



Learning
Resource Network



QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

**LRN Entry Level Certificate
in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2)**

Qualification Accreditation Number: 603/0524/1



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BACKGROUND TO LRN

Learning Resource Network (LRN) is an awarding organisation that offers qualifications to candidates, educational institutes, training providers, schools and employers who can access qualifications either through registered educational institutions. In producing its qualifications the project team drew upon the experience and expertise of academics, professionals working in the pertinent industries and colleagues with a wealth of practice and knowledge of validation, verification, delivery and assessment.

A full list of LRN qualifications can be found on the [register of regulated qualifications](#). LRN London head office is supported by a team of representatives around the world. LRN can be contacted in the following ways:

Tel: +44 (0) 207 859 4223
enquiries@lrnglobal.org

A L T E

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATE





ESOL INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

ESOL International qualifications are designed for candidates who wish to improve their knowledge and ability to speak English. Candidates may also wish to achieve a high quality, internationally recognised qualification in English that is both available and recognised worldwide and covers the whole range up to the highest level (NQF level 3 / CEF C2).

The qualification is suitable for candidates who are preparing for entry to higher education or professional employment in the UK or elsewhere. ESOL International qualifications are designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEF). The levels in the CEF have been mapped to the levels in the National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (see Pathways to Proficiency: the alignment of language proficiency scales for assessing competence in English Language).

INTRODUCTION

This specification provides an overview and orientation to the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) for candidates, centres, administrators, teachers and examiners. The specification outlines the key features and administrative procedures required for this test.

OBJECTIVE

Candidates taking the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) will need to demonstrate that they can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type; introduce themselves and others, ask and answer questions about personal details (e.g. home and possessions); and interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. Candidate responses will be at a level of language that would be expected on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) at A2.

CANDIDATE CATEGORY

Candidates interested in taking the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) may include those:

1. needing a starting point in order to work towards a qualification in English.
2. Working or seeking work in an English speaking environment.
3. Living and working in a country where the native and official language is English.

Candidates who take the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) are made up of a range of different national and cultural backgrounds.



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are no entry requirements for candidates upon taking this qualification, including prior knowledge, levels of understanding and areas of familiarity. Candidates do not need a qualification in English prior to registering for this qualification. However, **LRN strongly recommends** that candidates are well prepared before taking this test. Downloadable sample materials are accessible through the qualifications section of the LRN website whereby candidates can access sample assessment material. LRN approved centres ensure that candidates are fully prepared to sit LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) through using fully trained teachers and appropriate resources as laid out in the centre agreement with LRN.

PROGRESSION

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) has been designed to reflect the wide variation in candidates' origins, levels of education and career aims. Progression opportunities may take various routes; this depend upon the level of qualification achieved. Candidates have the following progression opportunities:

- A higher level of any ESOL International qualification – E .g. Entry 3 ESOL (CEF B1) qualification;
- A key skills or functional skills qualification
- Vocational qualifications

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Please refer to LRN's policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning to determine whether previously achieved qualifications meet LRN's policy on possible exemptions.

LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT

LRN aims to use English that is plain, clear, free from bias and appropriate to Entry Level candidates. All assessments and assessment related materials are written in English and rigorously checked by subject specialists before release. Teachers preparing candidates are expected to ensure that their materials are clear, diverse and appropriate to Entry Level ESOL candidates.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is based on the CEFR in that it reflects the level(s) of language ability, which are as defined by the CEFR. LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is a single unit qualification. Candidates are assessed in all four components of reading, listening, writing and speaking. The total qualification time is 304 hours for this qualification. The breakdown of total qualification time (as below):



Guided learning hours (GLH)	250
Self study (SS)	52
Total Assessment Time (TAT)	2 hours
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	304 Hours (GLH+SS+TAT)

QUALIFICATION FEATURES

The LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is a four-language skills qualification, which assesses four sub skills of the English language: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. References to the CEFR are made in the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) mark scheme. This ensures an adequate linkage between the qualification construct and CEFR. The information below is a breakdown of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) qualification features.



SPEAKING:

Duration: 14 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Part 1	Introduction based on familiar topics. The examiner asks candidates questions about themselves (e.g. family/friends, home town or neighbourhood, everyday routines, free time activities) - 2 minutes
Part 2	Topic presentation (1 minute) based on a prepared topic from a given list of 5 (i.e. two people, two jobs, the weather, important dates/celebrations, school/college) followed by examiner's question(s) - 5 minutes
Part 3	Picture description (1 minute) followed by a response to two questions put forward by the other candidate.
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Give personal and factual information; <input type="checkbox"/> Compare things and people; <input type="checkbox"/> Express likes and dislikes; <input type="checkbox"/> Use a lexical range appropriate to the tasks; <input type="checkbox"/> Ask and answer questions; <input type="checkbox"/> Use basic linking devices (e.g. and, but, then, so) Relate to other speakers.



WRITING:

Duration: 40 minutes

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Describe a picture. Key words provided. (60 – 80 words)
Section 2	Write an e-mail or letter in response to a given piece of correspondence. (70 – 100 words)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> form sentences correctly in the present tenses, past tense (requiring regular or common irregular verbs), and future;<input type="checkbox"/> use simple connecting devices to link ideas and clauses;<input type="checkbox"/> spell correctly common and frequently used words;<input type="checkbox"/> use a range of task-appropriate lexical items;<input type="checkbox"/> use full stops, question marks and capital letters; reply meaningfully to a given piece of correspondence.



LISTENING:

Duration: approx.. 30 minutes

Number of Questions: 25

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	Listen and respond to 5 simple questions for personal information and requests for action and permission (multiple choice out of 3)
Section 2	Two telephone messages; listen for gist and detailed information (9 questions, multiple choice out of 3)
Section 3	Three dialogues involving two speakers each; listen for gist and detail, incl. listen for and identify simply expressed feelings, opinions and topics of discussion (10 questions, multiple choice out of 3)
Section 4	Listen to and understand simple directions (1 question, identify marked spot on a map)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> listen and respond appropriately to questions for personal information and requests; <input type="checkbox"/> listen for gist and specific information in passages involving one or two speakers; <input type="checkbox"/> listen for phonological detail; <input type="checkbox"/> listen for and identify simply expressed feelings and opinions; follow and understand directions.



READING AND USE OF ENGLISH:

Duration: 40 minutes

Number of Questions: 20

Section	Tasks and Functions
Section 1	One short, simple text on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency, everyday or job-related language (5 questions, multiple choice out of 3)
Section 2	One text with different layout/textual features (e.g. boxes and pictures) on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language (7 questions, open comprehension)
Section 3	Read and understand a factual text providing information or advice (8 cloze test items)
Skills tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> read for gist and specific information; <input type="checkbox"/> find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables; <input type="checkbox"/> read for gist and detail in short, simple messages/texts; <input type="checkbox"/> use capitalisation and punctuation to aid understanding; <input type="checkbox"/> use grammatical structures that link clauses and help identify sequence; <input type="checkbox"/> read every word to obtain specific information; <input type="checkbox"/> use knowledge of basic text layout to aid understanding; predict meaning from context.



CEFR GLOBAL SCALE

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 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 & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A1	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.
	A2	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.



CAN DO SUMMARY

The ALTE 'Can Do' Project

The CAN do Project has been developed by Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) which offers a framework that covers six levels of language competency that is aligned to the Council of Europe Common European Framework (CEFR) – see Appendix D of the CEFR for more information. The CAN do summary outlines how language candidates can perform and what they can do at each level. They are divided into three areas, Social & Tourism, Work and Study, and are detailed below for CEFR Level B1 and give examples of typical ability.

Summary of overall ability



A2

A2

A2



SOCIAL & TOURIST SKILL AREA

SPEAKING & LISTENING

CAN express likes and dislikes in familiar contexts using simple language.

A2

READING

CAN understand straightforward information, for example labels on food, standard menus, road signs etc.

A2

WRITING

CAN most forms related to personal information

A2

SPEAKING & LISTENING

CAN state simple requirements within his/her own work area, such as "I want to order 25 pieces".

A2

READING

CAN understand most short reports or manuals of a predictable nature within his/her own area of expertise, provided enough time is given.

A2

WRITING

CAN write a short, comprehensible note of request to a colleague or a known contact in another company.

A2



STUDY SKILL AREA

SPEAKING & LISTENING

CAN express simple opinions using expressions such as "I don't agree".

A2

READING

CAN understand the general meaning of a simplified textbook or article, reading very slowly.

A2

WRITING

CAN write a very short simple narrative or description, such as "My last holiday"

A2

A2

A2

A2

A2

A2

A2



RESULTS

LRN examiners are authorised to mark the writing and speaking components of the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2). Marks are allocated for each candidate in accordance with the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) mark scheme for writing and speaking. The timescales in which LRN will issue its results up to **6 weeks** (upon receiving the candidate results from the test centre).

READING AND LISTENING

The marking of Reading and Listening components of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is completed by clerical markers using answer keys for each question paper. To ensure standardisation of each exam, the reading and listening clerical markers completed induction training followed by standardisation exercises prior to each paper (where required). Results are moderated in accordance with LRN's moderation policy. Moderated results are then forwarded to the qualification review panel for final approval.

SPEAKING & WRITING

The speaking exam is conducted by one examiner, approved by LRN, and is recorded on a Dictaphone. Marks are allocated for speaking and writing skill to each candidate in accordance with the LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) mark scheme. LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is 100% externally assessed by an LRN examiner.

Speaking sub skills are assessed in pairs, where there are odd number of registered candidate, a dummy candidate will be used as a pair candidate. Candidates will receive pre-released speaking topics 5 working days prior to exam from their centre. Results are moderated in accordance with LRN's moderation policy. Moderated results are then forwarded to the qualification review panel for final approval.



MARKING

- Speaking is a three part exam and carries a maximum of 20 marks
- Each Reading question carries 1 mark (20 questions)
- Each Listening question carries 0.8 marks (25 questions)
- Writing is based on 2 tasks, each task carries 20 points. The combined total (maximum 40) is divided by 2

For each sub-component candidates will be graded as follows:

- **0-9 = Fail**
- **10-12 = Pass**
- **13-15 = Merit**
- **16+ = Distinction**

Each sub-component skill mark is out of 20 and the total marks for this qualification are 80.

GRADING

Results are reported as distinction, merit, pass or fail grades.

Candidates' marks for all sub-components will be added together to give an overall grade based on the minimum marks per grade level below:

Minimum Marks require (overall)	Grade
0-39	Fail
40-51	Pass
52-63	Merit
64+	Distinction



RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) has been designed in line with the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR) and follows the principles of reliability and validity through the following steps:

VALIDITY

1. Producing quality items to the required standard that measure performance with links to the CEFR.
2. Validating performance through piloting and feeding back into the test development cycle to ensure consistency of items.

The validity of LRN tests is evaluated in terms of the uses and interpretations of scores. The two main concerns in validation studies are:

1. The uses and their meaning to which scores are put in terms of the latent trait(s) they engage and measure. Several validation frameworks, such as Messick (1989) and Kane (2012), emerge from this. Supporting evidence of validity arguments potentially vary from test to test as every test produced has a unique validity argument.

The following inferences are included, following Kane's framework (2012):

- a. Evaluation - clear and sufficient domain definition and operationalisation.
- b. Generalisation - how confidently performance can be extrapolated on the test to a universe of the tasks.
- c. Explanation - analogous to conventional construct validity.
- d. Accuracy of scores - representing the amount of the latent trait under assessment.
- e. Extrapolation - analogous to conventional criterion validity.
- f. Accuracy of candidate performance on the test - prediction of performance on similar devices as well as the target language domain.

Tests developed by LRN are subjected to rigorous data analysis methods in order to ascertain the validity of the uses and interpretations of scores. Consultation is received by a team of experts who assist in undergoing latent trait model analysis on data sets in order to determine the quality of the test.

Evidence yielded from these analyses is used to judge the validity argument of the test.



RELIABILITY

1. Delivering examiner training against LRN Entry Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International (CEF A2) mark scheme with links to the CEFR.
2. Conducting standardisation and monitoring to ensure consistent interlocutor performance and accurate grading.
3. Carrying out moderation to ensure consistent, accurate and reliable results.
4. The LRN validation team work with a variety of models relevant to language testing and psycholinguistics. Validation studies for each qualification are produced for every 800 - 1000 responses / grades generated.

*Please visit the LRN website for further updates on validation and reliability under our Research section.

ADMINISTRATION AND ASSESSMENT DELIVERY

The duration of LRN Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (CEF A2) is approximately 2 hours with the main test sitting (reading, listening and writing) lasting approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes in one continuous assessment session on the same day (with a short break in between each component). Speaking tests are scheduled between one and three days before or after the main test sitting.

One invigilator is assigned to every 15 candidates for reading, listening and writing sub skills with an additional invigilator to accompany candidates, in instances where they leaving the assessment room for any reason. The invigilator is also responsible for checking candidate identification and is always present for the duration of the assessment. Invigilators are also responsible for ensuring candidates have no unauthorised materials in the examination room.