example, descriptive language may be linked to the creation of atmosphere, or methods of presenting alternating points of view are expected to be analysed. Guiding questions in the exam papers are not compulsory and students may propose an alternative route of inquiry, though this does not impact the marking criteria and, therefore, these questions are likely to indicate the broad way that most students will engage with the texts.

Unlike the input texts for paper 1 of Language and Literature, Ecctis did not find examples where text 1 or text 2 on a single paper for Literature paper 1 required noticeably different levels of reading comprehension in order to access the level of meaning required to respond to the question. Although, in some cases such as shorter poems, the amount of complex vocabulary may have been less than in some extracts from novels or plays, this is counterbalanced by the complex meaning implicit within key terms or key items of figurative language within those shorter texts.

Overall, all texts analysed were found to have components that would be accessible to a student with B1 level of language proficiency. Therefore, some level of literal comprehension would be possible at this level. However, all examples of input texts also included numerous linguistic features which would require B2 level of language proficiency in order to understand either their explicit meaning, in the case of vocabulary, or their implicit meaning, in the case of figurative language. In combination with the questions – which prompt analysis of literary features – the input texts also provide the potential for C1 and C2 level students to understand particularly nuanced or connotative aspects of the text.

Key language proficiency activities, strategies, and competences likely to be deployed in comprehension and response to the input text and question prompts are represented in the table below, along with the minimum language proficiency level required to access the input text as well as the level range of some of the more complex features included.

Table 23: Summary of key communicative language activities, strategies and competences with associated proficiency levels required in Language A: literature (SL & HL)

Activity, Strategy, or Competence	Minimum Proficiency Level Needed to Access Input and Respond to Input	Proficiency Levels Needed to Access and Respond to the Most Complex Features
Overall reading comprehension	B2	C1-C2
Reading for information and	B2	C1

Activity, Strategy, or Competence	Minimum Proficiency Level Needed to Access Input and Respond to Input	Proficiency Levels Needed to Access and Respond to the Most Complex Features
argument		
Reading as a leisure activity	B1	B2-C2
Identifying cues and inferring	B1	B2-C2
Overall written production	B1	B2-C2
Creative writing	B2	C1-C2
Reports and essays	B1	B2-C2
Planning	B1	B2-C1
Compensating	B2	C1-C2
Processing text	B1+	C1-C2
Expressing a personal response to creative texts	B1	B2-C1
Analysis and criticism of creative texts	B1	B2-C2
Linking to previous knowledge	B1	B2-C1
General linguistic range	B1	B2-C2
Vocabulary range	B2	C1-C2
Thematic development	B1+	B2-C2
Coherence and cohesion	B1	B2-C2

Paper 1: Guided Textual Analysis: Marking Criteria

The marking criteria for paper 1 are identical at HL and SL.¹²³

The marks for the guided textual analysis are allocated across four assessment criteria, each of which are worth five marks.

- Criterion A: Understanding and interpretation (5 marks)
- Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation (5 marks)
- Criterion C: Focus and organisation (5 marks)
- Criterion D: Language (5 marks)

All four criteria descriptors above are identical for paper 1 Language A: language and literature and for paper 1 Language A: literature. For the detailed analysis of each mark scheme criterion in relation to CEFR, please refer to [section 3.2.1](#). In addition, the following analysis is specifically relevant to Language A: literature paper 1.

Criterion A, the IB knowledge and understanding descriptor, highlights an ability to understand the literal meaning of the text as well as identify some implications, with supporting arguments and references, as being required to score a 3/5. As the task involves understanding the characters and the relationships between them, this level of performance relates to the CEFR B2 level in relation to the competence 'Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments'.¹²⁴

As some knowledge and understanding of the objective facts presented in a text can be expected at CEFR B1 level, a score of 2/5 can be considered reflective of this level of

¹²³ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. pp. 39-40; pp. 47-49.

¹²⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 221.

knowledge understanding, although given the complexity of the text a score of 1/5 may well also be indicative of CEFR B1 proficiency.

In terms of **Criterion B**, the analysis and evaluation descriptor, a score of 2/5 may be indicative of the CEFR B2 level descriptor which states that the student ‘Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples’ in that some analysis is expected at this level in relation to the task which involves analysing the relationship between the two characters in the text.¹²⁵ It may also be indicative of the CEFR C1 level descriptor which outlines that the student ‘Can describe and comment on ways in which the work engages the audience’. Therefore, some analysis is expected at this level in relation to the task which involves analysing the way in which the author combines facts with opinions to create an impression on the reader.¹²⁶

Because the CEFR B1 level descriptor does not explicitly expect the user to be able to engage effectively in literary analysis, a score of 1/5 may be indicative of this level.

Criterion D, the language descriptor, relates more to writing proficiency (accuracy and coherence) rather than reading comprehension. In comparison with CEFR writing descriptors, the IB descriptors refer to similar skills, covering aspects of clarity, accuracy in spelling and grammar, range, and complexity of vocabulary as well as tone, structure, register, and style. Given that the task itself is pitched at least at CEFR B2 level in terms of demands on writing proficiency, a score of 2/5 demonstrates linkages with this level of ability overall.

In summary, comparisons can be drawn in relation to CEFR B1-C1 levels overall. The input text contains language and themes which are complex and as such may not accurately provide scope for assessing A1-A2 levels of language proficiency. A score of 6 out of 20 may indicate language proficiency at B1 level, whilst 10 is commensurate with CEFR B2 level overall. A score of 14 marks demonstrates overall comparability with C1 level of proficiency.

The table below provides an overarching summary of the comparisons between the marks for the different paper 1 criteria and CEFR levels of language proficiency.

Table 24: Overall referencing of criteria to CEFR for Language A: literature (SL & HL)

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion B	N/A	1	2	3	4
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
<i>Total out of 20</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>18</i>

¹²⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 223.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 107.

Overall findings: Paper 1

The typical threshold mark required to achieve a grade 4 is 9 or 10 marks out of 20 per question, this also aligns to the level observed to reflect an overall CEFR B2 level of proficiency in reading and writing in response to the tasks. The typical mark required to obtain a grade 3 is a 6, the level deemed comparable to CEFR B1 level. A grade of 6 requires receiving 14 or 15 marks, which was also found to demonstrate CEFR C1 level. A score of 18 is required to receive a grade of 7, which aligns with CEFR C2 level. Based on this, the overall relationship between paper 1 grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 25: Overall referencing of paper 1 grades to CEFR for Language A: literature (SL & HL)

	Literature: Paper 1 Grades
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	Not reported

Paper 2: Comparative Essay: Analysis and Findings

The task for paper 2 is an extended, comparative essay to be written in response to the student's selection of one from a choice of four questions. The paper is 1 hour and 45 minutes in duration. Both SL and HL students are set the same paper and marked according to the same mark scheme. The questions set invite students to comparatively analyse two works of literature they have studied, by engaging in an in-depth discussion relating to one or more identified themes. The paper is weighted at 35% of the final grade for both SL and HL.

The format of paper 2 and the assessment criteria are identical in Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature. As such, to see a breakdown of the assessment criteria in relation to language proficiency, please see above. The breakdown of each broad CEFR level against the best aligned marks from each criterion are provided below.

Table 26: Overall comparison of broad CEFR level against aligned marks from each criterion

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	3	5	7	9
Criterion B	N/A	2	5	7	9
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
Total out of 30 marks	N/A	8/30	15/30	23/30	27/30

Overall findings on Paper 2

Grade boundaries for the paper 2 (which a previous version scored out of 25) indicate that typically around 16-20% of the marks are required to be awarded a 2 and 32% of the marks to gain a 3, meaning that 8/30 (the minimum score found comparable to CEFR B1 level) falls between these two levels for Paper 2. A score of 52% is typically required to be awarded a 4 overall on paper 2, whereas 15/30 was found to be broadly comparable to the level of language proficiency expected at CEFR B2 level, referring to the above analysis.

Additionally, 72% of the marks are typically required to gain a 6 overall, which may relate broadly to CEFR C1 level (which was found to link closely to the level of performance indicative of scoring 23/30 – 70%), whilst 84% according to the grade boundary data is required to score a 7.

The overall referencing of grades in paper 2 (SL and HL) to CEFR levels is provided below:

Table 27: Overall referencing of grades from Language A: literature (SL & HL) to CEFR levels

	Literature Paper 2 Grade (SL/HL)
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	Upper end of a 2 / 3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

Higher Level Essay: Analysis and Findings

At HL, students are required to write a 1,200–1,500 word formal essay which develops a particular line of inquiry of their own choice in connection with a work previously studied in class. The HL essay provides assessment of the student’s ability to respond critically and creatively to literary texts, by exploring a literary or language line of inquiry over an extended period of time. This component is worth 20 marks and weighted at 20% of the HL Language A: literature.

Apart from a minor adjustment to the phrasing regarding whether ‘works’ or ‘bodies of work’ should be the subject of the essay, this assessment component is the same format and follows the same assessment criteria in Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature. Therefore, for a breakdown of the assessment criteria in relation to language proficiency skills and CEFR levels, please see above.

The table below shows the same breakdown of assessment criteria marks against the best aligned CEFR levels.

Table 28: Overall comparison of assessment criteria marks from Language A: literature HL Essay against CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion B	N/A	1	2	3	4
Criterion C	N/A	2	3	4	5
Criterion D	N/A	1	2	3	4
<i>Total out of 20</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>6/20</i>	<i>10/20</i>	<i>14/20</i>	<i>18/20</i>

Overall findings on Higher Level Essay

The overall relationship between HL Essay grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 29: Overall referencing of HL Essay grades to CEFR for Language A: literature

	Language A: Literature HL Essay Grades
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6

	Language A: Literature HL Essay Grades
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

4.2.2 Language A: Literature Internal Component

Individual Oral

The internal assessment component in Language A: literature is a 15-minute oral assessment, comprising a 10-minute individual presentation by the student and 5 minutes of questions from the teacher and student responses. This is weighted 30% at SL and 20% at HL. The same marking criteria and task are applied at both levels.

The student addresses the following prompt: ‘Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied.’¹²⁷ Apart from a minor adjustment in relation to how the number and type of works are labelled, this is the same prompt and same assessment criteria as used in the oral assessment of Language A: language and literature. Therefore, for a breakdown of the assessment criteria in relation to language proficiency and CEFR, please see above.

The same breakdown of assessment criteria marks against CEFR levels is demonstrated below.

Table 30: Overall comparison of assessment criteria marks from Language A: literature oral component against CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Criterion A	N/A	3	5	7	N/A
Criterion B	N/A	2	4	7	N/A
Criterion C	N/A	3	5	7	9
Criterion D	N/A	3	5	7	9
<i>Total out of 40 marks</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Overall findings on Individual Oral

Overall, the oral may provide assessment for spoken production up to CEFR C1 level. The fact that only two texts are selected, and the relative brevity of the presentation, limits the assessment of literary criticism and evaluation to C1 level, as C2 level generally also requires analysis and appreciation of a broader range of texts (which may require a longer time to fully evidence). Furthermore, speaking interaction is not explicit within the descriptors, limiting the degree to which the IB assessment can assess speaking proficiency in full. Based on this, the overall relationship between Individual Oral grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 31: Overall referencing of oral component grades to CEFR for Language A: literature (SL & HL)

	Language A: Literature Oral Component Grades
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¹²⁷ International Baccalaureate (2019) *Language A: Literature Guide*. p. 57.

	Language A: Literature Oral Component Grades
CEFR C2	N/A
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	Upper 2 / 3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

4.2.3 Overall findings on Language A: Literature: SL

The following table summarises the marks deemed comparable to demonstrate CEFR levels of proficiency from CEFR B1 to C1 level in the SL Literature (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 32: Overall relationship between SL Language A: literature marks and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Paper 1	N/A	6 (10.5)	10 (17.5)	14 (24.5)	18 (31.5)
Paper 2	N/A	8 (9.3)	15 (17.5)	23 (26.8)	27 (31.5)
Oral	N/A	11 (8.85)	19 (14.25)	28 (21)	N/A
Total	N/A	25	44	65	N/A
Total as a percentage (with weightings applied)	N/A	28.65%	49.25%	72.3%	N/A*

*As only two of the three components allow scope for assessing CEFR C2 level, no overall comparison to CEFR C2 level is possible for the SL.

The following table summarises the average total grade thresholds required to score from 1-7 points in the SL:

Table 33: Summary of grade thresholds for SL Language A: literature

Grade boundary Min. mark	Paper 1 (35%)	Paper 2 (35%)	Oral (New – 30%)	Overall Percentage (New thresholds)	Overall Percentage (Old thresholds)
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	4	7	15%	15%
3	6	8	13	31%	29%
4	9	11	19	46%	43%
5	12	14	24	59%	56%
6	15	18	29	73%	68%
7	17	21	34	85%	81%
Total marks	20	25	40		

The percentage required to score a 4 is 46%, which broadly compares with 49% calculated to be comparable to CEFR B2 level of proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking. A percentage score of 59% is required to score a 5 whereas a score of 73% is required to score a 6. A score of 6 therefore closely reflects the overall level indicative of CEFR C1 level

based on our analysis. The range of skills indicated at CEFR C2 level of language proficiency are not fully assessed at SL, when reviewing the programme and assessment as a whole. The overall findings are summarised below:

Table 34: Overall referencing of SL grades to CEFR for Language A: literature

	Language A: Literature SL Grades
CEFR C2	N/A
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

The above applies to reading, writing, and speaking (production) abilities. Listening comprehension is not covered sufficiently to enable a referencing against CEFR levels. Although speaking interaction is included in the oral, descriptors do not explicitly assess interaction ability.

4.2.4 Overall findings on Language A: Literature HL

The following table summarises the marks considered comparable to demonstrate CEFR levels of proficiency from CEFR B1 to C2 level in HL Language A: literature (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 35: Overall relationship between HL Language A: literature marks and CEFR levels

	CEFR Levels				
	A1-A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Paper 1	N/A	12 (10.5)	18 (15.75)	27 (23.63)	36 (31.5)
Paper 2	N/A	8 (6.67)	15 (12.5)	23 (19.17)	27 (22.5)
Oral	N/A	11 (5.5)	19 (9.5)	28 (14)	N/A (18)
HL Essay	N/A	6 (6)	10 (10)	14 (14)	18 (18)
Total	N/A	31	53	78	97
<i>Total as a percentage (with weightings applied)</i>	N/A	28.67%	47.75%	70.8%	90%

The following table summarises the average total grade thresholds required to score from 1-7 points in the HL (weightings applied in brackets):

Table 36: Summary of grade thresholds for HL Language A: literature

Grade boundary Min. mark	Paper 1 (35%)	Paper 2 (25%)	Oral (New – 20%)	HL Essay (20%)	Overall Percentage (New thresholds)	Overall Percentage (Old thresholds)
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	3 (5.25)	5	7 (3.5)	4	17.75%	14
3	5 (8.75)	9	13 (6.5)	7	31.25%	28
4	8 (14)	11	19 (9.5)	10	45%	42

Grade boundary Min. mark	Paper 1 (35%)	Paper 2 (25%)	Oral (New – 20%)	HL Essay (20%)	Overall Percentage (New thresholds)	Overall Percentage (Old thresholds)
5	11 (19.25)	14	24 (12)	13	58.25%	55
6	14 (24.5)	17	29 (14.5)	15	71%	67
7	17 (29.75)	20	34 (17)	18	85%	80
Total marks	20	25	40	20		

A score of 45% would be required to be graded 4 overall, this compares with an overall 47.75% deemed comparable to a CEFR B2 level of language proficiency. Despite the 2.75% variation, overall, a 4 may be considered to be comparable to CEFR B2 level in terms of proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking (production). A score of 31.25% is required to score a 3, relating broadly to the score determined to be indicative of a CEFR B1 level of proficiency. Furthermore, a score of 71% is the average threshold to score a 6, also indicative of a C1 level of language proficiency. The relationship between overall HL grades and CEFR levels reported, is as follows:

Table 37: Overall referencing of HL grades to CEFR for Language A: literature

	Language A: Literature HL Grades
CEFR C2	7
CEFR C1	6
CEFR B2	4 / 5
CEFR B1	3
CEFR A1-A2	N/A

The above applies to reading, writing, and speaking (production) abilities. Listening comprehension is not covered sufficiently to enable a referencing against CEFR levels. Although speaking interaction is included in the oral, descriptors do not explicitly assess ability at spoken interaction.

4.2.5 Student samples across Language A: Language and Literature and Language A: Literature

As described in the methodology section of this report, the CEFR comparative analysis and grading findings for both Language A subjects were cross-referenced throughout with analysis of how the marking approaches were used in practice against student samples provided by the IB.

The marking decisions made by examiners aligned with Ecctis' interpretation of how the mark scheme should be applied. Moreover, the alignment established in the sections above between marks achieved in each assessment component and reported CEFR levels was strongly sustained by Ecctis' analysis of the CEFR proficiency levels being demonstrated in the output texts of students.

As the assessment components are not only linked to language proficiency, Ecctis observed that marking decisions were informed by a balanced combination of judgements on language proficiency (such as clarity, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and ability to articulate

complex processes such as understanding of implicit meaning and interpretation of opinions / arguments) and wider language-and-literature-related skills (such as knowledge and interpretation of relevant texts, awareness of literary and linguistic devices related to authorial choices and meaning, and ability to move beyond description towards critical analysis and evaluation).

In all marking samples analysed by Ecctis, examiners demonstrated a close focus on the meaning and wording of the marking criteria, as well as making concerted efforts to engage with students' point of view or thesis. In many cases, examiner's 'overall comments' provided valuable context to the overall marks (linking together the points made when discussing each criterion individual). These latter comments also demonstrated that examiners were engaged with the literal and intended meaning of the marking criteria in relation to both language proficiency components and wider skills.

5. Overview and Summary Analysis– Language B

The following section contains two parts. The first part of this section is an overview of the course specifications of the Language B subject. This includes a review of the course’s aims, content, assessment objectives and assessment methods, providing information about the external and internal assessment of Language B. Additionally, this section includes the mapping of the speaking and interactive skills as well as writing assessment criteria of both SL and HL Language B against the CEFR levels. The second part of this section includes the summary of analysis and the key findings from the paper and sample analysis of the Language B subjects for English, French, German, and Spanish.

5.1 Overview of Language B

Language B is designed as one of two language acquisition subjects (Language *ab initio* and Language B) that are offered in several modern foreign languages.¹²⁸ Most Language B subjects are offered at SL and HL and students are recommended to have had some previous exposure to and knowledge of the target language. For the Language B SL course, prior language learning situated between CEFR levels A2-B1 is advised; CEFR B1-B2 level language skills are suggested for prospective HL students.¹²⁹ Language B is intended as a language acquisition course that develops functional language abilities and intercultural skills.¹³⁰ The subject also aims to target the progression of productive, receptive, and interactive linguistic competences.

5.1.1 Aims

The aims of IB DP Language B and language *ab initio* subjects are presented in the following table:

Table 38: Language B and language ab initio aims¹³¹

Number	Aims of IB DP Language B and Language ab initio
1	Develop international mindedness through the study of languages, cultures, and ideas and issues of global significance.
2	Enable students to communicate in the language they have studied in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.
3	Encourage, through the study of texts and through social interaction, an awareness and appreciation of a variety of perspectives of people from diverse cultures.
4	Develop students’ understanding of the relationship between the languages and cultures with which they are familiar.
5	Develop students’ awareness of the importance of language in relation to other areas of knowledge.
6	Provide students, through language learning and the process of inquiry, with opportunities for intellectual engagement and the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills.
7	Provide students with a basis for further study, work and leisure through the use of an additional language.
8	Foster curiosity, creativity and a lifelong enjoyment of language learning.

¹²⁸ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.6.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p.11.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p.6.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 13.

5.1.2 Course content

The course content of Language B and language ab initio is categorised and sorted into five broad themes: identities, experiences, human ingenuity, social organisation, and sharing the planet. These five themes are prescribed and must be equally included in the Language B subjects. Teachers are free to work with the themes in a flexible way, to support them to organise and plan the course but also support students' needs and interests in the target language and culture. However, although the themes are prescribed, teachers are free to choose from several recommended topic areas which provide them with more flexibility to adjust the theme to the students' needs and interests. Each theme is based on a guiding principle and includes some optional recommended topics. More information regarding the course content of Language B and language ab initio can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1.3 Assessment objectives, methods and marking

Assessment objectives are statements that refer to the knowledge, skills, and competences that students are expected to be able to demonstrate when they are assessed for a course. The assessment objectives of Language B are the same for both HL and SL. The assessment objectives of Language B and language ab initio are presented in the table below:

Table 39: IB DP Language B and Language ab initio assessment objectives¹³²

Number	Assessment Objectives of IB DP Language B and Language ab initio	Paper that assesses this Assessment Objective
1	Communicate clearly and effectively in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.	Paper 1—writing Internal assessment
2	Understand and use language appropriate to a range of interpersonal and/or intercultural contexts and audiences.	Paper 1—writing Paper 2—listening and Reading Internal assessment
3	Understand and use language to express and respond to a range of ideas with fluency and accuracy.	Paper 1—writing Paper 2—listening and Reading Internal assessment
4	Identify, organize and present ideas on a range of topics.	Paper 1—writing Internal assessment
5	Understand, analyse and reflect upon a range of written, audio, visual and audio-visual texts.	Paper 2—listening and Reading Internal assessment

Ectis reviewed the assessment methods used in the Language B subject for both HL and SL. The objective of the review of the assessment methods is to identify whether the methods of assessment provide an adequate evaluation of the key skills that the course aims to assess. Assessment in Language B consists of both external and internal assessment components, where external assessment focuses on evaluating students'

¹³² International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p. 14.

receptive skills such as reading and listening, as well as writing skills, and the internal assessment focuses on assessing students speaking and interactive skills.¹³³

External Assessment

At both levels, at the end of the Language B course, students' abilities in reading, listening and writing are measured by means of external assessment. In both Language B HL and SL, external assessment consists of paper 1, which assesses students' writing skills, and paper 2, which assesses students' reading and listening skills. Both paper 1 and 2 are external examinations meaning that they are externally set and externally assessed where students need to complete the assessments under typical exam conditions.

Writing assessment (Paper 1)

The aim of paper 1 is to evaluate students' knowledge and skills for communication in writing for a wide range of purposes, by demonstrating their ability to adapt the text style to the target audience, a variety of contexts and purposes. Paper 1 aims to assess students' ability to effectively communicate and express their thoughts and opinions in writing, use the language in a variety of interpersonal and intercultural contexts, use the language with fluency and accuracy, and organise and present their opinions, concepts, and ideas in a coherent and consistent way.

In both HL and SL, paper 1 consists of 30 marks, constituting 25% of the external assessment. However, the duration of paper 1 in SL is one hour and 15 minutes, whereas in HL the duration of paper 1 is one hour and 30 minutes. Another difference between paper 1 in HL and SL is that in SL students are required to write an essay of 250-400 words, whereas in HL students are required to write an essay of 450-600 words.¹³⁴

Listening comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Paper 2, in both HL and SL, aims to assess students' listening and reading comprehension. In particular, the listening assessment aims to assess students' understanding of conversations and dialogues between two people, lectures, and presentations in a variety of topics, the meaning of audio recordings, conversations or monologues. In the listening comprehension assessment, the students' use of grammatical structures and vocabulary are only assessed to the extent that misunderstanding would have an impact on the meaning of the message and the words. The majority of the assessment tasks in the listening comprehension assessment aim to assess the students' understanding of the message of the audio recording and not the students' ability to identify grammatical structures within the audio recording. However, the listening comprehension assessment aims to assess if students have understood particular details or aspects of the audio recording which may be tested through the understanding and awareness of grammatical structures that make a difference to the meaning of the message.¹³⁵ The mark scheme of the assessment of listening comprehension of the Language B paper 2 (SL and HL) provides general instructions and question-specific guidelines to the examiners. The general marking criteria for the assessment of the listening comprehension element of paper 2 are listed in the table below:

¹³³ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. pp. 29-30.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 31 and 36.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 32 and 36.

Table 40: Mark Scheme for Paper 2 SL and HL Listening Comprehension Assessment¹³⁶

Mark Scheme for SL and HL Listening Comprehension Assessment (Paper 2)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For questions where short answers are required, the answer must be clear. Do not award the mark if the answer does not make sense or if the additional information makes the answer ambiguous, incorrect or incomprehensible. 2. Allow spelling mistakes so long as they do not hinder comprehension or do not change the sense of the phrase. 3. For true or false questions, students may use a tick or a cross to indicate their intended response, but usage must be consistent. If a student writes two ticks or two crosses for the same answer award [0]. If a student answers with a cross and a tick for the same answer, mark the tick and ignore the cross. 4. For questions where the student has to write a letter in a box (for example, multiple choice questions), if a student has written two answers – one in the box and one outside – only mark the answer inside the box. 5. The total number of marks for the question paper is [25].

Reading comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

The reading assessment aims to evaluate students' reading comprehension, their ability to understand the main information and key arguments presented in reading material, their ability to understand the meaning of reading material, their ability to read for orientation and to identify and effectively use grammatical structures and vocabulary in the target language.¹³⁷ The mark scheme for the assessment of reading comprehension of the Language B paper 2 (SL and HL) provides general instructions and question-specific guidelines to the examiners. The general marking criteria for the assessment of the reading comprehension element of paper 2 are listed in the table below:

Table 41: Mark Scheme for Paper 2 SL and HL Reading Comprehension Assessment¹³⁸

Mark Scheme for SL and HL Reading Comprehension Assessment (Paper 2)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For questions where short answers are required, the answer must be clear. Do not award the mark if the answer does not make sense or if the additional information makes the answer ambiguous, incorrect or incomprehensible. 2. Allow spelling mistakes so long as they do not hinder comprehension or do not change the sense of the phrase. 3. For true or false questions, students may use a tick or a cross to indicate their intended response but usage must be consistent. If a student writes two ticks or two crosses for the same answer award [0]. If a student answers with a cross and a tick for the same answer, mark the tick and ignore the cross. 4. For questions where the student has to write a letter in a box (for example, multiple choice questions), if a student has written two answers – one in the box and one outside – only mark the answer inside the box.

¹³⁶ International Baccalaureate (2020). *English B: Higher and Standard Level Paper 2 Listening Comprehension*. p.5.

¹³⁷ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. pp.32 and 36.

¹³⁸ International Baccalaureate (2020). *English B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Mark Scheme*. p.5; International Baccalaureate (2020). *English B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Mark Scheme*. p.5.

5. The total number of marks for the question paper is [40].

In both SL and HL, paper 2 is assigned 65 marks in total, including 40 marks for reading comprehension and 25 marks for listening comprehension. However, the duration of the paper 2 differs between SL and HL. The duration of paper 2 in SL is one hour and 45 minutes, including one hour for the reading assessment and 45 minutes for the listening assessment. On the other hand, the duration of paper 2 in HL is two hours, including one hour for the reading assessment and one hour for the listening assessment.¹³⁹

More information about the external assessment of Language B can be found in Appendix 1.

Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)

Internal assessment is compulsory for both HL and SL students studying Language B. The aim of internal assessment in Language B is to assess students' speaking and interactive skills. More specifically, the student's speaking and interactive skills are internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.

SL students are required to make an oral presentation of a visual stimulus providing clear links to the target culture(s). On the other hand, HL students are asked to make an oral presentation of a literary extract. However, at both levels, the presentation is followed by an interactive discussion between the student and the teacher, who asks questions based on the topic of the visual stimuli or the literary extract and then develops the conversation to cover a wide range of topics and themes from the ones outlined in the Language B syllabus.

In both HL and SL, oral assessment constitutes 25% of the overall assessment and it is allocated up to 30 marks. The duration of SL oral assessment is 12 to 15 minutes with an additional 15 minutes for students' preparation of a presentation related to the visual stimulus. The duration of the HL oral assessment is 12 to 15 minutes with an additional 20 minutes for students to prepare a presentation in relation to the literary extract. In the HL internal assessment, the length of the literary extract is up to approximately 300 words.¹⁴⁰ More information on the internal assessment of Language B can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1.4 Grading and grade boundaries

As with all IB DP subjects, Language B is graded on a 1-7 scale (with 1 representing the lowest achievement and 7 the highest). Both SL and HL are graded on the same scale. However, the wording of the SL grade descriptors is slightly different to the wording in the HL ones, which reflects the differences in the level of knowledge, skills, and competences that students are required to demonstrate in each level. A single output grade for the subject is provided upon successful completion, though individual assessment papers are also graded on the 1-7 scale in order to ascertain the final weighted result. These papers are for internal use only and they are not given to students.

¹³⁹ International Baccalaureate (2020). *English B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Mark Scheme*. p.5; International Baccalaureate (2020). *English B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Mark Scheme*. p.5.

¹⁴⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. pp.40-56.

Each grade for Language B has an overarching descriptor attached to it and the IB sets its grade boundaries differently for different assessment components and different subjects. Grade boundary information was shared with Ecctis for the purposes of mapping CEFR levels to grade thresholds.

5.1.5 CEFR level mapping of assessment criteria of speaking and interactive skills and writing

In order to conduct the review and comparative analysis of the writing (paper 1) and speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) of the Language B subjects, Ecctis conducted a review, comparative analysis and mapping of the speaking and interactive skills, as well as writing Language B mark schemes against the CEFR levels and descriptors of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences. As the Language B speaking and interactive skills, as well as writing assessment criteria and mark schemes are common for all Language B subjects across all languages, the mark scheme analysis and mapping to relevant CEFR descriptors and levels applies to all languages reviewed as part of this project.

The Language B mark schemes for speaking and interactive skills include four criteria for speaking (Criterion A: language, Criterion B1: Message-visual stimulus [SL], Criterion B1: Message-literary extract [HL], Criterion B2: Message: Conversation, Criterion C: Interactive Skills-communication) and three criteria for writing (Criterion A: Language, Criterion B: Message, Criterion C: Conceptual understanding). Each criterion includes different bands, and each band has specific marks and level descriptors allocated to them. After reviewing the assessment criteria and mark schemes for both speaking and interactive skills as well as writing, Ecctis used specific CEFR activities, strategies and competences which better matched each assessment criterion. Following that, Ecctis looked at each band of each criterion with its allocated marks and level descriptors and tried to match them with a relevant CEFR level.

Speaking and interactive skills

Criterion A: Language (SL and HL)

Criterion A in both SL and HL evaluates the student's use and command of the language in spoken production. More specifically, Criterion A focuses on assessing the extent to which students' use and command of vocabulary and grammatical structures are appropriate and varied, the extent to which the accuracy of students' language contributes to effective communication and whether students' pronunciation and intonation affect communication by either supporting or impeding understanding. Criterion A is marked on a scale of 0-12. The CEFR competences that were selected for the purposes of the comparative analysis and that better reflect the level descriptors of Criterion A include General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control, Orthographic control, and Overall phonological control.

In SL, the mapping exercise indicated that the level descriptor 1-3 reflects the CEFR levels A1- A2 because it describes a student's profile with limited command of language, limited use of vocabulary, which is sometimes appropriate to the task, use of basic grammatical

structures, which contain errors and impede communication, as well as recurrent mispronunciations, which are often outcomes of strong influences by other languages. The 1-3 level descriptor better aligns with the A1 level descriptor of the CEFR competence of General linguistic range, which outlines that the student 'Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type. Can use some basic structures in one-clause sentences with some omission or reduction of elements' but also the A2 level descriptor which outlines that the student 'Has a limited repertoire of short, memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations'.¹⁴¹

The mapping exercise of the Criterion A of HL to CEFR found that the level descriptor 1-3 reflects the CEFR levels A2- B1 because it describes a student's profile with limited command of language, use of vocabulary which is sometimes appropriate to the task, and use of basic but also few attempts to use complex grammatical structures. At this level, the student makes errors in both basic and complex grammatical structures which often interfere with communication, with their pronunciation being generally clear, but with occasional errors that sometimes impede communication. In terms of pronunciation and intonation, this IB band presents some similarities with both the A2 and B1 CEFR levels of Overall phonological control which state at A2 level 'Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility' and at B1 level that 'Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message'.¹⁴² Regarding vocabulary, the IB band best reflects the B1 level of Vocabulary range and Vocabulary control where it is outlined that the student 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations' and that the student 'Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations'.¹⁴³ Furthermore, in terms of grammar, the A2+ and B1 levels of Grammatical accuracy seem to reflect this IB band as at A2+ level the student 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say' and at B1 level the student 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.¹⁴⁴ Overall, it is evident that this IB band demonstrates similarities with A2, A2+ and B1 CEFR levels in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar as the student has generally good pronunciation and use of simple and complex vocabulary and grammatical structures but consistently makes errors which sometimes might impede communication and understanding.

At the next marking band, 4-6, the IB descriptors for the SL Criterion A relate best to the B1-B1+ CEFR level descriptors as command of the language is partially effective, vocabulary is appropriate to the task, the use of basic grammatical structures is effective, and the student makes occasional attempts to use more complex grammatical structures, but these contain

¹⁴¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 130-131.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 134.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 133.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

errors. According to this level descriptor, pronunciation and intonation are influenced by other languages but mispronunciations do not interfere with communication. The 4-6 level descriptor better aligns with the B1 descriptor of the CEFR competence of Overall phonological control which outlines that 'Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message. Accent is usually influenced by the other language(s) they speak.'¹⁴⁵ Additionally, the 4-6 level descriptor also aligns with the B1 level descriptor of the Vocabulary control competence which outlines that the student 'Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations. Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics.'¹⁴⁶ In terms of grammar, the CEFR level descriptors that relate best to this IB level descriptor band is the B1 Grammatical accuracy competence which outlines that the student 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express. Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.'¹⁴⁷ Additionally, this IB level descriptor band aligns also to the B2 level of the Grammatical accuracy competence which highlights that the student 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy'.¹⁴⁸

In the same IB band of Criterion A in HL, the student is awarded with 4-6 marks. This band at HL describes a student with generally effective use and command of language, where the student demonstrates appropriate vocabulary to the task which is sometime varied, and effective use of both common and complex grammatical structures, with occasional errors only in complex grammatical structures. More specifically, this band outlines that the occasional errors that the student makes do not impede communication and the pronunciation and intonation is generally clear.

The comparative analysis of this IB band of HL indicated that it reflects B1-B2 CEFR levels in relation to the use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Regarding pronunciation, this IB band reflects the B2 descriptor of Overall phonological control which states that the pronunciation and intonation is generally clear without affecting communication with the student being able to 'generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak but has little or no effect on intelligibility'.¹⁴⁹ In terms of vocabulary, the IB band reflects B2 level of Vocabulary range where it is outlined that the student 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.'¹⁵⁰ Additionally, this IB band presents several similarities with the B1+ and B2

¹⁴⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 134.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 133.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 134.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

levels of the CEFR Grammatical accuracy competence. More specifically, the B1+ level focuses on students' ability to 'Communicate with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express' and the B2 level states that the student 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.'¹⁵¹ Overall, it is evident that this IB level band has many similarities with the B1+ and B2 CEFR level descriptors, describing a student profile with effective use of language, good command of simple, complex and varied vocabulary and grammatical structures, and clear pronunciation and intonation with occasional errors which do not hinder communication and understanding of what the student wants to convey.

In the second highest IB band of 7-9 marks of Criterion A in SL, students' command of the language is effective and mostly accurate which better reflects the B2 CEFR level descriptors. In this IB band, the vocabulary is appropriate to the task and varied, reflecting the B2 descriptor of Vocabulary range which outlines that the student 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution'.¹⁵² In addition, the descriptor aligns with the B2 level descriptor of Vocabulary control which highlights that 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication'.¹⁵³ Regarding grammar, this IB band focuses on students' ability to use a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures with only occasional errors in both, which do not affect communication. This best reflects the B2 and B2+ Grammatical accuracy descriptors where the student 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding' and 'Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect'.¹⁵⁴ In terms of pronunciation, this IB band focuses on students' ability to use appropriate pronunciation and intonation which are easy to understand. This better reflects the B2 level descriptor of the Overall phonological control competence which outlines that students 'Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak but has little or no effect on intelligibility'.¹⁵⁵

In the same IB marking band (7-9 marks) in HL the descriptors emphasise the students' effective and mostly accurate command and use of language, with the use of a variety of basic but also complex grammatical structures and the use of lexical variety and vocabulary which includes some idiomatic expressions. This IB band describes a student who makes some occasional mistakes in common and more complex grammatical structures, although these do not impede communication and understanding, and the pronunciation is mostly clear. The comparative analysis of this IB band indicated that it reflects B2+-C1 CEFR levels

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 134.

in relation to the use of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In relation to pronunciation and intonation, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the C1 CEFR Overall phonological control competence which states that the student 'Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility'.¹⁵⁶ Regarding vocabulary, the IB band descriptors reflect those of the C1 CEFR level Vocabulary range and Vocabulary control competences as both focus on the ability of the student to use a variety of vocabulary as well as idiomatic expressions, with the C1 level describing a student who 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors' and to have a good command of common idiomatic expressions.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, with regard to grammar, the IB band descriptors better reflect those of the B2+ Grammatical accuracy which emphasise that the student has good grammatical control but 'occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect'.¹⁵⁸ Overall, the comparative analysis indicated that the level descriptors of this IB band mostly reflect those of the B2+ and C1 CEFR levels where the student uses a variety of vocabulary with includes idiomatic expressions and also a range of basic and complex grammatical structures with minor errors which do not establish barriers in communication and understanding.

In the highest IB marking band of 10-12 marks in SL, the students command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective with the descriptors relating more to B2+ and C1 CEFR levels. In terms of vocabulary, the IB band outlines that the students' vocabulary is appropriate to the task, varied and includes some idiomatic expressions. This better reflects the B2+ level descriptor of Vocabulary range which outlines that the student 'Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists' and also the C1 level descriptor of Vocabulary range which highlights that the student 'Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation'.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, this also reflects the C1 level descriptor of Vocabulary control which outlines that the student 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors'.¹⁶⁰ Regarding grammar the highest IB marking band outlines that the students use a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures effectively with minor errors occurring in more complex grammatical structures but without impeding communication. This best reflects the C1 level descriptor of Grammatical accuracy which focuses on students' ability to 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.¹⁶¹ With regard to pronunciation, the IB marking band outlines that students' pronunciation and intonation is easy to understand and helps to convey meaning. This better aligns with the C1 level descriptor of the Overall phonological control competence which outlines that the student 'Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 134.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 132.

sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout. Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.¹⁶²

Similarly to SL, the highest IB marking band of the Criterion A (10-12 marks) in HL describes a student whose command and use of language is accurate and very effective, including the use of nuanced, varied, and purposeful vocabulary and idiomatic expressions as well as the use of a wide range of common and complex grammatical structures. In addition, in this IB band the student usually makes some minor errors in more complex grammatical structures and the pronunciation is very clear which increases the levels of understanding and communication and enhances the conveyance of meaning. The comparative analysis of this IB band of Criterion A reflects performance at C1 level with some elements of C2 level. More specifically, the pronunciation descriptor included in this IB band reflects the C2 level of the CEFR Overall phonological control which outlines that the student can use a full range of phonological elements with high level of control, their message is clear and accurate and that 'Intelligibility and effective conveyance and enhancement of meaning are not affected in any way by features of accent that may be retained from other language(s)'.¹⁶³ Additionally, in terms of grammar, the IB band descriptor reflects the C1 level of Grammatical accuracy which specifies that the student effectively and consistently uses and maintains a high level of grammatical precision with only minor and rare mistakes which are difficult to identify. Furthermore, in terms of vocabulary, this IB band presents several simulates with the C1 level of Vocabulary control as both descriptors outline the effective use of complex and varied vocabulary including idiomatic expressions.

The table below presents the level descriptors of the SL and HL Criterion A for speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment) mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assessed to each level descriptor of Criterion A in both SL and HL.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 134.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. 134.

Table 42: SL and HL Criterion A: Language level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1	0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1
1-3	<p>Command of the language is limited. Vocabulary is sometimes appropriate to the task. Basic grammatical structures are used. Language contains errors in basic structures. Errors interfere with communication. Pronunciation and intonation are influenced by other language(s). Mispronunciations are recurrent and interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: A1: Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type. Can use some basic structures in one-clause sentences with some omission or reduction of elements. Vocabulary range: A1: Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of words/signs and phrases related to particular concrete situations. A2: Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Grammatical accuracy: A1: Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire. A2: Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say. Vocabulary control: A2: Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs. Overall phonological control: A2: Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation</p>	A1-A2	1-3	<p>Command of the language is limited. Vocabulary is sometimes appropriate to the task. Some basic grammatical structures are used, with some attempts to use more complex structures. Language contains errors in both basic and more complex structures. Errors interfere with communication. Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear but sometimes interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: A2+: Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs. B1: Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times. Vocabulary range: B1: Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. Grammatical accuracy: A2+: Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say. B1: Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations. Vocabulary control B1: Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and</p>	A2 - B1

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
		may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.				situations. Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics. Overall phonological control: A2: Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear. B1: Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message. Accent is usually influenced by the other language(s) they speak.	
4-6	Command of the language is partially effective. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task. Some basic grammatical structures are used, with some attempts to use more complex structures. Language is mostly accurate in basic structures, but errors occur in more complex	General linguistic range: A2+: Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs. Vocabulary range: B1: Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events. Grammatical accuracy: B1: Communicates with reasonable	B1-B1+ Some evidence of B2 in grammar	4-6	Command of the language is partially effective. Vocabulary is generally appropriate to the task, and varied. A variety of basic and some more complex grammatical structures is used. Language is mostly accurate for basic structures, but errors occur in more complex structures. Errors at times interfere with	General linguistic range: B1+: Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film. B2: Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so. Vocabulary range: B2: Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.	B1- B2

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
	<p>structures. Errors at times interfere with communication. Pronunciation and intonation are influenced by other language(s), but mispronunciations do not often interfere with communication.</p>	<p>accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.</p> <p>Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more predictable situations.</p> <p>B2: Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.</p> <p>Vocabulary control:</p> <p>B1: Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.</p> <p>Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics.</p> <p>Overall phonological control:</p> <p>B1: Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message. Accent is usually influenced by the other language(s) they speak.</p>			<p>communication. Pronunciation and intonation are generally clear.</p>	<p>Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy</p> <p>B1+: Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.</p> <p>B2: Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.</p> <p>Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.</p> <p>Vocabulary control:</p> <p>B2: Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication.</p> <p>Overall phonological control:</p> <p>B2: Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.</p>	

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
7-9	<p>Command of the language is effective and mostly accurate. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied. A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used. Language is mostly accurate. Occasional errors in basic and in complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication. <i>Pronunciation and intonation are easy to understand.</i></p>	<p>General linguistic range: B1+: Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film. Vocabulary range: B2: Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Grammatical accuracy: B2: Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. B2+: Good grammatical control; occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. Vocabulary control B2: Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication. Overall phonological control: B2: Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.</p>	B2	7-9	<p>Command of the language is effective and mostly accurate. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied, including the use of idiomatic expressions. A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used effectively. Language is mostly accurate. Occasional errors in basic and in complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication. <i>Pronunciation and intonation are mostly clear and do not interfere with communication.</i></p>	<p>General linguistic range: B2+: Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. C1: Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say. Vocabulary range: B2+: Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists. C1: Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation. Grammatical accuracy: B2+: Good grammatical control; occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. Vocabulary control: C1: Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. Overall phonological control: C1: Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language</p>	B2 - C1 Vocab at C1

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
						with sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout. Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.	
10-12	<p>Command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective.</p> <p>Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied, including the use of idiomatic expressions.</p> <p>A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used effectively.</p> <p>Language is mostly accurate. Minor errors in more complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication.</p> <p><i>Pronunciation and intonation are easy to understand and help to convey meaning.</i></p>	<p>General linguistic range:</p> <p>B2+: Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say.</p> <p>C1: Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.</p> <p>Vocabulary range:</p> <p>B2+: Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists.</p> <p>C1: Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy:</p> <p>C1: Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</p> <p>Vocabulary control:</p>	B2+ - C1	10-12	<p>Command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective.</p> <p>Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and nuanced and varied in a manner that enhances the message, including the purposeful use of idiomatic expressions.</p> <p>A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used selectively in order to enhance communication.</p> <p>Language is mostly accurate. Minor errors in more complex grammatical structures do not interfere with</p>	<p>General linguistic range:</p> <p>C1: Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.</p> <p>Vocabulary range:</p> <p>C2: Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy:</p> <p>C1: Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</p> <p>Vocabulary control:</p> <p>C1: Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Overall phonological control:</p> <p>C2: Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with a high level of control – including prosodic features such as word and</p>	C1

Standard Level			Higher Level				
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
		<p>C1: Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Overall phonological control:</p> <p>C1: Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout. Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.</p>			<p>communication. Pronunciation and intonation are very clear and enhance communication.</p>	<p>sentence stress, rhythm and intonation – so that the finer points of their message are clear and precise. Intelligibility and effective conveyance and enhancement of meaning are not affected in any way by features of accent that may be retained from other language(s).</p>	

Key:

Colour	Description
Yellow	Command of language and vocabulary range and control
Cyan	Grammatical accuracy and control
Green	Pronunciation, accent and intonation
Magenta	Information about errors in language, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation

Criterion B1: Message- Visual Stimulus (SL)

Criterion B1 focuses on assessing students' development of ideas and how relevant these are to the visual stimulus that they have selected. More specifically, this criterion aims to assess students' ability to engage with the stimulus, deliver a presentation about the stimulus and their ability to effectively present ideas related to the visual stimulus and the English-speaking cultures that it refers to. Criterion B1 is marked on a scale of 0-6. The CEFR activity that was selected for the purposes of the comparative analysis and that better reflects the level descriptors of Criterion B1 is that of Overall oral production. Additionally, the CEFR competences that were selected for the purposes of the comparative analysis and that better reflect the level descriptors of Criterion B1 include Thematic development, Coherence and cohesion, Propositional precision and Building on pluricultural repertoire.

The level descriptor for 1-2 marks for Criterion B1 outlines that the students' presentation is mostly irrelevant to the stimulus, it is limited to descriptions of the stimulus which are often incomplete, and it is not clearly linked to the English-speaking cultures. The analysis found that this level descriptor band demonstrates some similarities with the A2-A2+ CEFR levels. This is evident in the A2 level of the CEFR Overall oral production competence which focuses on students' ability to produce simple descriptions outlining that the student 'Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list'.¹⁶⁴ In terms of Thematic development, this level descriptor band seems to better align with the A2 level descriptor which highlights that the student 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can give an example of something in a very simple text using 'like' or 'for example'.¹⁶⁵ This IB band demonstrates similarities with the A2 CEFR level descriptor of the Propositional precision competence which outlines that the student 'Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message'.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the A2 level descriptor of the CEFR competence Coherence and cohesion which supports that the student 'Can link groups of words/signs with simple connectors (e.g. 'and', 'but' and 'because')' as well as the A2+ level descriptor of the same competence which outlines that the student 'Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points'.¹⁶⁷ Overall, in this IB band it is evident that the student's overall oral production is limited to simple presentations and descriptions of the visual stimulus by linking words and phrases with simple and frequent connectors.

The second IB marking band of Criterion B1, for 3-4 marks, indicates that the student's presentation is mostly relevant to the stimulus where the student provides detailed descriptions, provides personal meanings and interpretations related to the stimulus, and mostly connects the presentation of the stimulus to the English-speaking culture(s). The analysis found that this level descriptor band demonstrates some similarities with the B1-

¹⁶⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 62.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 141.

B1+ CEFR levels. This is evident in the B1 level descriptor of the CEFR activity of Overall oral production which outlines that the student 'Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points'.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, this IB band presents a number of similarities with the B1 and B1+ level descriptors of the Thematic development CEFR competence which outlines that the student '(B1) Shows awareness of the conventional structure of the text type concerned when communicating their ideas. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points' and '(B1+) Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.'¹⁶⁹ The IB level descriptor for 3-4 marks demonstrates some similarities with the B1 and B1+ CEFR level descriptors of the Coherence and cohesion CEFR competence. This is evident as the B1 level descriptor of Coherence and cohesion outlines that the student 'Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points. Can form longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices, e.g. in a story. Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text' and the B1+ level descriptor supports that the student 'Can introduce a counterargument in a simple discursive text (e.g. with 'however')'.¹⁷⁰ In addition, the IB level descriptor for 3-4 marks presents some similarities with the B1 and B1+ level descriptors of the Propositional precision CEFR competence. More specifically this is evident as the B1 level descriptor supports that the student 'Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly' and the B1+ level descriptor outlines that the student 'Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision'.¹⁷¹ As a result, it is evident that this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the B1 and B1+ CEFR level descriptors as both focus on students' ability to provide detailed descriptions, communicate their ideas in a narrative, develop arguments and counterarguments and express their personal opinion regarding those as well as develop mostly relevant topics and ideas to the visual stimulus.

In the next band, the IB level descriptor for marks 5-6 reflects effective presentation of the visual stimulus where the student consistently creates links between the stimulus and the presentation by providing explicit and implicit details, descriptions and personal interpretations related to the stimulus as well as links to the English-speaking culture(s). The analysis found that this level descriptor band demonstrates some similarities with the B2 CEFR levels. This is evident in the B2 level descriptor of the CEFR Overall oral production activity which describes that the student 'Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding, and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples'.¹⁷² This is also evident in the B2 level descriptor of the CEFR Thematic development competence which specifies that that student 'Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their main

¹⁶⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 62.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 64.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 62.

points with relevant supporting detail and examples'.¹⁷³ In addition, the B2 level descriptor of the CEFR Propositional precision competence outlines that the student 'Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though their language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity.'¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, this IB level descriptor demonstrates similarities with the B2 level descriptor on the Pluricultural repertoire competence which outlines that the student 'Can generally interpret cultural cues appropriately in the culture concerned. Can reflect on and explain particular ways of communicating in their own and other cultures, and the risks of misunderstanding they generate.'¹⁷⁵ Therefore, the analysis of this IB band level descriptor showed that it presents a lot of similarities with the B2 CEFR level descriptors in several activities and competences.

The table below presents the level descriptors of the SL Criterion B1: Message-visual mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion B1.

Table 43: SL Criterion B1: Message- visual stimulus level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion B1: Message— visual stimulus		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1
1-2	<p>The presentation is mostly irrelevant to the stimulus.</p> <p>The presentation is limited to descriptions of the stimulus, or part of it. These descriptions may be incomplete.</p> <p>The presentation is not clearly linked to the target culture(s).</p>	<p>Overall oral production: A2: Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/ dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</p> <p>Thematic development: A2: Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can give an example of something in a very simple text using "like" or "for example".</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: A1: Can link words/signs or groups of words/signs with very basic linear connectors (e.g. "and" or "then"). A2: Can link groups of words/signs with simple connectors (e.g. "and", "but" and "because"). A2+: Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.</p> <p>Propositional precision: A1: Can communicate basic information about personal details and needs of a concrete type in a simple way. A2: Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message.</p> <p>Building on pluricultural repertoire: A2: Can recognise and apply basic cultural conventions associated with everyday social exchanges (e.g. different</p>	A2-A2+

¹⁷³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 125.

IB Criterion B1: Message— visual stimulus		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
		greetings, rituals). Can act appropriately in everyday greetings, farewells and expressions of thanks and apology, although they have difficulty coping with any departure from the routine. Can recognise that their behaviour in an everyday transaction may convey a message different from the one they intend, and can try to explain this simply. Can recognise when difficulties occur in interaction with members of other cultures, even though they may not be sure how to behave in the situation.	
3-4	The presentation is mostly relevant to the stimulus. With a focus on explicit details, the candidate provides descriptions and basic personal interpretations relating to the stimulus. The presentation is mostly linked to the target culture(s).	<p>Overall oral production:</p> <p>B1: Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</p> <p>Thematic development:</p> <p>B1: Shows awareness of the conventional structure of the text type concerned when communicating their ideas. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points.</p> <p>B1+: Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion:</p> <p>B1: Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points. Can form longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices, e.g. in a story. Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.</p> <p>B1+: Can introduce a counter-argument in a simple discursive text (e.g. with “however”).</p> <p>Propositional precision:</p> <p>B1: Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly.</p> <p>B1+: Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision.</p> <p>Building on pluricultural repertoire:</p> <p>B1: Can generally act according to conventions regarding posture, eye contact and distance from others. Can generally respond appropriately to the most commonly used cultural cues. Can explain features of their own culture to members of another culture or explain features of the other culture to members of their own culture.</p>	B1-B1+

IB Criterion B1: Message— visual stimulus		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
5-6	<p>The presentation is consistently relevant to the stimulus and draws on explicit and implicit details.</p> <p>The presentation provides both descriptions and personal interpretations relating to the stimulus.</p> <p>The presentation makes clear links to the target culture(s).</p>	<p>Overall oral production: B2: Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p> <p>Thematic development: B2: Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas.</p> <p>Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their main points with relevant supporting detail and examples.</p> <p>Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2: Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some “jumpiness” in a long contribution. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices. Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs.</p> <p>Propositional precision: B2: Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though their language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity.</p> <p>Building on pluricultural repertoire: B2: **Can describe and evaluate the viewpoints and practices of their own and other social groups, showing awareness of the implicit values on which judgments and prejudices are frequently based.</p>	B2

Key:

Colour	Description
	Description of the stimulus
	Links to the target culture during the presentation of the stimulus

Criterion B1: Message- Literary Extract (HL)

Criterion B1 aims to assess students’ ability to engage with a literary extract and to present it by summarising its main points, key elements, expressing their opinions and making observations related to the literary extract. Criterion B1 is marked on a scale of 0-6. The CEFR activities that were selected for the purposes of the comparative analysis and that better reflect the level descriptors of Criterion B1 are Mediation of a text, Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) and Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature).

To be awarded 1-2 marks in Criterion B1, the students make superficial use of the literary extract, with their observations and opinions being generalised, simple and unsupported, making the overall presentation mostly irrelevant to the literary extract. This IB band mostly reflects the A2 CEFR level descriptors of the CEFR activities of Expressing a personal response to creative texts and Analysis and criticism of creative texts. This is evident as the A2 level descriptor of the activity of Expressing a personal response to creative texts

specifies that the student 'Can express their reactions to a work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple language. Can state in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested them. Can state whether they liked a work or not and explain why in simple language'¹⁷⁶. Additionally, this IB band descriptor reflects the A2 level descriptor of the Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) which focuses on students' ability to 'identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language'.¹⁷⁷ Overall, the analysis of Criterion B1 found that this band demonstrates similarities with A2 level descriptors as the student can provide only simple and generalised descriptions of the literary extract, using simple and familiar language without being able to engage in more in-depth analysis, observations and descriptions of the story and the characters or their opinions of the literary extract.

The next marking band for 3-4 marks describes a presentation which is mostly relevant to the literary extract with the student being able to make competent and effective use of the extract and being able to make observations and express their opinion regarding the topic discussed by referring to the extract. This reflects the descriptors of B1 in both CEFR Mediation of a text activities. More specifically, the B1 level descriptor of Expressing a personal response to creative texts focuses on the students' ability to 'relate events in a story, film or play to similar events they have experienced or heard about. Can relate the emotions experienced by a character to emotions they have experienced. Can explain briefly the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in them. Can describe the personality of a character. Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them.'¹⁷⁸ Additionally, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the B1 level descriptor of the CEFR activity of Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) where it is highlighted that the student 'Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connections between them. Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language'.¹⁷⁹ As a result, the IB band for 3-4 marks of Criterion B1 reflects B1 CEFR level descriptors as the student can generally provide an effective presentation of the literary extract by describing the story, the key themes that the story presents, the main characters and feelings that the extract evokes by relating them to some extent to their own personal views and experiences and in some cases providing their own meanings and interpretations of the story.

The highest marking band for 5-6 marks of Criterion B1 focuses on student's ability to present the literary extract effectively and convincingly by making observations, expressing personal views which are thoroughly developed, and making clear connections and references between their personal experiences and perceptions and the literary extract. This IB band mostly reflects the B2 CEFR level descriptors of the CEFR activities of Expressing a personal response to creative texts and Analysis and criticism of creative texts. At B2 level of

¹⁷⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 222.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 224.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 107.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 108.

the CEFR activity of Expressing a personal response to creative texts, the student ‘Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can give a personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and themes in a story, novel, film or play.’¹⁸⁰ In addition, this IB band reflects the B2 level descriptor of the CEFR activity of Analysis and criticism of creative texts where it is stated that the student ‘Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others’.¹⁸¹ Therefore, the comparative analysis of the highest IB marking band of Criterion B1 to CEFR seems to better reflect the B2 descriptors where the student can effectively and confidently make a clear presentation of a literary extract, provide personal interpretations and opinions regarding the story supported by references, examples, and arguments from the literary extract which are justified and supported.

The table below presents the level descriptors of the HL Criterion B1: Message- literary extract mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion B1.

Table 44: HL Criterion B1: Message- literary extract level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion B1: Message— literary extract		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1
1-2	The presentation is mostly irrelevant to the literary extract. The candidate makes superficial use of the extract. Observations and opinions are generalized, simplistic and mostly unsupported.	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): A1: Can use simple words/signs to state how a work made them feel. A2: Can express their reactions to a work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple language. Can state in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested them. Can state whether they liked a work or not and explain why in simple language.</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): A2: Can identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language.</p>	A2
3-4	The presentation is mostly relevant to the literary extract. The candidate makes competent use of the literary extract. Some observations and opinions are developed and supported with reference to the	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B1: Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested them. Can explain in some detail which character they most identified with and why. Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events they have experienced or heard about. Can relate the emotions experienced by a character to emotions they have experienced. Can describe the emotions they experienced at a certain point in a story, e.g. the point(s) in a story when</p>	B1

¹⁸⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 221.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 223.

IB Criterion B1: Message— literary extract		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
	extract.	<p>they became anxious for a character, and explain why.</p> <p>Can explain briefly the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in them.</p> <p>Can describe the personality of a character.</p> <p>Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them.</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): B1: Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connections between them.</p> <p>Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language.</p>	
5-6	<p>The presentation is consistently relevant to the literary extract and is convincing.</p> <p>The candidate makes effective use of the extract. Observations and opinions are effectively developed and supported with reference to the extract.</p>	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B2: Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments.</p> <p>Can give a personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and themes in a story, novel, film or play.</p> <p>Can describe their emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response. Can express in some detail their reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what they appreciated and why.</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): B2: Can compare two works, considering themes, characters and scenes, exploring similarities and contrasts and explaining the relevance of the connections between them.</p> <p>Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others.</p>	B2

Key:

Colour	Description
	Use of the literary extract during the presentation
	Development and presentation of observations, ideas and opinions with reference to the literary extract

Criterion B2: Message- Conversation (SL and HL)

The level descriptors of the HL Criterion B2: Message-Conversation are the same as the level descriptors of the SL Criterion B2: Message-Conversation. As a result, the findings of the mapping of these level descriptors against the CEFR descriptors are the same as the SL outlined above.

Criterion B2 aims to assess students' ability and extent to which they appropriately and thoroughly respond to the questions posed by the teacher during their conversation but also evaluate the depth of students' responses. Criterion B2 is marked on a scale of 0-6. The CEFR activities that were selected for the purposes of the comparative analysis and that better reflect the level descriptors of Criterion B2 are Conversation and Overall oral interaction. Additionally, the CEFR competence that was selected for the purposes of the

comparative analysis and that better reflects the level descriptors of Criterion B2 is that of Thematic development.

The level descriptor for 1-2 marks for Criterion B2 outlines that the student consistently struggles to address the questions asked by the teacher and that only some responses are appropriate and rarely developed, with the majority of responses being limited to scope and depth. This level descriptor for a mark of 1-2 for Criterion B2 demonstrates some similarities with A1 and A2 CEFR level descriptors. More specifically, this is evident in the A2 level descriptor of the Conversation CEFR activity which outlines that the student 'Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocutor will take the trouble. Can use simple, everyday, polite forms of greeting and address.'¹⁸² Furthermore, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the A2 level band of the Overall oral interaction activity which specifies that the student 'Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.'¹⁸³ Additionally, this IB band demonstrates some similarities with the A2+ level descriptor of the Thematic development competence which highlights that the student 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can give an example of something in a very simple text using 'like' or 'for example'.¹⁸⁴ As a result, it is evident that this IB level descriptor band reflects the A2 CEFR level descriptors of Conversation, Overall oral interaction, and Thematic development, where the student can usually handle very short and simple conversations and interactions about every day, simple things and familiar topics but without being able to fully respond to the questions posed by the teacher and also being unable to understand enough to maintain an interaction and continue the conversation with the teacher.

In the second highest IB band for 3-4 marks, the students' responses are mostly relevant to the questions asked by the teacher with some responses being developed and mostly broad in scope and depth. This IB band seems to better reflect the A2+ and B1 CEFR level descriptors in Conversation, Overall oral interaction and Thematic development. More specifically, this is evident in the A2+ level descriptor of the CEFR Conversation activity where it is stated that the student 'Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.'¹⁸⁵ Additionally, the B1 level descriptor of the Conversation activity also seems to reflect this IB band as it specifies that the student 'Can follow clearly articulated language directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs. Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to

¹⁸² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 74.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 72.

express exactly what they would like to.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, this IB band demonstrates some similarities with the B1 level descriptor of the Thematic development competence where it is outlined that the student 'Shows awareness of the conventional structure of the text type concerned when communicating their ideas. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points.'¹⁸⁷ In terms of the Overall oral interaction CEFR activity, this IB band presents some similarities with the B1 level descriptor of this activity where the students 'Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, and 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 and current events)'.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, it is evident that the IB band for marks 3-4 reflects better the A2+ and B1 CEFR levels as the student can produce generally relevant responses to teachers' questions and can communicate effectively by providing broad responses to questions using simple language.

The highest IB marking band, for 5-6 marks, describes the students' responses being consistently relevant to the questions asked by the teacher, developed and appropriate to the questions, as well as broad in scope and depth, including some personal interpretations. This IB band seems to better reflect the B1+ and B2 CEFR level descriptors in Conversation, Overall oral interaction, and Thematic development by showing some attempts to engage with the teacher. More specifically, this is evident in the B1+ descriptor of the Conversation CEFR activity where it is stated that where it is stated that the student 'Can start up a conversation and help keep it going by asking people relatively spontaneous questions about a special experience or event, expressing reactions and opinions on familiar subjects. Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding.'¹⁸⁹ Additionally, this IB band demonstrates some similarities with the B2 level descriptor of the CEFR Conversation activity which states that the student 'Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user. Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.'¹⁹⁰ In terms of Overall oral interaction, this IB band demonstrates a lot of similarities with the B1+ level descriptor which outlines that the student 'Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc.'¹⁹¹ Furthermore, the B2 level descriptor of the Overall oral interaction CEFR activity seems to reflect this IB band as it specifies that the student 'Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account

¹⁸⁶Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 74.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 74.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 73.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 72.

for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.¹⁹² The IB level descriptors included in this band reflect those of B2 level descriptors in the Thematic development CEFR competence where it is supported that the student 'Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples'.¹⁹³ As a result, it is evident that the IB band for 5-6 marks better reflects B1+ and B2 CEFR levels as the student effectively interacts and engages in conversations with the teacher, by expanding their responses in breadth and depth, providing their opinions and points of view.

The table below presents the level descriptors of the SL and HL Criterion B2 mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion B2.

Table 45: SL and HL Criterion B2: Message- conversation level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion B2: Message— conversation		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1
1-2	The candidate consistently struggles to address the questions. Some responses are appropriate and are rarely developed. Responses are limited in scope and depth.	<p>Conversation</p> <p>A2: Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocutor will take the trouble.</p> <p>Can converse in simple language with peers, colleagues or members of a host family, asking questions and understanding answers relating to most routine matters. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions and apologies. Can express how they are feeling, using very basic stock expressions. Can state what they like and dislike.</p> <p>A2+: Can establish social contact (e.g. greetings and farewells, introductions, giving thanks).</p> <p>Can generally understand clear, standard language on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.</p> <p>Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.</p> <p>Can express how they feel in simple terms, and express thanks.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction:</p> <p>A2: Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.</p> <p>A2+: Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.</p>	A1-A2
3-4	The candidate's responses are mostly relevant to the questions.	<p>Conversation:</p> <p>B1: Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.</p> <p>Can follow clearly articulated language directed at them in</p>	A2+ -B1

¹⁹² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume.

¹⁹³ Ibid. p. 140.

IB Criterion B2: Message— conversation		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
	<p>Most responses are appropriate and some are developed.</p> <p>Responses are mostly broad in scope and depth.</p>	<p>everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs.</p> <p>Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to express exactly what they would like to.</p> <p>Can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction:</p> <p>B1: Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling.</p> <p>Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, and 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 and current events).</p>	
5-6	<p>The candidate's responses are consistently relevant to the questions and show some development.</p> <p>Responses are consistently appropriate and developed.</p> <p>Responses are broad in scope and depth, including personal interpretations and/or attempts to engage the interlocutor.</p>	<p>Conversation:</p> <p>B1+: Can start up a conversation and help keep it going by asking people relatively spontaneous questions about a special experience or event, expressing reactions and opinions on familiar subjects.</p> <p>Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding.</p> <p>B2: Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.</p> <p>Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction:</p> <p>B1+: Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc.</p> <p>B2: Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.</p>	B1+ -B2

Key:

Colour	Description
	Appropriateness and development of candidate's responses to questions
	Depth and scope of candidate's responses

Criterion C: Interactive skills- Communication (SL and HL)

The level descriptors of the HL Criterion C: Interactive skills- Communication are the same as the level descriptors of the SL Criterion C: Interactive skills- Communication. As a result, the findings of the mapping of these level descriptors against the CEFR descriptors are the same as the SL outlined above.

The level descriptors for 1-2 marks at Criterion C describe the student as having limited comprehension, interaction, and participation in the discussion with the teacher. At this level, the student shows hesitation, pauses and false starts when speaking, and most of the questions must be repeated or rephrased by the teacher. This IB band reflects the A1 and A2 CEFR level descriptors of the CEFR activities of Overall oral interaction and Understanding an interlocutor. This is because the A1 level descriptor of the Overall oral interaction states that the student 'Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate, rephrasing and repair'.¹⁹⁴ In addition, this IB band presents some similarities with the A2 level descriptor for Overall oral interaction where it is outlined that a student 'Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord'.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the A1 and A2 level descriptors of the CEFR Understanding an interlocutor activity. This is evident as the A1 level descriptor of Understanding an interlocutor describes that the student 'Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them clearly and slowly, with repetition, by a sympathetic interlocutor' and also the A1 level descriptor of the same activity which outlines that the student 'Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocutor can take the trouble'.¹⁹⁶ Overall, this IB level band relates to the A1 and A2 descriptors where the students can interact with the interlocutor in simple language, requesting repetition of questions and the support of the interlocutor in order to reach better understanding, although the students' responses are limited and restricted.

The next IB marking band of 3-4 marks for Criterion C requires the students to provide responses that mostly demonstrate comprehension with their participation in the conversation being mostly sustained. This IB band reflects the A2+ and B1 CEFR level descriptors of the CEFR activities of Overall oral interaction and Understanding an interlocutor. Regarding Overall oral interaction, the level descriptors of this IB band reflect those of the A2+ level which outlines the ability of the student to 'interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations' as well as the B1 level which states that the student 'Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling'.¹⁹⁷ In addition, this IB band presents a lot of similarities with the A2+ and B1 levels of the Understanding an interlocutor CEFR activity, where it is stated that the student '(A2+) Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort. Can generally understand clear, standard speech/sign on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time' and that the student '(B1) Can follow clearly articulated speech/sign directed at them in everyday conversation,

¹⁹⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 72.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 73.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 72.

though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs and phrases'.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, the mark scheme analysis found that the IB band for 3-4 marks reflects the A2+ and B1 CEFR level descriptors where the student mostly has a good level of interaction with the teacher, their responses are mostly accurate and their participation and engagement in the conversation is mostly sustained throughout the task.

At the highest IB band for Criterion C, the students are awarded between 5-6 marks where they are able to consistently sustain participation, interaction, and comprehension throughout the conversation with the teacher and to provide some independent contributions throughout the task. This IB band mostly reflects the B2 CEFR level descriptors of the CEFR activities of Overall oral interaction and Understanding an interlocutor with some elements of B1+. Regarding Overall oral interaction, this IB band demonstrates some similarities with the B1+ CEFR level descriptor which highlights students' ability to 'exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem' but also the B2 CEFR level descriptor which focuses on students' ability to 'interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.'¹⁹⁹ Additionally, this IB band reflects the B2 level descriptor of the Understanding an interlocutor CEFR activity which outlines that the student 'Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment'.²⁰⁰ As a result, it is evident that at the highest IB level band for Criterion C the student should be able to demonstrate comprehension and understanding of the questions posed by the teacher, consistently sustain the interaction and participation during the conversation and also provide their personal views and opinions confidently and fluently throughout the discussion.

The table below presents the level descriptors of the HL and SL Criterion C mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion C.

Table 46: SL and HL Criterion C: Interactive skills communication level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion C: Interactive skills—communication		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre- A1
1-2	Comprehension and interaction are limited. The candidate provides limited responses in the target language. Participation is limited.	Overall oral interaction: A1: Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	A1-A2

¹⁹⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 73.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 72.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 73.

IB Criterion C: Interactive skills—communication		CEFR Activities	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
	Most questions must be repeated and/or rephrased.	<p>A2: Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: A1: Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them clearly and slowly, with repetition, by a sympathetic interlocutor. Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions. A2: Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocutor can take the trouble.</p>	
3-4	Comprehension and interaction are mostly sustained. The candidate provides responses in the target language and mostly demonstrates comprehension. Participation is mostly sustained.	<p>Overall oral interaction: A2+: Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. B1: Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, and 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 and current events).</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: A2+: Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort. Can generally understand clear, standard speech/sign on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time. B1: Can follow clearly articulated speech/sign directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs and phrases.</p>	A2+-B1
5-6	Comprehension and interaction are consistently sustained. The candidate provides responses in the target language and demonstrates comprehension. Participation is sustained with some independent contributions.	<p>Overall oral interaction B1+: Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc. B2: Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party.</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: B2: Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.</p>	B2

Key:

Colour	Description
	Level of interaction and participation in the discussion
	Comprehension of the interlocutor's questions and provision of responses in the target language

Writing

Criterion A: Language (SL and HL)

At both SL and HL, Criterion A outlines the level of language that students are expected to demonstrate. There is a maximum of 12 marks available for language and these marks are divided into bands, accounting for varying levels of student skill demonstration. The descriptors in each IB marking band were analysed, in order to link them with the most equivalent CEFR scales and descriptors. In all four marking bands, the following CEFR competences were identified as relevant and were subsequently used to draw comparison between IB marking bands and CEFR levels: General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control and Orthographic control.

The mapping of the level descriptors of the Criterion A mark scheme of SL indicated that the first marking band (1-3), aligned generally with CEFR levels ranging from A1 to A2. At this level the IB state that command of the language is limited, linking closely with the General linguistic range descriptors at A1, 'a very basic range of simple expressions' and also at A2, 'limited repertoire of short, memorised phrases'.²⁰¹ Similarities can also be drawn with Orthographic control at A1, 'can copy familiar words and short phrases' and at A2, 'can copy short sentences on everyday subjects'.²⁰² The IB expectations for vocabulary are that it is sometimes appropriate, which could be seen to align with Vocabulary range at A1, 'a basic vocabulary repertoire' and at A2, 'sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs'.²⁰³ There are also similarities with Vocabulary control at A2, mentioning 'a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs'.²⁰⁴ In terms of grammar, the IB expect the use of basic grammatical structures, which links to the General linguistic range at A1.²⁰⁵ The IB expect that language contains errors in basic structures; similar mention can be found in Grammatical accuracy at A1, 'limited control of a few simple grammatical structures', and at A2, 'some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes'.²⁰⁶ Finally, in this band, the IB refers to errors interfering with communication, which can be seen to link with General linguistic range at A2, with 'frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings'.²⁰⁷

At HL, the mapping exercise found that the first marking band (1-3), aligned generally with CEFR levels ranging from A2 to B1. At this level the IB state that command of the language is limited, linking closely with the General linguistic range descriptor at A2+, 'they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs' and at B1 'lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times'.²⁰⁸ Similarities can also be drawn with Orthographic control at A2 'can copy short sentences ... can write with

²⁰¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 130.

²⁰² Ibid. p. 136.

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 131.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 133.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 130.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 130.

reasonable phonetic accuracy'.²⁰⁹ The IB expectations for vocabulary are that it is sometimes appropriate, which could be seen to align with Vocabulary range at B1, 'has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life'.²¹⁰ In terms of grammar, the IB expect the use of basic grammatical structures and some more complex structures', whilst also alluding to errors in both. Similar mention can be found in Grammatical accuracy at A2+, 'uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes' and at B1 'uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines''.²¹¹ There is also relevant mention in Vocabulary control at B1, where a student 'shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts'.²¹² Finally, in this band, the IB refers to errors which impede communication; depending on the level of inaccuracy, this can be seen to link with General linguistic range at A2, with 'frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings' or at B1 'lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times'.²¹³

In SL, the mapping exercise identified that the second marking band (4-6), aligned most closely with CEFR levels ranging from B1 – B1+, with some evidence of potential grammar use at B2. At this level, the IB are looking for command of language to be partially effective. This descriptor aligns with General linguistic range at A2, 'can produce brief, everyday expressions', and also at A2+ where students have 'a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations ... they will generally have to compromise the message'.²¹⁴ According to the IB, vocabulary is appropriate to the task; this relates to Vocabulary range at B1, where 'a good range of vocabulary' is expected, as well as 'sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life'.²¹⁵ This is also similar to Vocabulary control at B1 which 'uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately'.²¹⁶ In terms of language variety, the IB expects basic grammatical structures and some more complex structures. This level could be seen to link with General linguistic range at A2 'can use basic sentence patterns' and also Grammatical accuracy at B2, which uses 'good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms ... with some inaccuracy'.²¹⁷ At this level, the IB stipulates that language is mostly accurate for basic structures but with errors in complex structures. This level has similarities with Grammatical accuracy at B1, where the student 'communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts' and 'uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns'.²¹⁸ Similarities can also be found at B2 level, where students 'tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy' and with Vocabulary control at B1, [student] 'shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling

²⁰⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 136.

²¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 132.

²¹² Ibid. p. 133.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 130.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 133.

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

unfamiliar topics and situations'.²¹⁹ IB make further reference to errors that interfere with communication, whilst CEFR Orthographic control at B1 alludes to inconsistency in intelligibility, 'can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout' and 'spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time'.²²⁰

In comparison to SL, the mark scheme analysis indicated that the second marking band at HL (4-6), aligned most closely with CEFR levels ranging from B1 to B2. At this level, the IB are looking for command of language to be partially effective. This descriptor aligns with General linguistic range at B1+, where students have 'a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision' and at B2 'a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching'.²²¹ Orthographic control at B2 also accounts for partially effective language, 'can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing' but spelling and punctuation 'may show signs of mother-tongue influence'.²²² According to the IB, vocabulary is generally appropriate to the task and varied; this relates to Vocabulary range at B2, where a student 'has a good range of vocabulary', 'can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition', but may also need to 'produce appropriate collocations'.²²³ This is also similar to Vocabulary control at B2 which states that 'lexical accuracy is generally high'.²²⁴ In terms of language variety, the IB expects a variety of basic and some more complex grammatical structures. This level could be seen to link with General linguistic range at B2, where students produce language 'using some complex sentence forms to do so'.²²⁵ At this level, the IB stipulates that language is mostly accurate for basic structures, but errors occur in more complex structures. This level has similarities with Grammatical accuracy at B1+, where the student uses 'reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts ... generally good control' and at B2 'relatively high degree of grammatical control ... good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms'.²²⁶

Additionally, at SL it was determined that the range of marks in the third marking band (7-9), aligned overall with CEFR descriptors at B2. At this level, command of the language is expected to be effective and mostly accurate. This can align to General linguistic range at B1+, where 'a sufficient range of language' is used and students are able to 'explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision'.²²⁷ In addition, Vocabulary control at B2 mentions that 'lexical accuracy is generally high'.²²⁸ The level of vocabulary expected by the IB is appropriate and varied, the variety of which is similar to Vocabulary range B2 where the student 'has a good range of vocabulary' and 'can vary formulation to avoid frequent

²¹⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 133.

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 136.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid. p. 136.

²²³ Ibid. p. 131.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 133.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 130.

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

²²⁷ Ibid. p. 130.

²²⁸ Ibid. p. 132.

repetition'.²²⁹ The IB expect that language is mostly accurate and the student makes occasional errors in basic and complex grammatical structures. Parallels can be drawn here with Grammatical accuracy at B2, as students demonstrate 'a relatively high degree of grammatical control' or at B2+ level with 'good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare'.²³⁰ The IB state that errors do not impact communication, in line with Grammatical accuracy at B2 where the student 'does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding'.²³¹ In addition, Vocabulary control at B2 mentions that 'incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication', while Orthographic control at B2 says that students 'can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing'.²³²

In contrast with SL, the mark scheme analysis found that the range of marks in the third marking band at HL (7-9), aligned overall with CEFR descriptors at B2 and C1, with vocabulary particularly at C1 level. At this level, command of the language is expected to be 'effective and mostly accurate'. This can align to General linguistic range at B2+, where a student can 'express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say' or at C1 using 'complex grammatical structures appropriately' and expressing themselves 'without having to restrict what they want to say'.²³³ The level of vocabulary expected by the IB is appropriate and varied, including the use of idiomatic expressions. This level of language variety and appropriateness is similar to Vocabulary range at B2+, using 'main technical terminology', and at C1 with a 'good command of common idiomatic expressions'.²³⁴ In addition, Vocabulary control at C1 also mentions using 'less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.²³⁵ The IB expect that language is 'mostly accurate' with only 'occasional errors in basic and in complex grammatical structures' that 'do not interfere with communication'. Parallels can be drawn here with Vocabulary control at C1 where there are only 'occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors', with Grammatical accuracy at B2+, where students use 'good grammatical control' and only rare 'occasional slips ... and minor flaws' and even with Orthographic control at C1 where 'spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen'.²³⁶ Not only is this range of basic and complex grammatical structures expected to be accurate, but also used effectively in the IB; this stipulation can also be seen in General linguistic range at C1, where a student 'can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility'.²³⁷

In the final marking band (10-12) at SL, the range of marks available was found to relate to a range of CEFR descriptors from B2+ to C1. According to the IB, command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective. This statement shows similarities with General linguistic range at B2+, where students 'can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say' and at C1, where they 'can select an appropriate

²²⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

²³⁰ Ibid. p. 132.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid. p. 130.

²³⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 130.

formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say'.²³⁸ The IB describes vocabulary as appropriate, varied and employing idiomatic expressions. This descriptor can be linked to Vocabulary range at B2+ with the use of 'main technical terminology of their field', at C1 where 'a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms' is used and even Vocabulary control at C1 which 'uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.^{239 240} In terms of language structures, IB students effectively use basic and more complex grammatical structures, similar to General linguistic range at C1 where 'a broad range of complex grammatical structures ... with considerable flexibility' is employed.²⁴¹ The language of IB students is expected to be mostly accurate with errors in complex grammatical structures. This description links to Grammatical accuracy at C1 where a student 'consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy' and also Orthographic control at C1 where 'spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen'.²⁴²

In the final marking band at HL (10-12), the range of marks available was found to relate to a range of CEFR descriptors from C1 level. According to the IB, command of the language is 'mostly accurate and very effective'. The efficacy of communication here shows similarities with General linguistic range at C1, where students 'can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly'.²⁴³ The IB describes vocabulary as appropriate, nuanced and varied, enhancing the message, and including the purposeful use of idiomatic expressions. This descriptor can be linked to Vocabulary range at C2 with 'a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms' and Vocabulary control at C1, which 'uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.²⁴⁴ In terms of language structures, IB students selectively use a variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures, in order to enhance communication. This is similar to General linguistic range at C1 where students 'use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility'.²⁴⁵ The language of IB students is mostly accurate and even 'minor errors in more complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication'. This description links to Grammatical accuracy at C1 where a student 'consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot' and also Orthographic control at C1, where 'spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen'.²⁴⁶

The table below provides a visual representation of the level descriptors of the SL and HL Criterion A for writing (paper 1) mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assessed to each level descriptor of Criterion A.

²³⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 130.

²³⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 132.

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 130.

²⁴² Ibid. p. 132.

²⁴³ Ibid. p. 130.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 130.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 132, 136.

Table 47: SL and HL Criterion A: Language level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

Standard Level				Higher Level			
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.			0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		A2- B1
1-3	Command of the language is limited. Vocabulary is sometimes appropriate to the task. Basic grammatical structures are used. Language contains errors in basic structures. Errors interfere with communication.	<p>General linguistic range: A1 Can use some <u>basic structures</u> in one-clause sentences with some omission or reduction of elements.</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A1 Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of words/signs and phrases related to <u>particular concrete situations</u>.</p> <p>Vocabulary control: A2 Can control a <u>narrow repertoire</u> dealing with concrete, everyday needs.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A2 Uses some <u>simple structures correctly</u>, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is <u>usually clear</u> what they are trying to say.</p>	A1-A2	1-3	Command of the language is limited. Vocabulary is sometimes appropriate to the task. Some basic grammatical structures are used, with some attempts to use more complex structures. Language contains errors in both basic and more complex structures. Errors interfere with communication.	<p>General linguistic range: A2+ Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with <u>everyday situations with predictable content</u>, though they will generally have to <u>compromise the message</u> and search for words/signs.</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2 Has <u>sufficient vocabulary</u> to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.</p> <p>Vocabulary control: A2/ B1 Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs. Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+/ B2 Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. <u>Errors occur</u>, but it is clear what they are trying to express. Has a good command of simple language structures and <u>some complex grammatical forms</u>, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.</p>	B1- B2

Standard Level				Higher Level			
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
4-6	<p>Command of the language is partially effective. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task. Some basic grammatical structures are used, with some attempts to use more complex structures. Language is mostly accurate for basic structures, but errors occur in more complex structures. Errors at times interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: A2 <i>Has a limited repertoire of short, memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.</i> Vocabulary range: B1 <i>Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.</i> Vocabulary control: B1 <i>Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.</i> Grammatical accuracy: B1+/ B2 <i>Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express. Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly</i></p>	B1-B1+ Some evidence of B2 in grammar	4-6	<p>Command of the language is partially effective. Vocabulary is generally appropriate to the task and varied. A variety of basic and some more complex grammatical structures is used. Language is mostly accurate for basic structures, but errors occur in more complex structures. Errors at times interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: B1 <i>Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</i> Vocabulary range: B1+ <i>Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film.</i> Vocabulary control: B1 <i>Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.</i> Grammatical accuracy: B2 <i>Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.</i></p>	B2-C1 Vocab at C1

Standard Level				Higher Level			
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
		<i>with some inaccuracy.</i>					
7-9	<p>Command of the language is effective and mostly accurate. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied. A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used. Language is mostly accurate. Occasional errors in basic and in complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: B1 <i>Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with <u>some hesitation</u> and <u>circumlocutions</u> on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</i> Vocabulary range: B2 <i>Has a <u>good range</u> of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.</i> Vocabulary control: B2 <i>Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur <u>without hindering communication</u>.</i> Grammatical accuracy: B2 <i>Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. <u>Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.</u></i></p>	B2	7-9	<p>Command of the language is effective and mostly accurate. Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied, including the use of idiomatic expressions. A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used effectively. Language is mostly accurate. Occasional errors in basic and in complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: B2+ <i>Can express themselves <u>clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say.</u></i> Vocabulary range: C1 <i>Has a good command of common <u>idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms</u>; can play with words/signs fairly well.</i> Vocabulary control: B2 <i>Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur <u>without hindering communication</u>.</i> Grammatical accuracy: C1 <i>Consistently maintains a <u>high degree of grammatical accuracy</u>; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</i></p>	C1

Standard Level				Higher Level			
IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level	IB Criterion A: Language		CEFR Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor			Marks	Level Descriptor		
10-12	<p>Command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective.</p> <p>Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and varied, including the use of idiomatic expressions.</p> <p>A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used effectively.</p> <p>Language is mostly accurate. Minor errors in more complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: B2 <i>Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary range: C1 <i>Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1 <i>Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.</i></p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: C1 <i>Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</i></p>	B2+ - C1	10-12	<p>Command of the language is mostly accurate and very effective.</p> <p>Vocabulary is appropriate to the task, and nuanced and varied in a manner that enhances the message, including the purposeful use of idiomatic expressions.</p> <p>A variety of basic and more complex grammatical structures is used selectively in order to enhance communication.</p> <p>Language is mostly accurate. Minor errors in more complex grammatical structures do not interfere with communication.</p>	<p>General linguistic range: C2 <i>Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what they want to say.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary range: C2 <i>Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</i></p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1 <i>Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately.</i></p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: C1 <i>Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.</i></p>	

Criterion B: Message (SL and HL)

Criterion B assesses the message that students convey in their writing and the degree to which it aligns with the task brief. The level descriptors for Criterion B at HL are identical to those at SL. For this criterion, there is also a maximum of 12 marks available, split into marking bands whose ranges are identical to that of Criterion A. An identical process of comparison was undertaken, where the most relevant CEFR scales and descriptors were identified and then mapped against each marking band of the IB. For the first marking band (1-3), the CEFR activity Overall written production was aligned, as were the CEFR competences of Thematic development and Coherence and cohesion. All three scales were utilised in the analysis of the remaining three marking bands, with the addition of the CEFR activity Reports and essays.

In the first marking band (1-3), the IB descriptors align most closely with CEFR levels ranging from A1 to A2. According to the IB the task is partially fulfilled, with minimal ideas relevant to the task and ideas with little development. The lack of development in this descriptor links to Thematic development at A2 where students can merely ‘tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points’ or ‘give an example of something in a very simple text’.²⁴⁷ At this level, there is also a lack of logical structure expected by the IB, which is alluded to in the basic structure of Overall written production at A1 with ‘simple isolated phrases and sentences’.²⁴⁸ In addition, there are similarities with Coherence and cohesion at A1 where students ‘link words/signs or groups of words/signs with very basic linear connectors’ and at A2, linking with ‘simple connectors’.²⁴⁹

The second marking band (4-6) includes a range of requirements which align with CEFR levels ranging from A2+ - B1. At this level, the IB expect the task to be generally fulfilled with some ideas relevant to the task. The limitations of relevant ideas can be seen to relate to Reports and essays at A2, where students can only ‘give their impressions and opinions about topics of personal interest’.²⁵⁰ Ideas in the task may not be fully developed which is similar to the basic content requirements of Thematic development at A2+ where students ‘can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points’ or ‘give an example of something in a very simple text’.²⁵¹ IB expects that ideas are clearly presented and structured in a logical manner for the most part. This descriptor aligns with Overall written production at A2 where a student uses ‘a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors’ and with Coherence and cohesion at A2+ with ‘the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points’.²⁵²

In the third marking band (7-9), the descriptors used show alignment with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1+ to B2. According to IB, the task is fulfilled, most ideas are relevant, and ideas are well developed, with detail and examples. The notion of development can be seen in Reports and essays at B1 where students do not just pass on ‘routine factual information’

²⁴⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 66.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 141.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 68.

²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁵² Ibid. pp. 66, 141.

but also state ‘reasons for actions’ and in the sequential element of Thematic development at B1 with ‘a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points’.²⁵³ In the IB, ideas are clearly presented in a logical manner; there are several CEFR descriptors aligning with this judgement regarding structure. Overall written production at B1 identifies ‘straightforward connected texts ... linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence’ and Reports and essays at B1 details ‘very brief reports in a standard conventionalised format’.²⁵⁴ In addition, Thematic development at B1 shows ‘awareness of the conventional structure of the text type’ and Coherence and cohesion at B1 lists ‘connected, linear sequence of points’ and ‘simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text’.²⁵⁵

The final marking band (10-12), aligned most closely with CEFR descriptors ranging from B2 to B2+. Expectations from the IB show that the task is fulfilled effectively, ideas are relevant, fully developed, and supported by details and relevant examples. The developmental aspect is reflected in Overall written production at B2 where students are ‘synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources’.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, Reports and essays at B2 show that a student ‘develops an argument, giving reasons ... and explaining the advantages and disadvantages’ and B2+ where a student ‘develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail’.²⁵⁷ In terms of exemplifying a key point, Thematic development at B2 mentions ‘supporting main points with relevant supporting detail and examples’, ‘expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples’ and at B2+ students ‘can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail’.²⁵⁸ At this IB level, ideas are also presented in a logical and coherent manner. The notion of message clarity is reflected in Overall written production at B2, which stipulates that students ‘can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects’.²⁵⁹ In addition, Coherence and cohesion at B2 similarly requires a ‘generally well-organised and coherent’ and ‘longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs’, while at B2+ students use ‘a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas’.²⁶⁰

As the level descriptors for Criterion B at HL are identical to those at SL, so too is our analysis of the mark scheme. The table below presents the level descriptors of the HL and SL Criterion B for writing mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion B.

Table 48: SL and HL Criterion B: Message level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion B: Message		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		

²⁵³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 68, 140.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 66.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 66.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 68.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

IB Criterion B: Message		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		Pre-A1
1-3	The task is partially fulfilled. Few ideas are relevant to the task. Ideas are stated, but with no development. Ideas are not clearly presented and do not follow a logical structure, making the message difficult to determine.	Overall written production: A1 Can produce <u>simple isolated phrases and sentences</u> . Coherence and cohesion: A1 Can link words/signs or groups of words/signs with <u>very basic linear connectors</u> (e.g. "and" or "then"). A2 Can link groups of words/signs with <u>simple connectors</u> (e.g. "and", "but" and "because").	A1- A2
4-6	The task is generally fulfilled. Some ideas are relevant to the task. Ideas are outlined, but are not fully developed. Ideas are generally clearly presented and the response is generally structured in a logical manner, leading to a mostly successful delivery of the message.	Overall written production: B1 Can produce <u>straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence</u> . Reports and essays: A2 Can produce <u>simple texts on familiar subjects of interest, linking sentences with connectors like "and", "because" or "then"</u> . Thematic development: A2+ Can give an <u>example of something in a very simple text</u> using "like" or "for example". B1 Can <u>reasonably fluently</u> relate a straightforward narrative or description as <u>a sequence of points</u> . Coherence and cohesion: A2+ Can use the most frequently occurring connectors <u>to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points</u> .	A2+ - B1
7-9	The task is fulfilled. Most ideas are relevant to the task. Ideas are developed well, with some detail and examples. Ideas are clearly presented and the response is structured in a logical manner, supporting the delivery of the message.	Overall written production: B1 Can produce <u>straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence</u> . Reports and essays: B1 Can produce <u>very brief reports in a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions</u> . B1+ Can summarise, report and give their <u>opinion</u> about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within their field with some confidence. Thematic development: B1+ Can <u>develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time</u> . Can clearly signal <u>chronological sequence</u> in narrative text. Coherence and cohesion: B1 Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a <u>connected, linear sequence of points</u> . B2 Can produce text that is generally <u>well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices</u> .	B1+ - B2
10-12	The task is fulfilled effectively. Ideas are relevant to the task. Ideas are fully developed, providing details and relevant examples. Ideas are clearly presented and the response is structured in a logical and coherent manner that supports the delivery of the message.	Overall Written production: B2 Can produce <u>clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources</u> . C1: Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, <u>underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion</u> . Reports and essays: B2 Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument, <u>giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options</u> . B2+ Can produce an essay or report which <u>develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail</u> .	B2- B2+

IB Criterion B: Message		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
		<p>Thematic development: B2 <i>Can develop a clear description or narrative, <u>expanding and supporting their main points with relevant supporting detail and examples.</u></i></p> <p>B2+ <i>Can develop an argument <u>systematically</u> with appropriate highlighting of <u>significant points, and relevant supporting detail.</u></i></p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2+ <i>Can use a variety of <u>linking expressions</u> efficiently to mark clearly the <u>relationships</u> between ideas.</i></p>	

Criterion C: Conceptual understanding (SL and HL)

Criterion C describes the students expected levels of conceptual understanding and adherence to the conventions of the task; for this criterion, there is a maximum of 6 marks available. The level descriptors for Criterion C at HL are identical to those at SL. In all three marking bands, the same CEFR scales were identified as relevant and subsequently mapped against the expectations of the IB; CEFR activities of Overall written interaction and Correspondence in addition to the CEFR competences of Thematic development, Coherence and cohesion and Propositional precision.

It was determined that the first marking band (1-2), has similarities with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 - A2+. The IB states that conceptual understanding is limited, and that text type, register and tone are contextually inappropriate. There are numerous references to simple structures and limited information in CEFR, which reflect the inappropriate text construct alluded to in the IB. For example, Overall written interaction at A2 uses 'short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need'.²⁶¹ In addition, Coherence and cohesion at A2 show that a student 'can link groups of words/signs with simple connectors', and at A2+ 'link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points'.²⁶² Finally, Propositional precision at A2 describes a 'simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters'.²⁶³ The 'limited recognizable conventions' in the IB are reflected in the basic nature of Thematic development at A2+ where students 'can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points'.²⁶⁴

In the second marking band (3-4), the descriptors used demonstrated alignment with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1 to B2. In the IB, conceptual understanding is 'mostly demonstrated', which is reminiscent of the breadth of understanding shown in Overall written interaction at B1+; 'can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics'.²⁶⁵ Similarities can also be seen in Propositional precision at B1 where students 'can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly and at B1+, where they 'can

²⁶¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 82.

²⁶² Ibid. p. 141.

²⁶³ Ibid. p. 142.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 82.

explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision'.²⁶⁶ At this IB level, text type is generally appropriate; there are references to specific text types in CEFR, whose relevance will depend on the nature of the examination task selected. Correspondence at B1+ mentions the ability to 'compose personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics', 'compose letters expressing different opinions and giving detailed accounts of personal feelings and experiences', as well as 'basic formal e-mails/letters'.²⁶⁷ IB expects register and tone to be occasionally appropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task, but allow for fluctuation throughout the response, while using some conventions of the chosen text type. Similarly, Thematic development at B1 suggests an 'awareness of the conventional structure of the text type' and at B1+ students 'can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text' and 'develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time'.²⁶⁸ The Coherence and cohesion scale also references the relevance of text structure to purpose. For example, at B1 students 'can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text' and at B1+ can 'introduce a counter-argument in a simple discursive text'.²⁶⁹

The final marking band (5-6), aligned most closely with CEFR descriptors ranging from B2 to B2+. At this level, conceptual understanding is fully demonstrated. This level of understanding, competence and clarity of message can be seen to relate to Thematic development at B2 with students developing 'a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples'.²⁷⁰ Also, Propositional precision at B2 states that students 'can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations'.²⁷¹ The IB states that text type, register and tone are appropriate to the context, purpose and audience. The consideration of audience can be seen in Overall written interaction at B2, 'can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others', and at C1, 'can express themselves with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively'.²⁷² In addition, appropriateness of structure is referenced in Coherence and cohesion at B2, where students 'can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent', 'can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs'.²⁷³ Importance is also given to the conventions of the text type, as they are expected to be fully incorporated in the written response. Correspondence at B2 also acknowledge that students 'can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and e-mails', 'using appropriate registers and conventions', and 'can compose non-routine professional letters, using appropriate structure and conventions'.²⁷⁴ In addition, Thematic development at B2 mentions that students 'can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas'.²⁷⁵

²⁶⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 142.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 141.

²⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 140.

²⁷¹ Ibid. p. 142.

²⁷² Ibid. p. 82.

²⁷³ Ibid. p. 141.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁷⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

As the descriptors for Criterion C at HL are identical to those at SL, so too is our analysis of the mark scheme. The table below presents the level descriptors of the HL and SL Criterion C for writing mapped against the CEFR descriptors, including the overall final CEFR level which was assigned to each level descriptor of Criterion C.

Table 49: SL and HL Criterion C: Conceptual understanding level descriptors mapped against the CEFR descriptors

IB Criterion C: Conceptual understanding		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		
1-2	Conceptual understanding is limited. The choice of text type is generally inappropriate to the context, purpose or audience. The register and tone are inappropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task. The response incorporates limited recognizable conventions of the chosen text type.	Overall written interaction: A2 <i>Can compose <u>short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.</u></i> Thematic development: A2+ <i>Can give an example of something in a <u>very simple text</u> using “like” or “for example”.</i> Coherence and cohesion: A1 <i>Can link words/signs or groups of words/signs with very basic linear connectors (e.g. “and” or “then”).</i> A2+ <i>Can link groups of words/signs with <u>simple connectors</u> (e.g. “and”, “but” and “because”).</i> Propositional precision: A2 <i>Can communicate what they want to say in a <u>simple and direct</u> exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations <u>they generally have to compromise the message.</u></i>	A2-A2+
3-4	Conceptual understanding is mostly demonstrated. The choice of text type is generally appropriate to the context, purpose and audience. The register and tone, while occasionally appropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task, fluctuate throughout the response. The response incorporates some conventions of the chosen text type.	Overall written interaction: B1 <i>Can compose <u>personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important.</u></i> B1+ <i>Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, <u>check information, and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.</u></i> Thematic development: B1 <i>Can <u>reasonably fluently</u> relate a straightforward <u>narrative or description</u> as a sequence of points.</i> <i>Shows <u>awareness of the conventional structure of the text type</u> concerned when communicating their ideas.</i> B1+ <i>Can develop an argument well enough <u>to be followed without difficulty most of the time.</u></i> Coherence and cohesion: B1 <i>Can link a series of <u>shorter, discrete simple elements</u> into a connected, linear sequence of points.</i> B2 <i>Can produce text that is <u>generally well-organised and coherent</u>, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices.</i> Propositional precision: B1 <i>Can convey <u>simple, straightforward information</u> of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is <u>most important.</u></i> B1+ <i>Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with <u>reasonable precision.</u></i> B2 <i>Can communicate the <u>essential points</u> even in more demanding situations, though their <u>language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity.</u></i>	B1-B2
5-6	Conceptual understanding is fully demonstrated. The choice of text type is appropriate to the context, purpose and audience.	Overall written interaction: B2 <i>Can <u>express news and views effectively</u> in writing and relate to those of others.</i> C1 <i>Can express themselves with <u>clarity and precision</u>, relating to the <u>addressee flexibly and effectively.</u></i>	B2-B2+

IB Criterion C: Conceptual understanding		CEFR Activities and Competences	Final CEFR Level
Marks	Level Descriptor		
	<p>The register and tone are appropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task.</p> <p>The response fully incorporates the conventions of the chosen text type.</p>	<p>Thematic development: B2 <i>Can follow the <u>conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas. Can develop a clear argument, <u>expanding and supporting their points of view</u> at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</u></i></p> <p>B2+ <i>Can develop an argument <u>systematically</u> with <u>appropriate</u> highlighting of <u>significant points</u>, and <u>relevant</u> supporting detail.</i></p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2+ <i>Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to <u>mark clearly the relationships between ideas.</u></i></p> <p>C1 <i>Can produce well-organised, coherent text, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns. Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</i></p> <p>Propositional precision: B2 <i>Can pass on detailed information <u>reliably.</u></i></p> <p>C1 <i>Can make effective use of linguistic modality to <u>signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position.</u></i></p> <p><i>Can qualify opinions and statements <u>precisely</u> in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.</i></p>	

5.2 Summary Analysis – English B (SL & HL)

This section presents the summary CEFR analysis and findings of the English B (SL and HL) reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The analysis of each skill includes a summary of the assessment papers and texts reviewed and a detailed review and comparative analysis of one reading and listening text for each level (SL and HL) for reading and listening. Additionally, the analysis of each skill includes a summary of the assessment papers and student samples for writing and speaking and a detailed review and comparative analysis of one speaking and writing student sample for each level (SL and HL). The assessment papers reviewed for both SL and HL English B are presented in the table below:

Table 50: English B assessment papers reviewed

English B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
English B	HL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for

English B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
			HL and 3 for SL)
	SL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N22	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)

As presented in the table above, the English B SL and HL reading and listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis is from N20. More specifically, the listening comprehension paper was an early-authored paper which was not sat as an exam, but it was repurposed for use as a specimen. In addition, the project team reviewed the English B SL Paper 2 (Reading and listening) from the N22 examination. Additionally, the English B SL and HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) as well as writing skills assessment (Paper 1) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from the M21 examination. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 and N22 examination and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for English B SL and HL.

The summary analysis is followed by the presentation of the overall findings of the whole paper analysis per skill, including the findings on the CEFR levels for all the texts included in the reading and listening paper for each level (SL and HL) and the findings on the CEFR levels for all the speaking and writing student samples reviewed. The presentation of the overall findings includes information about the core CEFR descriptors used to determine the level of each text of each paper, as well as the overall CEFR level determined for each text of each paper.

Number of Examination Years Consulted

For English B, most of the assessment examples analysed by Ecctis were drawn from 2020. However, in the course of the analysis, some findings for English B SL emerged as unexpected in the context of what Ecctis expected to see at this level. As a result, some cross-referencing work was carried out using 2022 papers, particularly for the receptive skills paper. Therefore, some subsections of this analysis present both 2020 and 2022 findings one-after-another. This was done as a level-checking exercise, to test specific findings, and is not therefore uniformly present in all subsections. Some differences were noted between the 2020 and 2022 assessment papers for English B SL; these are summarised in section 5.2 and further elaborated in the key findings for the whole report – [section 6](#).

5.2.1 Reading

Box 3: Key findings on English B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings English B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- Regarding **SL**, the comparative analysis of the **English B reading comprehension** assessment of the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from A2+ up to B1+ CEFR level**.
- However, the comparative analysis of the **English B SL reading comprehension** assessment of the **N22** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B1 up to B2 CEFR levels**.
- Therefore, the comparative analysis found that there are differences in relation to the CEFR levels reported by the **English B SL reading comprehension** examinations, with the **N20** examination reporting **up to B1+ CEFR level** and the **N22** examination reporting **up to B2 CEFR level**.
- In relation to **HL**, the comparative analysis of the **English B reading comprehension** assessment of the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies, and language competences reported **from B1+ up to C1 level**.
- In both **SL and HL English B** the comparative analysis of the **reading comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 and N22** examinations found that the CEFR reading comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the reading comprehension activities of 'Overall reading comprehension', 'Reading for orientation', 'Reading for information and argument', and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Standard Level

The English B SL paper 2 assesses receptive language skills and comprises of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening comprehension.²⁷⁶ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items respectively. The SL paper 2 examinations used in this analysis are dated N20 and N22, and the reading skills assessment items are structured as follows:

Table 51: English SL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)²⁷⁷

English SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-12	12 marks

²⁷⁶ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.29.

²⁷⁷ International Baccalaureate (2020) *English B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

English SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text B	Questions 13-24	14 marks
Text C	Questions 25-38	14 marks

Table 52: English SL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N22 examination)²⁷⁸

English SL Examination Paper 2 (N22 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-10	13 marks
Text B	Questions 11-23	13 marks
Text C	Questions 24-37	14 marks

The first step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B SL reading comprehension paper involved review of the input text of the assessment task including the review of the text type, the linguistic analysis of the input text including a review of the grammatical structures, vocabulary and language functions used in the input text. Additionally, the second step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B SL reading comprehension paper was the review of the question types included in the assessment and the review of the reading skills that are being tested through those tasks. More specifically, this stage of the review included the identification of the necessary reading skills that the student needs to have in order to get the marks in the different questions included in the assessment.

The section below provides a detailed overview of the review and comparative analysis of the assessment tasks of one Text included in the English SL Language B reading comprehension examination of N22 to CEFR.

Text B N22 examination

Text B of English B SL of the N22 reading comprehension examination was selected because it targets a wide range of CEFR levels between B1 and B2 level and because in this task the students are required to demonstrate a wide range of skills such as identify synonyms, demonstrate a good knowledge and command of complex vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, and infer meaning from the text. Text B of English B SL Paper 2 of the N22 reading comprehension examination is a 363-word extract from an article focusing on the findings from a study regarding kangaroos.²⁷⁹ The article is adapted from an authentic online source. The subject matter of the input text is consistent with the prescriptive themes listed in the IB DP Language B syllabus including sharing the planet, the urban and rural environment, and the climate.²⁸⁰ Therefore, the CEFR domains covered in

²⁷⁸ International Baccalaureate (2022) *English B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

²⁷⁹ Singh, N., 2020. The Independent. [online] Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/kangaroos-communicate-human-study-b1774776.html> [Accessed 30 January 2021]. source adapted. reference redacted. Brooke, E., 2019. Shallow Focus Photo of Kangaroo. [image online] Available at: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/shallow-focus-photo-of-kangaroo-2122423/> [Accessed 24 November 2021].

²⁸⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

this text include the public and the educational domains.²⁸¹ More specifically, text B includes 13 assessment items included in four sets of questions. The first set of questions involves one multiple choice question, the second set of questions includes four closed questions which require students to provide short answers, the third set of questions which also includes four closed questions which require students to provide short answers and the fourth set of questions which includes four gap fill questions.

To correctly respond to the first set of questions, the student should read the first paragraph of the text, try to identify the meaning of the text and following that, try and answer the multiple-choice question with the information found in the first paragraph of the text. Additionally, in order to find the answers to the second set of questions and get the marks, the student should read the second paragraph of the text and try and identify the words included in this paragraph that are synonyms to the ones included in questions 12 to 15. Similarly, in the third set of questions the student is required to read the third and fourth paragraphs of the text and try and complete the sentences in questions 16 to 19 with the correct words from the text included in these paragraphs. In addition, regarding the fourth set of questions the student should read paragraphs five to seven and try and choose the correct words from these paragraphs to complete the sentences in the questions. All questions in text B indicate the specific paragraphs that the answers to the questions can be found within the text which helps students find the responses to the questions easier as they direct them to the specific paragraphs that the answers are located within the text.

The input text of text B includes a wide range of simple grammatical structures and vocabulary such as past simple ('researchers found', 'looked', 'interpreted') (A1), present perfect ('has found', 'have seen') (A2), modals ('can use body language', 'they couldn't') (A2), and the gerund ('seeking help', 'gazing', 'striving', 'attempting') (A2). Additionally the analysis of the input text indicated that it includes some examples of more complex grammatical structures such as the use of passive voice ('is usually associated with', 'is interpreted as', 'can be learnt') (B1 and B2), Additionally, the input text of text B includes a variety of language functions including describing people and things, reporting facts and actions, developing an argument, providing suggestions, defending a point of view, and emphasising points, feelings and issues.

The table below present the review of the input text of Text B of the reading comprehension examination of the English B SL of the N22 examination.

²⁸¹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

Table 53: Input text review and linguistic analysis of Text B of the reading comprehension English B SL N22 examination

Input text review and linguistic analysis of Text B of English B SL reading comprehension N22 examination					
Examination date	Text	Text type	Reading skills assessed	Language functions	Grammar and vocabulary
N22	Text B	Article	Reading for detail Skimming Scanning Identifying synonyms Inferencing/ understanding of implicit meaning	Describing People, Describing Things, Expressing Opinions / agreement / disagreement, Comparing things (simple), Reporting facts, actions, Narrating and describing past, present and future events (more complex), Developing an argument, Critiquing and Reviewing, Suggestions (add examples), Defending a Point of View, Emphasizing or exemplifying a point, feeling, issue	Past simple: researchers found, looked, interpreted, thought, used, showed, said, led a study A2 Present perfect: Has found, have seen A2 Modals: can use body language, they couldn't, they can't open the box, can be learnt, can understand, positive results should lead to A2 Passive voice: is usually associated with, is interpreted as, can be learnt, to be studied, has been underestimated B1/B2 Gerund: seeking help, gazing, striving, attempting, stretching, alternating, asking for, scratching A2

The third step of the review and comparative analysis included a review of the CEFR reading comprehension activities, reception strategies and competences assessed in the assessment questions of the reading comprehension examination, the identification of the CEFR descriptors with the corresponding level for each one of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies and competences. The fourth and final step of the review and comparative analysis included the identification of the overall CEFR level of the assessment tasks.

The CEFR analysis of text B indicated that different sets of questions target different CEFR levels. More specifically, the review and analysis found that the first set of questions aligns with B1 level descriptors in the CEFR scales of Overall reading comprehension, Reading for information and argument, Vocabulary range and Identifying cues and inferring. This is because the student should be able to read straightforward factual texts on topics relevant to their field of interest with satisfactory level of comprehension but also recognise significant main points in factual texts in order to understand the text and successfully respond to the question.²⁸² Additionally, the student should be able to follow a line of argumentation in a narrative focusing on common logical and temporal connectors and identify meaning of occasional unknown words in order to get the mark.²⁸³ In terms of vocabulary, the student should have knowledge of basic vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations in order to be able to understand that phrases such as 'communicated with humans in a

²⁸² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.54.

²⁸³ Ibid. p.60.

similar way to domesticated animals' is synonym to 'communicate with humans like domesticated animals'.²⁸⁴ As a result, the first set of questions of text B is not lower than B1 as the student should be able to understand and infer the meaning of the paragraph, understand the meaning of the multiple-choice question, and have a good command of vocabulary and grammar to identify synonyms.

Additionally, the CEFR analysis found that the second and fourth sets of questions of text B correspond to B2 level descriptors in the CEFR scales of Overall reading comprehension, Vocabulary range, Vocabulary control and Identifying cues and inferring. Regarding Overall oral comprehension, the assessment items in both sets of questions reflect elements of B2 level descriptor as in order to select the correct answers the student should be able to read with a large level of independence, adapting style and speed of reading for the purpose of the text.²⁸⁵ In terms of vocabulary, to select the correct responses the student should have a broad and active reading vocabulary, and understand the majority of specialist vocabulary, however they might experience challenges in understanding low-frequency idiomatic expressions and figurative language.²⁸⁶ Additionally, the student should be able to use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points by using contextual information and cues in order to select the correct responses.²⁸⁷

For example, the CEFR analysis found that the assessment items in the second set of questions are not lower than B2 level because although the question outlines in which paragraph the answers to the questions are located within the text, the vocabulary of the questions is more complex and the students need to be able to infer and identify meaning of the whole paragraph in order to find the synonyms to the words included in the questions. All the words included in the second set of questions are gerunds and their synonyms located within the text are also gerunds which makes it easier for the student to identify. However, the words included in both the text and the questions are complex ('switching', 'gazing', 'seeking', 'stretching for', 'alternating') requiring a good command of more complex vocabulary from the student as these words are not everyday vocabulary. Additionally, the fourth set of questions requires the student to have good knowledge and command of simple and more complex grammatical structures such as reported speech (B1 and B2), complex modal verbs (B1 and B2), passive voice (B1 and B2), reversed sentence structure and alternating from passive to active voice, as well as knowledge of a wide range of synonyms. Therefore, both sets of questions were found to reflect elements of B2 level descriptors in several CEFR activities, strategies, and competences.

However, regarding the third set of questions of text B the CEFR analysis found that this corresponds to B1+ and B2 level descriptors in the CEFR scales of Reading for information and argument, Overall reading comprehension and Identifying cues and inferring. In terms of Reading for information and argument, this set of questions reflects elements of the B1+ level descriptor as the student should be able to recognise the lines of argument, the main conclusions, and points of view but not necessarily in detail in order to correctly answer to

²⁸⁴ Ibid. p.131.

²⁸⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.54.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. p.131.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. p.60.

the questions.²⁸⁸ Additionally, to select the correct responses, the student should be able to extrapolate the meaning of occasionally unknown words, understand the meaning of a section by taking into consideration the whole text but also use a variety of reading strategies to achieve comprehension by identifying main points but also contextual information reflecting elements of both B1+ and B2 levels in the CEFR scale of Identifying cues and inferring.²⁸⁹ For example, in this set of questions the student should be able to identify that the phrase 'instead of' is synonym to 'rather than' within the text, and generally identify the meaning of the sentences to complete the questions with the correct response from the text. Additionally, the student should be able to understand the difference between reported and active speech (B1 and B2), have good knowledge of simple and more complex grammatical structures such as passive voice (B1 and B2), modals (B1 and B2) and the gerund (A2).

The detailed review and comparative analysis of all the English B SL reading comprehension paper 2 texts of the N20 and the N22 examinations are included in Appendix 2.

Higher Level

Similar to English B SL paper 2 assessment, examination of the English B paper 2 HL centres on receptive language skills and consists of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening comprehension.²⁹⁰ The reading comprehension component of HL paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The English B HL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills segment is structured as follows:²⁹¹

Table 54: English HL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)²⁹²

English HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-9	12 marks
Text B	Questions 10-22	13 marks
Text C	Questions 23-37	15 marks

Similarly to SL, the first step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B HL reading comprehension paper involved review of the input text of the assessment task including the review of the text type, the linguistic analysis of the input text including a review of the grammatical structures, vocabulary and language functions used in the input text. This was followed by the review of the question types included in the assessment and the review of the reading skills that are being tested through those tasks. More specifically, this stage of the review included the identification of the necessary reading skills that the student needs to have in order to get the marks in the different questions included in the assessment.

²⁸⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. p.60.

²⁹⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.30.

²⁹¹ International Baccalaureate (2020) *English B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

²⁹² Ibid.

The section below provides a detailed overview of the review and comparative analysis of the assessment tasks of one Text included in the English HL Language B reading comprehension examination of N20 to CEFR.

Text C N20 examination

Extract C of the English HL Paper 2 of the N20 reading comprehension examination is a 483-word narrative text adapted from an authentic public domain source and more specifically from a historical novel.²⁹³ The novel is set in the period of post-war Ireland onwards and the excerpt relates the interactions of several characters as they disembark in Dublin. The subject matter of the input text is consistent with the prescriptive themes listed in the syllabus, such as identities and experiences, as well as the optional topics of artistic expressions, life stories, and social relations.²⁹⁴

Regarding the input text, in terms of lexical categories, text C contains parts of speech that include personal pronouns ('she would reply') (A1), objective case pronouns ('surprised her'), possessive determiners ('my mother') (A1 and A2), quantifiers ('any in Ballincollig'), comparative adjectives ('darker') (A1 to B1), adverbs of frequency ('occasionally veered') (A1 and A2), adverbs of manner ('looked around anxiously') (B1), intensifiers ('such good friends') (B1), and modal verbs ('might be') (B1). The extract includes morphosyntactic components such as finite verbs in present simple ('sun is out') (A1), present perfect ('has found') (A2), past simple ('it surprised') (A2), past continuous ('we were sitting') (A2), and past perfect ('had been hatched') (B1) tenses. Complex and complex-compound sentences in text C contain subordinate clauses such as: adverbial clauses of contrast ("Where Seán was outgoing and affable to the point of innocence, [Smoot was a darker and more reticent figure]'), adverbial clauses of time ('As the bus arrived in to Dublin'), participle clauses ('smiling at him'), and restrictive relative clauses (' [introspection] that occasionally veered towards despair'). The language functions contained in text C include: expressing opinions; describing emotions, people, places, and past experiences; comparison; narrating past, present, and future events; and introducing self, others, and relatives.

The table below present the review of the input text of Text C of the English B HL reading comprehension examination of N20.

Table 55: Input text review and linguistic analysis of Text C English B HL N20 examination

Input text analysis of Text C of the English B HL reading comprehension (paper 2) N20 examination					
Examination year	Text	Text type	Reading skills assessed	Language functions	Grammar and vocabulary
N20	Text C	Story / narrative / creative	Reading for detail	Expressing opinions Describing	Comparison: darker B1 Present simple: the sun is out A1

²⁹³ Boyne, J. (2017) *The Heart's Invisible Furies*. London, Black Swan.

²⁹⁴ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

Input text analysis of Text C of the English B HL reading comprehension (paper 2) N20 examination

Examination year	Text	Text type	Reading skills assessed	Language functions	Grammar and vocabulary
		writing	Skimming Scanning Identifying synonyms Inferencing/ understanding of implicit meaning	people Comparisons (complex) Describing past experiences (complex) Narrating and describing past, present and future events Describing places Introducing self, others, family Describing feelings and emotions	Common nouns: voice, sun A1 Past simple: he was, I thought A2 Reported speech: 'the world,' he would remark B2 Complex nouns: playfulness - Present perfect: Catherine has found A2 Past perfect: a plan had been hatched B1 Modals: I might be B1 Conditionals: she would discover B1 Extended sentences: 'still, the sun is out', she would reply then, smiling at him. - Phrasal verbs: veered towards, born into, broke into B1 Idiomatic and colloquial language: as different as chalk and cheese, he broke into a smile, a plan had been hatched, try her luck, in a bit of bother. B2/C1 Would, expressing habits in the past: he would remark to her B2 Narrative tenses: his voice almost choking in happiness B2

The third step included a review of the CEFR reading comprehension activities, reception strategies and competences assessed in the assessment questions of the reading examination, the identification of the CEFR descriptors with the corresponding level for each one of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies and competences. The fourth and final step of the review and comparative analysis included the identification of the overall CEFR level of the assessment tasks.

The assessment items relating to text C generally correspond to CEFR C1 level descriptors. For example, question 27 ('To whom or to what do the underlined words refer? 'there's that at least') requires an understanding of pro-forms, specifically, a pro-clause ('the sun is out') that is referenced anaphorically. Recovering the meaning of the anaphor requires the ability to semantically comprehend the preceding text where the antecedent and referent is located. This involves an understanding of two subordinate clauses: one containing two additional anaphors ('she would reply then'), whilst the subject of the second is elliptical ('smiling at him'). These skills are consistent with C1 CEFR Overall reading comprehension descriptors that refer to the ability to 'understand a wide variety of texts including literary writings', as

well as C1 Identifying cues and inferring criteria such as the capacity to use ‘contextual, grammatical, and lexical cues’ and ‘anticipate what will come next’.²⁹⁵

The detailed review and comparative analysis of all the English B HL reading comprehension paper 2 texts of the N20 examination are included in Appendix 2.

Overall findings on English B Reading (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the reading comprehension examination of English B (SL and HL) against the CEFR reading comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each question included in each text of the reading comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the English B SL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks of the English B SL of the N20 reading comprehension examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ up to B1+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the SL English of the N20 reading comprehension examination are presented in the table below.

Table 56: Overall CEFR levels of the English B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

English SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-12	<p>Overall reading comprehension A2+: ‘Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language’.²⁹⁶</p> <p>Reading for information and argument A2+: ‘Can pick out the main information in short news reports or simple articles in which figures, names, illustrations and titles play a prominent role and support the meaning of the text.’²⁹⁷</p> <p>Reading for orientation A2+: ‘Can find specific information in practical, concrete, predictable texts (e.g. travel guidebooks, recipes), provided they are produced in simple language’.²⁹⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: ‘Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context’.²⁹⁹</p>	A2+

²⁹⁵ Overall Reading Comprehension [Council of Europe (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. [pdf]. p.54]; Identifying Cues and Inferring [Council of Europe (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. [pdf]. p.60].

²⁹⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p. 54.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

²⁹⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p.60.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Grammatical accuracy: A2: ‘Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say’.³⁰⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2+: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics’.³⁰¹</p>	
Text B	13-24	<p>Reading for information and argument B1+: ‘Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail’.³⁰²</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1+: ‘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’.³⁰³</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar’.³⁰⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more predictable situations’. B1+: ‘Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express’.³⁰⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations’.³⁰⁶</p>	B1+
Text C	25-38	<p>Reading for information and argument B1+: ‘Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies’.³⁰⁷</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1+: ‘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’.³⁰⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the</p>	B1+

³⁰⁰ Ibid. p.132.

³⁰¹ Ibid. p. 131.

³⁰² Ibid. pp. 56-57.

³⁰³ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. p.60.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. p.132.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

³⁰⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 55-56.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.'³⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events'.³¹⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.</p> <p>B1+ 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.³¹¹</p>	

However, the CEFR analysis of the N22 examination of the English B Paper 2 SL reading comprehension found that the assessment items have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1 up to B2 levels. Therefore, the CEFR analysis found a significant difference in the CEFR levels that were targeted in the SL N20 reading comprehension examination and the SL N22 reading comprehension examination, with the former assessing up to B1+ reading comprehension skills and the later assessing up to B2 level reading comprehension skills. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the English B SL of the N22 reading comprehension examination is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The overall CEFR level of each text of the SL reading comprehension N22 examination are as follows:

Table 57: Overall CEFR levels of the English B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N22 examination)

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-10	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.'³¹²</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B1: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies. Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects.'³¹³</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring:</p>	B1/B1+

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p.60.

³¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

³¹¹ Ibid. p.132.

³¹² Ibid. p. 54.

³¹³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes). Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar’.³¹⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary range:</p> <p>B1: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events. Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’³¹⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1 ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more predictable situations’.</p> <p>B1+ ‘Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express’.³¹⁶</p>	
Text B	11-23	<p>Overall reading comprehension:</p> <p>B1: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’³¹⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument:</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (e.g. critical contributions to an online discussion forum or readers’ letters to the editor). Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships. Can recognise when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something.’</p>	B1+/B2

³¹⁴ Ibid. p.60.

³¹⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

³¹⁶ Ibid. p.132.

³¹⁷ Ibid. p. 54.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted.³¹⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1+: ‘Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text.’ B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’³¹⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: ‘Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’³²⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: ‘Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express’.</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy’.³²¹</p> <p>Vocabulary control: B2: ‘Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication’.³²²</p>	
Text C	24-37	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’³²³</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B2: ‘Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted. Can recognise when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something. Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.’³²⁴</p>	B2

³¹⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

³¹⁹ Ibid. p.60.

³²⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

³²¹ Ibid. p.132.

³²² Ibid. pp.132-133.

³²³ Ibid. p. 54.

³²⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Identifying cues and inferring: B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'³²⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.'³²⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.'³²⁷</p>	

Similarly to English B SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the English B HL of the N20 reading comprehension examination is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks of the HL N20 reading comprehension examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1+ up to C1 level. The overall CEFR level of the tasks associated with each text of the HL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 58: Overall CEFR levels of the English B HL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

English HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-9	<p>Reading for orientation B1+: '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.'³²⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text.'³²⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations'.³³⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1 'Uses reasonably accurately a</p>	B1+

³²⁵ Ibid. p.60.

³²⁶ Ibid. p.132.

³²⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

³²⁸ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

³²⁹ Ibid. p.60.

³³⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

English HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		repertoire of frequently used “routines” and patterns associated with more predictable situations’. ³³¹	
Text B	10-22	<p>Reading for information and argument B2+: ‘Can obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised sources within their field.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.’³³²</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension: B2 ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’³³³</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’³³⁴</p> <p>Reading for orientation B2: ‘Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. Students must scan an area of the text looking for particular details and synonymous phrases.’³³⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2 ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics’. C1 ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well’.³³⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2 ‘Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding’.³³⁷</p>	B2+
Text C	23-37	<p>Overall reading comprehension C1: ‘Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not these relate to their own area of speciality, provided they can reread difficult sections.’³³⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’³³⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range C1: ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can select from several vocabulary options</p>	C1

³³¹ Ibid. p.132.

³³² Ibid. pp. 56-57.

³³³ Ibid. p. 54.

³³⁴ Ibid. p.60.

³³⁵ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

³³⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

³³⁷ Ibid. p.132.

³³⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

³³⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

English HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words / signs less commonly encountered. ³⁴⁰	

5.2.2 Listening

Box 4: Key findings on English B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings English B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- Regarding **SL**, the comparative analysis of the **English B listening comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from A2+ up to B1+ CEFR level**.
- However, the comparative analysis of the **English B SL listening comprehension** assessment of **N22** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from A2+ up to B2 CEFR levels**.
- Therefore, the comparative analysis found that there are differences in relation to the CEFR levels reported by the **English B SL listening comprehension** examinations, with the **N20** examination reporting **up to B1+ CEFR level** whereas the **N22** examination reporting **up to B2 CEFR level**.
- In relation to **HL**, the comparative analysis of the **English B listening comprehension** assessment of **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B1+ up to C1 CEFR level**.
- In both **SL and HL English B** the comparative analysis of the **listening comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 and N22** examinations found that the CEFR oral comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the oral comprehension activities of 'Overall oral comprehension', 'Understanding conversation between other people', 'Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings', 'Understanding as a member of a live audience' and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Both the English B SL and HL listening comprehension examinations (Paper 2) papers reviewed in this project are dated N20. In addition, Ecctis reviewed the English B SL listening comprehension examination of the N22 examination.

Standard Level

The English B SL listening comprehension assessment Paper 2 is structured as follows:

³⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

Table 59: English SL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)³⁴¹

English SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Question 1	5 marks
Text B	Questions 2-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

Table 60: English SL listening comprehension components and marks (N22 examination)³⁴²

English SL Examination Paper 2 (N22 examination) (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Question 1	5 marks
Text B	Questions 2-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

The first step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B SL listening comprehension paper involved review of the input text of the assessment task including the review of the text type, the linguistic analysis of the input text including a review of the grammatical structures, vocabulary and language functions used in the input text. Additionally, the second step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B SL listening comprehension paper was the review of the question types included in the assessment and the review of the listening skills that are being tested through those tasks. More specifically, this stage of the review included the identification of the necessary listening skills that the student needs to have in order to get the marks in the different questions included in the assessment.

The section below provides a detailed overview of the review and comparative analysis of the assessment tasks of one Text included in the English SL Language B listening comprehension examination of N22 to CEFR.

Text A N22 examination

In Text A of the N22 English B listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) the student is asked to listen to a short monologue of a police officer and asked to select the five true statements in the true or false question based on what they hear. The students listen to the recording twice. From the IB documentation the topics discussed during the presentation focus on social organization, community, social engagement, education, the working world, and law and order. The CEFR domains covered in this text include the public and occupational domains.³⁴³ To respond to questions and awarded the marks, the student

³⁴¹ International Baccalaureate. (2020). English B November 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Standard Level.

³⁴² International Baccalaureate. (2022). English B November 2022 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Standard Level.

³⁴³ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

should listen to the short monologue, take notes during the monologue on the key points, key words, expressions and phrases used, key arguments and main points made to be able to respond to the questions and select the five true statements. Noting down key words that are used throughout the audio can help the student select the five true statements.

The input text of Text A is a short monologue of a police officer. The analysis of the input text indicated that the total wordcount of the audio recording transcript was 277 words. The short monologue was delivered in a clear language and the speaker had American accent. During the monologue, the speaker used a variety of simple and complex grammatical structures such as present perfect (it has been), past simple (I achieved), modals (I would still like to see), phrasal verbs (turn to crime, give back to the society), superlatives (the best way) and conditionals (If your parents had low-paid jobs, then you probably believe you will be poor too). Additionally, the speaker used a wide range of language functions including giving personal information, introducing self, describing past experiences, hopes, and plans, expressing opinions, agreement and disagreement, developing and argument and emphasising a point, feeling and an issue. The overall CEFR level of the input text of Text A was identified as B1/B2.

The table below presents the review of the input text of Text A of the listening comprehension examination of the English B SL of the N22 examination.

Table 61: Input text review and linguistic analysis of listening comprehension Text A English B SL N22 examination

Input text review and linguistic analysis of listening comprehension Text A English B SL N22 examination					
Examination date	Text	Text type	Listening skills assessed	Language functions	Grammar and vocabulary
N22	Text A	Short monologue	Listening for detail. Listening for gist. Inferring and inferencing implied meanings.	Giving Personal Information, Introducing self, others, family, Describing Past Experiences (simple), Describing People, Expressing Opinions / agreement / disagreement, Describing Hopes and Plans (simple), Reporting facts, actions, Developing an argument, Emphasizing or exemplifying a point, feeling, issue.	Present perfect: It has been A2 Past simple: I achieved A2 Modals: I would still like to see, can't see, I would spend money on, would be money A2/B1 Conditionals: If your parents had low-paid jobs, then you probably believe you will be poor too, If I had five billion dollars, I would spend one billion on policing and four billion on creating employment opportunities. B1/B2 Present simple: people believe, I believe, they create, you need to, this costs. A1 Futures: I am going to A2 Phrasal verbs: turn to crime, give back to our society A2/B1 Common Adjectives: unnecessary, strange, low-paid, low-level, poor A1 Comparatives/Superlatives: the best way A2

The third step of the review and comparative analysis included a review of the CEFR oral comprehension activities, reception strategies and competences assessed in the assessment questions of the listening comprehension examination, the identification of the CEFR descriptors with the corresponding level for each one of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies and competences. The fourth and final step of the review and comparative analysis included the identification of the overall CEFR level of the assessment tasks.

The different statements that the student needs to read through and select the true statements from in Text A align with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B1 levels. More specifically, statements B and C reflect A2+ level descriptors in the CEFR scale of Overall oral comprehension as the students need to understand enough to be able to meet the needs of questions given that the people articulate clearly and slowly.³⁴⁴ Additionally, statements B and C reflect A2+ level descriptors in the CEFR scale of Identifying cues and inferring as the students need to be able to exploit known words/signs to deduce the

³⁴⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

meaning of unfamiliar words and signs in short expressions used in everyday contexts and be able to use an idea and the overall meaning of a short texts on everyday topics to derive the probable meaning of unknown words from the contexts.³⁴⁵ More specifically, these two statements reflect elements of A2+ level as the information on those statements is identical to the information included in the recording so as soon as the students take notes of the key information and the actual wording mentioned in the audio recording, they will be able to select the correct statements.

The next three correct statements of this question including G, H and J reflect elements of B1 level in the CEFR scales of Overall oral comprehension, Understanding audio recordings, Understanding as a member of a live audience, Identifying cues and inferring and Vocabulary range. In terms of Understanding as a member of a live audience, these statements reflect elements of the B1 level descriptor which focuses on students' ability to understand the main points of what is said in a straightforward monologue, provided the delivery is clear and relatively slow.³⁴⁶ Additionally, regarding Overall oral comprehension these statements also reflect elements of the B1 level descriptor which outlines students' ability to understand the main points made in clear standard language on familiar matters regularly encountered at work including short narratives.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, in terms of Identifying cues and inferring these statements also reflect elements of the B1 level descriptor which outlines students' ability to follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).³⁴⁸ More specifically, in terms of Vocabulary range these statements were also found to correspond to elements of the B1 level descriptor as the student should be able to infer meaning and recognise synonyms as the sentences in those subtasks are not identical to the recording but they include synonyms.³⁴⁹

The overall CEFR level of Text A was found to be A2+/B1. More specifically, the overall CEFR level of Text A is not lower than A2+/B1 because the student should be able to understand the meaning and the overall message of the recording to respond correctly to the true or false questions. Additionally, Text A is not lower than A2+/B1 because it requires the student to be able to recognise synonyms and has a good knowledge of basic and everyday vocabulary to select the correct answers. Furthermore, the task is not higher than A2+/B1 because the student is not asked to use any complex grammar or vocabulary or any idiomatic expressions to respond to the questions.

As part of the review and comparative analysis, Ecctis reviewed the English B SL listening comprehension examination from the N22 examination to cross check and verify the findings. The review and comparative analysis of all assessment tasks of the English B SL listening comprehension Paper 2 texts of the N20 and the N22 examinations are included in Appendix 2.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. p.60.

³⁴⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.50.

³⁴⁷ Ibid. p.48.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. p.60.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. p.131.

Higher Level

The English B HL listening comprehension assessment Paper 2 of the N20 examination is structured as follows:

Table 62: English HL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)³⁵⁰

English HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Question 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

Similarly to SL, the first step of the review and comparative analysis of the English B HL listening comprehension paper involved review of the input text of the assessment task including the review of the text type, the linguistic analysis of the input text including a review of the grammatical structures, vocabulary and language functions used in the input text. This was followed by the review of the question types included in the assessment and the review of the listening skills that are being tested through those tasks. More specifically, this stage of the review included the identification of the necessary listening skills that the student needs to have in order to get the marks in the different questions included in the assessment.

The section below provides a detailed overview of the review and comparative analysis of the assessment tasks of one Text included in the English HL Language B listening comprehension examination of N20 to CEFR.

Text A N20 examination

In Text A of the HL the student is asked to listen to a recording of a guided discussion between two students and a teacher in class, about tall buildings in big cities. The student is then provided with incomplete sentences, and they are asked to complete the gaps in these five sentences. The gaps can be filled with up to three words. The accepted answer must be the word on the mark scheme, apart from question where synonyms are accepted. The topics discussed focus on tall buildings in big cities. From the IB documentation, the themes explored in this text are sharing the planet and human ingenuity and the topics covered are the environment, urban and rural environment, climate, environment, global issues, technology and scientific innovation. More specifically, the students discussed about a wide range of topics including ways of living, urban versus rural life, energy efficiency and eco-friendly solutions related to tall buildings, climate change and the environmental impact of tall buildings. The CEFR domains covered in this text are the public and educational domains.³⁵¹ The total number of marks that are allocated to this task are five marks. To respond to the questions the student should listen for detail and take notes during the audio recording.

³⁵⁰ International Baccalaureate. (2020). English B November 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Higher Level.

³⁵¹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

The input text of Text A is a short discussion and debate between two students in a classroom. The analysis of the input text indicated that the word count of the audio transcript of Text A was 423 words. The audio recording included one male and one female speaker who used clear pronunciation and intonation. More specifically one speaker had UK accent and the other speaker had Australian accent, but both had clear pronunciation and intonation. The Australian accent does not add extra challenge to the student but helps them to differentiate the two male voices. The audio recording included some authentic features such as background noise. However, the background noise stops once the dialogue between the two students begins. During their dialogue, the speakers used a wide range of basic grammatical structures such as regular and irregular plurals (cities, buildings), possessive pronouns (their), common adjectives (tall), present simple (houses and apartments are), imperatives (think about) and common nouns (energy, cost). Additionally, the speakers used some more complex grammatical structures such as passives (the buildings are designed), phrasal verbs (recognised as, think about), extended sentences with multiple clauses and colloquial language. The language functions of the input text included describing places and things, expressing opinions, providing justification, giving instructions, responding to counter arguments, comparing things (simple), and reporting facts. The overall CEFR level of the input text was B1+/B2.

The table below present the review of the input text of Text A of the listening comprehension examination of English B HL of the N20 examination.

Table 63: Input text review and linguistic analysis of listening comprehension Text A English B HL N20 examination

Input text review and linguistic analysis of listening comprehension Text A English B HSL N20 examination					
Examination date	Text	Text type	Listening skills assessed	Language functions	Grammar and vocabulary
N20	Text A	Discussion / Debate	Listening for detail. Potentially taking notes during the listening, to help answer the questions.	Describing places Describing things Expressing opinions Justification Giving instructions Responding to counter arguments Comparing things (simple) Reporting facts Emphasizing or exemplifying a point, feeling, issue	Present simple: houses and apartments are... A1 Imperatives: think about... A2 Common nouns: energy, cost A1 Passives: the buildings are designed B1 Extended sentences: these cities are recognised as modern and beautiful, and this, I believe, is because of their skyline. B1/B2 Phrasal verbs: recognised as, think about A2 Colloquial language: but still... B1/B2-

The third step of the review and comparative analysis included a review of the CEFR oral comprehension activities, reception strategies and competences assessed in the

assessment questions of the listening comprehension examination, the identification of the CEFR descriptors with the corresponding level for each one of the relevant CEFR activities, strategies and competences. The fourth and final step of the review and comparative analysis included the identification of the overall CEFR level of the assessment tasks.

The CEFR analysis of Text A found that is capable of testing B1+ level in terms of student's overall oral comprehension, their ability to understand conversations between other people and their ability to identify cues and inferring. In terms of Overall oral comprehension, this tasks reflects elements of B1+ level as the students need to understand the general messages from the audio recording in order to pick out the specific details needed for the gap fill, as the sentence structure in the questions does not match.³⁵² More specifically, as the sentence structure in the questions does not match with the sentence structure in the audio recording, the students should have good knowledge of grammar and inferencing to find the correct type of word. Regarding Identifying cues and inferring, this text reflects elements of B1+ as the students need to extrapolate the meaning of a sections of the audio by taking into consideration the audio recording as a whole in order to correctly respond to the question.³⁵³ Additionally, the text aligns to the B1+ descriptor of the CEFR activity understanding conversation between other people as the students should be able to follow a discussion in familiar topics given that they are articulated in a clear language.³⁵⁴ This text is not lower than A2 level because the Vocabulary range in this text goes beyond the expression of basic communicative needs and, in many cases, beyond routine everyday transactions regarding familiar topics. Additionally, this text is not lower than A2 because the students must go beyond identification of text type and meaning by using only text appearance and word position. Furthermore, in terms of Overall oral comprehension, the demands of this task require students to go beyond expressions related to immediate priority. Therefore, it is evident that Text A reflects elements of B1+ level in terms of students' overall oral comprehension, ability to understand conversation between other people and identifying cues and inferring.

The detailed review and comparative analysis of all the Text and assessment tasks of the English B HL listening comprehension Paper 2 texts of the N20 examinations are included in Appendix 2.

Overall findings on English B Listening (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the listening comprehension examination of the English B (SL and HL) against the CEFR oral comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the listening comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the English B SL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the

³⁵² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

³⁵³ Ibid. p. 60.

³⁵⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.49.

English B SL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ up to B1+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of English B SL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 64: Overall CEFR levels of the English B SL Paper 2 listening comprehension (N20 examination)

English SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1	<p>Overall oral comprehension: A2+: ‘Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.’³⁵⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’³⁵⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’³⁵⁷</p>	A2+/B1
Text B	2-11	<p>Overall oral comprehension: A2+: ‘Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.’ B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’³⁵⁸</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: B1: ‘Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.’³⁵⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B1: ‘Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.’³⁶⁰</p> <p>Identify cues and inferring: B1: ‘Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).’³⁶¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’³⁶²</p>	A2+/B1

³⁵⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p.132.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. p.131.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. p.48.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. p.49.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁶¹ Ibid. p.60.

³⁶² Ibid. p.131.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text C	12-21	<p>Understanding conversation between other people: A2+: ‘Can recognise when people agree and disagree in a conversation conducted slowly and clearly.’ B1: ‘Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.’ B1+: ‘Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety.’³⁶³</p> <p>Identify cues and inferring: B1: ‘Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand)’. B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests.’³⁶⁴</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension: B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’ B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’³⁶⁵</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B1+: ‘Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.’³⁶⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’³⁶⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’³⁶⁸</p>	B1/B1+

However, the CEFR analysis of the N22 examination of the English B listening comprehension for SL found that the assessment items have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B2. Therefore, the CEFR analysis found a difference in the CEFR levels that were targeted in the SL N20 listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) and the N22 one, with the former only assessing up to B1+ level listening comprehension

³⁶³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.49.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. p.60.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p.48.

³⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p.131.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p.132.

skills and the later assessing up to B2 level skills. The overall CEFR level of each text of the SL listening comprehension N22 examination are as follows:

Table 65: Overall CEFR levels of English B SL Paper 2 listening comprehension (N22 examination)

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1	<p>Overall oral comprehension: A2+: ‘Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.’ B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’³⁶⁹</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: A2+: ‘Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts., Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.’ B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes). Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).’³⁷⁰</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: A2+: ‘Can follow the general outline of a demonstration or presentation on a familiar or predictable topic, where the message is expressed slowly and clearly in simple language and there is visual support (e.g. slides, handouts).’ B1: ‘Can understand the main points of what is said in a straightforward monologue (e.g. a guided tour), provided the delivery is clear and relatively slow. Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.’³⁷¹</p>	A2+/B1
Text B	2-11	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’ B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’³⁷²</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: B1: ‘Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.’ B1+: ‘Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety.’³⁷³</p>	B1/B1+

³⁶⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. p.60.

³⁷¹ Ibid. pp.49-50.

³⁷² Ibid. p.48.

³⁷³ Ibid. p.49.

English SL Examination Paper 2 N22 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Identifying cues and inferring:</p> <p>B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes). Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text.’³⁷⁴</p>	
Text C	12-20	<p>Overall oral comprehension:</p> <p>B2: ‘Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers.’³⁷⁵</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience:</p> <p>B2: ‘Can recognise the point of view expressed and distinguish this from facts being reporting. Can distinguish main themes from asides, provided the lecture or talk is delivered in standard language or a familiar variety. Can follow complex lines of argument in a clearly articulated lecture, provided the topic is reasonably familiar.’³⁷⁶</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring:</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’³⁷⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy:</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.’³⁷⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range:</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.’³⁷⁹</p>	B2

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the English B HL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The English B HL listening

³⁷⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p.48.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. pp.49-50.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p.60.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p.132.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. p.131.

comprehension N20 examination reviewed contains assessment items that correspond to CEFR descriptors ranging from B1+ to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the English B HL listening comprehension N20 examination as follows:

Table 66: Overall CEFR levels of English B HL Paper 2 listening comprehension (N20 examination)

English HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’³⁸⁰</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole’.³⁸¹</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: B1+: ‘Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety.’³⁸²</p>	B1+
Text B	6-11	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’ B2: ‘Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers.’³⁸³</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B1+: ‘Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.’³⁸⁴</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: B1+: ‘Can distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in standard lectures on familiar subjects, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.’³⁸⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics’.³⁸⁶</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues’.³⁸⁷</p>	B1+/B2

³⁸⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

³⁸¹ Ibid. p.60.

³⁸² Ibid. p.49.

³⁸³ Ibid. p.48.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. pp.49-50.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. p.131.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. p.60.

English HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text C	12-21	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B2+: ‘Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand’. C1: ‘Can follow extended discourse even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly’.³⁸⁸</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: B2+: ‘Can understand the point of view expressed on topics that are of current interest or that relate to their specialised field, provided the talk is delivered in standard language or a familiar variety.’³⁸⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B2+: ‘Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.’³⁹⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range: C1: ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.’³⁹¹</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’³⁹²</p>	B2+/C1

5.2.3 Writing

Box 5: Key findings on English B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

Key findings English B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding English B SL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2 up to B2+ CEFR levels. In relation to English B HL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from B1+ up to B2+ CEFR levels. Therefore, the comparative analysis found that both SL and HL English B writing student samples from the M21 examination targeted up to B2+ level. This is because of a several factors. Firstly, as the students select the level that they want

³⁸⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. pp.49-50.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

³⁹¹ Ibid. p.131.

³⁹² Ibid. p.60.

Key findings English B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

to study the Language B subject (SL or HL) this means that some students with advanced productive skills might choose to study at SL. Secondly, according to the mark scheme analysis of the writing assessment criteria, it was evident that the bands and level descriptors of Criterion B: Message and Criterion C: Conceptual understanding were identical for both SL and HL. As a result, the review of the comparative analysis concluded that in the Language B assessment of the writing skills (paper 1) it is possible for both SL and HL students to achieve up to B2+ CEFR level.

- In both **SL and HL English B** the comparative analysis of the **writing students samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination found that the CEFR written production language activities assessed include 'Overall written production' and 'Reports and essays', the CEFR written interaction language activities assessed include 'Overall written interaction' and 'Correspondence' and the CEFR language competences assessed include 'Vocabulary range', 'Vocabulary control', 'Grammatical accuracy', 'Thematic development', 'Prepositional precision', 'General linguistic range', 'Orthographic control', and 'Coherence and Cohesion'.

Standard Level

At SL, students' written production skills are assessed through Paper 1. The examination paper reviewed was from M21. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 15 minutes, with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 250 – 400 words.

In this particular paper, the first task provided students with a scenario in which they had to describe their idea for a cultural game. More specifically, students were required to address a big company and convince them to develop the game. The task specified that students had to explain why the game could be a success. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of identities, experiences, and human ingenuity, in addition to the optional topics of subcultures, language and identity, leisure activities, customs and traditions, and entertainment.³⁹³ Therefore, the task seems to address personal, educational, and public domains.³⁹⁴

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a brochure, an official report, or a proposal. In all three text types, students are expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument. More specifically, one of these text types is usually viewed as 'most appropriate' for the task, one is seen as 'moderately appropriate' and one is seen as 'least appropriate' for the task. However, this doesn't mean that a student who chooses the 'least appropriate' text type cannot earn high marks – it would just be more difficult to complete the task given the examination time. Although examiners are told which text type is most, moderately, and least appropriate for the task, they do not deduct marks from the students for not choosing the most appropriate text type,

³⁹³ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

³⁹⁴ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

but instead they judge the quality of the response in determining if it is appropriate to the context, audience and purpose for that particular question.

The second choice of task requires students to write about the popularity of online learning. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of experiences, human ingenuity, social organisation and sharing the planet with the optional topics of education, technology, human rights, equality, communication, and media.³⁹⁵ In addition, the task seems to target the CEFR educational and public domains.³⁹⁶

Students are instructed to express a specific viewpoint, which focuses on the fact that the government is not taking sufficient action to ensure students' access to this facility. In addition to sharing this opinion on the matter, students are also expected to make suggestions as to how this issue can be rectified.

In this task, students can choose the text type of a brochure, a letter to an editor or a proposal. Regardless of the text type selected, students are required to demonstrate a wide array of writing skills, including writing to persuade, identifying, and solving problems, presenting, and justifying arguments, providing, and explaining advantages and disadvantages and summarising or concluding.

In the third and final task, students are provided with the scenario of having attended the opening of a new museum in the local area. Students are asked to inform other students about this new and unique attraction. Students are instructed to address two specific points, focusing on what the museum is about and its most special features. Due to the nature of the task, students' samples could potentially cover the IB themes of experiences, identities, human ingenuity, and social organisation while addressing the optional topics of subcultures, leisure activities, customs and traditions, entertainment, and education.³⁹⁷ This task identifies most closely with the personal, educational, and public CEFR domains.³⁹⁸

For this task, students are instructed to choose to write an article, a brochure, or an official report, in which they are expected to produce a detailed account of a past experience, writing to inform their audience.

Student sample analysis

In all three SL writing samples analysed, students selected task two. The review and comparative analysis of the English B student samples 1, 2 and 3 of the SL writing assessment of the M21 examination are presented in Appendix 2.

Higher Level

At HL, students' written production skills were assessed through Paper 1; the examination paper reviewed was from M21. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 30 minutes,

³⁹⁵ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

³⁹⁶ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

³⁹⁷ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

³⁹⁸ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 450 – 600 words.

In this paper, the first task requires students to write about the disappearance of world languages and the problems facing their preservation. The task specifies that students must adopt the specific stance that the international community is not doing enough to promote the preservation of languages, while also urging others to act and provide suggestions.

This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of identities, experiences, social organisation and sharing the planet, in addition to the optional topics of subcultures, language and identity, customs and traditions, community and globalisation.³⁹⁹ Therefore, the task seems to address the personal, educational, and public CEFR domains.⁴⁰⁰

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a letter to the editor, a news report, or a set of guidelines. In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument.

The second choice of the task requires students to write about the impact of mass tourism on different groups of the population. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of experiences and social organisation with the optional topics of holidays and travel, leisure activities and community.⁴⁰¹ In addition, the task seems to be targeted towards the educational, personal, and public CEFR domains.⁴⁰²

Students are not explicitly instructed to express a specific viewpoint, instead they are required to inform about an investigation, report fictional opinions and suggest future actions. In this task, students can choose the text type of a news report, a set of guidelines or a speech. Regardless of the text type selected, students are expected to demonstrate a wide array of writing skills, including writing to persuade, addressing an audience, structuring a coherent text, expressing, and developing opinions, summarising, or concluding.

In the third and final task, students are provided with the scenario of having participated in a volunteering programme abroad; they are then asked to produce a detailed account of a past experience, writing to inform their audience. Due to the nature of the task, students could potentially cover the IB themes of experience and sharing the planet while addressing the optional topics of leisure activities, holidays and travel, life stories, the environment and globalisation.⁴⁰³ This task identifies most closely with educational and public CEFR domains.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁴⁰⁰ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁴⁰¹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁴⁰² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁴⁰³ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁴⁰⁴ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

Students are asked to inform other students about their volunteering experience, addressing the following specific points: the most challenging aspects of achieving the programme’s objectives, how this was rectified and the subsequent change to their outlook on life. For this task, students must choose to write a letter to an editor, an official report or a speech.

Similarly to SL, in HL Paper 1 one of these text types is usually viewed as ‘most appropriate’ for the task, one is seen as ‘moderately appropriate’ and one is seen as ‘least appropriate’ for the task. However, this doesn’t mean that a student who chooses the ‘least appropriate’ text type cannot earn high marks –it would just be more difficult to complete the task given the examination time. Although examiners are told which text type is most, moderately, and least appropriate for the task, they do not deduct marks from the students for not choosing the most appropriate text type, but instead they judge the quality of the response in determining if it is appropriate to the context, audience and purpose for that particular question.

Student sample analysis

The review and comparative analysis of student samples 4, 5 and 6 of English B HL writing assessment are included in Appendix 2.

Overall findings on English B Writing (Paper 1)

The input text of the writing assessment tasks, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR writing production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the English B SL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The English B SL student samples of the writing assessment (Paper 1) of the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the English B SL writing assessment from the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 67: Overall CEFR levels of the English B SL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

English SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 1	<p>Correspondence A2: ‘Can compose short, simple notes, e-mails and text messages (e.g. to send or reply to an invitation, to confirm or change an arrangement)’.⁴⁰⁵</p> <p>Reports and essays A2: ‘Can produce simple texts on familiar subjects of interest, linking sentences with connectors like ‘and’, ‘because’ or ‘then’’.⁴⁰⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy A2: ‘Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say’.⁴⁰⁷</p>	A2

⁴⁰⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 82-83.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 68.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

English SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Prepositional precision A2: ‘Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message’.⁴⁰⁸</p> <p>Thematic development A2+: ‘Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points’.⁴⁰⁹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion A2+: ‘Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points’.⁴¹⁰</p> <p>Overall written production B1: ‘Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence’.⁴¹¹</p> <p>General linguistic range B1: ‘Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times’.⁴¹²</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations’.⁴¹³</p> <p>Vocabulary control B1: ‘Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations’.⁴¹⁴</p> <p>Orthographic control B1: ‘Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time. Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout’.⁴¹⁵</p>	
Sample 2	<p>Overall written production B2: ‘Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources’.⁴¹⁶</p> <p>Reports and essays B2: ‘Can produce 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 various options’.⁴¹⁷</p> <p>Correspondence B2: ‘Can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and e-mails’.⁴¹⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range B2: ‘Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so’.⁴¹⁹</p>	B2

⁴⁰⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 141-142.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴¹¹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴¹² Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁴¹³ Ibid. p. 131.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. p. 136.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. p. 68.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

English SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution'.⁴²⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary control B2: 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication'.⁴²¹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2: 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy'.⁴²²</p> <p>Orthographic control B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence. Can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions'.⁴²³</p> <p>Thematic development B2: 'Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas'.⁴²⁴</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2+: 'Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas'.⁴²⁵</p> <p>Propositional precision B2: 'Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though their language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity'.⁴²⁶</p>	
Sample 3	<p>Overall written interaction B1+: 'Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information, and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision'.⁴²⁷</p> <p>Correspondence B1+: 'Can compose personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music or film. Can compose letters expressing different opinions and giving detailed accounts of personal feelings and experiences. Can compose basic formal e-mails/letters (e.g. to make a complaint and request action)'.⁴²⁸</p> <p>Overall written production B2: 'Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources'.⁴²⁹</p> <p>Reports and essays B2: 'Can produce 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 various options. Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources'.⁴³⁰</p> <p>Propositional precision B2: 'Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though their language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity'.⁴³¹</p>	B2+

⁴²⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁴²¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp.132-133.

⁴²² Ibid. p. 132.

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 136.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴²⁶ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁴²⁷ Ibid. p. 82.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁴²⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴³⁰ Ibid. p. 68.

⁴³¹ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

English SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>General linguistic range B2+: 'Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say'.⁴³²</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2+: 'Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists'.⁴³³</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2+: 'Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas'.⁴³⁴</p> <p>Thematic development B2+: 'Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly'.⁴³⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.⁴³⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary control C1: 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors'.⁴³⁷</p> <p>Orthographic control C1: 'Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen'.⁴³⁸</p>	

The input texts of each question were examined for language function and a linguistic analysis. A detailed description can be found in the 'input text analysis' section and a summary found below for the SL external writing assessment, questions 1 to 3.

Table 68: English B SL Paper 1 input text analysis

SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)			
Questions	Language function	Grammatical structures	Estimated CEFR level of grammatical structure
1	Giving instructions Describing past experiences Describing things Describing places Expressing wishes Persuading Describing hopes and plans Suggestions	SVO order in simple statements Regular plural nouns Subject personal pronouns Common prepositions Common adjectives Common nouns Present simple tense Present perfect tense Future tense Definite and indefinite articles Imperatives Phrasal verbs Modals Relative pronoun and preposition	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 B2
2	Giving instructions	SVO order in simple statements	A1

⁴³² Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁴³³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴³⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁴³⁸ Ibid. p. 136.

SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)			
Questions	Language function	Grammatical structures	Estimated CEFR level of grammatical structure
	Describing habits and routines Reporting facts and actions Expressing wishes Critiquing and reviewing Suggestions	Regular plural nouns Subject personal pronouns Common prepositions Possessive adjectives Common adjectives Direct object pronoun Present simple tense Present continuous tense Definite and indefinite articles Imperatives Modals (with conditional) Conjunction of contrast Relative pronoun and preposition	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 B1 B1 B2
3	Giving instructions Describing past experiences Describing places Critiquing and reviewing Comparison Expressing wishes Suggestions	SVO order in simple statements Regular plural nouns Subject personal pronouns Common prepositions Possessive adjectives Common adjectives Common nouns Ordinal numbers Superlative Present simple tense Past simple tense Definite and indefinite articles Imperatives Modals Relative pronoun and preposition	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 B2

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the English B HL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The English B HL student samples of the external writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1+ to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the English B HL writing assessment of the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 69: Overall CEFR levels English B HL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

English HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 4	<p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence'.⁴³⁹</p> <p>Sociolinguistic appropriateness B1: 'Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register'.⁴⁴⁰</p> <p>Thematic development B1: 'Shows awareness of the conventional structure of</p>	B1+

⁴³⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 137.

English HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>the text type concerned when communicating their ideas'.⁴⁴¹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.⁴⁴²</p> <p>Vocabulary control B2: 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication'.⁴⁴³</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2: 'Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices'.⁴⁴⁴</p>	
Sample 5	<p>Coherence and cohesion B1: 'Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points'.⁴⁴⁵</p> <p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence'.⁴⁴⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically'.⁴⁴⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy'.⁴⁴⁸</p>	B2
Sample 6	<p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence'.⁴⁴⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary control B2: 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication'.⁴⁵⁰</p> <p>Thematic development B2: 'Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas'.⁴⁵¹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2+: 'Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas'.⁴⁵²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2+: 'Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect'.⁴⁵³</p> <p>Vocabulary range C1: 'Can understand and use appropriately the range of</p>	B2+

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴⁴² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 132.

⁴⁴³ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 141.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 132.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴⁵² Ibid. p. 141.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. p. 132.

Key findings English B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

- In relation to **English B SL**, the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences found that these report **from A2 up to B2 CEFR levels**.
- Additionally, in **English B HL** the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report **from A2 up to B2+ CEFR levels**.
- In **both SL and HL English B** the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination found that the CEFR oral production language activities assessed include 'Overall oral production' and 'Sustained monologue: describing experience', the CEFR oral interaction language activities of 'Overall oral interaction' and 'Conversation', and the CEFR language competences of 'General linguistic range', 'Thematic development', 'Fluency', 'Overall phonological control', 'Grammatical accuracy' and 'Vocabulary control'. Additionally, in relation to HL Language B, the comparative analysis of the speaking and interactive skills student samples and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination indicated that they assess some additional CEFR mediation activities in relation to mediating a text including 'Expressing a personal response to creative texts' and 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts'. This is because in the HL speaking and interactive skills assessment students are requested to provide a presentation and analyse a literary extract.

Standard Level

Ecctis reviewed three student samples of the SL internal oral assessment including the visual stimuli that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21. The Internal Assessment for M21 was assessment by examiners in addition to teachers submitting their assessed marks.

Student sample analysis

The analysis of the student samples included the review of the visual stimuli and the task, the analysis of the input text including the questions that were asked by the teacher during the speaking and interactive skills assessment, the analysis of the output text produced by the student, and the review of how the student samples are marked by the teacher against each one of the assessment criteria.

Based on the mark scheme analysis presented above, Ecctis marked each student sample across all assessment criteria and following that evaluated and synthesised data from the marking allocated to each sample by the teacher and the data from the marking allocated to each sample by Ecctis. Following that, Ecctis compared each speaking sample across the most relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences choosing the relevant level descriptors in order to determine the CEFR level of each student sample. The review and

comparative analysis of student sample 7, 8 and 9 of the English B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 2.

Higher Level

Ecctis reviewed three student samples of the HL internal oral assessment including the literary extract that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

Student sample analysis

The analysis of the HL student samples followed the same approach and process as the analysis of the SL student samples. More specifically, the analysis included the review of the literary extract and the task, the analysis of the input text including the literary extract and the questions that were asked by the teacher during the speaking and interactive skills assessment, the analysis of the output text produced by the student, and the review of how the student samples are marked by the teacher against each one of the assessment criteria.

Based on the mark scheme analysis, Ecctis marked each student sample across all assessment criteria and following that evaluated and synthesised data from the marking allocated to each sample by the teacher and the data from the marking allocated to each sample by Ecctis. Following that, Ecctis compared each sample across the most relevant CEFR activities, strategies, and competences choosing the relevant level descriptors to determine the overall CEFR level of each student sample. The review and comparative analysis of student samples 10, 11, and 12 of the English B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 2.

Overall findings on English B Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

The input text of the internal speaking and interactive skills assessment tasks including the questions asked by the teacher during the assessment, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR oral production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the English B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The English B SL student samples of the internal speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the English B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 71: Overall CEFR levels of English B SL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) (M21 examination)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
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Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 7	<p>Understanding an interlocuter B1: ‘Can follow clearly articulated speech/sign directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs and phrases’.⁴⁵⁵</p> <p>Conversation B1+: ‘Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocuter makes an effort to support understanding’.⁴⁵⁶</p> <p>Overall oral production B1: ‘Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points’.⁴⁵⁷</p> <p>Overall oral interaction B1+: ‘Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc’.⁴⁵⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range B1+: ‘Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film’.⁴⁵⁹</p> <p>Thematic development B1+: ‘Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time’.⁴⁶⁰</p>	B1+
Sample 8	<p>Understanding an interlocuter: B2: ‘Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment’.⁴⁶¹</p> <p>Conversation: B2: ‘Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user’. B2+: ‘Can establish a relationship with interlocutors through sympathetic questioning and expressions of agreement plus, if appropriate, comments about third parties or shared conditions’.⁴⁶²</p> <p>Overall oral production: B2+: ‘Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail’.⁴⁶³</p>	B2

⁴⁵⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 73.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 62.

⁴⁵⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 72.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 140.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. p. 73.

⁴⁶² Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁴⁶³ Ibid. p. 62.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Overall oral interaction: B2+: ‘Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances’.⁴⁶⁴</p> <p>Overall phonological control: B2: ‘Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility’.⁴⁶⁵</p> <p>Fluency: B2+: ‘Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of language’.⁴⁶⁶</p>	
Sample 9	<p>Understanding an interlocuter: A2: ‘Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocuter can take the trouble’.⁴⁶⁷</p> <p>Conversation: A2: ‘Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocuter will take the trouble’.⁴⁶⁸</p> <p>Overall oral Interaction: A2 ‘Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord’.⁴⁶⁹</p> <p>Overall oral production: A2: ‘Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list’.⁴⁷⁰</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: A2: ‘Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms’.⁴⁷¹</p> <p>Vocabulary control: A2: ‘Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs’.⁴⁷²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A2: ‘Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say’.⁴⁷³</p>	A2

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 72.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 142.

⁴⁶⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 73.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 72.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 62.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁴⁷² Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁴⁷³ Ibid. p. 132.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Overall phonological control: A2: ‘Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear’.⁴⁷⁴</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample of the English B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The English B HL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of English B HL internal speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 72: Overall CEFR levels of English B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) (M21 examination)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 10	<p>Conversation: A2: ‘Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocutor will take the trouble’.⁴⁷⁵</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: A2: ‘Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord’.⁴⁷⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A1: ‘Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire’.⁴⁷⁷</p> <p>Overall phonological control: A2: ‘Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear’.⁴⁷⁸</p>	A2
Sample 11	<p>Conversation: B1+: ‘Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding’.⁴⁷⁹</p>	B1+

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁴⁷⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 72.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Overall oral interaction: B1+: ‘Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc’. ⁴⁸⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: ‘Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express’. ⁴⁸¹</p> <p>Overall phonological control: B1: ‘Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message. Accent is usually influenced by the other language(s) they speak’. ⁴⁸²</p> <p>Analysis and criticisms of creative texts (including literature): B1: ‘Can point out the most important episodes and events in a clearly structured narrative in everyday language and explain the significance of events and the connections between them’. ⁴⁸³</p>	
Sample 12	<p>Fluency: B2+ : ‘Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of language’. ⁴⁸⁴</p> <p>Overall oral production: B2+: ‘Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail’. ⁴⁸⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1: ‘Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors’. ⁴⁸⁶</p> <p>Thematic development: B2+: ‘Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly’. ⁴⁸⁷</p> <p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B2: ‘Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can give a personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and themes in a story, novel, film or play. Can describe their emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response. Can express in some detail their</p>	B2+

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 72.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. p. 132.

⁴⁸² Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁴⁸³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 223-224.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 142.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what they appreciated and why'.⁴⁸⁸</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): B2: 'Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others. Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples. Can describe the way in which different works differ in their treatment of the same theme'.⁴⁸⁹</p>	

5.3 Summary Analysis – French B (SL & HL)

This section presents the summary analysis and findings of the French B (SL and HL) reading, listening, writing, and speaking and interactive skills to CEFR. The summary of analysis and findings for each skill are presented in the same structure and way as the findings in English B (SL and HL).

The assessment papers reviewed for both SL and HL French B are presented in the table below:

Table 73: French B assessment papers reviewed

French B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
French B	HL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
	SL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N22	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)

As presented in the table above, the French B SL and HL reading and listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis is from

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

N20. In addition, the project team reviewed the French B SL Paper 2 (Reading and listening) from the N22 examination. Additionally, the French B SL and HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) as well as writing skills assessment (Paper 1) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from the M21 examination. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 and N22 examination and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for French B SL and HL.

5.3.1 Reading

Box 7: Key findings on French B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The review and comparative analysis of the **French B SL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types, reading skills assessed and associated mark schemes from the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences indicated that these reported **from A2+ up to B2 CEFR level**.
- Additionally, the review and comparative analysis of the **French B HL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types, reading skills assessed and associated mark schemes of the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences indicated that these reported **from B1+ up to C1 CEFR level**.
- In both **SL and HL French B** the comparative analysis of the **reading comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20** examination found that the CEFR reading comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the reading comprehension activities of 'Overall reading comprehension', 'Reading for orientation', 'Reading for information and argument', and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Standard Level

The French B SL paper 2 assesses receptive language skills and comprises two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening comprehension.⁴⁹⁰ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The SL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills assessment items are structured as follows:

Table 74: French SL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁴⁹¹

French SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-9	12 marks

⁴⁹⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.29.

⁴⁹¹ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

Text B	Questions 10-23	14 marks
Text C	Questions 24-36	14 marks

A detailed review and comparative analysis of one reading text for French B SL paper 2 from the N20 examination can be found in Appendix 3.

Higher Level

Similar to the French B SL paper 2 assessment, examination of the French B paper 2 HL centres on receptive language skills and consists of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening skills.⁴⁹² The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The French B HL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills segment is structured as follows:⁴⁹³

Table 75: French HL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁴⁹⁴

French HL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-9	13 marks
Text B	Questions 10-22	13 marks
Text C	Questions 23-35	14 marks

A detailed overview of the review and analysis of one HL text of the French B paper 2 reading comprehension examination of N20 to CEFR is presented in Appendix 3.

Overall findings on French B Reading (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the reading comprehension examination of the French B (SL and HL) Paper 2 against the CEFR reading comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the reading comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the French B SL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the reading comprehension component of the French B SL N20 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ up to B2 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the French B SL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 76: Overall CEFR levels of the French B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level

⁴⁹² International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.30.

⁴⁹³ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-9	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: ‘Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.’ ‘Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).’⁴⁹⁵</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension A2+: ‘Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.’⁴⁹⁶</p> <p>Reading for information and argument A2+: ‘Can understand the main points of short texts dealing with everyday topics (e.g. lifestyle, hobbies, sports, weather).’⁴⁹⁷</p> <p>Reading for orientation A2+: ‘Can find specific information in practical, concrete, predictable texts (e.g. travel guidebooks, recipes), provided they are produced in simple language.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.’⁴⁹⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range A2+: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’⁴⁹⁹</p>	A2+/B1
Text B	10-23	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: ‘Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests.’ ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’ ‘Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’⁵⁰⁰</p>	B1+

⁴⁹⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p.60.

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Overall reading comprehension A2+: ‘Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.’⁵⁰¹</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1: ‘Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (e.g. critical contributions to an online discussion forum or readers’ letters to the editor).’ ‘Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.’⁵⁰²</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1: ‘Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘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.’ ‘Can scan through straightforward, factual texts in magazines, brochures or on the web, identify what they are about and decide whether they contain information that might be of practical use.’⁵⁰³</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁵⁰⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’⁵⁰⁵</p>	
Text C	24-36	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’ ‘Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests.’ ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’⁵⁰⁶</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a</p>	B2

⁵⁰¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁵⁰² Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 60.

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>satisfactory level of comprehension.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’⁵⁰⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1: ‘Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.’⁵⁰⁸</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1+: ‘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.’⁵⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁵¹⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.’ ‘Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.’⁵¹¹</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the French B HL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The French B HL reading comprehension N20 examination contains assessment items that correspond to CEFR descriptor levels B1+ to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level each text of the French B HL of the reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 77: Overall CEFR levels of the French B HL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
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⁵⁰⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵¹¹ Ibid. p. 132.

Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-9	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’ ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’⁵¹²</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’⁵¹³</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1+: ‘Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.’ ‘Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted.’ ‘Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.’⁵¹⁴</p> <p>Reading for orientation B2: ‘Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.’ ‘Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.’⁵¹⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁵¹⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.’⁵¹⁷</p>	B1+/B2
Text B	10-22	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’</p>	B2/B2+

⁵¹² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁵¹³ Ibid. p. 54.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>C1: 'Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.'⁵¹⁸</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.'⁵¹⁹</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1+: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted.' 'Can recognise when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something.'⁵²⁰</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1+: 'Can scan through straightforward, factual texts in magazines, brochures or on the web, identify what they are about and decide whether they contain information that might be of practical use.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile. Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.'⁵²¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'</p> <p>B2+: 'Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists.'⁵²²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.'</p> <p>B2: 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.'⁵²³</p>	
Text C	23-35	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'</p> <p>C1: 'Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.'⁵²⁴</p>	B2+/C1

⁵¹⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. p. 54.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁵²¹ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁵²² Ibid. p. 131.

⁵²³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵²⁴ Ibid. p.60.

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Overall reading comprehension B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Can understand a wide variety of texts including literary writings, newspaper or magazine articles, and specialised academic or professional publications, provided there are opportunities for rereading and they have access to reference tools.’ ‘Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not these relate to their own area of speciality, provided they can reread difficult sections.’⁵²⁵</p> <p>Reading for information and argument C1: ‘Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.’⁵²⁶</p> <p>Reading for orientation B2: ‘Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.’⁵²⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.’ ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.’ ‘Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/signs less commonly encountered.’⁵²⁸</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2: ‘Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.’⁵²⁹</p>	

⁵²⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁵²⁶ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁵²⁷ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁵²⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵²⁹ Ibid. p. 132.

5.3.2 Listening

Box 8: Key findings on French B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The comparative analysis of the **French B SL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from A2+ up to B2 CEFR level**.
- The comparative analysis of the **French B HL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B1 up to C1 level**.
- In both **SL and HL French B** the comparative analysis of the **listening comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 examination** found that the CEFR oral comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the oral comprehension activities of 'Overall oral comprehension', 'Understanding conversation between other people', 'Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings', 'Understanding as a member of a live audience' and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Standard Level

The French B SL listening comprehension assessment paper 2 is structured as follows:

Table 78: French SL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁵³⁰

French SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-11	5 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

A detailed review and comparative analysis of one listening text for French B SL Paper 2 from the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 3.

Higher Level

The French B HL listening comprehension assessment paper 2 is structured as follows:

Table 79: French HL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁵³¹

⁵³⁰ International Baccalaureate. (2020). French B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Standard Level.

⁵³¹ International Baccalaureate. (2020). French B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Higher Level.

French HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-15	10 marks
Text C	Questions 16-25	10 marks

A detailed review and comparative analysis of one listening text for French B HL paper 2 listening comprehension from the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 3.

Overall findings on French B Listening (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the listening comprehension examination of French B (SL and HL) against the CEFR oral comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the listening comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the French B SL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the listening comprehension component of the examination French B SL of the N20 examination reviewed have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B2 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the French B SL listening comprehension are as follows:

Table 80: Overall CEFR levels of the French B SL Paper 2 listening comprehension (N20 examination)

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: 'Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g., identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.'⁵³²</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁵³³</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings A2: 'Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly.'</p> <p>B1: Can understand the main points of news bulletins and simpler recorded</p>	A2+/B1

⁵³² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁵³³ Ibid. p.48.

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.'⁵³⁴</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience B1: 'Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in standard lectures on familiar subjects, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.'⁵³⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.'</p> <p>B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁵³⁶</p>	
Text B	6-11	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: 'Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g., identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).' 'Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests.'⁵³⁷</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension A2+: 'Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁵³⁸</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings A2+: 'Can understand in an interview what people say they do in their free time, what they particularly like doing and what they do not like doing, provided they speak slowly and clearly.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.'⁵³⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday</p>	B1/B1+

⁵³⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 52.

⁵³⁵ Ibid. pp.49-50.

⁵³⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵³⁷ Ibid. p.60.

⁵³⁸ Ibid. p.48.

⁵³⁹ Ibid. p. 52.

French SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>transactions involving familiar situations and topics.'</p> <p>B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'</p> <p>B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁵⁴⁰</p>	
Text C	12-21	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: 'Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁵⁴¹</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁵⁴²</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: 'Can understand the main points of news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.'⁵⁴³</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'</p> <p>B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁵⁴⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2: 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.'⁵⁴⁵</p>	B1+/B2

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the French B HL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The French B HL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed contains assessment items that correspond to CEFR descriptors from B1 up to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the French B HL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

⁵⁴⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid. p.60.

⁵⁴² Ibid. p.48.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. p. 52.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

Table 81: Overall CEFR levels of French B HL Paper 2 listening comprehension (N20 examination)

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’⁵⁴⁶</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’⁵⁴⁷</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: ‘Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.’⁵⁴⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁵⁴⁹</p>	B1
Text B	6-15	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: ‘Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts.’</p> <p>B1: ‘Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (e.g. identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’⁵⁵⁰</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: ‘Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Can follow extended discourse even when it is not clearly structured and</p>	B2

⁵⁴⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. p.48.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 52.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. p.60.

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.’⁵⁵¹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: ‘Can understand the main points of news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.’</p> <p>B1+: ‘Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.’</p> <p>B2+: ‘Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.’⁵⁵²</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.’⁵⁵³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: ‘Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used ‘routines’ and patterns associated with more predictable situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.’⁵⁵⁴</p>	
Text C	16-25	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’⁵⁵⁵</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B2: ‘Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers.’</p> <p>B2+: ‘Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Can understand enough to follow extended discourse on abstract and complex topics beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the variety is unfamiliar.’⁵⁵⁶</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B2+: ‘Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and</p>	C1

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. p.48.

⁵⁵² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 52.

⁵⁵³ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. p.60.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. p.48.

French HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>attitudes as well as the information content.'</p> <p>C1: 'Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between people.'⁵⁵⁷</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience B2+: 'Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.'⁵⁵⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'</p> <p>C1: 'Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/signs less commonly encountered.'⁵⁵⁹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B2: 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.'</p> <p>C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.'⁵⁶⁰</p>	

5.3.3 Writing

Box 9: Key findings on French B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding French B SL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2 up to B2+ CEFR levels. In relation to French B HL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels. Therefore, the comparative analysis found that both SL and HL French B writing student samples from the M21 examination targeted up to B2+ level. This is because of a several factors. Firstly, as the students select the level that they want to study the Language B subject (SL or HL) this means that some students with advanced productive skills might choose to study at SL. Secondly, according to the mark scheme analysis of the writing assessment criteria, it was evident that the bands and level descriptors of Criterion B: Message and Criterion C: Conceptual understanding were identical for both SL and HL. As a result, the review of the comparative analysis concluded that in the Language B assessment of the writing skills (paper 1) it is possible for both SL and HL students to achieve up to B2+ CEFR level. In both SL and HL French B the comparative analysis of the writing students samples and associated mark schemes of the M21 examination found that the CEFR written production language activities assessed include 'Overall written production' and 'Reports

⁵⁵⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 52.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid. pp.49-50.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 132.

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

and essays', the CEFR written interaction language activities assessed include 'Overall written interaction' and 'Correspondence' and the CEFR language competences assessed include 'Vocabulary range', 'Vocabulary control', 'Grammatical accuracy', 'Thematic development', 'Prepositional precision', 'General linguistic range', 'Orthographic control', and 'Coherence and Cohesion'.

Standard Level

The analysis of all SL external written assessment materials for French B, followed an identical process to that of English B. The student samples of the French B SL external written assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of N20.

In this paper, the first task provides students with a scenario in which they must share their opinion regarding repeating a year at school; students must address their classmates and also propose at least one solution for ensuring success at school. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of community, social organisation, and education.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, the task seems to address educational and public CEFR domains.⁵⁶²

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: an article, a presentation, or some instructions. In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, whilst developing an argument, justifying their opinions, and making recommendations.

The second choice of task requires students to write about a proposed environmental project, to preserve green spaces in their town. Specifically, the student is required to write the text as an entry to a competition, describing the nature of their project, and convincing the committee of the reasons why the proposal should be chosen. Depending on the ideas that the student includes, this task could cover the IB themes of human ingenuity, scientific innovation, social organisation, community, sharing the planet, the environment, and urban and rural environment.⁵⁶³ The task addresses the educational and public CEFR domains.⁵⁶⁴

In this task, students can choose to write the task in the following text types: a blog, a presentation, or a proposal. In this task, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to write a detailed and descriptive text, in which they share their opinions, develop an argument and write to persuade the recipient.

In the third and final task, students are presented with a scenario in which they have just returned from a trip with friends, during which they tried a new outdoor activity. Specifically, the student is instructed to promote the new activity; the target audience is not specified. This task covers the IB themes of experiences, leisure activities, social organisation, social relationships, social engagement, sharing the planet, and urban and rural environment.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶¹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁵⁶² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁵⁶³ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁵⁶⁴ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁵⁶⁵ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

This task identifies most closely with personal and public CEFR domains.⁵⁶⁶ In addition to promoting the activity, students are asked to describe their trip and share their enthusiasm for the activity.

In terms of task text type, students can choose either an article, a blog, or a proposal. Regardless of the text type, students should write persuasively, justifying their opinions and argument, as they share information and write in detail.

Student sample analysis

In the three writing samples analysed, two students selected task two (samples 1 and 2), one student selected task three (sample 3), yet none of the samples addressed task one. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the French B SL writing assessment (paper 1) is presented in Appendix 3.

Higher Level

The analysis of all HL external written assessment materials for French B, followed an identical process to that of English B. The student samples of the French B HL external written assessment (paper 1) reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

In this paper, the first task requires students to write about the problematic frequency of academic testing in schools. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of social organisation and education.⁵⁶⁷ Therefore, the task seems to address personal and educational CEFR domains.⁵⁶⁸ The task specifies that students must adopt a negative stance, describing disadvantages and encouraging the adoption of different testing methods.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task: a speech, an interview or a letter. In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument.

The second choice of task requires students to address a scenario in which they are writing to the mayor of their town, with an idea for a project that will benefit their local area. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of social organisation, community, social engagement, education, sharing the planet, the environment, urban and rural environment.⁵⁶⁹ In addition, the task seems targeted toward the educational and public CEFR domains.⁵⁷⁰

Students are specifically instructed to provide a description of their project, demonstrate the advantages for their area and explain how they could help to implement the project. In this task, students can choose the text type of a letter, a proposal or some instructions. Students

⁵⁶⁶ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁵⁶⁷ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁵⁶⁸ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁵⁶⁹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁵⁷⁰ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

will be expected to write persuasively, considering the audience of the text, write descriptively and develop a convincing argument.

In the third and final task, students are presented with the scenario of having listened to a former student at their school, specifically about their travels and working abroad. Students are specifically instructed to include information about the motives of the traveller and his advice for students intending to do the same. The student is then asked to write a text about the experiences of the former student. Depending on the nature of the chosen output content, this task has the capacity to cover the IB themes of social organisation, education, the working world, experiences, holidays and travel, life stories, migration, and leisure activities.⁵⁷¹ In addition, the task seems targeted toward the personal and educational CEFR domains.⁵⁷²

In this task, students can choose the text type of a speech, an interview, or a proposal. Regardless of the text type selected, students are expected to demonstrate an array of writing skills, including sharing information, writing to persuade, developing, and justifying an argument, summarising, or concluding.

Student sample analysis

In the three writing samples analysed, two students selected task three (samples 4 and 6), one student selected task one (sample 5), yet none of the samples addressed task two. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the French B HL writing assessment is presented in Appendix 3.

Overall findings on French B Writing (Paper 1)

The input text of the writing assessment tasks, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR writing production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the French B SL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The French B SL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the French B SL writing assessment from the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 82: Overall CEFR levels of the French B SL Paper 1 writing (N20 examination)

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 1	Correspondence B1+: 'Can compose basic formal e-mails/letters (e.g. to make a complaint and request action).' ⁵⁷³	A2+

⁵⁷¹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁵⁷² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁵⁷³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 82-83.

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Reports and essays B1: 'Can produce very brief reports in a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.'⁵⁷⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say.'⁵⁷⁵</p> <p>Prepositional precision A2: 'Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message.'⁵⁷⁶</p> <p>Thematic development A2+: 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.'⁵⁷⁷</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B1: 'Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.'⁵⁷⁸</p> <p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.'⁵⁷⁹</p> <p>Overall written interaction B1: 'Can compose personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important.'⁵⁸⁰</p> <p>General linguistic range A2+: 'Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs.'⁵⁸¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.'⁵⁸²</p> <p>Vocabulary control A2: 'Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs.'⁵⁸³</p> <p>Orthographic control B1: 'Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.'⁵⁸⁴</p>	
Sample 2	<p>Correspondence B2+: 'Can compose formal correspondence such as letters of enquiry, request, application and complaint using appropriate register, structure and conventions.'⁵⁸⁵</p> <p>Reports and essays B1+: 'Can produce a text on a topical subject of personal interest, using simple language to list advantages and disadvantages, and give and justify their opinion.'⁵⁸⁶</p>	B2

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 68.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 141.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 82.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁵⁸² Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 136.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁵⁸⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 68.

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Grammatical accuracy B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.'⁵⁸⁷</p> <p>Prepositional precision B1+: 'Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision.'⁵⁸⁸</p> <p>Thematic development B1+: 'Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.'⁵⁸⁹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2+: 'Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.'⁵⁹⁰</p> <p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.'⁵⁹¹</p> <p>Overall written interaction B1+: 'Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information, and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.'⁵⁹²</p> <p>General linguistic range B2: 'Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.'⁵⁹³</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.'⁵⁹⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary control B2: 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication.'⁵⁹⁵</p> <p>Orthographic control B1: 'Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout.'⁵⁹⁶</p>	
Sample 3	<p>Overall written production B2: 'Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.'⁵⁹⁷</p> <p>Reports and essays B2+: 'Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail.'⁵⁹⁸</p> <p>Overall written interaction B2: 'Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others.'⁵⁹⁹</p>	B2+

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁵⁹² Ibid. p. 82.

⁵⁹³ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 136.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 66.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 68.

⁵⁹⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 82.

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Correspondence B2+: 'Can in most cases understand idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms in correspondence and other communications and use the most common ones themselves as appropriate to the situation.'⁶⁰⁰</p> <p>General linguistic range C1: 'Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.' 'Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility.'⁶⁰¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range C1: 'Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.'⁶⁰²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.'⁶⁰³</p> <p>Vocabulary control C1: 'Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately.'⁶⁰⁴</p> <p>Orthographic control B2: 'Can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions.'⁶⁰⁵</p> <p>Thematic development B2+: 'Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.'⁶⁰⁶</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2+: 'Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.'⁶⁰⁷</p> <p>Propositional precision C1: 'Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.'⁶⁰⁸</p>	

The input texts of each question were examined for language function and a linguistic analysis. A detailed description can be found in the 'input text analysis' section and a summary found below for the SL external writing assessment, questions 1 to 3.

Table 83: French B SL Paper 1 input text analysis

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)			
Questions	Language function	Grammatical structures	Estimated CEFR level of grammatical structure
1	Giving instructions Describing past experiences (simple) Describing places Expressing wishes Describing hopes and plans (simple) Persuading (simple) Narrating and describing past, present and future events	Subject personal pronouns Possessive adjectives Common prepositions Common adjectives Present simple Past simple/ present perfect Definite/ indefinite articles Superlative	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1/A2 A2 A2

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁶⁰² Ibid. p. 131.

⁶⁰³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 136.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 141.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

French SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)			
Questions	Language function	Grammatical structures	Estimated CEFR level of grammatical structure
	Critiquing and reviewing	Imperatives Connecting words expressing cause and effect Relative clauses	A2 B1 B2
2	Giving instructions Expressing wishes Suggestions Reporting facts/ actions Describing places Expressing opinions Persuading Obligation and necessity Developing an argument	SVO order in simple statements Regular plural nouns Subject personal pronouns Possessive adjectives Common prepositions Common adjectives Present simple Definite/ indefinite articles Imperatives Modals Gerund Conditionals Relative clauses	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 B1 B2
3	Giving instructions Expressing wishes Suggestions Reporting facts/ actions Describing habits and routines Describing places Describing things Describing past experiences Expressing opinions Expressing likes and dislikes Persuading Obligation and necessity Developing an argument Inviting Critiquing and reviewing	SVO order in simple statements Subject personal pronouns Possessive adjectives Demonstrative adjectives Common prepositions Common adjectives Present simple Past simple/ present perfect Prepositional phrases of place Definite/ indefinite articles Countable/ uncountable nouns Modals Imperatives Relative clauses	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1/A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2 B2

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the French B HL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The French B HL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of French B HL writing assessment from the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 84: Overall CEFR levels French B HL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

French HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 4	Correspondence A2: 'Can convey personal information of a routine nature, for example in a short e-mail or letter introducing themselves.' ⁶⁰⁹ Reports and essays A2: 'Can produce simple texts on a subjects of interest, linking	A2+

⁶⁰⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 82-83.

French HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>sentences with connectors like 'and', 'because' or 'then'.⁶¹⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say.'⁶¹¹</p> <p>Prepositional precision A2: 'Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message.'⁶¹²</p> <p>Thematic development A2+: 'Can give an example of something in a very simple text using 'like' or 'for example'. Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.'⁶¹³</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B1: 'Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.'⁶¹⁴</p> <p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.'⁶¹⁵</p> <p>Overall written interaction B1: 'Can compose personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important.'⁶¹⁶</p> <p>General linguistic range A2+: 'Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs.'⁶¹⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.'⁶¹⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary control A2: 'Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs.'⁶¹⁹</p> <p>Orthographic control B1: 'Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.'⁶²⁰</p>	
Sample 5	<p>Correspondence B2: 'Can compose letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views.' 'Can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and e-mails.'⁶²¹</p>	B2

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. p. 68.

⁶¹¹ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶¹² Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁶¹³ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid. p. 141.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid. p. 66.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. p. 82.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁶²⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 136.

⁶²¹ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

French HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Reports and essays B2: 'Can produce 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 various options.'⁶²²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.'⁶²³</p> <p>Prepositional precision B1+: 'Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision.'⁶²⁴</p> <p>Thematic development B2: 'Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.' 'Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas.'⁶²⁵</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion B2: 'Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices.'⁶²⁶</p> <p>Overall written production B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.'⁶²⁷</p> <p>Overall written interaction B2: 'Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others.'⁶²⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range B1: 'Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.'⁶²⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁶³⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary control B1: 'Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.'⁶³¹</p> <p>Orthographic control B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence.'⁶³²</p>	
Sample 6	Correspondence B2+: 'Can maintain a relationship through personal	B2+

⁶²² Ibid. p. 68.

⁶²³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶²⁴ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁶²⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶²⁶ Ibid. p. 141.

⁶²⁷ Ibid. p. 66.

⁶²⁸ Ibid. p. 82.

⁶²⁹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁶³⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁶³¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp.132-133.

⁶³² Ibid. p. 136.

French HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>correspondence using the language fluently and effectively to give detailed descriptions of experiences, pose sympathetic questions and follow up issues of mutual interest.⁶³³</p> <p>Reports and essays B2+: 'Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail.'⁶³⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.'⁶³⁵</p> <p>Prepositional precision C1: 'Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.'⁶³⁶</p> <p>Thematic development B2+: 'Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.'⁶³⁷</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion C1: 'Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.'⁶³⁸</p> <p>Overall written production B2: 'Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.'⁶³⁹</p> <p>Overall written interaction C1: 'Can express themselves with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively.'⁶⁴⁰</p> <p>General linguistic range C1: 'Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.' 'Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility.'⁶⁴¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range C1: 'Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/signs less commonly encountered.' 'Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies.'⁶⁴²</p> <p>Vocabulary control C1: 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately.'⁶⁴³</p> <p>Orthographic control C1: 'Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful.'⁶⁴⁴</p>	

⁶³³ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁶³⁴ Ibid. p. 68.

⁶³⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶³⁶ Ibid. pp. 141-142.

⁶³⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. p. 141.

⁶³⁹ Ibid. p. 66.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 82.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁶⁴² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

⁶⁴³ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 136.

The input texts of each question were examined for language function and a linguistic analysis. A detailed description can be found in the ‘input text analysis’ section and a summary found below for the HL external writing assessment, questions 1 to 3.

Table 85: French HL Paper 1 input text analysis

French HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)			
Questions	Language function	Grammatical structures	Estimated CEFR level of grammatical structure
1	Giving instructions Critiquing and reviewing Describing habits and routines Describing people Expressing wishes Expressing opinions Describing hopes and plans Reporting facts and actions Persuading Describing feelings and emotions Justification	SVO order in simple statements Present simple Possessive adjectives Subject personal pronouns Common adjectives Demonstrative adjectives Common prepositions Definite/ indefinite articles Modals Imperative Range of intensifiers Relative clauses (pronouns)	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 B1 B2
2	Giving instructions Describing habits and routines Describing people Describing things Expressing wishes Inviting Requests or responding to requests	Possessive adjectives Present simple Common adjectives Common prepositions Definite/ indefinite articles Imperative Superlative Modals Future tense	A1 A1 A1 A1 A2 A2 A2 A2 A2
3	Giving instructions Describing people Expressing wishes Expressing opinions Describing hopes and plans Reporting facts and actions Persuading Describing feelings and emotions Justification Suggestions Describing past experiences Introducing others Giving advice	Possessive adjectives Subject personal pronouns Common adjectives Common prepositions Past simple/ present perfect Indefinite articles Imperative Definite/ indefinite articles Conditional Relative clauses (pronouns)	A1 A1 A1 A1 A1/ A2 A2 A2 A2 B1 B2

5.3.4 Speaking and interactive skills

Box 10: Key findings on French B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills assessment (Internal Assessment)

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

- In relation to **French B SL**, the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences found that these report **from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels**.
- Additionally, in **French B HL** the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report **from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels**.

Key findings French B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

- Therefore, the comparative analysis of **both SL and HL French B speaking and interactive skills** student samples and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and competences of the **M21** examination targeted **up to B2+ CEFR level**.
- In **both SL and HL French B** the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills** student samples and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination found that the CEFR oral production language activities assessed include 'Overall oral production' and 'Sustained monologue: describing experience', the CEFR oral interaction language activities of 'Overall oral interaction' and 'Conversation', and the CEFR language competences of 'General linguistic range', 'Thematic development', 'Fluency', 'Overall phonological control', 'Grammatical accuracy' and 'Vocabulary control'. Additionally, in relation to **HL French B**, the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination indicated that they assess some additional CEFR mediation activities in relation to mediating a text including 'Expressing a personal response to creative texts' and 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts'. This is because in the HL speaking and interactive skills assessment, students are requested to provide a presentation and analyse a literary extract.

Standard Level

Student sample analysis

The analysis of all SL internal oral assessment materials for French B, followed an identical process to that of English B. The student samples of the SL internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the French B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment is presented in Appendix 3.

Higher Level

Student sample analysis

The analysis of all HL internal oral assessment materials for French B, followed an identical process to that of English B; see section 3.2.4 for further details. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the French HL speaking and interactive skills assessment is presented in Appendix 3.

Overall findings on French B Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

The input text of the internal speaking and interactive skills assessment tasks including the questions asked by the teacher during the assessment, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR oral production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the French B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The French B SL student samples of the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the French B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 86: Overall CEFR levels of French B SL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) (M21 examination)

French SL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 7	<p>Conversation A2+: 'Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.' 'Can generally understand clear, standard language on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.'⁶⁴⁵</p> <p>Overall oral interaction A2: 'Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time.' 'Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.'⁶⁴⁶</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor A2+: 'Can generally understand clear, standard speech/sign on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.'⁶⁴⁷</p> <p>Overall oral production A2: 'Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.'⁶⁴⁸</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience A2+: 'Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.' 'Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.'⁶⁴⁹</p> <p>General linguistic range A2+: 'Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs.'⁶⁵⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics.'⁶⁵¹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say.'⁶⁵²</p> <p>Vocabulary control A2: 'Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs.'⁶⁵³</p> <p>Overall phonological control A2: 'Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.'⁶⁵⁴</p> <p>Thematic development A2+: 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.'⁶⁵⁵</p> <p>Fluency A2: 'Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.'⁶⁵⁶</p>	A2+

⁶⁴⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 72.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 73.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 62.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁶⁵² Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁵³ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

French SL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 8	<p>Conversation B1+: 'Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding.'⁶⁵⁷</p> <p>Overall oral interaction B1+: 'Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field.' '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, music, etc.'⁶⁵⁸</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor B2: 'Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.'⁶⁵⁹</p> <p>Overall oral production B2: 'Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.'⁶⁶⁰</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience B1+: 'Can clearly express feelings about something experienced and give reasons to explain those feelings.'⁶⁶¹</p> <p>General linguistic range B1: 'Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.'⁶⁶²</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.'⁶⁶³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.'⁶⁶⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary control B1: 'Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.'⁶⁶⁵</p> <p>Overall phonological control B2: 'Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.'⁶⁶⁶</p> <p>Thematic development B1+: 'Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.'⁶⁶⁷</p> <p>Fluency B2: 'Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party.'⁶⁶⁸</p>	B1+

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 142.

⁶⁵⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 72.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 73.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 62.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁶⁶² Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁶⁶³ Ibid. p. 131.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 142.

French SL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 9	<p>Conversation B2: 'Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user.' 'Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.'⁶⁶⁹</p> <p>Overall oral interaction B2+: 'Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas.' 'Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.'⁶⁷⁰</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor B2: 'Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.'⁶⁷¹</p> <p>Overall oral production C1: 'Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.'⁶⁷²</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience B2: 'Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest.'⁶⁷³</p>	B2+

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample of the French B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The French B HL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of French B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 87: Overall CEFR levels of French B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) (M21 examination)

French HL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 10	<p>Conversation B2: 'Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user.'⁶⁷⁴</p> <p>Overall oral interaction B2: 'Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party.' 'Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views</p>	B2

⁶⁶⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 72.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. p. 73.

⁶⁷² Ibid. p. 62.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

French HL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.’⁶⁷⁵</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor B2: ‘Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.’⁶⁷⁶</p> <p>Overall oral production B1: ‘Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.’⁶⁷⁷</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience B1+: ‘Can clearly express feelings about something experienced and give reasons to explain those feelings.’⁶⁷⁸</p> <p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) B1: ‘Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested them.’ ‘Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events they have experienced or heard about.’⁶⁷⁹</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) B1: ‘Can describe the key themes and characters in short narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language.’⁶⁸⁰</p> <p>General linguistic range B2: ‘Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.’⁶⁸¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: ‘Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.’⁶⁸²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1+: ‘Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.’⁶⁸³</p> <p>Vocabulary control B2: ‘Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication.’⁶⁸⁴</p> <p>Overall phonological control B2: ‘Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.’⁶⁸⁵</p> <p>Thematic development B1+: ‘Can develop an argument well enough to be followed</p>	

⁶⁷⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 72.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 73.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 62.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁶⁸² Ibid. p. 131.

⁶⁸³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

French HL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	without difficulty most of the time. ⁶⁸⁶ Fluency B1+: 'Can express themselves with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and 'cul-de-sacs', they are able to keep going effectively without help.' ⁶⁸⁷	
Sample 11	<p>Conversation B2: 'Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user.'⁶⁸⁸</p> <p>Overall oral interaction B2+: 'Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas.' 'Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.'⁶⁸⁹</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor B2: 'Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.'⁶⁹⁰</p> <p>Overall oral production B2+: 'Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.'⁶⁹¹</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience B2: 'Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest.'⁶⁹²</p> <p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) B2: 'Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments.'⁶⁹³</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) B2: 'Can evaluate the way the work encourages identification with characters, giving examples.' 'Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others.'⁶⁹⁴</p> <p>General linguistic range C1: 'Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.'⁶⁹⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range C1: 'Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/signs less commonly encountered.' 'Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily</p>	B2+

⁶⁸⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 142.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 72.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 73.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid. p. 62.

⁶⁹² Ibid. pp. 62-63.

⁶⁹³ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

French HL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies.⁶⁹⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.'⁶⁹⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary control C1: 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately.'⁶⁹⁸</p> <p>Overall phonological control C1: 'Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout.' 'Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.'⁶⁹⁹</p> <p>Thematic development B2+: 'Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly.'⁷⁰⁰</p> <p>Fluency B2+: 'Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of language.'⁷⁰¹</p>	
Sample 12	<p>Conversation A2+: 'Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.'⁷⁰²</p> <p>Overall oral interaction A2+: 'Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.' 'Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.'⁷⁰³</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor A2+: 'Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort.'⁷⁰⁴</p> <p>Overall oral production A2: 'Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.'⁷⁰⁵</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience A2+: 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.'⁷⁰⁶</p> <p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) A2: 'Can express their reactions to a work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple</p>	A2+

⁶⁹⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 140.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid. p. 142.

⁷⁰² Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁷⁰³ Ibid. p. 72.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 73.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

French HL Internal Assessment (Speaking and interactive skills)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>language.⁷⁰⁷</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) A2: 'Can identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language.'⁷⁰⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range B1: 'Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.'⁷⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.'⁷¹⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say.'⁷¹¹</p> <p>Vocabulary control B1: 'Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics.'⁷¹²</p> <p>Overall phonological control A2: 'Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.'⁷¹³</p> <p>Thematic development A2: 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.'⁷¹⁴</p> <p>Fluency A2+: 'Can make themselves understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.'⁷¹⁵</p>	

5.4. Summary Analysis – German B (SL & HL)

This section presents the summary analysis and findings of the German B (SL and HL) reading, listening, writing, and speaking and interactive skills to CEFR. The summary of analysis and findings for each skill are presented in the same structure as the ones in English B (SL and HL).

The assessment papers reviewed for both SL and HL German B are presented in the table below:

⁷⁰⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 106-107.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. p. 132.

⁷¹² Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁷¹³ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid. p. 140.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid. p. 142.

Table 88: German B assessment papers reviewed

German B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
German B	HL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
	SL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N22	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)

As presented in the table above, the German B SL and HL reading and listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from N20. In addition, the project team reviewed the German B SL Paper 2 (Reading and listening) from the N22 examination. Additionally, the German B SL and HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) as well as writing skills assessment (Paper 1) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from the M21 examination. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 and N22 examination and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for German B SL and HL.

5.4.1 Reading

Box 11: Key findings on German B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The review and comparative analysis of the **German B SL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types,

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

reading skills assessed and associated mark schemes from the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences indicated that these reported **from A2+ up to B1+ CEFR level**.

- Additionally, the comparative analysis of the **German B SL reading comprehension** assessment of **N22** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences also reported **up to B1+ CEFR level**.
- Therefore, the comparative analysis of the **German B SL reading comprehension** of **N20 and N22** examinations to the CEFR levels reported up to **B1+ CEFR level**.
- Additionally, the review and comparative analysis of the **German B HL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types, reading skills assessed and associated mark schemes of the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences indicated that these reported **from B1+ up to C1 CEFR level**.
- In both **SL and HL German B** the comparative analysis of the **reading comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 and N22** examinations found that the CEFR reading comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the reading comprehension activities of 'Overall reading comprehension', 'Reading for orientation', 'Reading for information and argument', and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

As part of the review and comparative analysis of the reading comprehension assessment, Ecctis reviewed the German B SL reading comprehension from the N20 and the N22 examination to cross check and verify the CEFR analysis findings of the N20 and N22 examinations.

Standard Level

The German B SL paper 2 assesses receptive language skills and comprises two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening comprehension.⁷¹⁶ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The German SL examination paper 2 used in this analysis are dated N20 and N22, and the reading skills segments are structured as follows:

Table 89: German SL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁷¹⁷

German SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)

⁷¹⁶ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.29.

⁷¹⁷ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-12	13 marks
Text B	Questions 13-25	14 marks
Text C	Questions 26- 35	13 marks

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one reading text of German SL reading comprehension paper 2 of the in Appendix 4.

Higher Level

Similar to the German B SL assessment, the paper 2 HL centres on receptive language skills and consists of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening skills.⁷¹⁸ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 HL contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The German HL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills segment is structured as follows:⁷¹⁹

Table 90: German HL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁷²⁰

German HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks) (N20 examination)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-12	13 marks
Text B	Questions 13-26	14 marks
Text C	Questions 27-37	13 marks

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one reading text of German HL reading comprehension paper 2 of the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 4.

Overall findings on German B Reading (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the reading comprehension examination of the German B (SL and HL) Paper 2 against the CEFR reading comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the reading comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the German B SL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks of the German B SL N20 reading comprehension examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B1+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the German B SL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 91: Overall CEFR levels of German B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

⁷¹⁸ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.30.

⁷¹⁹ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

⁷²⁰ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-12	<p>Overall reading comprehension: A2+: 'Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language'. B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension'.⁷²¹</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: A2+: 'Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts. Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context'. B1: 'Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines. Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand)'.⁷²²</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: A2+: 'Can understand the main points of short texts dealing with everyday topics (e.g. lifestyle, hobbies, sports, weather)'.⁷²³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.⁷²⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events. Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations'.⁷²⁵</p>	A2+/B1
Text B	13-25	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension'.⁷²⁶</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1: 'Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors and temporal connectors. Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines.' B1+: 'Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking</p>	B1/B1+

⁷²¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁷²² Ibid. p.60.

⁷²³ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁷²⁴ Ibid. p.132.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

⁷²⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>into account the text as a whole. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar'.⁷²⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B1: 'Can understand the main points in descriptive notes such as those on museum exhibits and explanatory boards in exhibitions. Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies. Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects'. B1+: 'Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view'.⁷²⁸</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1: 'Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents'. B1+: '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'.⁷²⁹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.⁷³⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations'.⁷³¹</p>	
Text C	26-35	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension'.⁷³²</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1+: 'Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar'.⁷³³</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B1+: 'Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can understand</p>	B1+

⁷²⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁷²⁸ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁷³⁰ Ibid. p.132.

⁷³¹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁷³² Ibid.

⁷³³ Ibid. p.60.

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view'.⁷³⁴</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1+: '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'.⁷³⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.⁷³⁶</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the German B HL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks of the German B HL N20 reading comprehension examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from CEFR B1+ to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the German B HL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 92: Overall CEFR levels of German B HL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

German HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-12	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension'.⁷³⁷</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1+: 'Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.'⁷³⁸</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B1+: 'Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can understand</p>	B1+

⁷³⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁷³⁶ Ibid. p.132.

⁷³⁷ Ibid. p. 54.

⁷³⁸ Ibid. p.60.

German HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view'.⁷³⁹</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1+: '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'.⁷⁴⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.⁷⁴¹</p>	
Text B	13-26	<p>Overall reading comprehension: B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension'.⁷⁴²</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text'.⁷⁴³</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: B1+: 'Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (e.g. critical contributions to an online discussion forum or readers' letters to the editor). Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies'.⁷⁴⁴</p> <p>Reading for orientation: B1+: 'Can scan through straightforward, factual texts in magazines, brochures or on the web, identify what they are about and decide whether they contain information that might be of practical use. 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'.⁷⁴⁵</p>	B1+
Text C	27-37	<p>Overall reading comprehension: C1: 'Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not these relate to their own area of speciality, provided they can reread difficult sections'.⁷⁴⁶</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring:</p>	C1

⁷³⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid. p.132.

⁷⁴² Ibid. p. 54.

⁷⁴³ Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 55-56.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

German HL Examination Paper 2 (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>C1: 'Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next'.⁷⁴⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument:</p> <p>C1: 'Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions'.⁷⁴⁸</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy:</p> <p>C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.⁷⁴⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range:</p> <p>C1: 'Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well'.⁷⁵⁰</p>	

5.4.2 Listening

Both the German B SL and HL listening comprehension examinations papers reviewed in this project are dated N20. Ecctis also reviewed the German B SL listening comprehension examination of N22.

Box 12: Key findings on German B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

⁷⁴⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid. p.132.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The comparative analysis of the **German B SL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B1 up to B2 CEFR level**.
- The comparative analysis of the **German B HL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B2 up to B2+ level**.
- In both **SL and HL German B** the comparative analysis of the **listening comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 examination** found that the CEFR oral comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the oral comprehension activities of 'Overall oral comprehension', 'Understanding conversation between other people', 'Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings', 'Understanding as a member of a live audience' and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Standard Level

The German B SL listening comprehension assessment paper 2 is structured as follows:

Table 93: German Paper 2 SL listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁷⁵¹

German SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one listening text of the German B SL listening comprehension (paper 2) of the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 4.

Higher Level

The German B HL listening comprehension assessment (paper 2) is structured as follows:

Table 94: German Paper 2 HL listening comprehension components and marks⁷⁵²

German HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks

⁷⁵¹ International Baccalaureate. (2020). German B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Standard Level.

⁷⁵² International Baccalaureate. (2020). German B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Higher Level.

German HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text B	Questions 6-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one listening text of the German B HL listening comprehension (paper 2) of the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 4.

Overall findings on German B Listening (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the listening comprehension examination of German B (SL and HL) against the CEFR oral comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the listening comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the German B SL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the German B SL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1 to B2 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of German B SL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 95: Overall CEFR levels of German B SL Paper 2 on listening comprehension (N20 examination)

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives'.⁷⁵³</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: A2+: 'Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts'.⁷⁵⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.⁷⁵⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations'.⁷⁵⁶</p> <p>Sociolinguistic appropriateness:</p>	B1

⁷⁵³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid. p.132.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid. p.131.

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		B1: 'Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of their own community'. ⁷⁵⁷	
Text B	6-11	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety'.⁷⁵⁸</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B1: 'Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines. Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand)'.⁷⁵⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B1: 'Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear'.⁷⁶⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. (use of informal language and expressions)'.⁷⁶¹</p>	B1+
Text C	12-21	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B2: 'Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation'.⁷⁶²</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: B2: 'Can follow chronological sequence in extended informal discourse, e.g. in a story or anecdote. Can identify the main reasons for and against an argument or idea in a discussion conducted in clear standard language or a familiar variety. Can with some effort catch much of what is said around them, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several users of the target language who do not modify their language in any way'.⁷⁶³</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B2: 'Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.'.⁷⁶⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy:</p>	B2

⁷⁵⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.137.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid. p.48.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid. p.132.

⁷⁶² Ibid. p.48.

⁷⁶³ Ibid. p.49.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 52.

German SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms'.⁷⁶⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: 'Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically'.⁷⁶⁶</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the German B HL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The German B HL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed contains assessment items that correspond to B2 to B2+ CEFR levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of German B HL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 96: Overall CEFR levels of German B HL Paper 2 overall on listening comprehension (N20 examination)

German HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B2+: 'Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life'.⁷⁶⁷</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues'.⁷⁶⁸</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B2+: 'Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content'.⁷⁶⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2+: 'Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists'.⁷⁷⁰</p>	B2+
Text B	6-11	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B2: 'Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and</p>	B2

⁷⁶⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.132.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. p.131.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. p.48.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 52.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid. p.131.

German HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation'.⁷⁷¹</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues'.⁷⁷²</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B2: 'Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.'.⁷⁷³</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: B2: 'Can recognise the point of view expressed and distinguish this from facts being reporting. Can distinguish main themes from asides, provided the lecture or talk is delivered in standard language or a familiar variety. Can follow complex lines of argument in a clearly articulated lecture, provided the topic is reasonably familiar'.⁷⁷⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: 'Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics'.⁷⁷⁵</p>	
Text C	12-21	<p>Overall oral comprehension: B2+: 'Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand'.⁷⁷⁶</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues'.⁷⁷⁷</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: B2+: 'Can keep up with an animated conversation between proficient users of the target language'.⁷⁷⁸</p>	B2+

⁷⁷¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

⁷⁷² Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁷³ Ibid. p. 52.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid. pp.49-50.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid. p.131.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid. p.48.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid. p.60.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid. p.49.

German HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings: B2+: 'Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content'.⁷⁷⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2+: 'Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists'.⁷⁸⁰</p> <p>Sociolinguistic appropriateness: B2+: 'Can recognise and interpret sociocultural/sociolinguistic cues and consciously modify their linguistic forms of expression in order to express themselves appropriately in the situation'.⁷⁸¹</p>	

5.4.3 Writing

Box 13: Key findings on German B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding German B SL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels. In relation to German B HL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from B1 up to B2+ CEFR levels. Therefore, the comparative analysis found that both SL and HL German B writing student samples from the M21 examination targeted up to B2+ level. This is because of a several factors. Firstly, as the students select the level that they want to study the Language B subject (SL or HL) this means that some students with advanced productive skills might choose to study at SL. Secondly, according to the mark scheme analysis of the writing assessment criteria, it was evident that the bands and level descriptors of Criterion B: Message and Criterion C: Conceptual understanding were identical for both SL and HL. As a result, the review of the comparative analysis concluded that in the Language B assessment of the writing skills (paper 1) it is possible for both SL and HL students to achieve up to B2+ CEFR level. In both SL and HL German B the comparative analysis of the writing student samples and associated mark schemes of the M21 examination found that the CEFR written production language activities assessed include 'Overall written production' and 'Reports and essays', the CEFR written interaction language activities assessed include 'Overall written interaction' and 'Correspondence' and the CEFR language competences assessed include 'Vocabulary range', 'Vocabulary control', 'Grammatical accuracy', 'Thematic development', 'Prepositional precision', 'General linguistic range', 'Orthographic control',

⁷⁷⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 52.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. p.131.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid. p.137.

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1) and 'Coherence and Cohesion'.

Standard Level

At SL, students' written production skills are assessed through paper 1. The German B SL examination paper 1 reviewed as part of this project was from the M21 examination. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 15 minutes, with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 250 – 400 words to respond to this question.

In paper 1 of the German B SL written production examination of M21, the first task provides students with the scenario that they are considering spending a year in Germany or Austria after their graduation and they are interested in the opinion of others. The first task instructs students to write a text about the possible benefits of studying abroad by describing what problems might occur and explaining how those could be solved. Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: a blog, an interview, or a speech.

This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB theme of identities including the optional recommended topics of lifestyles, language and identity, personal attributes, and personal relationships.⁷⁸² The task also has the capacity to cover the overarching IB theme of experiences including the optional recommended topics of leisure activities, holidays and travel, life stories and rites of passage.⁷⁸³ Therefore, the task seems to address the personal, educational, and occupational CEFR domains.⁷⁸⁴ In all three text types, students will be expected to write to persuade, identify a problem but also a solution to a problem, present and justify an argument by providing the reasons behind the argument, providing and explaining advantages and disadvantages, and providing a summary at the end of the task to summarise and conclude their arguments.

The second task of the M21 paper 1 examination requires students to write a text in which they describe an online application which provides unused groceries from restaurants and supermarkets. In this task, students are asked to write a text in which they describe the features of the online application to the residents of the city by explaining the reasons why this application could be of great help to the city.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: an article, an interview, or a presentation. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB theme of human ingenuity and more specifically the optional recommended topics of technology, media and scientific innovation.⁷⁸⁵ Additionally, this task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB theme of social organisation and the optional recommended topic of community, but also the theme of sharing the planet and the specific optional recommended topic of the environment.⁷⁸⁶ Therefore, the task seems to

⁷⁸² International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁸³ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁴ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁷⁸⁵ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁸⁶ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

address the public and educational CEFR domains.⁷⁸⁷ Students are instructed to express a specific viewpoint, that this online application could be of great benefit to the local community and present and justify their arguments.

In the third and final task of paper 1 of the M21 examination, students are provided with the scenario that there are new foreign language courses for German that are to be offered in the students' city, but the city still lacks some money for it. The task requires students to ask a linguist about the advantages of language courses and provide possible alternatives to financing the courses in the city.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: a blog, an interview, or a presentation. Due to the nature of the task, students could potentially cover the IB themes of identities including the optional recommended topics of beliefs and values, subcultures and language and identity and the theme of social organisation covering the optional recommended topics of community, social engagement, and education.⁷⁸⁸ As a result, the task seems to address the public and educational CEFR domains.⁷⁸⁹

Students are instructed to express a specific viewpoint, advocating for the advantages of language courses, and providing suggestions and recommendations on how this could be financed by the city. Therefore, this task requires students to demonstrate a wide array of writing skills, including writing to persuade, identifying, and solving problems, presenting, and justifying arguments, providing and explaining advantages and summarising or concluding their arguments.

Student sample analysis

In all three writing samples analysed for German SL paper 1 of the M21 examination, two students selected option three and one student selected option one. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the SL writing assessment (sample 2) of the German B SL paper 1 of the M21 examination is included in Appendix 4.

Higher Level

At HL, students' written production skills are assessed through paper 1. The German B HL examination paper 1 reviewed as part of this project was from the M21 examination. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 30 minutes, with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 450 – 600 words.

In the first task of this paper students are provided with the scenario that they see a photo of their friend on social media which is heavily edited, and they are afraid that this person might live in a parallel world and not in the reality. As a result, students are required to write a text where they describe their reaction and express how they see their personality. Students are

⁷⁸⁷ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁷⁸⁸ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁸⁹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

asked to discuss and address the issue of pressure that social media can put on teenagers and share their concerns that they might have about that friend.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: a blog, a brief, or an email. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB theme of identities covering the optional recommended topics of lifestyles, health and wellbeing, language and identity, personal attributes, and personal relations.⁷⁹⁰ In addition, the first task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of human ingenuity and more specifically the optional recommended topics of communication and media, and technology.⁷⁹¹ As a result, the task seems to address the public and educational CEFR domains.⁷⁹²

In this task, students will be expected to demonstrate a wide range of writing skills including writing to persuade, presenting, and justifying their arguments by providing the reasons behind their argument, and providing a summary at the end of the task to summarise and conclude their arguments and thoughts.

In the second task the students are given the scenario that the school community is not doing enough to protect the climate and that in the last demonstration about climate protection that happened in their city there were only a few participants from the school community attended. Therefore, students are asked to write a text presenting their personal opinion about climate protection and make recommendations on the different ways that the school community can contribute to the climate protection. Additionally, students are asked to try and convince other people of the community to take part in the next climate protection demonstration.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: a blog, an email, or a speech. Due to the nature of the task, students could potentially cover the overarching IB theme of social organisation including the optional recommended topics of social relationships and social engagement as well as the overarching theme of sharing the planet, covering the optional recommended topics of the environment, the climate, the urban and rural environment, global issues, and ethics.⁷⁹³ As a result, the task seems to address the public and educational CEFR domains.⁷⁹⁴

In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument about the importance of participating in climate protection demonstrations and try and persuade the school and other students about the importance of the school community's participation in the next climate protection demonstration.

In the third and final task, the students are presented with the scenario that they are the captain of a sports team and in an important tournament, in which their team played great, the disappointment is great. As a result, the students are required to write a text in which

⁷⁹⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁹¹ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁹² Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁷⁹³ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁹⁴ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

they try to analyse the game and the reactions of the team by addressing their role as the captain and considering how to approach the next game.

Students may choose one of the three text types in which to write their task including: a brief, a speech, or a diary. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB theme of identifies and the optional recommended topics of beliefs and values, language and identify, personal attributes and personal relationships, the theme of social organisation, covering the optional recommended topics of social relationships, community, and social engagement and the overarching theme of experiences covering the optional recommended topics of leisure activities and life stories.⁷⁹⁵ Therefore, the CEFR domains covered in this task include the personal and public domains.⁷⁹⁶

In this task, students will be expected to demonstrate a wide range of writing skills such as writing to persuade, identifying a problem but also a solution to a problem, presenting and justifying an argument by providing the reasons behind the argument, providing, and explaining advantages and disadvantages, and summarising their arguments at the end of the task.

Student sample analysis

In all three writing samples analysed for German B HL paper 1 of the M21 examination, two students selected option one and one student selected option three. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the HL writing assessment (sample 5) of the German B HL paper 1 of the M21 examination is presented in Appendix 4.

Overall findings on German B Writing (Paper 1)

The input text of the writing assessment tasks, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR writing production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the German B SL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The German B SL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of German B SL writing assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 97: Overall CEFR levels of the German B SL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

German SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level

⁷⁹⁵ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁷⁹⁶ Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

German SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 1	<p>Overall written production: B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence'.⁷⁹⁷</p> <p>Reports and essays: B1+: 'Can produce short, simple essays on topics of interest. Can summarise, report and give their opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within their field with some confidence'.⁷⁹⁸</p> <p>Overall written interaction: B1: 'Can compose personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important'.⁷⁹⁹</p> <p>Correspondence: B1: 'Can compose personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail'.⁸⁰⁰</p> <p>General linguistic range: A2+: 'Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs'. B1: 'Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times'.⁸⁰¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics'. B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events'.⁸⁰²</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say'.⁸⁰³</p> <p>Vocabulary control: B1: 'Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations'.⁸⁰⁴</p> <p>Orthographic control: B1: 'Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time. Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout'.⁸⁰⁵</p> <p>Thematic development: B1: 'Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points'.⁸⁰⁶</p>	A2+/B1

⁷⁹⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 68.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 82.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁸⁰² Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁰³ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 136.

German SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 2	<p>General linguistic range: B1+: 'Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film'.⁸⁰⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding'.⁸⁰⁸</p> <p>Reports and essays: B2: 'Can produce 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 various options'.⁸⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics'.⁸¹⁰</p> <p>Orthographic control: B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence'.⁸¹¹</p> <p>Thematic development: B2: 'Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their main points with relevant supporting detail and examples'.⁸¹²</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2: 'Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices'.⁸¹³</p>	B2
Sample 3	<p>Overall written production: C1: 'Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme. Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion'.⁸¹⁴</p> <p>Reports and essays: B2+: 'Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail'. C1: 'Can produce clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues'.⁸¹⁵</p> <p>Overall written interaction: B2: 'Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others'.</p>	B2+

⁸⁰⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 68.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸¹¹ Ibid. p. 136.

⁸¹² Ibid. p. 140.

⁸¹³ Ibid. p. 141.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid. p. 66.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid. p. 68.

German SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>C1: 'Can express themselves with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively'.⁸¹⁶</p> <p>Correspondence: B2+: 'Can compose formal correspondence such as letters of enquiry, request, application and complaint using appropriate register, structure and conventions. Can maintain a relationship through personal correspondence using the language fluently and effectively to give detailed descriptions of experiences, pose sympathetic questions and follow up issues of mutual interest'.⁸¹⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1: 'Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.⁸¹⁸</p> <p>Orthographic control: C1: 'Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen. Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful'.⁸¹⁹</p> <p>Thematic development: C1: 'Can expand and support the main points at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion'.⁸²⁰</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: C1: 'Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices'.⁸²¹</p> <p>Propositional precision: C1: 'Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position'.⁸²²</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the German B HL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The German B HL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from B1 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the German B HL external writing assessment of the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 98: Overall CEFR levels of the German B HL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

German HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 4	Overall written production:	B1

⁸¹⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 82.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid. p. 136.

⁸²⁰ Ibid. p. 140.

⁸²¹ Ibid. p. 141.

⁸²² Ibid. pp. 141-142.

German HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>B1: 'Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence'.⁸²³</p> <p>Reports and essays: B1: 'Can produce very brief reports in a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions'.⁸²⁴</p> <p>Overall written interaction: B1: 'Can compose personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important'.⁸²⁵</p> <p>Correspondence: B1: 'Can compose personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail'.⁸²⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events'.⁸²⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.⁸²⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary control: B1: 'Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations'.⁸²⁹</p> <p>Orthographic control: B1: 'Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time'.⁸³⁰</p> <p>Thematic development: B1: 'Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points'.⁸³¹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B1: 'Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text'.⁸³²</p>	
Sample 5	<p>Overall written production: B2: 'Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources'.⁸³³</p> <p>Reports and essays: B2: 'Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons</p>	B2

⁸²³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. p. 68.

⁸²⁵ Ibid. p. 82.

⁸²⁶ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸²⁸ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸²⁹ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁸³⁰ Ibid. p. 136.

⁸³¹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁸³² Ibid. p. 141.

⁸³³ Ibid. p. 66.

German HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options'.⁸³⁴</p> <p>Overall written interaction: B2: 'Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others'.⁸³⁵</p> <p>Correspondence: B2: 'Can compose letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views'.⁸³⁶</p> <p>General linguistic range: B2: 'Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so'.⁸³⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics'.⁸³⁸</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2: 'Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding'.⁸³⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary control: B2: 'Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication'.⁸⁴⁰</p> <p>Orthographic control: B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence'.⁸⁴¹</p> <p>Thematic development: B2: 'Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas'.⁸⁴²</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2: 'Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution'.⁸⁴³</p> <p>Propositional precision: B2: 'Can pass on detailed information reliably'.⁸⁴⁴</p>	
Sample 6	<p>Overall written production: C1: 'Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the</p>	B2+

⁸³⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 68.

⁸³⁵ Ibid. p. 82.

⁸³⁶ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁸³⁷ Ibid. pp.130-131.

⁸³⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸³⁹ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid. pp.132-133.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid. p. 136.

⁸⁴² Ibid. p. 140.

⁸⁴³ Ibid. p. 141.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid. pp.141-142.

German HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion'.⁸⁴⁵</p> <p>Reports and essays: C1: 'Can produce clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues'.⁸⁴⁶</p> <p>Overall written interaction: C1: 'Can express themselves with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively'.⁸⁴⁷</p> <p>Correspondence: C1: 'Can express themselves with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage'.⁸⁴⁸</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: C1: 'Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices'.⁸⁴⁹</p> <p>Propositional precision: C1: 'Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc'.⁸⁵⁰</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.⁸⁵¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: C1: 'Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/signs less commonly encountered. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation'.⁸⁵²</p> <p>General linguistic range: C1: 'Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say. Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility'.⁸⁵³</p>	

⁸⁴⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 68.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 82.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 141.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid. pp.141-142.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid. p. 132.

⁸⁵² Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁵³ Ibid. pp.130-131.

5.4.4 Speaking and interactive skills

Box 14: Key findings on German B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills assessment (Internal Assessment)

Key findings German B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

- In relation to **German B SL**, the review of the **speaking and interactive skills** student samples from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences found that these report **from A2 up to B2+/C1 CEFR levels**.
- Additionally, in **German B HL** the review of the **speaking and interactive skills** student samples from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report **from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels**.
- In **both SL and HL German B** the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination found that the CEFR oral production language activities assessed include 'Overall oral production' and 'Sustained monologue: describing experience', the CEFR oral interaction language activities of 'Overall oral interaction' and 'Conversation', and the CEFR language competences of 'General linguistic range', 'Thematic development', 'Fluency', 'Overall phonological control', 'Grammatical accuracy' and 'Vocabulary control'. Additionally, in relation to **HL German B**, the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination indicated that they assess some additional CEFR mediation activities in relation to mediating a text including 'Expressing a personal response to creative texts' and 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts'. This is because in the HL speaking and interactive skills assessment, students are requested to provide a presentation and analyse a literary extract.

Standard Level

Ecctis reviewed three student samples of the SL internal oral assessment including the visual stimuli that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

Student sample analysis

The review and comparative analysis of one student sample of the German B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 4.

Higher Level

Ecctis reviewed three student samples of the HL internal oral assessment including the literary extracts that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

Student sample analysis

The review and comparative analysis of one student sample of the German B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 4.

Overall findings on German B Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

The input text of the internal speaking and interactive skills assessment tasks including the questions asked by the teacher during the oral assessment, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR oral production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the German B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The German B SL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+/C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of German B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 99: Overall CEFR levels of German B SL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 7	<p>Conversation: A2: ‘Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocutor will take the trouble’.⁸⁵⁴</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: A1: ‘Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics’. A2: ‘Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord’.⁸⁵⁵</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: A2: ‘Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocutor can take the trouble’.⁸⁵⁶</p> <p>Overall oral production: A2: ‘Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list’.⁸⁵⁷</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: A2: ‘Can describe their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms. Can express what they are good at and not so good at (e.g. sports, games, skills, subjects). Can briefly describe what they plan to do at the weekend or during the holidays’.⁸⁵⁸</p>	A2

⁸⁵⁴Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 72.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 62.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>General linguistic range: A2: ‘Can produce brief, everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type (e.g. personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information)’.⁸⁵⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs’.⁸⁶⁰</p> <p>Overall phonological control: A2: ‘Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear’.⁸⁶¹</p> <p>Fluency: A1: ‘Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words/signs, and to repair communication’.⁸⁶²</p>	
Sample 8	<p>Conversation: A2+: ‘Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest. Can generally understand clear, standard language on familiar matters directed at them, provided they can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time. Can establish social contact (e.g. greetings and farewells, introductions, giving thanks)’.⁸⁶³</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: B1: ‘Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, and 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 and current events)’.⁸⁶⁴</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: B1: ‘Can follow clearly articulated speech/sign directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs and phrases.’⁸⁶⁵</p> <p>Overall oral production: B1: ‘Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.’⁸⁶⁶</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: A2+: ‘Can explain what they like or dislike about something. Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal</p>	B1

⁸⁵⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 130-131.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁸⁶² Ibid. p. 142.

⁸⁶³ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 72.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 62.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>experiences. Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities. Can describe everyday aspects of their environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience.⁸⁶⁷</p> <p>General linguistic range: B1: ‘Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.’⁸⁶⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events. Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’⁸⁶⁹</p> <p>Overall phonological control: B2: ‘Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility.’⁸⁷⁰</p> <p>Fluency: B1: ‘Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.’⁸⁷¹</p>	
Sample 9	<p>Conversation: C1: ‘Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.’⁸⁷²</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: C1: ‘Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.’⁸⁷³</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: B2: ‘Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment.’⁸⁷⁴</p> <p>Overall oral production: B2+: ‘Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.’⁸⁷⁵</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: B2: ‘Can describe the personal significance of events and experiences in detail. Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest.’⁸⁷⁶</p>	B2+/C1

⁸⁶⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 62-63.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid. p. 142.

⁸⁷² Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁸⁷³ Ibid. p. 72.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>General linguistic range: B2+: ‘Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say.’⁸⁷⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: ‘Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁸⁷⁸</p> <p>Overall phonological control: C1: ‘Can employ the full range of phonological features in the target language with sufficient control to ensure intelligibility throughout. Can articulate virtually all the sounds of the target language; some features of accent(s) retained from other language(s) may be noticeable, but they do not affect intelligibility.’⁸⁷⁹</p> <p>Fluency: C1: ‘Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.’⁸⁸⁰</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample of the German B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The German B HL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of German B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 100: Overall CEFR levels of German B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 10	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): A2: ‘Can state in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested them. Can express their reactions to a work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple language.’⁸⁸¹</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): A2: ‘Can identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language.’⁸⁸²</p>	A2+

⁸⁷⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 62-63.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 142.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

⁸⁸² Ibid. pp. 223-224.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Conversation: A2: ‘Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord, though they can be made to understand if the interlocutor will take the trouble. Can use simple, everyday, polite forms of greeting and address. Can state what they like and dislike.’⁸⁸³</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: A2: ‘Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.’⁸⁸⁴</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: A2: ‘Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocutor can take the trouble.’⁸⁸⁵</p> <p>Overall oral production: A2: ‘Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.’⁸⁸⁶</p> <p>General linguistic range: A2+: ‘Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs.’⁸⁸⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs. Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs.’⁸⁸⁸</p> <p>Overall phonological control: A2: ‘Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time. A strong influence from the other language(s) they speak on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.’⁸⁸⁹</p> <p>Thematic development: A2+: ‘Can give an example of something in a very simple text using “like” or “for example”. Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.’⁸⁹⁰</p> <p>Fluency: A2+: ‘Can make themselves understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.’⁸⁹¹</p>	

⁸⁸³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 73-74.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 72.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 62.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 140.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid. p. 142.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 11	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B2: ‘Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can give a personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and themes in a story, novel, film or play’.⁸⁹²</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): B2: ‘Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others’.⁸⁹³</p> <p>Conversation: B2: ‘Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user. Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment’.⁸⁹⁴</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: B2: ‘Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments’.⁸⁹⁵</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: B2: ‘Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment’.⁸⁹⁶</p> <p>Overall oral production: B2: ‘Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples’.⁸⁹⁷</p> <p>General linguistic range: B2: ‘Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so’.⁸⁹⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution’.⁸⁹⁹</p>	B2

⁸⁹² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 106-107.

⁸⁹³ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 72.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 62.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Overall phonological control: B2: ‘Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility’.⁹⁰⁰</p> <p>Thematic development: B2: ‘Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas. Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples. Can evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can clearly signal the difference between fact and opinion’.⁹⁰¹</p> <p>Fluency: B2: ‘Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although they can be hesitant as they search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party’.⁹⁰²</p>	
Sample 12	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B2: ‘Can give a clear presentation of their reactions to a work, developing their ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can give a personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and themes in a story, novel, film or play’.</p> <p>C1: ‘Can describe in detail a personal interpretation of a work, outlining their reactions to certain features and explaining their significance. Can outline a personal interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions’.⁹⁰³</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): B2: ‘Can give a reasoned opinion of a work, showing awareness of the thematic, structural and formal features and referring to the opinions and arguments of others’.⁹⁰⁴</p> <p>Conversation: B2: ‘Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user. Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment’.⁹⁰⁵</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: B2: ‘Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments’.⁹⁰⁶</p>	B2+

⁹⁰⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 134-135.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 140.

⁹⁰² Ibid. p. 142.

⁹⁰³ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 72.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Understanding an interlocutor: B2: ‘Can understand in detail what is said to them in the standard language or a familiar variety even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment’.⁹⁰⁷</p> <p>Overall oral production: B2: ‘Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples’.⁹⁰⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range: B2: ‘Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so’.⁹⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution’.⁹¹⁰</p> <p>Overall phonological control: B2: ‘Can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility’.⁹¹¹</p> <p>Thematic development: B2+: ‘Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly’.⁹¹²</p> <p>Fluency: B2: ‘Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although they can be hesitant as they search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party’.⁹¹³</p>	

5.5 Summary Analysis – Spanish B (SL & HL)

This section presents the summary analysis and findings of the Spanish B (SL and HL) reading, listening, writing and speaking and interactive skills to CEFR. The summary of analysis and findings for each skill are presented in the same structure as the findings of English B (SL and HL).

The assessment papers reviewed for both SL and HL Spanish B are presented in the table below:

⁹⁰⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume p. 73.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 62.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹¹¹ Ibid. pp. 134-135.

⁹¹² Ibid. p. 140.

⁹¹³ Ibid. p. 142.

Table 101: Spanish B assessment papers reviewed

Spanish B			
Language subject	Standard or Higher Level	Date and year of examination	Assessment paper reviewed
Spanish B	HL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
	SL	M21	Paper 1 (Writing) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N20	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)
		M21	Internal assessment (Speaking and interactive skills) (Review of 6 student samples, including 3 for HL and 3 for SL)
		N22	Paper 2 (Reading and listening)

As presented in the table above, the Spanish B SL and HL reading and listening comprehension examination (Paper 2) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis is from N20. In addition, the project team reviewed the Spanish B SL Paper 2 (Reading and listening) from the N22 examination. Additionally, the Spanish B SL and HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) as well as writing skills assessment (Paper 1) reviewed for the purposes of the analysis were from the M21 examination. However, Paper 2 from the M21 was not available due to the streamlined assessment model that was introduced in response to the Covid situation. Therefore, the project team reviewed Paper 2 from the N20 and N22 examination and Paper 1 and the internal assessment from the M21 examination for Spanish B SL and HL.

5.5.1 Reading

Box 15: Key findings on Spanish B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The review and comparative analysis of the **Spanish B SL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types, reading skills assessed and

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Reading Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

associated mark schemes from the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies, and language competences indicated that these reported **from A2+ up to B2 CEFR level**.

- Additionally, the review and comparative analysis of the **Spanish B HL reading comprehension** assessment tasks including the input text, question types, reading skills assessed and associated mark schemes of the **N20** examination to the CEFR reading comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences indicated that these reported **from B1+ up to B2+/C1 CEFR level**.
- In both **SL and HL Spanish B** the comparative analysis of the **reading comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20** and **N22** examinations found that the CEFR reading comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the reading comprehension activities of 'Overall reading comprehension', 'Reading for orientation', 'Reading for information and argument', and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Standard Level

The Spanish B SL paper 2 assesses receptive language skills and comprises of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening skills.⁹¹⁴ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The SL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills segments are structured as follows:

Table 102: Spanish SL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁹¹⁵

Spanish SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-10	14 marks
Text B	Questions 11-23	13 marks
Text C	Questions 24-36	13 marks

The detailed review and analysis of one reading text of the Spanish B SL paper 2 from the N20 examination is presented in Appendix 5.

Higher Level

Similar to the Spanish B SL assessments, examination paper 2 HL centres on receptive language skills and consists of two sections: one based on reading comprehension and the other focusing on listening skills.⁹¹⁶ The reading comprehension component of paper 2 contains three different input texts which correspond to three sets of assessment items, respectively. The Spanish HL examination paper 2 used in this analysis is dated N20, and the reading skills segment is structured as follows:⁹¹⁷

⁹¹⁴ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.29.

⁹¹⁵ International Baccalaureate (2020) *Spanish B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

⁹¹⁶ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.30.

⁹¹⁷ International Baccalaureate (2020) *Spanish B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

Table 103: Spanish HL Paper 2 reading comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁹¹⁸

Spanish HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks)		
Reading Comprehension (40 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-9	13 marks
Text B	Questions 10-22	13 marks
Text C	Questions 23-36	14 marks

The detailed overview of the review and analysis of one HL text of the paper 2 of the Spanish B reading comprehension examination of N20 to CEFR is included in Appendix 5.

Overall findings on Spanish B Reading (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the reading comprehension examination of the Spanish B (SL and HL) Paper 2 against the CEFR reading comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the reading comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the Spanish B SL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the reading comprehension component of the Spanish B SL of the N20 examination reviewed have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B2 level. The overall CEFR level of each text of the Spanish B SL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 104: Overall CEFR levels of Spanish B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-10	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: 'Can exploit their recognition of known words/signs to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts.' 'Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.' 'Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.'⁹¹⁹</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension A2+: 'Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of</p>	A2+/ B1+

⁹¹⁸ International Baccalaureate (2020) *Spanish B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Comprehension*.

⁹¹⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. p.60.

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>high frequency everyday or job-related language.'</p> <p>B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.'⁹²⁰</p> <p>Reading for information and argument A2+: 'Can understand the main points of short texts dealing with everyday topics (e.g. lifestyle, hobbies, sports, weather).'</p> <p>B1: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.'⁹²¹</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1: 'Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.'</p> <p>B1+: '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.'⁹²²</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁹²³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.'⁹²⁴</p>	
Text B	11-23	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1: 'Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines.'</p> <p>B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.' 'Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁹²⁵</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms'.⁹²⁶</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1: 'Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (e.g. critical contributions to</p>	B1+ / B2

⁹²⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 54.

⁹²¹ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁹²² Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁹²³ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹²⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

⁹²⁵ Ibid. p.60.

⁹²⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>an online discussion forum or readers' letters to the editor).' B1+: 'Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (e.g. critical contributions to an online discussion forum or readers' letters to the editor).' 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.'⁹²⁷</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1: 'Can assess whether an article, report or review is on the required topic. Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.' B1+: 'Can scan through straightforward, factual texts in magazines, brochures or on the web, identify what they are about and decide whether they contain information that might be of practical use.' '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.'⁹²⁸</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.' B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁹²⁹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.' B2: 'Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.'⁹³⁰</p>	
Text C	24-36	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: 'Can exploit different types of connectors (numerical, temporal, logical) and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text.' B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁹³¹</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.' B2: 'Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.'⁹³²</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1+: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests</p>	B2

⁹²⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

⁹²⁸ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁹²⁹ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹³⁰ Ibid. p. 132.

⁹³¹ Ibid. p.60.

⁹³² Ibid. p. 54.

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>or studies.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.'⁹³³</p> <p>Reading for orientation B2: 'Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.'⁹³⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁹³⁵</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the Spanish B HL reading comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The review and comparative analysis of the Spanish B HL reading comprehension N20 examination found that the assessment items correspond to CEFR descriptors from B1 to C1 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the Spanish B HL reading comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 105: Overall CEFR level of Spanish B HL Paper 2 reading comprehension (N20 examination)

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-9	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁹³⁶</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B1: 'Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.'</p> <p>B2: 'Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.'⁹³⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B1+: 'Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies.'⁹³⁸</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1+: 'Can scan longer texts in order to</p>	B1+/B2

⁹³³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 56-57.

⁹³⁴ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁹³⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹³⁶ Ibid. p.60.

⁹³⁷ Ibid. p. 54.

⁹³⁸ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task.’⁹³⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.’</p> <p>B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’⁹⁴⁰</p>	
Text B	10-22	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’⁹⁴¹</p> <p>Overall reading comprehension B2: ‘Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’⁹⁴²</p> <p>Reading for information and argument B2: ‘Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted.’⁹⁴³</p> <p>Reading for orientation B1+: ‘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>B2: ‘Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.’⁹⁴⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.’⁹⁴⁵</p>	B2/B2+
Text C	23-36	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B2: ‘Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.’⁹⁴⁶</p>	B2+/C1

⁹³⁹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp.55-56.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid. p.60.

⁹⁴² Ibid. p. 54.

⁹⁴³ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 131.

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 examination (Reading Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Overall reading comprehension C1: ‘Can understand a wide variety of texts including literary writings, newspaper or magazine articles, and specialised academic or professional publications, provided there are opportunities for rereading and they have access to reference tools.’⁹⁴⁷</p> <p>Reading for information and argument C1: ‘Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.’⁹⁴⁸</p> <p>Reading for orientation B2: ‘Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.’⁹⁴⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B2: ‘Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.’</p> <p>C1: ‘Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well.’⁹⁵⁰</p>	

5.5.2 Listening

Box 16: Key findings on Spanish B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

⁹⁴⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 54.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 56-57.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid. pp.55-56.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 131.

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Listening Comprehension assessment (Paper 2)

- The comparative analysis of the **Spanish B SL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from A2 up to B1+ CEFR level**.
- However, the comparative analysis of the **Spanish B SL listening comprehension** assessment of **N22** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **up to B2 CEFR levels**.
- Therefore, the comparative analysis found that there are differences in relation to the CEFR levels reported by the **Spanish B SL listening comprehension** examinations, with the **N20** examination reporting **up to B1+ CEFR level** whereas the **N22** examination reporting **up to B2 CEFR level**.
- The comparative analysis of the **Spanish B HL listening comprehension** assessment tasks, question types, input text and mark scheme of the **N20** examination to the CEFR oral comprehension language activities, reception strategies and language competences reported **from B1 up to B2 level**.
- In both **SL and HL Spanish B** the comparative analysis of the **listening comprehension** assessment tasks of the **N20 and N22 examinations** found that the CEFR oral comprehension language activities and reception strategies assessed in those tasks include the CEFR reception strategy of 'Identifying cues and inferring' and the oral comprehension activities of 'Overall oral comprehension', 'Understanding conversation between other people', 'Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings', 'Understanding as a member of a live audience' and the CEFR language competences of 'Vocabulary range' and 'Grammatical accuracy'.

Both the Spanish B SL and HL listening comprehension examinations papers reviewed in this project are dated N20.

Standard Level

The Spanish B SL listening comprehension assessment paper 2 is structured as follows:

Table 106: Spanish SL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁹⁵¹

Spanish SL Examination Paper 2 (N20 examination) (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-15	10 marks
Text C	Questions 16-21	10 marks

⁹⁵¹ International Baccalaureate. (2020). Spanish B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Standard Level.

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one of the Spanish B listening text of the SL paper 2 from the N20 examination is included in Appendix 5.

Higher Level

The Spanish B HL listening comprehension assessment paper 2 is structured as follows:

Table 107: Spanish HL Paper 2 listening comprehension components and marks (N20 examination)⁹⁵²

Spanish HL Examination Paper 2 (65 marks in total)		
Listening Comprehension (25 marks)		
Text A	Questions 1-5	5 marks
Text B	Questions 6-11	10 marks
Text C	Questions 12-21	10 marks

The detailed review and comparative analysis of one listening text for Spanish B HL Paper 2 from the N20 examination is included in Appendix 5.

Overall findings on Spanish B Listening (Paper 2)

Ecctis conducted a review and comparative analysis of the input text, assessment tasks, question types and mark scheme of the listening comprehension examination of Spanish B (SL and HL) against the CEFR oral comprehension activities, strategies, and competences in order to determine the overall CEFR level of each text included in the listening comprehension examination. The overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the Spanish B SL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The assessment tasks in the Spanish B SL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B1+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the Spanish B SL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 108: Overall CEFR levels of Spanish B SL Paper 2 on listening comprehension (N20 examination)

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Identifying cues and inferring A2+: 'Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words/signs from the context.'⁹⁵³</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'⁹⁵⁴</p>	A2

⁹⁵² International Baccalaureate. (2020). Spanish B October 2020 Specimen Paper Writing and Listening Higher Level.

⁹⁵³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.60.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid. p.48.

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings A2: 'Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly.'⁹⁵⁵</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people A2+: 'Can generally identify the topic of discussion around them when it is conducted slowly and clearly.'⁹⁵⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁹⁵⁷</p>	
Text B	6-15	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1: 'Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).'</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'⁹⁵⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: 'Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.'⁹⁶⁰</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people B1: 'Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.'⁹⁶¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁹⁶²</p>	B1
Text C	16-21	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1: 'Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).'</p> <p><i>(Second set of questions)</i></p> <p>B1+: 'Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests.' 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.'⁹⁶³ <i>(First set of questions)</i></p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'⁹⁶³ <i>(Second set of questions)</i></p> <p>B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common</p>	B1/B1+

⁹⁵⁵ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 52.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid. p.49.

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid. p.60.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid. p.48.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid. p.49.

⁹⁶² Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁶³ Ibid. p.60.

SL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁹⁶⁴ (<i>First set of questions</i>)</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: 'Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.'⁹⁶⁵</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience B1+: 'Can follow a lecture or talk within their own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.'⁹⁶⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁹⁶⁷</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each text (each row on the table below) of the Spanish B HL listening comprehension assessment is a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the analysis of each individual assessment question included in each text. The Spanish B HL listening comprehension N20 examination reviewed contains assessment items that correspond to CEFR descriptor levels from B1 to B2 levels. The overall CEFR level of each text of the Spanish B HL listening comprehension N20 examination are as follows:

Table 109: Overall CEFR levels of Spanish B HL Paper 2 on listening comprehension (N20 examination)

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Text A	1-5	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1: 'Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because) and temporal connectors (e.g. after that, beforehand).'⁹⁶⁸</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1: 'Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.'⁹⁶⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1: 'Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.'⁹⁷⁰</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience B1: 'Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety.' 'Can understand the</p>	B1

⁹⁶⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.48.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 52.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid. pp.49-50.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid. p.60.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid. p.48.

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		<p>main points of what is said in a straightforward monologue (e.g. a guided tour), provided the delivery is clear and relatively slow.⁹⁷¹</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.'⁹⁷²</p>	
Text B	6-11	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar.' (<i>Second set of questions</i>)</p> <p>B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁹⁷³ (<i>First set of questions</i>)</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁹⁷⁴</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B1+: 'Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language.'⁹⁷⁵</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people B1+: 'Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety.'⁹⁷⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary range B1: 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.' (<i>Second set of questions</i>)</p> <p>B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.'⁹⁷⁷ (<i>First set of questions</i>)</p>	B1+
Text C	12-21	<p>Identifying cues and inferring B1+: 'Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole.' (<i>Second set of questions</i>)</p> <p>B2: 'Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.'⁹⁷⁸ (<i>First set of questions</i>)</p> <p>Overall oral comprehension B1+: 'Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety.'⁹⁷⁹</p> <p>Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings B2: 'Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.'⁹⁸⁰</p>	B2

⁹⁷¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp.49-50.

⁹⁷² Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁷³ Ibid. p.60.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid. p.48.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 52.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid. p.49.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid. p.60.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid. p.48.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

HL Examination Paper 2 N20 Examination (Listening Comprehension)			
Text	Questions	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
		Vocabulary range B2: 'Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics.' ⁹⁸¹	

5.5.3 Writing

Box 17: Key findings on Spanish B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Writing assessment (Paper 1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding Spanish B SL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2 up to B2+ CEFR levels. In relation to Spanish B HL, the review and comparative analysis of the writing student samples from the M21 examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR written production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report from A2+ up to B2+ CEFR levels. Therefore, the comparative analysis found that both SL and HL Spanish B writing student samples from the M21 examination targeted up to B2+ level. This is because of a several factors. Firstly, as the students select the level that they want to study the Language B subject (SL or HL) this means that some students with advanced productive skills might choose to study at SL. Secondly, according to the mark scheme analysis of the writing assessment criteria, it was evident that the bands and level descriptors of Criterion B: Message and Criterion C: Conceptual understanding were identical for both SL and HL. As a result, the review of the comparative analysis concluded that in the Language B assessment of the writing skills (paper 1) it is possible for both SL and HL students to achieve up to B2+ CEFR level. In both SL and HL Spanish B the comparative analysis of the writing students samples and associated mark schemes of the M21 examination found that the CEFR written production language activities assessed include 'Overall written production' and 'Reports and essays', the CEFR written interaction language activities assessed include 'Overall written interaction' and 'Correspondence' and the CEFR language competences assessed include 'Vocabulary range', 'Vocabulary control', 'Grammatical accuracy', 'Thematic development', 'Prepositional precision', 'General linguistic range', 'Orthographic control', and 'Coherence and Cohesion'. 	

Standard Level

At SL, students' written production skills are assessed through paper 1. The Spanish B SL examination paper 1 reviewed as part of this project was from the M21 examination. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 15 minutes, with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 250 – 400 words.

⁹⁸¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 131.

In paper 1 of the Spanish B SL written production examination of M21, the first task requires students to write about an environmental protection campaign as leaders of an environmentalist group at their school where they study. Students are asked to write as text explaining what the campaign consists of and ask for permission for it to take place.

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a formal correspondence, a set of instructions or a brochure. In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument. This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of identifies including the optional recommended topics of lifestyles, health and wellbeing, beliefs and values, the developing, social organisation including the optional recommended topics of social relationships, community, social engagement and education, and the theme of sharing the planet covering the optional recommended topics of the urban and rural environment, the environment and ethics.⁹⁸² Therefore, the task seems to address the public, personal and educational CEFR domains.⁹⁸³

In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument about the importance of the environmental protection campaign and the reason why it should take place.

The second choice of the task requires students to write a text about the absence of public spaces and recreational activities in their local community. Students are asked to write a text representing the youth of their area in a community meeting in which they describe how this issue affects those of their generation and propose a solution about that. Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a speech, a brochure, or a social media post.

Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of experiences and the optional recommended topics of leisure activities and leisure, the theme of identities and the optional recommended topic of lifestyles and health and wellbeing, and the theme of social organisation covering the optional recommended topics of community, social engagement, and neighbourhood.⁹⁸⁴ Therefore, the task seems to address the public and educational CEFR domains.⁹⁸⁵

Students are instructed to express a specific viewpoint, that there is an absence of public spaces in the local community for recreational activities for children and young people. In addition to sharing their opinion on the matter and provide justifications on their point of view, students must also provide suggestions and propose a solution as to how this issue can be resolved.

⁹⁸² International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁸³ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁹⁸⁴ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁸⁵ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

In the third and final task, students are provided with the scenario that they are doing an internship in a Spanish company. In particular, students are asked to write a text in which they explain to other young people about the advantages and the disadvantages of doing internships on vacations.

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a formal correspondence, a brochure, or a social media post. Due to the nature of the task, students could potentially cover the IB themes of experiences and social organisation.⁹⁸⁶ Therefore, the task seems to address the public, personal, occupational, and educational CEFR domains.⁹⁸⁷

Regardless of the text type selected, students are required to demonstrate a wide array of writing skills, including writing to persuade, identifying, and solving problems, presenting and justifying arguments, providing and explaining advantages and disadvantages and summarising or concluding their thoughts and arguments.

Student sample analysis

In all three writing samples analysed for Spanish SL paper 1 of M21, two students selected to complete option one and one student selected top complete option three. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the SL writing assessment (sample 2) of the Spanish SL paper 1 of the M21 examination is presented in Appendix 5.

Higher Level

At HL, students' written production skills are assessed through paper 1. The Spanish B HL examination paper 1 reviewed as part of this project was from the M21 examination. The duration of this examination paper is 1 hour 30 minutes, with a total of 30 marks available. Students are required to answer one question, from a choice of three, and write 450 – 600 words.

In the first task of this paper students are provided with the scenario of spending two weeks of their last summer living with a Spanish-speaking family to improve their Spanish. In this scenario students would like their school to facilitate activities of this type. Therefore, students are asked to write a text addressing the school, share their experience and talk about the advantages and the recommendations of language exchange programmes.

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: an email, a speech, or a blog. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of experiences and social organisation.⁹⁸⁸ As a result, the task seems to address the public, personal and educational CEFR domains.⁹⁸⁹ Students are instructed to express a specific viewpoint which focuses on the advantages of language exchanges

⁹⁸⁶ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁸⁷ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁹⁸⁸ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁸⁹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

programmes and recommend further language exchange programmes that can be conducted through the school.

Regardless of the text type selected, students are required to demonstrate a variety of writing skills including their ability to evaluate, analyse, synthesise, and justify their arguments, explain advantages of language exchanges programmes, and demonstrate their ability to persuade the target audience which in this case is the school.

The second choice of the task requires students to write a text about the current situation in an animal shelter. Students are provided with the scenario that they work as volunteers in an abandoned animal shelter, and they have noticed that help and support is lacking so they want to encourage people to contribute. In this task, students are required to write a text in which they alert people about the current situation, explain why it is important to find long-term solutions about this issue and propose some ideas to solve the problem.

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: an article, a blog, or a proposal. Depending on the output produced by the student, the task could therefore cover the IB themes of identities and the optional recommended topics of beliefs and values, the theme of social organisation and the optional recommended topics of community and social engagement, and the theme of sharing the planet and the optional recommended topics of the environment and ethics.⁹⁹⁰ As a result, the task seems to address the public and occupational CEFR domains.⁹⁹¹

In all three text types, students will be expected to write persuasively, developing, and justifying their argument about the importance of volunteering in the abandoned animal shelter, explaining the current situation and the lack of help and support, and provide recommendations as well as propose a long-term solution that would resolve the problem.

In the third task of paper 1, the students are provided with the scenario of being the student representatives and they have been told that the Technology Department is going to receive funding from a company that has had ethical issues in the past. The task stipulates that students are required to write a text in which they expose the situation, evaluate the advantages and the disadvantages about what the acceptance of the funding might imply, based on the background of the company, and provide a solution to this problem.

This task has the capacity to cover the overarching IB themes of identities and more specifically the optional recommended topics of beliefs and values and personal attributes, the theme of human ingenuity and more specifically the optional recommended topics of technology and scientific innovation and the theme of sharing the planet including the optional recommended topic of ethics.⁹⁹² Therefore, the task seems to address the public, educational and occupational CEFR domains.⁹⁹³

⁹⁹⁰ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁹¹ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

⁹⁹² International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*.pp.18-20.

⁹⁹³ Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg. p. 10.

Students may choose one of three text types in which to write their task: a blog, an email, or a speech. Regardless of the text type selected, students are required to demonstrate a wide array of writing skills, including writing to persuade, identifying, and solving problems, presenting, and justifying arguments, providing, and explaining advantages and disadvantages and summarising and concluding their thoughts and arguments.

Student sample analysis

In all three writing samples analysed for Spanish HL paper 1 of M21, all students selected to complete option one. The review and comparative analysis of a student sample of the HL writing assessment (sample 5) of the Spanish HL paper 1 of the M21 examination is included in Appendix 5.

Overall findings on Spanish B Writing (Paper 1)

The input text of the writing assessment tasks, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR writing production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the Spanish B SL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The Spanish B SL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of Spanish B SL writing assessment of the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 110: Overall CEFR levels of the Spanish B SL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

Spanish SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 1	<p>Overall written production: A2: 'Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because''.⁹⁹⁴</p> <p>Overall written interaction: A2: 'Can compose short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need'.⁹⁹⁵</p> <p>Correspondence: B1: 'Can compose a basic letter of application with limited supporting details. Can compose basic e-mails/letters of a factual nature (e.g. to request information or to ask for and give confirmation)'.⁹⁹⁶</p> <p>Vocabulary control: A2: 'Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs'.⁹⁹⁷</p>	A2

⁹⁹⁴ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 82.

⁹⁹⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 82-83.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid. pp.132-133.

Spanish SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Vocabulary range: A2: 'Has sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs. Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs'.⁹⁹⁸</p> <p>Thematic development: A2: 'Can describe something in a simple list of points'.⁹⁹⁹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: A2: 'Can link groups of words/signs with simple connectors (e.g. 'and', 'but' and 'because')'.¹⁰⁰⁰</p>	
Sample 2	<p>Overall written interaction: B1+: 'Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information, and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision'.¹⁰⁰¹</p> <p>Propositional precision: B1+: 'Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision. Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly'.¹⁰⁰²</p> <p>Correspondence: B1+: 'Can compose basic formal e-mails/letters (e.g. to make a complaint and request action)'.¹⁰⁰³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B1+: 'Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express'.¹⁰⁰⁴</p> <p>Orthographic control: B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence. Can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions'.¹⁰⁰⁵</p> <p>Thematic development: B1+: 'Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time'.¹⁰⁰⁶</p> <p>Reports and essays: B1+: 'Can produce short, simple essays on topics of interest'.¹⁰⁰⁷</p>	B1+
Sample 3	<p>Overall written production: C1: 'Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme'.¹⁰⁰⁸</p>	B2+

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid. p. 82.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 136.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 68.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 66.

Spanish SL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Creative writing: C1: 'Can produce clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind. Can incorporate idiom'.¹⁰⁰⁹</p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1: 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.¹⁰¹⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range: C1: 'Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well'.¹⁰¹¹</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2+: 'Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect'.¹⁰¹²</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B2: 'Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution'.¹⁰¹³</p> <p>Thematic development: C1: 'Can expand and support the main points at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples'.¹⁰¹⁴</p> <p>Propositional precision: C1: 'Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc.'.¹⁰¹⁵</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample (each row in the table below) of the Spanish B HL writing assessment, was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The Spanish B HL student samples of the writing assessment from the M21 examination have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A2+ to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of Spanish B HL writing assessment of the M21 examination are presented in the table below.

Table 111: Overall CEFR levels of the Spanish B HL Paper 1 writing (M21 examination)

Spanish HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid. p.67.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid. pp.132-133.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰¹² Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid. pp.141-142.

Spanish HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 4	<p>Creative writing: A2+: 'Can describe everyday aspects of their environment. Can give very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences'.¹⁰¹⁶</p> <p>Correspondence: B1: 'Can compose personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail'.¹⁰¹⁷</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A2: 'Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes; nevertheless, it is usually clear what they are trying to say'.¹⁰¹⁸</p> <p>Sociolinguistic appropriateness: A2+: 'Can perform and respond to basic language functions, e.g. information exchange and requests, and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way'.¹⁰¹⁹</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B1: 'Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text'.¹⁰²⁰</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A2+: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics. Has sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs'.¹⁰²¹</p> <p>Thematic development: A2+: 'Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can give an example of something in a very simple text using 'like' or 'for example'.¹⁰²²</p>	A2+
Sample 5	<p>Overall written production: B2: 'Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest'.¹⁰²³</p> <p>General linguistic range: B2+: 'Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say'.¹⁰²⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1: 'Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors. Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately'.¹⁰²⁵</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: B2+: 'Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect'.¹⁰²⁶</p> <p>Thematic development: B2: 'Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their</p>	B2

¹⁰¹⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.67.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid. p. 137.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁰²¹ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰²² Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁰²³ Ibid. p. 66.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid. pp.130-131.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid. pp.132-133.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

Spanish HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>main points with relevant supporting detail and examples'.¹⁰²⁷</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: B1+: 'Can introduce a counterargument in a simple discursive text (e.g. with 'however'). Can form longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices'.¹⁰²⁸</p> <p>Orthographic control: B2: 'Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence'.¹⁰²⁹</p> <p>Propositional precision: B1+: 'Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision'.¹⁰³⁰</p>	
Sample 6	<p>Overall written production: C1: 'Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme'.¹⁰³¹</p> <p>Creative writing: C1: 'Can produce clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind. Can incorporate idiom and humour, though use of the latter is not always appropriate'.¹⁰³²</p> <p>Correspondence: C1: 'Can express themselves with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. Can, with good expression and accuracy, compose formal correspondence such as letters of clarification, application, recommendation, reference, complaint, sympathy and condolence'.¹⁰³³</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.¹⁰³⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary control: C1: 'Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors'.¹⁰³⁵</p> <p>Orthographic control: C1: 'Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen'.¹⁰³⁶</p> <p>Sociolinguistic appropriateness:</p>	B2+

¹⁰²⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 140.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid. p. 141.

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid. p. 136.

¹⁰³⁰ Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰³¹ Ibid. p. 66.

¹⁰³² Ibid. p.67.

¹⁰³³ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid. pp.132-133.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid. p. 136.

Spanish HL Examination Paper 1 (Writing)		
Student Sample	Core CEFR Descriptors and Strategies	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>C1: 'Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. Can adjust their level of formality (register and style) to suit the social context: formal, informal or colloquial as appropriate, and maintain a consistent register'. ¹⁰³⁷</p> <p>Thematic development: C1: 'Can use the conventions of the type of text concerned to hold the target reader's attention and communicate complex ideas. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion'. ¹⁰³⁸</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: C1: 'Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. Can produce well-organised, coherent text, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns'. ¹⁰³⁹</p>	

5.5.4 Speaking and interactive skills

Box 18: Key findings on Spanish B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills assessment (Internal Assessment)

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

- In relation to **Spanish B SL**, the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences found that these report **from A1 up to B2+ CEFR levels**.
- Additionally, in **Spanish B HL** the review of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** from the **M21** examination and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and language competences indicated that these report **from A1 up to B2+ CEFR levels**.
- Therefore, the comparative analysis of **both SL and HL Spanish B speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes to CEFR oral production and interaction language activities and competences of the **M21** examination targeted **up to B2+ CEFR level**.
- In **both SL and HL Spanish B** the comparative analysis of the **speaking and interactive skills student samples** and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination found that the CEFR oral production language activities assessed include 'Overall oral production' and 'Sustained monologue: describing experience', the CEFR oral interaction language activities of 'Overall oral interaction' and 'Conversation', and the CEFR language competences of 'General linguistic range', 'Thematic development', 'Fluency', 'Overall phonological control', 'Grammatical accuracy' and 'Vocabulary control'. Additionally, in relation to HL Language B, the comparative analysis of the speaking and interactive skill student samples and associated mark schemes of the **M21** examination indicated that they assess some additional CEFR mediation activities in relation to mediating a text including

¹⁰³⁷ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p.137.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid. p. 140.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid. p. 141.

Key findings Spanish B (SL and HL) Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

'Expressing a personal response to creative texts' and 'Analysis and criticism of creative texts'. This is because in the HL speaking and interactive skills assessment, students are requested to provide a presentation and analyse a literary extract.

Standard Level

Ecttis reviewed three student samples of the Spanish B SL internal oral assessment including the visual stimuli that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

Student sample analysis

The review and comparative analysis of one student sample of the Spanish B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 5.

Higher Level

Ecttis reviewed three student samples of the Spanish B HL internal oral assessment including the literary extract that were given to the students together with the audio recording of their individual oral presentation and discussion with the teacher. The student samples of the internal assessment reviewed in this project were from the examination period of M21.

Student sample analysis

The review and comparative analysis of one student sample of the Spanish B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment of the M21 examination are included in Appendix 5.

Overall findings on Spanish B Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment)

The input text of the internal oral assessment tasks including the questions asked by the teacher during the oral assessment, the marked student samples, and the associated marked schemes were reviewed and analysed against the CEFR oral production and interaction language activities, strategies and competences. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the Spanish B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The Spanish B SL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A1 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the Spanish B SL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 112: Overall CEFR levels of Spanish B SL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
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Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 7	<p>Understanding an interlocuter: A1: ‘Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions. Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them clearly and slowly, with repetition, by a sympathetic interlocutor’.¹⁰⁴⁰</p> <p>Interviewing and being interviewed: A2: ‘Can indicate in simple language the nature of a problem to a health professional, perhaps using gestures and body language. Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview’.¹⁰⁴¹</p> <p>Propositional precision: A1: ‘Can communicate basic information about personal details and needs of a concrete type in a simple way’.¹⁰⁴²</p> <p>Conversation: A1: ‘Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them in clear, slow and repeated language by a sympathetic interlocutor. Can take part in a simple conversation of a basic factual nature on a predictable topic (e.g. their home country, family, school). Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions. Can ask how people are and react to news’.¹⁰⁴³</p> <p>Overall oral production: A1: ‘Can produce simple, mainly isolated phrases about people and places’.¹⁰⁴⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A1: ‘Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire’.¹⁰⁴⁵</p> <p>Fluency: A1: ‘Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words/signs, and to repair communication’.¹⁰⁴⁶</p>	A1
Sample 8	<p>Overall oral interaction: B1+: ‘Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests and professional field. 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, music, etc’.¹⁰⁴⁷</p> <p>Conversation: B1+: ‘Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding’.¹⁰⁴⁸</p> <p>General linguistic range: B1: ‘Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times’.¹⁰⁴⁹</p> <p>Fluency: B1+: ‘Can express themselves with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and ‘cul-de-sacs’, they are able to keep going effectively without help’.¹⁰⁵⁰</p>	B1

¹⁰⁴⁰ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 73.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 62.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 142.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Grammatical accuracy: B1: 'Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations'.¹⁰⁵¹</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: B1: 'Can follow clearly articulated speech/sign directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs and phrases'.¹⁰⁵²</p> <p>Sustained monologue (describing experiences): B1: 'Can narrate a story'.¹⁰⁵³</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: 'Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events'.¹⁰⁵⁴</p> <p>Vocabulary control: B1: 'Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics'.¹⁰⁵⁵</p> <p>Propositional precision: B1: 'Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly'.¹⁰⁵⁶</p>	
Sample 9	<p>Explaining data in speech or sign: C1: 'Can interpret and describe clearly and reliably the salient points and details contained in visually organised information on complex academic or professional topics'.¹⁰⁵⁷</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: C1: 'Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language'.¹⁰⁵⁸</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: C1: 'Can understand an interlocutor in detail on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the variety is unfamiliar'.¹⁰⁵⁹</p> <p>Conversation: C1: 'Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage'.¹⁰⁶⁰</p> <p>Interviewing and being interviewed: C1: 'Can participate fully in an interview, as either interviewer or interviewee, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support, and handling interjections well'.¹⁰⁶¹</p> <p>Overall oral production: C1: 'Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion'.¹⁰⁶²</p> <p>General linguistic range: C1: 'Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate</p>	B2+

¹⁰⁵¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 132.

¹⁰⁵² Ibid. p. 73.

¹⁰⁵³ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid. p.97.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 73.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁰⁶² Ibid. p. 62.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say'.¹⁰⁶³</p> <p>Vocabulary range: C1: 'Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words fairly well'.¹⁰⁶⁴</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: C1: 'Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot'.¹⁰⁶⁵</p> <p>Propositional precision: C1: 'Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position'.¹⁰⁶⁶</p> <p>Fluency: C1: 'Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language'.¹⁰⁶⁷</p>	

Similarly to SL, the overall CEFR level of each student sample of the Spanish B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment was a combination of the CEFR level findings of the input text analysis, the CEFR level findings of the output text analysis and the CEFR level findings of the mark scheme analysis. The Spanish B HL student samples from the M21 speaking and interactive skills assessment have been aligned with CEFR descriptors ranging from A1 to B2+ levels. The overall CEFR level of each student sample of the Spanish B HL speaking and interactive skills assessment from the M21 examination are as follows:

Table 113: Overall CEFR levels of Spanish B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills)

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
Sample 10	<p>Interviewing and being interviewed: A2: 'Can indicate in simple language the nature of a problem to a health professional, perhaps using gestures and body language. Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview'.¹⁰⁶⁸</p> <p>Sustained monologue (describing experiences): A2: 'Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms'.¹⁰⁶⁹</p> <p>Propositional precision: A1: 'Can communicate basic information about personal details and needs of a concrete type in a simple way'.¹⁰⁷⁰</p> <p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): A1: 'Can</p>	A1

¹⁰⁶³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 130-131.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid. pp.141-142.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>use simple words/signs to state how a work made them feel'.¹⁰⁷¹</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): A2: 'Can identify and briefly describe, in basic formulaic language, the key themes and characters in short, simple narratives involving familiar situations that contain only high frequency everyday language'.¹⁰⁷²</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: A1: 'Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics'.¹⁰⁷³</p> <p>Conversation: A1: 'Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them in clear, slow and repeated language by a sympathetic interlocutor'.¹⁰⁷⁴</p> <p>General linguistic range: A1: 'Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type. Can use some basic structures in one-clause sentences with some omission or reduction of elements'.¹⁰⁷⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: A1: 'Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of words/signs and phrases related to particular concrete situations'.¹⁰⁷⁶</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: A1: 'Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns'.¹⁰⁷⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary control: A2: 'Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete, everyday needs'.¹⁰⁷⁸</p> <p>Fluency: A1: 'Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words/signs, and to repair communication'.¹⁰⁷⁹</p>	
Sample 11	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): B1: 'Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them'.¹⁰⁸⁰</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: A2: 'Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord'.¹⁰⁸¹</p> <p>Conversation: B1: 'Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to express exactly what they would like to'.¹⁰⁸²</p>	B1

¹⁰⁷¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. pp. 106-107.

¹⁰⁷² Ibid. pp. 223-224.

¹⁰⁷³ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 132-133.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

¹⁰⁸¹ Ibid. p. 72.

¹⁰⁸² Ibid. pp. 73-74.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Overall oral production: B1: ‘Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points’.¹⁰⁸³</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experiences: B1: ‘Can describe events, real or imagined’.¹⁰⁸⁴</p> <p>General linguistic range: B1: ‘Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times’.¹⁰⁸⁵</p> <p>Vocabulary range: B1: ‘Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events. Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations’.¹⁰⁸⁶</p> <p>Overall phonological control: B1: ‘Pronunciation is generally intelligible; intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels do not prevent understanding of the message. Accent is usually influenced by the other language(s) they speak’.</p> <p>Propositional precision: B1: ‘Can convey simple, straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel is most important’.¹⁰⁸⁷</p> <p>Fluency: B1: ‘Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production’.¹⁰⁸⁸</p>	
Sample 12	<p>Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature): C1: ‘Can describe in detail a personal interpretation of a work, outlining their reactions to certain features and explaining their significance. Can outline a personal interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological/emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions’.¹⁰⁸⁹</p> <p>Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature): C1: ‘Can critically appraise a wide variety of texts including literary works of different periods and genres. Can evaluate the extent to which a work follows the conventions of its genre’.¹⁰⁹⁰</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: C2: ‘Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it’.¹⁰⁹¹</p>	B2+

¹⁰⁸³ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 62.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 106-107.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 223-224.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid. p. 72.

Student sample	Core CEFR Descriptors on Activities, Strategies and Competences	Overall CEFR Level
	<p>Understanding an interlocutor: C2: ‘Can understand any interlocutor, even on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond their own field, given an opportunity to adjust to a less familiar variety’.¹⁰⁹²</p> <p>Conversation: C1: ‘Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage’.¹⁰⁹³</p> <p>Interviewing and being interviewed: C2: ‘Can keep up their side of the dialogue extremely well, structuring the discourse and interacting authoritatively with effortless fluency’.¹⁰⁹⁴</p> <p>Overall oral production: C2: ‘Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured discourse with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points’.¹⁰⁹⁵</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experiences: C2: ‘Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions’.¹⁰⁹⁶</p> <p>General linguistic range: C1: ‘Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say’.¹⁰⁹⁷</p> <p>Vocabulary range: C2: ‘Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning’.¹⁰⁹⁸</p> <p>Propositional precision: C1: ‘Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position’.¹⁰⁹⁹</p> <p>Fluency: C2: ‘Can express themselves at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right means to express their thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation’.¹¹⁰⁰</p>	

¹⁰⁹² Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 73.

¹⁰⁹³ Ibid. pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 62-63.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid. pp.141-142.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 142.

6. Key findings

This section presents the key findings of the review and comparative analysis of the IB DP Language A and Language B subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish to CEFR.

6.1 Language A

This section presents the cross-language findings of the comparative analysis of the Language A subjects to CEFR, including the relationship between overall CEFR levels and grades, and an overview of the most notable CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences that were used for the comparative analysis of the Language A skills to CEFR.

6.1.1 Language A Grades and CEFR Levels

Key Finding i – Language A Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, the Language A subjects analysed report different CEFR levels at SL and HL. At SL, all four languages report proficiency at B1 to C1 levels and the grade threshold for B2 proficiency is 4. At HL, all four languages report proficiency at B1 to C2 levels and the grade threshold for B2 proficiency is also 4.

Based on the analysis of marking criteria undertaken by Ecctis and the cross-referencing of those findings against student samples (from the M21 examination session), the relationship between IB grade boundaries and CEFR levels in Language A subjects are represented in the tables below.

This relationship was not found to be different across the four languages reviewed in the Language A subject (English, German, French, and Spanish). This is largely due to the nature of the assessments (being driven more comprehensively by shared marking criteria – with less variation introduced by individual items and prompts). This is not to say that all Language A assessments are identical in different languages, but rather that the language proficiency elements of these tests do not vary between languages in a substantial enough way to influence the placement of grade boundaries in relation to CEFR levels. To a greater extent, Language A curricula assess skills that are outside the remit of language proficiency, as well as being able to report language proficiency at some levels.

Figure 6: Comparability of the Language A: language and Literature grade boundaries to CEFR levels

CEFR Level	Language A: Language and Literature	
	Standard Level	Higher Level
C2		7
C1	7	6
	6	
B2	5	5
	4	4
B1	3	3
A2	Not reported	Not reported
A1	Not reported	Not reported

Figure 7: Comparability of the Language A: literature grade boundaries to CEFR levels

CEFR Level	Language A: Literature	
	Standard Level	Higher Level
C2		7
C1	7	6
	6	
B2	5	5
	4	4
B1	3	3
A2	Not reported	Not reported
A1	Not reported	Not reported

As reported by these tables, the same relationship between grade boundaries and CEFR levels is held by the assessment of Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature. As such, the B2 grade threshold for both is 4, at both SL and HL.

One key difference between SL and HL for both Language A subjects is that C2 proficiency is reported by HL grade 7 in both cases, whereas SL only reports language proficiency up to C1. This difference is primarily a result of the oral components not fully assessing C2 proficiency and, in the case of Language A: language and literature, the variation in input text complexity in paper 1.

6.1.2 Language A Activities, Strategies, and Competences

Key Finding ii – Language A Skills Assessed

In all four languages analysed here, both Language A courses fully assess reading and writing skills. Listening skills are not directly assessed and although spoken production skills are assessed, spoken interaction is not specifically rewarded in the marking criteria. Both Language A curricula include assessment of a wide range of CEFR-related activities, strategies, and competences within these assessed skill areas.

Within the Language A approach to assessment, not all four skills (reading, listening, speaking and interactive skills, as well as writing) are fully assessed. The table below summarises which skills are assessed by Language A.

Table 114: Skills assessed in Language A subjects

Skills Assessed	Language A	
Reading	✓	Reading skills are fully assessed across all assessment components and in the preparatory work required in advance of the assessment papers.
Listening	X	There is no dedicated listening component in the Language A assessment. Some listening skills may be involved in the Internal Assessment (Oral), during the question-and-answer segment, but listening skills are not specifically targeted and rewarded by the marking criteria.
Writing	✓	Writing skills are fully assessed in paper 1 and paper 2 in both Language A: language and literature and Language A: literature. HL students also complete an assessed essay. The long-form answers across these assessment components are a robust test of writing skills.
Speaking	✓*	Speaking production skills are assessed in the Internal Assessment (Oral). However, spoken interaction skills are not specifically rewarded by the marking scheme (e.g. conversational skills). Therefore, this skill is partially assessed in Language A.

In the course of the comparative CEFR analysis of the Language A assessment components, Ecctis identified a number of activities, strategies, and competences that were particularly relevant. These were the most used by Ecctis to analyse the CEFR level of assessment components and it would therefore be accurate to say that they are the most

notably assessed aspects of language proficiency within the Language A assessment scheme.

In relation to reading, the most notable CEFR activities were Overall reading comprehension, Reading for information and argument, and Reading as a leisure activity. The most significant receptive strategy was Identifying cues and inferring and the most significant competences linked to reception were General linguistic range and Vocabulary range.

In relation to productive skills, the most notable writing-based CEFR activities were Overall written production, Creative writing, and Reports and Essays. The most significant writing-based strategy was Planning and the most significant writing-related competences were General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Thematic development, and Sociolinguistic appropriateness.

The most notable speaking-based CEFR activities were Overall oral production and Sustained monologue: describing experience. The most significant speaking-based strategies were Compensating and Monitoring and Repair. And the most significant speaking-related competences were General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Phonological control, Thematic development, Coherence and cohesion, and Fluency.

There were also a number of mediation-related skills that were relevant across components of the Language A assessment. The most notable were Overall mediation, Expressing a personal response to creative texts, Analysis and criticism of creative texts, Linking to previous knowledge, Breaking down complicated information, and Streamlining a text.

6.2 Language B

This section presents the cross-language findings of the comparative analysis of the Language B subjects to CEFR, including the overall CEFR levels and grades for each skill assessed in Language B, the summary of the findings around the consistency across assessment years, and an overview of the CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences that were used for the comparative analysis of the Language B skills to CEFR.

6.2.1 CEFR Levels and Grades

CEFR Levels

This section below presents the cross-language findings of the Language B subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish per skill (reading, listening, writing, speaking and interactive skills) and level (SL and HL).

Key Finding iii – Language B SL Reading

Despite some variety between the 2020 and 2022 assessment cycles, Language B SL Paper 2 (reading comprehension) was found in English, French, and Spanish to have tasks pitched between CEFR levels A2+ and B2. German B SL was found to have tasks pitched between A2+ and B1+, as Text C (reading comprehension) in German B SL did not reach B2 level in either assessment cycle.

The Language B SL paper 2 reading comprehension assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the N20 and N22 examination for English B, and from the N20 and the N22 examination for French, German, and Spanish B. In relation to the N22 reading comprehension examinations, the table below presents only the findings of the analysis of Text C, which was the one considered to contribute to the difference in the level of the overall paper. This is because, in most of the subjects, Text C was the only one to reflect elements of B2 CEFR level.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL paper 2 reading comprehension examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency tested by the input text and questions linked to each text.

Table 115: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL Paper 2 reading comprehension across all languages (N20 and N22 examinations)

Text number	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B SL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	French B SL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	German B SL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	Spanish B SL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)
Text A	A2+	A2+/B1	A2+/B1	A2+/ B1+
Text B	B1+	B1+	B1/B1+	B1+/B2
Text C	B1+	B2	B1+	B2
	English B SL Paper 2 N22 (Reading Comprehension)	French B SL Paper 2 N22 (Reading Comprehension)	German B SL Paper 2 N22 (Reading Comprehension)	Spanish B SL Paper 2 N22 (Reading Comprehension)
Text C	B2	B2	B1+	B2

The findings presented in this table indicate that there are some similarities in the overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL paper 2 reading comprehension examination of both the 2020 and 2022 papers across the four languages. From the table above it is evident that the SL reading comprehension 2020 and 2022 examinations across the four languages targeted a range of CEFR levels, starting from A2+ up to B1+ and in some cases up to B2 level.

Another similarity of the overall CEFR levels of the SL reading comprehension 2020 and 2022 examinations, across the four languages, is that within each paper there is an increasing, gradual progression of difficulty throughout the paper, with often Text A targeting A2+ to B1 levels, Text B reflecting elements of B1, B1+ or sometimes B2 level, and Text C usually being the most difficult task within each paper, targeting B1+ or B2 levels.

There is a clear and stable progression of difficulty within each question and the sub-questions of each task. For example, within a specific set of questions, different sub-question usually targeted different CEFR levels with a clear progression of difficulty.

Furthermore, another similarity of the SL reading comprehension 2020 and 2022 examinations, across the four languages reviewed, related to the question types and the skills they assess. For example, the SL reading comprehension papers, across the four languages, included questions which required the students to identify the meaning of particular words within the text. Students were instructed as to which line or paragraph of the text they could find the word and then they were asked to select an appropriate synonym from a list of words provided. These question types usually targeted B1 and B1+ CEFR levels in several CEFR activities and competences such as Identifying cues and inferring and Vocabulary range. The B1+ level descriptor of the identifying cues and inferring scale outlines that the student 'Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar'. The B1 level descriptor for Vocabulary range outlines that the student 'Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations'.¹¹⁰¹

However, the analysis found that there are some differences in the overall CEFR levels of the SL reading comprehension 2020 examination across the languages. It is evident from the table above that the assessment of French and Spanish in 2020 targeted up to B2 level, whereas the assessment of English and German targeted up to B1+ level.

The CEFR analysis found that the question demand, as well as the skills that students were required to demonstrate to be awarded the marks, in Text C in English and German reflected elements up to B1+ level in the CEFR scales of Overall reading comprehension, Identifying cues and inferring, Reading for information and argument, and Vocabulary range. On the other hand, Text C in the SL reading comprehension 2020 examinations of French, and Spanish targeted up to B2 level in the same CEFR scales. This is because the skills that students needed to demonstrate went beyond making basic inferences and predictions about the text, using structural features, demonstrating a more detailed understanding than recognising main points, and demonstrating a more detailed understanding of more lengthy texts than the ones described in the B1 and B1+ level descriptors.

The text used as the input text (and the questions related to it) of Text C in French and Spanish in the SL reading comprehension 2020 examination were usually lengthier and more complex than adverts, everyday material, short documents, or brochures mentioned in

¹¹⁰¹ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 60 and p.131.

B1 and B1+ descriptors. Moreover, the vocabulary in those questions was very specific and not likely to be encountered in day-to-day conversations.

Regarding the differences in the overall CEFR levels between the SL reading comprehension 2020 examinations and the 2022 examinations, the SL reading comprehension 2022 examination of English, French, and Spanish targeted up to B2 level, compared to the 2020 examination which targeted up to B2 level in the French and Spanish examinations only.

The overall CEFR level of both the 2020 and 2022 SL reading comprehension examinations in German only targeted up to B1+ level. The analysis found that this is because, in the Text C of the German 2022 SL reading comprehension examination, word matching was possible, the task did not require the student to scan long complex texts, the answers to the questions were relatively signposted, and the distractor viability was considered comparatively low. Additionally, the text and the questions included mostly familiar language, and in the cases where technical language was used, it was often clearly signposted, and the students did not need to reformulate their answers.

HL Reading

Key Finding iv – Language B HL Reading

Language B HL Paper 2 (reading comprehension) was found to have tasks pitched between CEFR levels B1+ and C1 in English, French, German, and Spanish.

The Language B HL paper 2 reading comprehension assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the N20 examination for English B, and from the N20 examination for French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL paper 2 reading comprehension examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency tested by the input text and questions linked to each text.

Table 116: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL Paper 2 reading comprehension across all languages (N20 examinations)

Text Number	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B HL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	French B HL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	German B HL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)	Spanish B HL Paper 2 N20 (Reading Comprehension)
Text A	B1+	B1+/B2	B1+	B1+/B2
Text B	B2+	B2/B2+	B1+	B2/B2+
Text C	C1	B2+/C1	C1	B2+/C1

The findings presented in this table indicate that there are some similarities in the overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL paper 2 reading comprehension 2020 examination across the four languages. All target a range of CEFR levels, from B1+ up to B2+ and C1 levels.

Another similarity of the overall CEFR levels of the HL reading comprehension 2020 examination across the four languages is that within each paper there is an increased gradual progression of difficulty throughout the paper. Text A often targets B1+ and B2 levels, Text B reflects elements of B1+, B2 and B2+ levels, and Text C is usually the most difficult task within each paper, targeting B2+ and C1 levels.

A common question type of the HL reading comprehension 2020 paper across the four languages involves students being given phrases from the text and being asked to identify to whom or to what certain pronouns refer. In this type of question, the students were told which line to consult to find the pronoun and they were instructed to read the other lines before and after that specific one to find the context and reference of the answer. These questions required the students to be able to demonstrate their skills in reading for detail, skimming, scanning, identifying synonyms, inferencing, and understanding of implicit meaning.

This question type was common across all the HL reading comprehension papers in all four languages reviewed, usually targeting B2, B2+ and sometimes C1 CEFR levels in several CEFR activities and competences. These include overall reading comprehension, reading for orientation, reading for information and argument, vocabulary range, and identifying cues and inferring. In these questions, the student needs to demonstrate greater understanding of the details of the text than just 'basic inferences', the vocabulary is more advanced than for everyday situations, students are required to understand a wide range of grammatical structures and in some cases idiomatic language, and they may use contextual, grammatical, and lexical cues to infer meaning and thereby identify the correct word from the text to substitute.

However, there are also some differences on the overall CEFR levels of the HL reading comprehension 2020 examination across the languages. As it is evident from the table above, Text B in English, French and Spanish targets B2 and B2+ CEFR levels. However, the Text B in German targets B1+ level and then Text C targets C1 level. As a result, it is evident that there is a more stable progression of difficulty of the questions in English, French, and Spanish compared to the progression of difficulty from the questions in Text A, to Text B and Text C in German.

SL Listening

Key Finding v – Language B SL Listening

In Language B SL Paper 2 (listening comprehension), English, French, German, and Spanish all contained tasks pitched at B1 and B1+, but the presence of A2, A2+, and B2 varied between languages and between the 2020 and 2022 assessment cycles.

The Language B SL paper 2 listening comprehension assessments reviewed as part of the project are from the N20 and N22 examination for English B, and from the N20 and the N22 examination for French, German, and Spanish B. In relation to the N22 listening comprehension examinations, the table below presents only the findings of the analysis of Text C, which was the one considered to contribute to the difference in the level of the overall paper. This is because, in most of the subjects, Text C was the only one to reflect elements of B2 CEFR level.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL paper 2 listening comprehension examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency tested by the input text and questions linked to each text.

Table 117: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL Paper 2 listening comprehension across all languages (N20 and N22 examinations)

Text Number	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B SL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	French B SL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	German B SL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	Spanish B SL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)
Text A	A2+/B1	A2+/B1	B1	A2
Text B	A2+/B1	B1/B1+	B1+	B1
Text C	B1/B1+	B1+/B2	B2	B1/B1+
	English B SL Paper 2 N22 (Listening Comprehension)	French B SL Paper 2 N22 (Listening Comprehension)	German B SL Paper 2 N22 (Listening Comprehension)	Spanish B SL Paper 2 N22 (Listening Comprehension)
Text C	B2	B1+/B2	B1+	B2

The cross-language findings of the SL listening comprehension examination from 2020 and 2022 presented in the table above indicate that there are some similarities in the overall CEFR levels across the four languages. It is evident that the three Texts included in the assessment papers across the languages target a range of CEFR levels, starting from A2+ up to B1+ and sometimes B2 level.

Another similarity of the overall CEFR levels of the SL listening comprehension 2020 and 2022 examinations across the four languages is that within each paper there is an increased gradual progression of difficulty throughout the paper, with often Text A targeting A2+ to B1 levels, Text B reflecting elements of A2+, B1, and B1+ levels, and Text C usually being the most difficult task within each paper, targeting B1+ and sometimes B2 level.

The findings of the SL listening comprehension examination across all four languages indicate that there is a clear and stable progression of difficulty within each question and the sub-questions of each task. For example, within a specific set of questions, different sub-question usually targeted different CEFR levels with a clear progression of difficulty.

Another similarity of the SL listening comprehension 2020 and 2022 examinations across the four languages reviewed, which contributed to the overall CEFR level findings, related to question types. For example, the SL listening comprehension papers across the four languages included a question in Text C which required students to fill in the gaps with the correct answer from the audio recording that they listened to, using up to three words per answer.

This question type was common across papers reviewed, usually targeting B1, B1+ and sometimes B2 CEFR levels in several CEFR scales, such as Overall oral comprehension, Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings, and Identifying cues and inferring. Across the different language papers, this question was not found to be lower than B1 level as to be awarded the mark the students should be able demonstrate their ability to understand the meaning of the audio recording and extract specific words used in the audio recording to fill in the gaps and sentences in the task.

However, there are some differences in the overall CEFR levels of the SL listening comprehension 2020 examination across the languages. It is evident from the table above that the assessment of French and German targeted up to B2 level in Text C, in comparison to the assessment of English and Spanish which targeted only up to B1 and B1+ in Text C in 2020.

The CEFR analysis found that the question demand and difficulty as well as the skills that the students were required to demonstrate to be awarded the marks in Text C of the N20 examination in French and German reflected elements up to B2 level in the CEFR scales of Overall oral comprehension, Identifying cues and inferring, Vocabulary range, and Understanding audio (or signed) media recordings. On the other hand, Text C in the SL listening comprehension 2020 examinations of English and Spanish targeted only up to B1 and B1+ level in the same CEFR scales. This is because, in the French and German papers, the input text of the audio recording that the students should be able to understand goes beyond the common every day or job-related topics associated with B1+ level. In Text C of the French and German SL listening comprehension 2020 examination, often students were required to understand the main ideas of a relatively complex discourse delivered in standard language, where the key terms contained in the question signal to the student the key points contained in the dialogue.

Regarding the differences in the overall CEFR levels between the SL listening comprehension 2020 examination and 2022, the 2022 examination of English and Spanish targeted up to B2 level, whereas in 2020 it was only French and German. The overall CEFR level of the 2022 SL listening comprehension examinations in French and German only targeted up to B1+ level.

Key Finding vi – Language B HL Listening

In Language B HL Paper 2 (listening comprehension), English, French, German, and Spanish all contained tasks pitched at B2 level. The presence of B1, B1+, B2+, and C1 tasks varied between languages. English, French, and Spanish contained a steady progression of demand, whereas German B heavily deployed B2 and B2+ tasks.

The Language B HL paper 2 listening comprehension assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the N20 examination for English B, and from the N20 examination for French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL paper 2 listening comprehension examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency tested by the input text and questions linked to each text.

Table 118: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL Paper 2 listening comprehension across all languages (N20 examination)

Text Number	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B HL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	French B HL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	German B HL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)	Spanish B HL Paper 2 N20 (Listening Comprehension)
Text A	B1+	B1	B2+	B1
Text B	B1+/B2	B2	B2	B1+
Text C	B2+/C1	B2+/C1	B2+	B2

The findings presented in this table indicate that there are some broad similarities in the overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL paper 2 listening comprehension 2020 examination across the four languages. With the exception of German – where the target levels of Text A are an outlier – the HL listening comprehension 2020 examinations target a range of CEFR levels, from B1 and B1+ level up to B2+ and sometimes C1 levels.

Another general similarity – again with the exception of German – is that within each paper there is an increased gradual progression of difficulty throughout the paper, with often Text A targeting B1, B1+ and B2 levels, Text B reflecting elements of B1+ and B2 levels, and Text C usually being the most difficult task within each paper, targeting B2, B2+ and sometimes C1 levels.

For the most part there is a clear and stable progression of difficulty within each question and the sub-questions of each task. For example, within a specific set of questions, different sub-questions usually target different CEFR levels, with a clear progression of difficulty,

starting from easier tasks and continuing to more difficult and challenging ones which required students to demonstrate a wider range of listening comprehension skills.

However, the cross-language analysis found that there are some differences in the overall CEFR levels of the HL listening comprehension 2020 examinations across the languages. From the table above it is evident that there is stable progression of difficulty from Text A to Text B to Text C in the English, French, and Spanish HL listening comprehension examinations, targeting from B1, to B2, B2+ and C1 levels. However, in the German HL listening comprehension 2020 examination, the progression of difficulty from one Text to the other and from moving to one question to the other was fluctuating. This is evident as the German HL listening examination started with Text A, which reflected elements of B2+ level, in contrast with the Text A in the English, French, and Spanish HL listening examination, which reflected B1 and B1+ level. All Texts of the HL German B listening comprehension 2020 examination targeted a high level of language proficiency, ranging from B2 to B2+, and there was not much variation in the CEFR levels of the different tasks included within the paper.

Another difference in the overall CEFR levels of the HL listening comprehension examinations across the languages was that the English, French, and German HL listening comprehension examinations targeted up to B2+ and C1 levels, whereas the Spanish HL listening comprehension examination targeted only up to B2 level. In the English, French, and German HL listening comprehension examinations, the students needed to demonstrate their understanding of a wide range of everyday common but also more complex vocabulary including figurative language and idiomatic expressions, as well as simple and more complex grammatical structures. In the Spanish, however, there was distinctly less presence of these more complex forms of language indicative of needing proficiency over B2 level.

SL Writing

Key Finding vii – Language B SL Writing

From CEFR mapping of the Language B SL Paper 1 (writing) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2+ in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1 and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Regarding SL Language B writing (Paper 1), Ecctis conducted a mark scheme analysis in which we mapped each level descriptor for each one of the SL writing assessment criteria against the relevant CEFR levels. The table below presents the SL Language B writing (Paper 1) assessment criteria and their band levels mapped against CEFR levels.

Table 119: Language B SL writing (Paper 1) Assessment Criteria mapped against CEFR levels

SL Language B Writing (Paper 1) Assessment Criteria	Marks associated with each band level	CEFR level
Criterion A: Language	0	N/A
	1-3	A1-A2

SL Language B Writing (Paper 1) Assessment Criteria	Marks associated with each band level	CEFR level
	4-6	B1-B1+
	7-9	B2
	10-12	B2+/C1
Criterion B: Message	0	N/A
	1-3	A1-A2
	4-6	A2+ -B1
	7-9	B1+ -B2
	10-12	B2– B2+
Criterion C: Conceptual understanding	0	N/A
	1-2	A2-A2+
	3-4	B1-B2
	5-6	B2-B2+

The Language B SL paper 1 writing production assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the M21 examination for English, French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the M21 Language B SL paper 1 writing production examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish as well as the total number of marks that was assigned by the teacher to each student sample reviewed. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency demonstrated by the written samples provided. The overall CEFR level of each student sample was determined following a review and CEFR analysis of the student samples, including a review of the language functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the output texts produced by the students, and a review of how the student samples were marked by the teachers, in combination with information from the mark scheme analysis.

Table 120: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL Paper 1 writing across all languages (M21 examination)

Student Sample	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B SL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	French B SL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	German B SL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	Spanish B SL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)
Lower marks	Sample 1 A2 (9/30 marks)	Sample 1 A2+ (9/30 marks)	Sample 1 A2+/B1 (10/30 marks)	Sample 1 A2 (9/30 marks)
Medium marks	Sample 2 B2 (20/30 marks)	Sample 2 B2 (19/30 marks)	Sample 2 B2 (20/30 marks)	Sample 2 B1+ (20/30 marks)
Higher marks	Sample 3 B2+ (27/30 marks)	Sample 3 B2+ (30/30 marks)	Sample 3 B2+ (30/30 marks)	Sample 3 B2+ (30/30 marks)

Regarding the SL writing assessment, the IB shared with Ecctis three student samples of the Language B SL writing production 2021 examination in English, French, German, and Spanish.

As is evident from the table above in each SL writing assessment of each language, Sample 1 aligned with A1, A2+ and sometimes B1 levels, Sample 2 reflected elements of B2 and

sometimes B1+ level, and Sample 3 targeted up to B2+ level. The only difference in the overall CEFR levels of the SL writing assessment across the languages was that Sample 2 (roughly 20/30) reflected up to B2 level proficiency in English, French, and German whereas in Spanish it reflected only up to B1+ level.

HL Writing

Key Finding viii – Language B HL Writing

From CEFR mapping of the Language B HL Paper 1 (writing) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2+ in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1 and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

In terms of the HL Language B writing (Paper 1), Ecctis conducted a mark scheme analysis in which we mapped each level descriptor for each one of the HL writing assessment criteria against the relevant CEFR levels. The table below presents the HL Language B writing (Paper 1) assessment criteria and their band levels mapped against CEFR levels.

Table 121: Language B HL writing (Paper 1) Assessment Criteria mapped against CEFR levels

HL Language B Writing (Paper 1) Assessment Criteria	Marks associated with each band level	CEFR level
Criterion A: Language	0	N/A
	1-3	A2- B1
	4-6	B1- B2
	7-9	B2- C1
	10-12	C1
Criterion B: Message	0	N/A
	1-3	A1-A2
	4-6	A2+ -B1
	7-9	B1+- B2
	10-12	B2- B2+
Criterion C: Conceptual understanding	0	N/A
	1-2	A2-A2+
	3-4	B1-B2
	5-6	B2-B2+

The Language B HL paper 1 writing production assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the M21 examination for English, French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the M21 Language B HL paper 1 writing production examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency demonstrated by the written samples provided. Similar to Language B SL writing, the overall CEFR level of each student sample was determined following a review and CEFR analysis of the student samples, including a

review of the language functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary used in the output texts produced by the students, and a review of how the student samples were marked by the teachers, in combination with information from the mark scheme analysis.

Table 122: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL Paper 1 writing across all languages (M21 examination)

Student Sample	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B HL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	French B HL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	German B HL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)	Spanish B HL Paper 1 M21 Examination (Writing)
Lower marks	Sample 4 B1+ (16/30 marks)	Sample 4 A2+ (8/30 marks)	Sample 4 B1 (11/30 marks)	Sample 4 A2+ (10/30 marks)
Medium marks	Sample 5 B2 (22/30 marks)	Sample 5 B2 (20/30 marks)	Sample 5 B2 (20/30 marks)	Sample 5 B2 (19/30 marks)
Higher marks	Sample 6 B2+ (27/30 marks)	Sample 6 B2+ (29/30 marks)	Sample 6 B2+ (28/30 marks)	Sample 6 B2+ (30/30 marks)

Regarding the HL writing assessment, the IB shared with Ecctis three student samples of the Language B HL writing production 2021 examination in English, French, German, and Spanish.

As is evident from the table above, in each HL writing assessment of each language, Sample 4 aligned with A2+, B1 and B1+ levels, Sample 5 reflected elements of B2 level and Sample 6 targeted B2+ level. The only difference in the overall CEFR levels of the HL writing assessment across the languages was that Sample 4 in French and Spanish targeted only up to A2+ level whereas Sample 4 in German targeted only up to B1 level and Sample 4 in English targeted up to B1+ level. However, this also reflects the lower marks assigned to those samples.

Similar to the SL writing examinations, the question demand of the writing tasks was considered similar in all the HL writing assessments across all the languages reviewed, however, it was evident that different students demonstrated different levels of linguistic competences depending on the language they used in their writing samples, the extent to which they successfully conveyed the message they intended to, and the extent to which they addressed the purpose, audience, register, tone, and task conventions.

SL Speaking and interactive skills

Key Finding ix – Language B SL Speaking and interactive skills

From CEFR mapping of the Language B SL Internal Assessment (speaking and interactive skills) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2 in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1, B2+, and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Ecctis conducted a mark scheme analysis in which we mapped each level descriptor for each one of the SL speaking (internal assessment) assessment criteria against the relevant

CEFR levels. The table below presents the SL Language B speaking (internal assessment) assessment criteria and their band levels mapped against CEFR levels.

Table 123: Language B SL speaking (Internal Assessment) Assessment Criteria mapped against CEFR levels

SL Language B Speaking (Internal Assessment) Assessment Criteria	Marks associated with each band level	CEFR level
Criterion A: Language	0	N/A
	1-3	A1-A2
	4-6	B1-B1+
	7-9	B2
	10-12	B2+ - C1
Criterion B1: Message- Visual Stimulus	0	N/A
	1-2	A2-A2+
	3-4	B1-B1+
	5-6	B2
Criterion B2: Message- Conversation	0	N/A
	1-2	A1-A2
	3-4	A2+-B1
	5-6	B1+/B2
Criterion C: Interactive skills- Communication	0	N/A
	1-2	A1-A2
	3-4	A2+-B1
	5-6	B2

The Language B SL internal assessment (speaking) reviewed as part of the project is from the M21 examination for English, French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the M21 Language B SL internal assessment (speaking) examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency demonstrated by the written samples provided. The overall CEFR level of each student sample was determined following a review and CEFR analysis of the student samples, including a review of the language functions, grammatical structures, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and interactive skills used in the output texts produced by the students, and a review of how the student samples were marked by the teachers, in combination with information from the mark scheme analysis.

Table 124: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B SL internal assessment across all languages (M21 examination)

Student sample	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	French B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	German B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	Spanish B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)

Student sample	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	French B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	German B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	Spanish B SL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)
Lower marks	Sample 9 A2 (9/30 marks)	Sample 7 A2+ (9/30 marks)	Sample 7 A2 (9/30 marks)	Sample 7 A1 (10/30 marks)
Medium marks	Sample 7 B1+ (18/30 marks)	Sample 8 B1+ (20/30 marks)	Sample 8 B1 (19/30 marks)	Sample 8 B1 (19/30 marks)
Higher marks	Sample 8 B2 (29/30 marks)	Sample 9 B2+ (30/30 marks)	Sample 9 B2+/C1 (30/30 marks)	Sample 9 B2+ (29/30 marks)

In relation to the SL Language B internal assessment, the IB shared with Ecctis three student samples for each one of the SL internal assessments (speaking) of the 2021 examinations in English, French, German, and Spanish.

As it is evident from the table above, in each language there is one speaking and interactive skills student sample which demonstrated low linguistic competence and targeted A2, A2+ and sometimes even A1 level, one student sample which demonstrated medium linguistic competence and targeted B1 and B1+ levels, and one student sample which demonstrated high linguistic competence and targeted B2 and B2+, and sometimes C1 level such as in German B. The only difference in the overall CEFR levels of the SL internal assessment that the analysis found across the languages was that the sample with the lowest linguistic competence reviewed in English, French and German examinations reflected elements up to A2 and A2+ level, whereas the sample with the lowest linguistic competence reviewed in the Spanish examination targeted only up to A1 level.

HL Speaking and interactive skills

Key Finding x – Language B HL Speaking and interactive skills

From CEFR mapping of the Language B HL Internal Assessment (speaking and interactive skills) marking criteria – and detailed analysis of student samples – the paper was found to assess between CEFR levels A2 and B2 in all criteria. Some criteria also rewarded performance at A1, B2+, and C1 levels. These findings applied consistently to English, French, German, and Spanish.

Ecctis conducted a mark scheme analysis in which we mapped each level descriptor for each one of the HL speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) assessment criteria against the relevant CEFR levels. The table below presents the HL Language B speaking and interactive skills (internal assessment) assessment criteria and their band levels mapped against CEFR levels.

Table 125: Language B HL speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment) Assessment Criteria mapped against CEFR levels

HL Language B Speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment) Assessment Criteria	Marks associated with each band level	CEFR level
Criterion A: Language	0	N/A
	1-3	A2 - B1
	4-6	B1- B2
	7-9	B2 -C1
	10-12	C1
Criterion B1: Message- Literary Extract	0	N/A
	1-2	A2
	3-4	B1
	5-6	B2
Criterion B2: Message- Conversation	0	N/A
	1-2	A1-A2
	3-4	A2+-B1
	5-6	B1+/B2
Criterion C: Interactive skills- Communication	0	N/A
	1-2	A1-A2
	3-4	A2+-B1
	5-6	B2

The Language B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) assessment reviewed as part of the project is from the M21 examination for English, French, German, and Spanish B.

The table below presents the overall CEFR levels of the M21 Language B HL internal assessment (speaking and interactive skills) examinations for English, French, German, and Spanish. The CEFR levels in the table correspond to the overall level of proficiency demonstrated by the written samples provided. The overall CEFR level of each student sample was determined following a review and CEFR analysis of the student samples, including a review of the language functions, grammatical structures, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and interactive skills used in the output texts produced by the students, and a review of how the student samples were marked by the teachers, in combination with information from the mark scheme analysis.

Table 126: Overall CEFR levels of the Language B HL internal assessment across all languages (M21 examination)

Student sample	Overall CEFR Level			
	English B HL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	French B HL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	German B HL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)	Spanish B HL Internal Assessment M21 Examination (Speaking and Interactive Skills)
Lower marks	Sample 10 A2 (7/30 marks)	Sample 12 A2+ (10/30 marks)	Sample 10 A2+ (10/30 marks)	Sample 10 A1 (8/30 marks)
Medium marks	Sample 11 B1+ (20/30 marks)	Sample 10 B2 (19/30 marks)	Sample 11 B2 (22/30 marks)	Sample 11 B1 (19/30 marks)
Higher marks	Sample 12 B2+ (29/30 marks)	Sample 11 B2+ (29/30 marks)	Sample 12 B2+ (26/30 marks)	Sample 12 B2+ (30/30 marks)

In relation to the HL Language B internal assessment, the IB shared with Ecctis three student samples for each one of the HL internal assessments (speaking and interactive skills) of the 2021 examinations in English, French, German, and Spanish.

As evidenced in the table above, in each language there is one student sample which demonstrated low linguistic competence and targeted A2, A2+ and sometimes even A1 level, one student sample which demonstrated medium linguistic competence and targeted B1 and B1+ levels, and one student sample which demonstrated high linguistic competence and targeted B2 and B2+ level. The only difference in the overall CEFR levels of the HL internal assessment that the analysis found across the languages was that the sample with the lowest linguistic competence reviewed in the English, French and German examinations reflected elements up to A2 and A2+ level, whereas the sample with the lowest linguistic competence reviewed in the Spanish examination targeted only up to A1 level.

Grades

This section provides an overview of the grade boundaries of the Language B subjects in English, French, German, and Spanish by taking into consideration the weightings of each assessment and mapping them against the overall grades for each subject, together with the overall and average grade boundaries. This aims to summarise how each Language B assessment paper, in the four languages reviewed, and the grades available (1-7) compare to CEFR levels.

Language B HL Grades & CEFR Levels

Key Finding xi – Language B HL Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, Language B HL reports B2 proficiency at the grade threshold of 5. All four languages also report between A2+ and C1 levels.

Regarding Language B HL, in the completed CEFR benchmarking of the English, French, German, and Spanish B subjects to CEFR, Ecctis has found that at least B2-level CEFR language proficiency is reported by the threshold grade 5 and above in the HL Language B

subject in the N20 examinations across all languages. The figure below presents information regarding the grade boundaries and the comparability of the English, French, German, and Spanish B HL to the CEFR for both receptive and productive skills.

The analysis found that there is broad consistency on the CEFR levels but also the knowledge, subskills, and linguistic competences that were assessed in the HL Language B subjects across all the skills, with grade 5 being the threshold grade for the B2-level CEFR language proficiency in all the HL Language B subjects reviewed.

Figure 8: Overall comparability of the English, French, German, and Spanish B HL to the CEFR (N20 examination)

CEFR Level	English B HL (Receptive and Productive skills)	French B HL (Receptive and Productive skills)	German B HL (Receptive and Productive skills)	Spanish B HL (Receptive and Productive skills)
C2				
C1	7	7	7	7
B2+	6	6	6	6
B2	5	5	5	5
B1+	4	4	4	4
	3	3		3
B1	2	2	3	2
A2+			2	
A2	Not reported	Not reported	2	Not reported
A1				

As is evident from the table above, although the threshold grade for the B2-level CEFR language proficiency is grade 5 in all the HL Language B N20 examinations reviewed in this project, there are some differences across the languages in relation to the grades below grade 5 and the level of CEFR language proficiency that they reflect. Grade 3 and 4 in English, French, and Spanish B HL reflect B1+ level whereas grade 4 in German B HL reflects B1+ CEFR level and grade 3 reflects B1 CEFR level. Additionally, grade 2 in English, French, and Spanish B HL reflect A2+ and B1 CEFR levels, whereas grade 2 in German B HL reflects A2 and A2+ levels.

Key Finding xii – Language B SL Grades & CEFR Levels

In English, French, German, and Spanish, Language B SL reports different CEFR levels in relation to receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Taking this into account, and the evidence drawn from considering multiple assessment cycles, overall, all four languages report between A2 and B2+ levels. The B2 grade threshold for English, French, and Spanish is 6, while it is 7 for German.

In terms of SL, in the completed CEFR benchmarking of the English B subject to CEFR, Ecctis has found that at least B2-level CEFR language proficiency is reported by the threshold grade 6 in productive skills in the N20 examination. However, the analysis found that the SL English B subject does not reflect elements of B2 CEFR level in the receptive skills in the N20 examination. More specifically, English Language B SL grade 6 was found to be the B2 threshold for speaking and interactive skills, as well as writing, however, the receptive skills paper was found to report on proficiency up to CEFR-level B1+ only.

The analysis also found that grades 6 and 7 in SL English B N20 examination reflect B1+ CEFR level. In addition, Ecctis reviewed the English B SL N22 examination to identify if there are any differences in the grade boundaries and the CEFR levels that they reflect compared to the SL English B SL N20 examination. As outlined in the table below, Ecctis has found that at least B2-level CEFR language proficiency is reported by the threshold grades 5, 6, and 7 in the receptive skills of the SL English B N22 examinations and in grade 6 in the productive skills of the SL English B N22 examination. The figure below presents information regarding the grade boundaries and the comparability of the English B SL to the CEFR for both receptive and productive skills of the N20 and N22 examination.

Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12 present the findings from grade analysis and the comparability of the English, French, German, and Spanish B SL to CEFR levels for the N20 and N22 examinations for receptive and productive skills. The findings from both receptive and productive skills from these two years for each language subject reviewed in the project were considered and analysed together. Figure 13 presents the overall comparability findings of the English, French, German, and Spanish B SL subjects to CEFR levels.

Figure 9: Comparability of the English B SL to the CEFR (N20 and N22 examinations)

CEFR Level	English B SL (N20)		English B SL (N22)	
	Receptive skills	Productive skills	Receptive skills	Productive skills
C2				
C1		7		7
B2+				

CEFR Level	English B SL (N20)		English B SL (N22)	
B2		6	7	6
			6	
			5	
B1+	7	5	4	5
	6			
B1	5	4	3	4
	4			
	3			
A2+	2	2	2	2
A2				
A1	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported

In relation to French, German, and Spanish B SL, Ecctis has found that at least B2-level CEFR language proficiency is reported by the threshold grade 7 in the receptive skills and the threshold grade 6 in the productive skills in the N20 examinations. The figures below present information regarding the grade boundaries and the comparability of the French, German, and Spanish B SL to the CEFR for both receptive and productive skills of the N20 examinations.

Figure 10: Comparability of the French B SL to the CEFR (N20 examination)

CEFR Level	French B SL (N20)	
	Receptive skills	Productive skills
C2		
C1		7
B2+		
B2	7	6
B1+	6	5
	5	
B1	4	4
	3	3

CEFR Level	French B SL (N20)	
	Receptive skills	Productive skills
A2+	2	2
A2		
A1	Not reported	Not reported

Figure 11: Comparability of the German B SL to the CEFR (N20 examination)

CEFR Level	German B SL (N20)	
	Receptive skills	Productive Skills
C2		
C1		7
B2+	7	6
B2		
B1+	6	5
B1	5	4
	4	3
A2+	3	2
	2	
A2		
A1	Not reported	Not reported

Figure 12: Comparability of the Spanish B SL to the CEFR (N20 examination)

CEFR Level	Spanish B SL (N20)	
	Receptive skills	Productive skills
C2		
C1		7
B2+		

CEFR Level	Spanish B SL (N20)	
	Receptive skills	Productive skills
B2	7	6
B1+	6	5
	5	
B1	4	4
	3	3
A2+		2
	2	
A2		
A1	Not reported	Not reported

Overall, in Language B SL subjects, the B2 CEFR level was found to be reported at at least grade 7. In some Language B languages, including English, French, and Spanish, Ecctis also found grade 6 to report B2 level proficiency at SL. Although some variation between languages was found, at specific grades, in Language B, Ecctis found all Language B languages report a CEFR proficiency range between A2 and B2+ at SL.

The figure below presents information regarding the grade boundaries and the overall comparability of the English, French, German, and Spanish B SL to the CEFR for both receptive and productive skills of the N20 and N22 examinations.

Figure 13: Overall comparability of the English, French, German, and Spanish B SL to the CEFR

CEFR Level	English B SL (Receptive and Productive skills)	French B SL (Receptive and Productive skills)	German B SL (Receptive and Productive skills)	Spanish B SL (Receptive and Productive skills)
C2				
C1				
B2+	7	7	7	7
B2	6	6		6
			6	
B1+	5	5	5	5
			5	
B1	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3
A2+				
A2	2	2	2	2
A1	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported

As it is evident in the table above, in the Language B SL, the analysis found that there were some differences in the CEFR level that is reported at each IB grade, for some languages. Grade 2 in English and French B SL reflects A2 and A2+ levels whereas grade 2 in German and Spanish B SL reflects only A2 level. Additionally, grade 3 in English and French B SL reflects B1 level whereas in German and Spanish B SL reflects A2+ and B1 level. Across all languages, grade 4 in Language B SL reflects B1 level. Grade 5 in English, French, and Spanish B SL reflects B1+ level whereas in German B SL grades 5 and 6 reflect B1+ level. Grades 6 and 7 in English, French and Spanish B SL reflects B2 level, whereas grade 7 in German B SL reflects B2 level.

6.2.2 Consistency Across Assessment Years

Key Finding xiii – Language B Assessment Consistency (across years)

Language B SL assessments in receptive skills (paper 2) demonstrate tasks pitched at different levels between 2020 and 2022. The IB has indicated to Ecctis that the 2022 pattern is representative of how the assessment design will be continued in future.

Regarding SL, it is evident that there are differences in the CEFR levels and grade boundaries of the SL Language B subject between the N20 and the N22 examination across all languages reviewed as part of the project. This is because the assessment structure and design of the Language B subject were revised in 2021. As a result, the N22 examination was different in structure, design, and subskills assessed compared to the N20 papers. According to the findings of the CEFR analysis, the SL Language B assessments targeted different CEFR levels in 2022 compared to 2020.

As presented in an earlier section, in some specific language subjects, the SL Language B N20 examination reflected up to B1+ level in the receptive skills and B2 level in the productive skills, compared to the SL Language B N22 examination in which some SL Language B languages reflected the higher B2 level in both receptive and productive skills. However, the CEFR analysis found that the German B SL listening and reading comprehension and the French B SL listening comprehension N22 examinations only tested up to B1+ level.

6.2.3 Language B CEFR Activities, Strategies, and Competences

Key Finding xiv – Language B Skills Assessed

Language B assesses all four key language proficiency skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking). Furthermore, a wide range of activities, strategies, and competences described in the CEFR are actively assessed, including those related to production, reception, mediation, interaction, and others.

Analysis of the tasks, student samples, the IB assessment criteria and mark schemes involved evaluation against the CEFR scales and descriptors that were considered most appropriate for each task and skill. This process revealed certain scales (representing different language proficiency activities, strategies, and competences) to be particularly strongly embedded within IB assessment tasks.

To conduct the review and comparative analysis of the listening tasks of IB DP Language B examination to CEFR, Ecctis found that the most relevant CEFR strategy was Identifying cues and inferring, the more relevant CEFR activities were Overall oral comprehension, Understanding conversation between other people, Understanding as a member of a live audience, Understanding announcements and instructions, Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings, and the most relevant CEFR competences were Grammatical accuracy and Vocabulary range.

To conduct the review and comparative analysis of the reading tasks of the IB DP Language B examination to CEFR, Ecctis found that the most relevant CEFR strategy was Identifying cues and inferring, the most relevant CEFR activities were Overall reading comprehension, Reading instructions, Reading for information and argument, Reading for orientation, and the most relevant CEFR competences were Grammatical accuracy and Vocabulary control.

In relation to speaking and interactive skills, the analysis of the student samples as well as the mark scheme analysis indicated that the student samples often had relevance to being mapped against the CEFR activities of Conversation, Overall oral interaction, Understanding an interlocutor, Overall oral production, and Sustained monologue: describing experience, and the CEFR competences of General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control, Orthographic control, Phonological control, Fluency, Building on pluricultural repertoire and Thematic development.

Finally, the analysis of the student samples as well as the mark scheme analysis indicated that the writing student samples often had relevance to being mapped against the CEFR activities of Overall written production, Reports and essays, Overall written interaction, and Correspondence as well as the CEFR competences of General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control, Orthographic control, Thematic development, Coherence and cohesion and Propositional precision.

The table below presents the most common CEFR reception, production, and interaction communicative language activities and strategies as well as CEFR communicative language competences that were identified during the review and comparative analysis of the Language B assessment tasks and specifications to the CEFR. From the table below it is evident that across the four languages reviewed as part of the project, the Language B subject assesses a wide range of CEFR reception, production, and interaction communicative language activities and strategies as well as a variety of CEFR communicative language competences.

Table 127: CEFR strategies, activities, and competences found during the comparative analysis of Language B skills to CEFR

Language B Skill Area	Most Relevant CEFR Strategies	Most Relevant CEFR Activities	Most Relevant CEFR Competences
Writing (Paper 1)	N/A	Overall written production Reports and Essays Overall written interaction Correspondence	General linguistic range Vocabulary range Grammatical accuracy Vocabulary control Orthographic control Thematic development Coherence and cohesion Propositional precision
Reading (Paper 2)	Identifying cues and inferring	Overall reading comprehension	Grammatical accuracy Vocabulary range

Language B Skill Area	Most Relevant CEFR Strategies	Most Relevant CEFR Activities	Most Relevant CEFR Competences
		Reading for information and argument Reading for orientation Reading instructions	
Listening (Paper 2)	Identifying cues and inferring	Overall oral comprehension Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings Understanding as a member of a live audience Understanding announcements and instructions Understanding conversation between other people	Grammatical accuracy Vocabulary range Sociolinguistic appropriateness
Speaking and interactive skills (Internal assessment)	N/A	Mediating a text Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature) Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature) Conversation Overall oral interaction Understanding an interlocutor Overall oral production Sustained monologue: describing experience	General linguistic range Vocabulary range Grammatical accuracy Vocabulary control Orthographic control Phonological control Overall phonological control Thematic development Fluency Building on pluricultural repertoire

6.3 Consistency across languages

Key Finding xv – Consistency Across Languages

The degree of consistency found between the four languages considered by Ecctis (English, French, German, and Spanish) varied between Language A and Language B. The Language A courses had uniform top-level findings for all four languages, as the key CEFR-proficiency components are driven by the common marking criteria. Language B showed some small, but also some more significant, differences between languages. Particularly at SL, Language B demonstrated variability with the level of proficiency tested across receptive skills.

Ecctis analysed the specifications and assessment papers for English, French, German, and Spanish across Language B and Language A: language and literature and Language A:

literature. By looking across the findings of these languages it is possible to provide indicative guidance on whether other languages would be likely to follow predictable patterns in their interaction with CEFR benchmarking, or if the nature of their interaction would be unpredictable due to the variations noted among the four languages analysed here.

Regarding Language A, the analysis of English, French, German, and Spanish here indicates that other languages will be likely to produce the same pattern of top-level findings. For example, no reason was found by Ecctis why the comparative analysis between IB grades and CEFR levels varied between English, French, German, and Spanish – therefore, it is likely that other languages which follow the same specification design and assessment guidance would also experience the same results.

Regarding Language B HL, the interaction between grades and CEFR levels was fairly uniform across the four languages analysed here. There was some variation found in the low-to-middle grades, but the key grade threshold to report B2 level of language proficiency was stable between languages. At HL, this is an indication that other languages would be likely to interact with CEFR benchmarking in the same way. However, the presence of some variation does mean that this cannot be guaranteed as a universal finding for all Language B languages at HL.

For Language B SL, there was more variation noted between languages, particularly in relation to receptive skills and the B2 grade threshold. More specifically, the B2 CEFR level was found to be reported at least grade 7 in SL. In some Language B languages, including English, French, and Spanish, Ecctis also found grade 6 to report B2 level proficiency at SL. Although some variation between languages was found, at specific grades, in Language B, Ecctis found all Language B languages report a CEFR proficiency range between A2 and B2+ at SL.

6.4 Higher Education Readiness

Key Finding xvi – Higher Education Readiness

Many components of language proficiency described in the CEFR are linked to Higher Education readiness, particularly at B2 level. Ecctis' detailed analysis of the Language A: language and literature, Language A: literature and Language B assessments found that the majority of the activities, strategies, and competences linked to HE readiness are notably present in the assessments of these subjects. However, there are also some areas where the IB assessments do not overlap with these particular aspects of the CEFR.

The CEFR is used as a reference tool for Higher Education admission and entrance requirements across Europe and beyond. In cases where university admission and entrance examinations are connected to the CEFR, the most common threshold and benchmark level of language proficiency that students need to demonstrate when entering Higher Education is B2.

Several research studies in the field of language teaching, learning, and assessment in Higher Education have shown that the higher test scores that students demonstrate in university language entrance examinations, the better students described that they manage universities studies and succeed in university (Carlsen, 2018; Harrington and Roche, 2014; Lee and Greene, 2015). More specifically, studies have indicated that there are several skills that students need to have prior to entering university in order to be able to progress and succeed in their academic studies, including listening to presentations and lectures, reading curriculum literature and material as well as academic papers, speaking in class or with fellow students, discussing and exchanging information with other students and university professors, as well as writing academic essays, assignments and exams (Carlsen, 2018).

In terms of productive skills, several studies have found that students face more challenges in writing compared to speaking, as, in high stakes Higher Education assessments, students are often required to engage in academic writing by writing academic essays and assignments (Carlsen, 2018).

Regarding receptive skills, evidence from the academic literature indicates that students find listening to academic lectures and presentations more difficult than reading academic papers. It is common that students are required to listen to academic lectures regularly, follow the lines of argument, follow the pace, and understand the accent, pronunciation and intonation of the professors and lecturers (Carlsen, 2018; Fox, 2004).

When reading academic papers, students can read at their own pace but also use translation devices to help them understand the meaning of different words. In particular, students usually face challenges in listening to and understanding spoken words in clusters and sentences, understanding abbreviations, idiomatic expressions, understanding of the use of formal and technical language that they might have never heard before, following the speed of delivery in the language of communication, understanding prosodic features, and also understanding the other speaker and being able to interact and maintain a flow and level of interaction with the other speaker (Iskandar et al, 2021).

There are several CEFR communicative language activities, strategies and competences across the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking and interactive skills which are particularly suitable in addressing students' Higher Education readiness. In relation to writing, research suggests the suitable CEFR scales for writing skills in Higher Education reflect both the structural elements of linguistic proficiency (including the ability to demonstrate the necessary knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and syntax), but also that student's ability to develop a theme, analyse, synthesize and evaluate information and provide evidence and justifications to support their argument (McNamara et al, 2018). The CEFR scales suitable to address writing skills in Higher Education include Overall written production, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control, Vocabulary range, Coherence and cohesion, Reports and essays, Thematic development, Propositional precision, Orthographic control, and Processing text (McNamara et al, 2018).

Regarding speaking and interactive skills, research suggests that there are a number of CEFR activities, strategies, and competences related to oral production and interaction as well as phonology and fluency that students need to demonstrate when entering Higher

Education. The CEFR scales suitable to address students' speaking and interactive skills include Overall oral production, Sustained monologue: giving information, Sustained monologue: describing experience, Sustained monologue: Putting a case, Phonological control, Fluency, General linguistic range, Grammatical accuracy, Overall oral interaction, Thematic development, Sociolinguistic appropriateness and Coherence and cohesion (Bakar, 2020; Glover, 2011; Hulstijn et al, 2012).

In terms of receptive skills, students entering undergraduate courses in university need to demonstrate their ability to listen and understand academic lectures and presentations, understand the content and topic discussed and being able to read academic papers, handbooks, understand their content and topic, and be able to understand the main arguments made in a both conversations and lectures as well as texts, academic papers, and journals (Iskandar et al, 2021). As a result, the review of the academic literature in the field found that there are several CEFR scales for both productive and receptive skills which are suitable to assess students' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in relation to their Higher Education readiness.

Ecctis reviewed the CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences that are suitable for Higher Education readiness and mapped them against the ones identified as most relevant during the review and comparative analysis of IB DP Language A and B to CEFR. The table below presents the different CEFR activities, strategies, and competences represented by the literature as being particularly suitable for Higher Education readiness and whether they are reflected as notable and significant to the assessments of Language A and B subjects.

Table 128: CEFR activities, strategies, and competences linked to Higher Education readiness and their significance in IB DP Language A and B assessments

Skill	CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences linked to Higher Education readiness	Language B	Language A
Reading	Overall reading comprehension	✓	✓
	Reading for information and argument	✓	✓
	Reading for orientation	✓	✓
	Reading instructions	✓	
	Identifying cues and inferring	✓	✓
	General linguistic range	✓	✓
	Vocabulary control	✓	✓
	Vocabulary range	✓	✓
	Vocabulary control	✓	✓
Listening	Grammatical accuracy	✓	✓
	Overall oral comprehension	✓	
	Understanding conversation between other people	✓	
	Understanding as a member of a live audience	✓	
	Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings	✓	
	Identifying cues and inferring	✓	✓
	Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings etc.)		
Understanding announcements and instructions	✓		

Skill	CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences linked to Higher Education readiness	Language B	Language A
Writing	Overall written production	✓	✓
	Grammatical accuracy	✓	✓
	Vocabulary control	✓	✓
	Vocabulary range	✓	✓
	Coherence and cohesion	✓	✓
	Reports and essays	✓	✓
	Processing text in writing		✓
	Propositional precision	✓	✓
	Thematic development	✓	✓
	Orthographic control	✓	✓
	Explaining data in writing		
Speaking	Overall oral production	✓	✓
	Sustained monologue: Giving information	✓	✓
	Sustained monologue: Describing experience	✓	✓
	Sustained monologue: Putting a case		✓
	Phonological control	✓	✓
	Fluency	✓	✓
	General linguistic range	✓	✓
	Grammatical accuracy	✓	✓
	Overall oral interaction	✓	
	Propositional precision	✓	✓
	Thematic development	✓	✓
	Coherence and cohesion	✓	✓
	Sociolinguistic appropriateness	✓	✓
	Explaining data in speech or sign		
	Processing text in speech or sign		✓
	Mediating a text: expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)	✓	✓
	Mediating a text: analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)	✓	✓

As evidenced in the table above, the majority of the CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences linked to preparedness for Higher Education are reflected notably in the assessment of Language A and B subjects. However, there are several CEFR activities, strategies, and competences that are not reflected (or at least not to a noteworthy extent) in the Language A and B subject assessments.

The blue highlighted cells in the table above demonstrate the strategies, activities, and competences that are linked to Higher Education preparedness but were not found by Ecctis to be notable features of Language A and Language B assessment.

In relation to Language B, these are scattered lightly across the range of identified scales. The recommendations (below) contain further information on how these gaps could be addressed if this is identified as desirable for the IB. For Language A, some gaps are also scattered across the range but there is a particular gap in relation to listening-related scales, as Language A does not have a dedicated listening component. Again, more information is provided in the recommendation section (below).

7. Recommendations

This section provides an overview of the recommendations of the study in relation to Language A and Language B subjects in the languages of English, French, German, and Spanish. Whenever scope for potential improvement was found, this section provides recommendations associated with specific findings mentioned in earlier sections.

7.1 Recommendations for Language A

7.1.1 Marking Criteria

Recommendation i – Language A Marking Criteria

Ecctis has provided suggestions on how adaptations to the Language A marking criteria may enable closer correlation with how language proficiency is described in the CEFR, if this is a desired outcome for the IB.

When analysing the marking criteria across the assessment components of the Language A subjects, it was apparent that aligning any marking bands below CEFR level B1 was a challenge. A significant reason for this is that the lowest bands of each criterion are often phrased negatively rather than positively.

For example, a mark of 1/5 on Criterion A: Understanding and Interpretation on the Guided Textual Analysis paper for Language A: language and literature has the following descriptor 'The response demonstrates little understanding of the literal meaning of the text. References to the text are infrequent or are rarely appropriate.' This does not describe what a student has been able to achieve, but rather what they have been *unable* to achieve. As a competency-based framework, the CEFR is framed around 'can-do' statements, even in the lowest descriptors (for the most part). For instance, even the A1 descriptor of the Overall reading comprehension scale is framed around what someone *can* do: 'Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items'.

As a result, there is a mismatch between the positive wording of the CEFR descriptors and the negative wording of the IB criterion descriptors that makes comparisons at the lower end nearly impossible. If the IB would desire to expand the range of CEFR levels reported by these marking criteria (particularly at the lower end such as A1, A2, and A2+), it would be worth exploring if more detail in the criterion descriptors would enable positive framing to accompany the negative. For example, it may be possible to expand the 1/5 Criterion A descriptor above, as follows: 'The response demonstrates little understanding of the literal meaning of the text. References to the text are infrequent or are rarely appropriate. Some coherent statements about the text are produced, which indicate a basic (though incomplete) understanding of the most basic, literal components.' In this way, some of the student's proficiency is rewardable, even if that tallies with relatively low levels in relation to the target task.

This point is not completely separable from a consideration of the nature of the input texts as well, because if the input text is pitched at B1 or above for any understanding of gist, no marking criteria (no matter how positively framed) will be able to make the task function for an A2 student. The nature of the input texts is discussed further in the subsection below.

Another finding made by Ecctis while referencing the Language A marking criteria to the CEFR is that, on many assessment components, Criterion A and Criterion B do not necessarily provide scope to assess different competences, activities, and strategies from a CEFR and language proficiency perspective.

Put simply, Criterion A often focuses on understanding and knowledge and/or interpretation, whereas Criterion B often focuses on analysis and evaluation. From a skills taxonomy perspective, there is clear evolution here from Criterion A's focus on the low-to-middle level Bloom's skills to Criterion B's focus on the middle-to-high level Bloom's skills. However, from a language proficiency perspective, both often (in practice) assess a similar range of both receptive and productive skills and subskills. This is an understandable feature of the fact that the Language A subjects are not primarily language proficiency qualifications as they aim to also develop and assess high order critical skills in the broad areas of language and literature. However, if it would be desirable for these marking criteria to link to language proficiency more neatly, then it may be possible to revisit the distinction between Criterion A and Criterion B. As with the recommendation above, more detail within the criteria descriptors may enable them to be made slightly more specific with regard to the proficiency-relevant skills being assessed by each.

Lastly, with respect to the marking criteria, it was noted in the key findings that both Language A subjects do not fully assess the full range of speaking skills. Spoken production is fairly and comprehensively assessed through the Internal Assessment (Oral) component, however, spoken interaction, is not specifically rewarded by the marking criteria. Some spoken interaction does take place in this assessment component, as there is an interactive question-and-answer section that follows the student's presentation. However, the marking criteria do not explicitly target marking of the interactive or conversational component of this exchange. If the IB would wish to fully assess the range of skills related to speaking proficiency, it might be possible to adapt the existing marking criteria to explicitly link some marks to interactional component. Slightly lengthening the interactive component, from the current five minutes to perhaps 10, would also address the current imbalance in the oral between the productive presentation and the interactive questions.

7.1.2 Input Texts

Recommendation ii – Language A Input Texts

Ecctis found that generally one of the two input texts in Language A: Language and Literature Paper 1 (Guided Textual Analysis) does not require a high level of reading comprehension compared to the other. Ecctis has suggested a possible change here, as there is a knock-on impact on the CEFR level reported by the SL paper. However, this would need to be considered against the wider aims of the subject and the paper.

From the analysis of input texts in the Language A subjects, these were broadly found to enable assessment of the targeted skills and provide interesting prompts for students to engage with. In Language A: language and literature, Ecctis found that Text 1 and Text 2 in Paper 1 (the Guided Textual Analysis) were often pitched at quite different levels in terms of the reading proficiency required to meaningfully understand the input. The typical difference was that one text would be a short article or extract from a magazine (or similar), whereas the other text would be a comic extract or advertising poster (or similar). The latter examples would not require substantial reading proficiency in order to be understood and this resulted in the SL exam (where just one input text is selected) not being able to reliably report C2 proficiency overall.

If the IB would choose to address this, the most notable way of doing so would be to ensure that both texts include a substantial textual component that elicits reading comprehension skills. However, the reason for including image-based sources is also important to maintain (as image and format analysis is an important component of understanding non-literary texts of diverse types). It might therefore be possible to maintain the visual component of one text in each examination, but to place alongside it a short, written interpretation from a third party or some other form of commentary. Incorporating these as part of the wider text-in-context could ensure that all SL students – even if selecting a more visual input text to analyse – would still engage their reading comprehension skills to develop their answer.

7.1.3 General cross-language recommendations for Language A

CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences for Higher Education readiness

Recommendation iii – Language A and Higher Education Readiness

Though the Language A assessment was found to assess the majority of CEFR activities, strategies, and competences specifically linked to HE readiness, Ecctis has provided some examples where further embedding of such areas of language proficiency may be possible.

The analysis found that there are several CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences linked to Higher Education readiness which are reflected and assessed in both the receptive and productive skills of the Language B subject across all languages reviewed in this project. However, the analysis also found that there are some CEFR activities, strategies, and competences which are linked to Higher Education readiness but are not reflected in the assessment of the Language B subject as discussed in [section 6.4](#) above.

The most significant skill area linked to Higher Education readiness for language proficiency that was not evidenced in the assessment of Language A was listening comprehension and the various strategies, activities, and competences linked to that. Short of adding a new listening component to the assessment scheme, it is unlikely that these sub-skills will be tested in full by these subjects. If the recommendation about developing the interactive

component of the Internal Assessment, and modifying the marking criteria, were taken on board, there is the possibility that more listening skills would be implicitly required. It could also be possible to include, within the existing assessment component, a requirement that an audio-text such as an audio-book, podcast, or radio show be included. However, this would require substantial changes to the format of assessment and would need to be considered in relation to the priorities of these subjects (both in terms of language proficiency and other skills).

The other components of language proficiency linked to Higher Education readiness and not currently evidenced by the Language A assessment were Reading instructions, Explaining data in writing, Overall oral interaction, and Explaining data in speech or sign. Overall oral interaction has been linked to recommendations above, concerning the Internal Assessment. The other components may be difficult to include to a substantial degree within the current assessment scheme and within the context of the wider aims of the subjects.

7.2 Recommendations for Language B

This section presents the recommendations for the Language B subject, only in cases where scope for potential improvement was found. This section includes the overall recommendations for reading and listening comprehension (Paper 2), writing (Paper 1) and speaking and interactive skills (Internal Assessment) for each one of the Language B assessment papers reviewed as part of this project, as well as general recommendations around the Language B assessment papers, tasks, and mark schemes which were found to be common across the different language subjects reviewed in the project. Where specific recommendations are made against specific texts or specific questions, it is understood by Ecctis that these are past papers and do not need to be 'corrected' as such. However, it is hoped that these examples may provide useful guidance on issues that can emerge in assessment task design and therefore support IB teams to avoid them (where judged appropriate) in future assessment design rounds.

Recommendation iv – Language B Reading

Ecctis' analysis discovered some instances where further checking and/or testing of reading comprehension assessment items could have uncovered issues with instructions, question construct, mark schemes, or the interaction between input text and question formulation. Ecctis has described some notable examples below which could have unintentionally increased or decreased the demand of certain assessment items.

7.2.1 Overall recommendations for Language B Reading Comprehension (Paper 2)

Analysis of the input texts in the **English** examinations revealed a few instances of grammatical errors and terminological ambiguity. For instance, Text A in examination Paper

2 (SL) contains a grammatical error relating to the use of countable / uncountable nouns ('the five or less [*sic*] options').¹¹⁰² The term 'colleges' is used in Text B in examination Paper 2 (HL) which may refer to different stages or institutions of the education system, depending on whether the word is used in the context of the UK or the USA.¹¹⁰³ Ensuring that there are quality standards processes to proof adapted texts and consider terminology in relation to student demographics may help reduce such occurrences.

A small number of assessment items in the English SL and HL examination papers contained imprecise wording. For example, question 26 in examination Paper 2 (SL) ('Which phrase in lines 2–7 means 'at the same time?') refers to a phrase in Text C; where the target response is an individual term ('simultaneously'), the wording of the question suggests that a multiple-word answer is required.

The wording of questions 26-28 in examination Paper 2 (HL) ('To whom or to what do the underlined words refer?') uses person ('whom') and object ('what') specific interrogative pronouns. As the target response to each of the questions is an object (for example, 'the world' and 'the sun'), the wording implies that the answer could be a person and cause confusion. Clarity of task instructions and construct could be trialled during the pretesting (or similar) phases of examination paper development.

In English examination Paper 2 (HL), a recommendation should be made against Text B, in particular question 10. This question is a sentence completion task, whereby students are instructed to lift material from the original text, in order to complete the sentence starters provided. However, this particular sentence starter ('The writer began to reflect on this topic after he was asked a question') can function as a complete phrase, making it challenging for the student to anticipate the appropriate material needed for completion.¹¹⁰⁴ There should be a greater link suggested between the sentence starter and the material to be sought; the addition of a phrase such as *in* or *during* would demonstrate to students that the information required concerns the circumstances of the question asked to the writer. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow these instructional issues to be recognised and questions reworded.

Analysis of the input text and questions in the **French** examinations, revealed some ambiguity in the vocabulary terms selected. For example, question 26 in examination Paper 2 (SL) requires students to determine whether a statement is true or false ('*La société qui a fabriqué Zora est japonaise*'), before providing verbatim evidence from the text.¹¹⁰⁵ In this instance, the answer indicated on the mark scheme is 'false' and the evidence required from the text is as follows: '*(a été conçue par Aldebaran,) une société française (achetée en 2015 par un groupe japonais)*'.¹¹⁰⁶ However, the terms used in the text and the question do not completely align; '*fabriquer*' most commonly refers to making, producing, and manufacturing, whereas '*conçu*' means designed, devised, and conceived. This example could easily be interpreted as a French company designing a product before a Japanese company

¹¹⁰² International Baccalaureate (2020) *English B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.2.

¹¹⁰³ International Baccalaureate (2020) *English B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.3.

¹¹⁰⁴ International Baccalaureate (2020) *English B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.4.

¹¹⁰⁵ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.6.

¹¹⁰⁶ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Mark scheme*. p.8.

manufactures the item, following the purchase of the company. A student could thus quite easily select the wrong answer. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow such examples of ambiguous language or question construct to be highlighted and amended to feature more closely aligned synonyms.

Similarly, questions 27 and 28 in French examination Paper 2 (HL) contain language options which may cause some confusion to students. The student is asked to identify suitable synonyms for specific terms in the text, from a list of adjectives. Whereas, in French examination Paper 2 (SL) (questions 13 – 16) all terms from the list of synonyms are nouns in the singular form, some of the adjectives in this HL paper are ambiguous in number; there is the possibility of these terms describing both masculine singular or masculine plural nouns. In particular, in question 27, one of these adjectives (*'orgueilleux'*) matches with a masculine singular adjective (*'arrogant'*), whereas in question 28, another of these adjectives (*'désireux'*) is used to match with a plural adjective (*'avidés'*); it should be recognised that this may cause confusion to students, particularly those relying on grammatical knowledge to identify synonyms.¹¹⁰⁷ Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow for these instances to be recognised and amended to include a more consistent selection of language items, specifically those that are less ambiguous.

In French examination Paper 2 (HL), there is evidence of misalignment between question construct and the requirements of the mark scheme, which may disadvantage students. For instance, in Text A question 2 the student is required to note *'les similarités'* between the robot and human beings, implying the use of multiple items.¹¹⁰⁸ However, the mark scheme states that students are permitted to provide a phrase including a singular noun as an acceptable answer (*'il a la taille d'un petit enfant'*), which is misleading.¹¹⁰⁹ There is an additional acceptable answer (*'ses bras/ ses jambes/ ses doigts'*), yet it is not clearly stipulated on the mark scheme whether the student needs one or all three terms in order to gain the mark.¹¹¹⁰ Clarity of task instructions and construct could be trialled during the pretesting (or similar) phases of examination paper development, and additional notes added to the mark scheme to ensure consistency.

In French examination Paper 2 (HL), Text A includes arbitrary numbering of paragraphs, as said markers are not alluded to in the questions or used to guide students to locate answers. As the paragraph numbers correspond to question numbers used in certain parts of the task (questions 1-5), this could add a complication for students who assume that the paragraph numbers are required to answer corresponding questions. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow this issue to be highlighted and for the examination paper layout to be reconsidered, with unnecessary information removed.

Upon analysis of the **Spanish** examination Paper 2 (SL), reading Text A was found to present a number of task changes uncharacteristic of the first text in an SL paper. The questions assigned to Text A in this Spanish examination paper include five discernible

¹¹⁰⁷ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.6.

¹¹⁰⁸ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.2.

¹¹⁰⁹ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Mark scheme*. p.6.

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid.

sections where the question type changes; true/false, short answer to closed question, multiple choice, short answer to closed question, and multiple choice again. In the French B and English B SL papers, there are only three and four different question styles respectively. This level of task variance may present complexity and challenge to SL students, especially as the first task in an examination; adapting to this frequency of changing question demands may delay question completion. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow these difficulties to be recognised and the paper simplified.

A lack of precision can be found in the instructions of Spanish examination Paper 2 (SL). In particular, Text A question 2 lacks specificity in question demand by neglecting to indicate that three adjectives are required to gain the mark. Furthermore, this more detailed level of instruction has been provided elsewhere in the examination, including question 8, where it is specified that two answers are required (*¿Qué dos grupos necesitan informarse sobre la seguridad en Internet?*).¹¹¹¹ Therefore, without this distinction, students may only record the first adjective and be penalised. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow these instructional issues to be recognised and reworded.

In Spanish examination Paper 2 (HL), there are recommendations to be made against Text B, particularly questions 13 and 14. The aforementioned questions are sentence completion tasks, whereby students are instructed to lift material from the original text, in order to complete the sentence starters provided. However, both sentence starters in questions 13 and 14 can function as complete phrases, making it challenging for the student to anticipate the appropriate material needed for completion. For example, in question 13, students are provided with the phrase *‘con las redes sociales ya no es necesaria la tarea del revelado de imágenes’*.¹¹¹² There should be a greater link suggested between the sentence starter and the material to be sought; the addition of a phrase such as *porque* or *dado que* would demonstrate to students that a reason for, or elaboration of, the initial idea is required. The same can be said for question 14, where students are presented with the following phrase: *‘existen compañías que continúan la tradición de revelar las fotos’*.¹¹¹³ Similarly, the addition of a phrase resembling *excepto* or *sino* may help to suggest that an opposing idea or difference is to be searched for. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow these instructional issues to be recognised and questions reworded.

In **German** examination Paper 2 (HL) certain questions contain language options which may cause some confusion to students. For example, in question 1 both option C (*‘Tagebuch’*) and option D (*‘Zeitschrift’*) can be translated as ‘journal’ in English.¹¹¹⁴ Students must therefore be aware that both of these vocabulary items carry additional meanings; *‘Tagebuch’* can also signify ‘diary’, while *‘Zeitschrift’* can be used for a ‘magazine’. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow the issues of vocabulary similarity to be recognised and terms replaced.

¹¹¹¹ International Baccalaureate (2020) *Spanish B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.3.

¹¹¹² International Baccalaureate (2020) *Spanish B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.4.

¹¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹¹⁴ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Specimen*. p.2.

Upon analysis of the mark schemes at both SL and HL, it is suggested that the question construct more accurately reflect the specific requirements of the mark scheme. For instance, the accepted answer to question 23 in the SL examination is the complete phrase '*Die Firmen in der Nähe*'; only stating '*Die Firmen*' is not enough to gain the mark.¹¹¹⁵ It would be helpful to students if the question instructions explicitly stated that they should be as specific as possible in their answers. Similarly, in HL examination Paper 2, the accepted answer to question 14 is a full sentence. Students must state '*schöne Radwege hängen aneinander*' in order to obtain the mark; writing '*Radwege*' alone is not accepted.¹¹¹⁶ A phrase such as 'answer in full sentences' would be a valuable instructional addition, so as to avoid students being penalised for showing understanding but a lack of detail. Pretesting and feedback (or similar) phases of examination paper development, may allow these instructional issues to be recognised and questions made more specific.

Although the **general** Language B syllabus states that literary criticism is not within the remit of assessment, there is potential to target additional CEFR scales relating to creative texts without necessarily engaging in critique.¹¹¹⁷ For example, assessment items requiring the description of a character's personality traits and emotional state could be aligned with CEFR B1 Mediation descriptors that refer to abilities such as 'can describe the personality of a character' and 'can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them'.¹¹¹⁸

It is also worth noting the impact of signposting the location of answers in a text, upon general complexity levels and certain CEFR levels. For example, by guiding students to search for relevant information in a specific paragraph, the CEFR level awarded to that portion of the task may be restricted. The CEFR scale of Reading for orientation at B1+ describes scanning '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', whereas at B2 it requires students to 'scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details'; when a student is directed to only one paragraph, the task does not require the B2 skill level.¹¹¹⁹ This is of particular concern at HL, where students are aiming to reach higher levels of CEFR achievement.

¹¹¹⁵ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Standard Level Paper 2 Reading Mark scheme*. p.7.

¹¹¹⁶ International Baccalaureate (2020) *German B: Higher Level Paper 2 Reading Mark scheme*. p.7.

¹¹¹⁷ International Baccalaureate (2021) *Language B Guide*. p.22.

¹¹¹⁸ Expressing a Personal Response to Creative Texts (Including Literature) [Council of Europe (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. [pdf]. p.107].

¹¹¹⁹ Reading comprehension [Council of Europe (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. [pdf]. p.55].

7.2.2 Overall recommendations on Language B Listening (Paper 2)

Recommendation v – Language B Listening

Ecctis' analysis discovered some instances where further checking and/or testing of listening comprehension assessment items could have uncovered issues with instructions, question construct, mark schemes, or the interaction between input audio and question formulation. These were generally few in number. However, there was one particular example from a French paper where the demand seemed to be unintentionally low and impacted the overall progression of demand within the paper.

In **French** examination Paper 2, there are instances where the mark scheme could be adapted to include alternative answers and increase the flexibility of what is deemed an acceptable response. For instance, question 12 at SL requires the student to record the date of a birthday. The question instructions do not state that the answer must be written in words, yet the mark scheme appears to only allow 'août', whilst the digits '13' and '1995' are permitted; for consistency, the mark scheme should be adapted to allow the month of August to be written in digits.¹¹²⁰

In the same examination paper, question 16 requires students to deduce whether a customer in a travel agency wants to go to the town ('ville') or countryside ('campagne'). The response to this question in the transcript mentions 'grands espaces sauvages', thus the mark scheme accepts this as an answer, as well as 'destination francophone'.¹¹²¹ For this reason, it should also be considered that the mark scheme be adapted to allow 'la campagne' as an additional accepted response. As the travel agent offers two options 'ville' or 'campagne', the student could easily deduce that one of these two options is the answer yet will be penalised for making this assumption.

When analysing the French examination Paper 2 (HL), it was found that Text B appears to lack an appropriate level of challenge. There are certain questions in this examination which appear too simplistic for an HL paper. For example, question 6 presents a gap-fill activity where the sentence used in the gap-fill text is almost exactly the same as that used in the transcript; students merely have to listen, word match, and record the word 'bouteille' to obtain the mark.¹¹²²

Another example is question 8, where although the phrasing is slightly different in the gap-fill text and in the transcript, the word used to fill the gap ('un kilo') is very simple and can be directly lifted from the transcript.¹¹²³ Finally, in question 10, the phrasing of the gap-fill text again follows the structure used in the transcript; this means that students would not necessarily need to recognise 'j'ai créé un blog où j'ai commencé à écrire', but could easily

¹¹²⁰ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Standard Level Paper 2 Listening Mark scheme*. p.8.

¹¹²¹ Ibid.

¹¹²² International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Listening Mark scheme*. p.7.

¹¹²³ Ibid.

follow *'que recycler, c'est bien, mais que réutiliser, c'est mieux'*, and record the missing word with no adaptations needed.¹¹²⁴

This lack of challenge is further highlighted when the French examination is compared to similar tasks in the English B 2020 examination Paper 2. For example, Text A in the English examination also features a gap-fill summary task, but where sentence structures in the gap-fill text are not replicated in the transcript, or are even reversed, and where anaphoric references make finding the correct answers more complex.

In the French examination Paper 2 (HL), there is also problematic variance of task challenge in the questions addressing Text B. In particular, the CEFR descriptors aligned with the individual questions in this section vary quite substantially from B1 to C1 level. Although these CEFR levels predominantly feature in an ascending order, this makes it slightly more complex to estimate an overall CEFR grade for the task. It would be recommended to have a smaller range of CEFR levels applicable to each text, to allow for more stable and gradual progression of difficulty throughout the paper.

Recommendation vi – Language B Writing

Ecctis' analysis discovered some areas where further information or detail within the writing marking criteria might enable a closer correlation with how the CEFR articulates language proficiency, if this is desired by the IB. It may also be possible to refine the instructions given to students in the writing paper, to support them to navigate through the idea of selecting a 'format' for their response.

7.2.3 Overall recommendations on Language B Writing (Paper 1)

There are several recommendations to be made against the SL and HL **mark schemes** used for examination Paper 1, in all languages.

Firstly, the mark scheme analysis found the IB level descriptors within Criteria A, B, and C to have the potential to contain more specific detail to support marking the student samples decisively and accurately; this applies to both SL and HL.

Moreover, if it would be desirable to have a more straightforward relationship between IB criteria and CEFR levels, the inclusion of command words which specifically reflect terminology used in CEFR descriptors is required; this addition would also facilitate easier alignment between student examinations and CEFR levels. If this is something the IB wishes to pursue, it is recommended to consult the Council of Europe documentation which features key CEFR scales required for language production.

In addition, the mark scheme analysis found that the terminology used in the mark schemes limits the maximum level of achievement possible for students. For example, the descriptors used in Criterion A of the SL mark scheme, align with CEFR C1 expectations, whereas those

¹¹²⁴ International Baccalaureate (2020) *French B: Higher Level Paper 2 Listening Text B Audio Script Template*.

used for Criterion B and Criterion C, restrict student achievement to B2+ level. There were certain SL samples analysed in which the task and the student output demonstrated the potential to reach an overall CEFR C1 level, yet the limits imposed by the mark scheme terminology prevented this. Given the possibility that students enter for the SL examinations based on preference, rather than ability, the mark scheme could be structured to allow exceptional students to achieve a C1 level.

Similarly, the terminology used in the mark schemes could be adapted and differentiated to better support the outcomes of HL students. For example, all Criterion B and C descriptors at SL and HL, are identical. The judgements made during SL and HL mark scheme analysis, regarding comparable CEFR levels, were subsequently identical. This signifies that the HL mark scheme does not support higher levels of achievement for HL students. If this would be a desirable outcome for the IB, it is recommended that the IB consult the Council of Europe documentation and refer to terminology used in CEFR descriptors at higher levels, such as the C1 level descriptors, integrating these into a new set of mark scheme descriptors which more clearly differentiate HL from SL.

During analysis of the **input text and the text types of the examination paper**, additional recommendations were made. At SL and HL, instruction and layout could be reconsidered in order to provide more support regarding the selection of the response text type, following the selection of the task. For example, an additional instruction could be added below the task description, such as 'now, choose an appropriate text type in which to present your response'. It could also be beneficial to provide extra information regarding the text types, where appropriate. For instance, when asking the student to write a 'letter to the editor', the type of publication could be stipulated, or when asking for an 'official report', the recipient of the report could be included. These additions would assist the marking of the response, particularly when ascertaining whether the student had addressed the correct audience.

Another possible adaptation would be the addition of a space for the student to indicate which text type they have selected; there is currently a box for the task number but not for the text type. Identifying the intended text type is not always straightforward for the examiner, yet having this information provided could make it easier to make a judgement regarding adherence to textual conventions.

Recommendation vii – Language B Speaking

Ecctis' analysis discovered some areas where further information or detail within the speaking marking criteria might enable a closer correlation with how the CEFR articulates language proficiency, if this is desired by the IB. It may also be worth considering if further guidance or training for teacher-examiners could lead to the interactive component of the oral being able to facilitate the best performance from all students.

7.2.4 Overall recommendations on Language B Speaking (Internal Assessment)

There are several recommendations to be made against the **mark scheme** used for the internal assessment, in all languages.

Firstly, the mark scheme analysis found the IB level descriptors within Criteria A, B1, B2, and C to have the potential for additional specific detail to support the marking of student samples decisively and accurately; this applies to both SL and HL.

Moreover, if it would be desirable to have a more straightforward relationship between IB criteria and CEFR levels, the inclusion of command words which specifically reflect terminology used in CEFR descriptors is required; this addition would also facilitate easier alignment between student examinations and CEFR levels.

If this is a desired outcomes for the IB, it is recommended that the IB consult the Council of Europe documentation which features key CEFR scales required for language production. Looking specifically at Criterion B1 in the SL mark scheme, examples of references that could be employed from the Council of Europe include mention of the student's use of thematic development, lines of argument based on the visual stimulus, the ability to maintain a monologue, recognise and interpret sociocultural information and meaning.

In addition, the terminology used in the mark scheme has been found to limit the maximum level of achievement possible for students. For example, the descriptors used in Criterion A of the SL mark scheme, align with CEFR C1 level expectations, whereas those used for Criteria B1, B2, and C restrict student achievement to either B2 or B2+ CEFR levels. There were certain SL samples analysed in which the task and the student output demonstrated the potential to reach an overall CEFR C1 level, yet the limits of the mark scheme terminology prevented this. Given the possibility that certain students enter for the SL examinations based on preference, rather than ability, the mark scheme could be structured to allow exceptional students to also achieve a C1 level overall across all assessment criteria.

Upon analysis of the **input text**, there were instances where the formulation of teacher questioning impacted student performance in a negative manner. Certain questions posed by teacher examiners were confusing in terms of the way they were phrased. More specifically, in some of the student samples reviewed, the teacher paused mid-question to change vocabulary items or to completely reformulate, sometimes asking two or three questions at once. This undoubtedly made it more difficult for a student to follow and respond to the line of questioning. In addition, there were instances where the teacher examiner failed to direct the conversation in such a way that students could satisfy assessment objectives.

In French Sample 7 (SL), rather than opening the post-presentation conversation to consider the wider theme and allow the student to develop opinions or experiences, the examiner continued to pose questions about the stimulus image. The student had previously satisfied this requirement. As a result, it is possible that, in some cases, additional training, guidance, and support concerning internal assessment conduct could be beneficial.

During the analysis of student samples, initial concerns arose regarding incorrect student-tier allocation. For instance, in one of the English SL samples (Sample 8) reviewed, the student

appeared to be capable of achieving C1 CEFR level but was limited to achieving B2 level, by the SL mark scheme descriptors. A similar student-tier allocation issue was identified in the review of an English HL sample (Sample 10), where the analysis found a discrepancy between the student's oral proficiency level (A2) and the input text delivered by the teacher examiner (C1 - C2); this suggests that the assessment material may be misaligned with the student's language level and that the student was allocated to the incorrect tier.

IB documentation explains that it is the responsibility of the student to select not only the subjects that they wish to study, but also the level at which they want to study (SL or HL). According to the IB documentation, in the DP 'three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL.'¹¹²⁵ The recommendation regarding the adaptation of the SL and HL mark schemes, to allow achievement at more levels, would help to address any issues where students may be better suited to a different level of the subject.

7.2.5 General cross-language recommendations for Language B

CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences for Higher Education readiness

Recommendation viii – Language B and Higher Education Readiness

Though the Language B assessment was found to assess the majority of CEFR activities, strategies, and competences specifically linked to HE readiness, Ecctis has provided some examples where further embedding of such areas of language proficiency may be possible.

The analysis found that there are several CEFR communicative language activities, strategies, and competences linked to Higher Education readiness which are reflected and assessed in both the receptive and productive skills of the Language B subject across all languages reviewed in this project. However, the analysis also found that there are some CEFR activities, strategies, and competences which are linked to Higher Education readiness but are not reflected in the assessment of the Language B subject as discussed in [section 6.4](#) above. More specifically, the analysis found that the Language B listening comprehension assessment (Paper 2) does not specifically assess students' ability to take notes regarding key information they listen to in a lecture or presentation and assess their type of notetaking but also the accuracy of their notes. This is a difficult to skill to directly assess. Although in both the SL and HL listening comprehension assessment of Language B students are required to take notes during the audio recording to be able to answer the questions of the listening examinations, the type of notetaking and the accuracy of the notes

¹¹²⁵ International Baccalaureate. 2020. Diploma Programme Subject Brief. Language B. International Baccalaureate. p.1.

are not assessed.¹¹²⁶ Without introducing a listening component that can only be heard once (which may present accessibility barriers at the lower proficiency ranges), there is not a specific question type that would directly assess note-taking ability.

Additionally, in terms of the productive skills assessed in the writing (paper 1) and speaking and interactive skills examinations (internal assessment), the analysis found that there is scope for the IB to incorporate elements within these components that can assess students' ability to describe, present, comment upon, and interpret information included in graphs and diagrams, as this is currently not included in the writing or speaking and interactive skills assessment of the Language B across the language subjects reviewed in this project. This would allow students to demonstrate their ability to synthesise, analyse, evaluate, interpret, and present information included in visual diagrams, tables, and graphs.¹¹²⁷ It is of course important not to develop assessment items that require skills or knowledge from other disciplines – such as the sciences or mathematics – but some simple forms of data, table, or graph may be able to avoid this challenge and still incorporate the specific skill.

Furthermore, the analysis found that there is scope for the IB to incorporate elements within the speaking and writing tasks that can assess students' ability to process text in both speaking and writing, involving their ability to understand, summarise main points, collate information and arguments from a variety of sources, and explain to the target audience the purpose and the meaning of a text. This skill is linked to Higher Education readiness, regardless of the undergraduate degree that students attend, as it is an essential skill that students need to have to write academic assignments, essays, exams, and presentations.¹¹²⁸

In addition, regarding the speaking and interactive skills assessment, the analysis found that there is potential scope for the IB to incorporate elements of debate within the speaking and interactive skills examination, which would require students to put a case and sustain an argument. More specifically, there is scope for the IB to include elements within the speaking and interactive skills examination which would assess students' ability to express their opinions about a range of topics and assess the degree to which students expand and support their arguments and the extent to which they consider the interlocutor's perception. Additionally, there is potential scope for the IB to include questions in the speaking and interactive skills examination which can assess students' manner of formulation of the argument, including elements of how the arguments, opinions and ideas are presented, formulated and structured.¹¹²⁹ This is linked to Higher Education readiness, as it can equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills on how they can support their arguments, present, and respond to counterarguments, debate, and express different viewpoints in order to try and convince the interlocutor and the target audience about their argument.

¹¹²⁶ Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume. p. 105.

¹¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 96.

¹¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 98.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 64.

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