

# International Spoken ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) (8985)

Assessment



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# 1 The International Spoken ESOL suite

The City & Guilds International Spoken ESOL suite of examinations is closely allied to the levels of the Common European Framework produced by the Council of Europe, details of which are available on [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang)

For details of the City & Guilds levels and the CEF levels, please refer to the International Spoken ESOL qualification handbook.

## 2 ISESOL Assessment

### 1.1 Introduction

The focus of the four parts of spoken ESOL is the same at each level. The differences between the six levels are found in:

- the length of the test
- the linguistic difficulty and complexity
- the range of topics and functions
- the nature of the tasks.

**Part 1:** here the candidate answers a variety of questions aimed at eliciting personal information, ideas or views.

**Part 2:** the focus is on how well the candidate can use functional language in a range of real-life situations. The interlocutor and candidate interact in a variety of situations, with the candidate asked both to respond and to initiate dialogue.

**Part 3:** the focus is on how well the candidate can exchange information with the interlocutor in order to perform a communicative task.

- At **Preliminary** and **Access** (A1 and A2 levels), the candidate asks and answers questions to find the differences between two pictures.
- At **Achiever** (B1 level), the candidate tries to reach agreement with the interlocutor after a discussion based on the same visual prompts.
- At **Communicator** (B2 level), there are two different sets of information around the same theme and the purpose is to make a plan or an arrangement based on these.
- At **Expert and Mastery** (C1 and C2 levels), the candidate and interlocutor both have the same written prompts based on a variety of topics which usually include contemporary issues. The discussion might require the speakers to rank or prioritise, to analyse, or to imagine and hypothesise. During the discussion, the candidate needs to demonstrate an ability to expand and give examples, to justify opinions and to challenge the interlocutor if they disagree.

**Part 4:** the aim is to give the candidate an opportunity to produce a long turn, on a topic selected by the interlocutor from a choice of three.

**The assessment of the candidate is not carried out by the Interlocutor. The test is recorded and the Marking Examiners listen to the recording and mark the candidate based on a set of criteria and descriptors of performance for each level.**



### 3 ISESOL CEFR descriptors

#### PRELIMINARY – A1

##### CEFR descriptors A1

<b>Overall oral production</b>	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.
<b>Range</b>	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.
<b>Phonology</b>	Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words and to repair communication.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependant on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like 'and' or 'then'.

# ACCESS – A2

## CEFR descriptors A2

<b>Overall oral production</b>	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.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.
<b>Range</b>	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.
<b>Phonology</b>	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.

# ACHIEVER – B1

## CEFR descriptors B1

<b>Overall oral production</b>	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
<b>Range</b>	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
<b>Phonology</b>	Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.

## COMMUNICATOR – B2

### CEFR descriptors B2

<b>Overall oral production</b>	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.
<b>Range</b>	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
<b>Phonology</b>	Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.

# EXPERT – C1

## CEFR descriptors C1

<b>Overall oral production</b>	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.
<b>Range</b>	Has a good command of broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.
<b>Phonology</b>	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

## MASTERY – C2

### CEFR descriptors C2

<b>Overall oral production</b>	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (eg in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).
<b>Range</b>	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.
<b>Phonology</b>	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.
<b>Fluency</b>	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
<b>Interaction</b>	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn-taking, referencing, allusion making, etc.
<b>Coherence</b>	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.

## 4 ISESOL Assessment Scales

For each Part of the exam, candidates are awarded a mark from 0 to 3 for Global Communication, so that the maximum number of marks they can get for Global Communication across the four parts of the test is 12.

In addition, candidates are awarded a mark from 0 to 3 for each of the analytical assessment criteria, so that the maximum number of marks they can get on the analytical assessment scale is again 12.

The final mark of the candidate for the ISESOL test is the average of the global communication mark and the analytical marks.

**Global communication scale:** The main aim of this scale is to provide an assessment tool for evaluating task fulfilment, i.e. whether the candidate has managed to perform the tasks adequately for the level.

**Analytical scales:** The following criteria are used to assess how well the candidate performs the required tasks i.e. the quality of the language produced at each level.

- Accuracy: the ability to demonstrate control of grammar and lexis
- Range: the ability to vary structure, lexis and register as appropriate to the task
- Pronunciation: the ability to produce the sounds of English in order to be understood with appropriate stress and intonation
- Fluency and interaction: the ability to connect utterances, maintain the flow and engage in effective communicative exchanges.

### Overall Result Determination

The maximum available marks for the ISESOL exam are 12, regardless of the level. There are three possible overall grades: First Class Pass, Pass and Fail. The table below shows what the requirements for each grade are.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total marks: 12</b>
<i>First Class Pass</i>	10 -12
<b>Pass</b>	<b>6-9</b>
<i>Narrow Fail</i>	5
<i>Fail</i>	0-4

**Please note that it is no longer necessary for the candidate to achieve a pass in each Part of the ISESOL examination in order to earn an overall pass.**

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