Draft Junior Cycle MFL Specification (2024)

French, German, Italian, Spanish

Reader's note:

The grey shaded areas indicate where changes have been made to the published version of the JC MFL specification. Some changes were minor and involved reordering sentences/paragraphing while other changes were more substantial.

Contents

Introduction to junior cycle

Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

The junior cycle allows students to make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner's junior cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

Rationale

The study of modern foreign languages enables students to build on their language learning in primary school and further develops their skills in and enjoyment of using languages. Language learning is accessible to all students and contributes to their cognitive, personal and social growth by enhancing their communicative and thinking skills, as well as their participation in a global society. Being able to communicate in the mother tongue and in foreign languages are also among the eight key competences for lifelong learning identified by the European Union and European Council in 2006[1].

Language learning develops students' general language awareness. It enhances their ability to analyse how language works, to compare languages, and to reflect on how they learn languages. This has a positive effect on their first language skills and on future language learning.

In learning foreign languages, students develop the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the target language in an integrated way by being actively engaged in activities and tasks[2] using the four modes of communication (reception, production, interaction and mediation). As a result, they communicate with increasing independence, confidence and creativity. As learning is a social activity as well as a personal one and as communication is central to language, learning languages offers students ample opportunities to work with others to develop their language skills and achieve appropriate goals.

A fundamental feature of languages is that they give students access to new worlds and different ways of thinking. The resulting development of socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness also enhances students' cognitive development. By reflecting on other cultures and making comparisons they develop a deeper understanding of their own while appreciating diversity.

Language learning also broadens students' horizons and enables them to develop a lifelong learning skill for education, leisure and work, and to develop a positive attitude towards other languages and cultures. Modern technologies play a key role in making language learning and language use increasingly more accessible and enjoyable for learners, by facilitating access to information and communication with people at a global level.

The society we live in has become multilingual. Ireland needs to increase its language capacity and to foster plurilingualism, the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner in which they draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to participate more fully in social and educational contexts. [3]

Many studies attest to the benefits of bilingualism and plurilingualism. Students who have been exposed to language learning from an early age perform better than those who have not; not only

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[1] Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006].

[2] Definitions of key terminology can be found in the Glossary of Terms in Appendix A. Throughout this document key terminology has been underlined and hyperlinked to the Glossary in Appendix A.

[3] CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p.6

in verbal skills, but also in mathematics. They display enhanced abilities in areas such as problem-solving, multi-tasking, creativity and pattern recognition[4].

A common approach was adopted in developing the specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages (JC MFL) across the four curricular languages French, German, Italian and Spanish to support teaching, learning and assessment. See appendices for further supports.

Aim

The Specification for Junior Cycle MFL aims to develop communicative language proficiency broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, basic user) of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR)[5] and its Companion Volume (CEFR CV[6]) and its descriptors. It also aims to enable students to explore the interdependence between language and culture, to develop their appreciation of the relevance of languages to their lives for personal, social, educational, vocational and leisure purposes, and to derive enjoyment from language learning.

More specifically it encourages all students to

- actively engage in language activities and tasks, developing the capacity to understand written and spoken language
- communicate effectively and confidently in the target language in familiar contexts through a range of media
- develop their capacity to use appropriate structures and vocabulary for the purposes of communication, both written and oral
- enjoy a language-learning experience that will facilitate and encourage them to continue learning languages in future
- be reflective and autonomous in their language learning, and become actively involved in monitoring and assessing their progress
- appreciate their own and other cultures
- develop skills that they can apply to other areas of study and to their lives.

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[4] See García, Ofelia (2009). *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Malden, MA and Oxford, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 93-108.

[5] Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The full text is available on the Council of Europe website: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf.

[6] Council of Europe, (2020), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Available at https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4

Overview: Links

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages show how Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages are linked to central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

Statements of learning

The statement	Examples of relevant learning
SOL 2: The student listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2[7] and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to the student's ability.	Students will develop their communicative language competence by actively engaging in language activities and tasks in the integrated language skills of listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction and writing.
SOL 6: The student appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives.	Students will reflect on the values, beliefs and traditions of another culture. By doing this, they will gain deeper insights into their own culture and develop a positive attitude towards as well as respect and curiosity for diversity. They will also develop an awareness and appreciation of the multilingual and multicultural society in which they live.
SOL 16: The student describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships.	Students will learn how the target language works; they will explore, describe and use language patterns such as word order, word endings, sentence construction, and the verbal system. By comparing the target language with other languages they know, students will look at the relationships between languages and will gain deeper insights into how their own language works.
SOL 24: The student uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner.	Students will use digital technologies to access information related to the target language and culture, to communicate using a range of formats (written, audio, video) and to communicate in the target language using appropriate tools in an honest, responsible and ethical manner.

Table 1: Links between Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages and the statements of learning

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7 L1 refers to a person's first or native language and L2 refers to a person's second language. A school's L1 refers to the language medium of the school (English in English-medium schools and Irish in Irish-medium schools). A school's L2 refers to Irish in English-medium schools and English in Irish-medium schools.

Key skills

In addition to their specific content and knowledge, the subjects and short courses of junior cycle provide students with opportunities to develop a range of key skills. There are opportunities to support all key skills in this course but some are particularly significant.

The examples below identify some of the elements that are related to learning activities in modern foreign languages. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning. The eight key skills are set out in detail in Key Skills of Junior Cycle.

The junior cycle curriculum focuses on eight key skills:
- being creative
- being literate
- being numerate
- communicating
- managing information and thinking
- managing myself
- staying well
- working with others.

Developing my understanding and enjoyment of words and language
- Reading for enjoyment and with critical understanding
- Writing for different purposes
- Expressing ideas clearly and accurately
- Developing my spoken language
- Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

- Using language
- Using numbers
- Listening and expressing myself
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

COMMUNICATING

BEING LITERATE

MANAGING MYSELF

WORKING WITH OTHERS

KEY SKILLS

STAYING WELL

BEING CREATIVE

MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

BEING NUMERATE

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

- Expressing ideas mathematically
- Estimating, predicting and calculating
- Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving
- Seeing patterns, trends and relationships
- Gathering, interpreting and representing data
- Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding

Figure 1: Key skills of junior cycle

Links to JC Key Skills

The language learning activities below highlight links between learning modern foreign languages in junior cycle and the development of JC Key Skills. Although they are set out separately below, they are not intended to be taught in isolation. The examples are illustrative in nature and offer suggestions of language learning activities across the three strands of the JC MFL specification.

Key skill	Student learning activity
Being literate	• As students explore a wide variety of target language texts for different purposes, they develop their understanding and enjoyment of the target language. • Students learn to express their ideas clearly and accurately in the target language. by processing and creating a wide variety of texts in the target language. • As students engage in meaningful communicative tasks and activities, they are supported to develop their understanding of how languages work.
Managing myself	• Students learn to manage themselves and their learning by taking initiatives, setting and achieving personal goals and reflecting on and evaluating their learning. • Students learn to take ownership and responsibility for their learning over time when they are involved in making choices. • As students build their own student language portfolio (SLP), they plan and create texts, set goals and reflect on their achievements, using formative feedback to self-assess their learning.
Staying well	• Students learn to develop their confidence and resilience when they are engaged in challenging and rewarding tasks and activities that are attainable and relevant to their lives. • Students' wellbeing is supported when they have opportunities to display their talents and aptitudes in a safe and supportive learning environment. • Students' wellbeing is supported when they learn to appreciate their own and others' heritage and cultures.
Managing information and thinking	• Learning a new language requires the use of knowledge, skills and strategies to support understanding of a range of texts in the target language. • Students think critically and creatively when they use the target language to negotiate meaning with others. • Students' curiosity is nurtured as they gather, record, organise, and evaluate information and data about the target language and associated cultures. • Students learn to use digital technologies honestly, ethically and responsibly as they research information and engage in communicative activities with others in the target language.

Being numerate	• As students participate in meaning-focused and form-focused tasks and activities, they are supported to problem-solve, reason, predict, and notice linguistic patterns. • As students engage with multimodal texts such as surveys, infographics and numerical data in simple texts (date, time, prices, distance, etc.), students interpret data and represent their understanding in their own words. • As students participate in language tasks and activities, they reinforce and transfer concepts and numeracy skills including number recognition, sequencing, date, time, value, measurement, and percentage.
Being creative	• As students engage in meaningful communication in the target language, they use language creatively to get their message across. • As students build their student language portfolio, they use their imagination and creativity to produce a wide variety of texts. • As students take action to complete tasks and activities, they explore different options, and make choices and therefore become increasingly autonomous learners.
Working with others	• As students use language for real communication in pair and group work, they work with others to overcome barriers in communication and avoid misunderstandings. • As students learn about the target language countries and associated cultures, they learn to be open to and appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity. • As students use criteria for peer assessment and feedback, they learn to develop relationships and to cooperate in a supportive environment.
Communicating	• As students use the target language in their learning, they learn to understand the target language and express themselves in simple everyday interactions. • As students learn to perform simple interactions in the target language and present information to their peers using simple everyday language, they become increasingly confident and competent communicators. • As students engage with authentic target language texts, they become increasingly aware of the language as it is used for the purpose of communication in everyday life.

Table 2: Links between JC MFL and the Key Skills of Junior Cycle

Overview: Course

The Specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages (JC MFL) is designed for a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement and is organised around three integrated strands: **Communicative Competence**, **Language Awareness** and **Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness**.

These strands are each further broken down into elements and the learning outcomes associated with each element are also specified.

The strand **Communicative Competence** is concerned with developing students' ability to communicate meaningfully in the target language.

The strand **Language Awareness** enhances students' general awareness about languages, the skill of language learning and their developing awareness of themselves as language learners.

The strand **Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness** emphasises that languages and cultures are inextricably linked. It allows students to gain access to new cultural dimensions and encourages them to reflect on their own culture.

Language use is central to the development of overall language proficiency. Students develop communicative competence through reflective language use which, in turn, informs and is informed by the development of socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness.

Teaching and learning

While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are set out separately in this specification, this should not be taken to imply that the strands are to be studied in isolation.

Students' language learning is actively supported when their **Communicative Competence**, **Language Awareness** and **Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness** are developed in an integrated way. Likewise, the elements associated with each strand, although set out separately, cannot be taught in isolation.

Communication is usually multimodal, where reading, writing, listening, and speaking enable meaningful communication. Students' growing awareness of grammar, syntax and pronunciation aids effective communication and, as such, these aspects of language learning are taught in the communicative context of the tasks and activities outlined in Strand 1. Figure 2 below illustrates the connections between the three strands. See appendices for further supports.
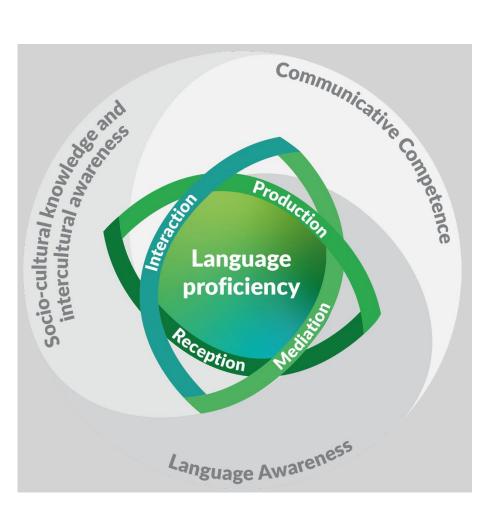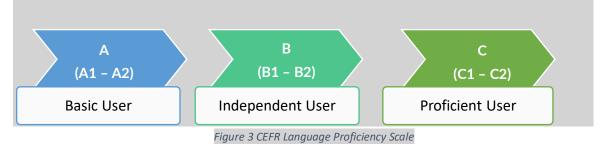
Figure 2: The inter-relatedness of the three strands

This curriculum specification has been informed by the educational aims and principles of the CEFR and the CEFR CV which serve as a framework for language learning, teaching and assessment.

CEFR A1 – A2 level: basic user

The CEFR organises language proficiency into a progressive scale from A1 to C2 level (see Figure 3 below). The Specification for Junior Cycle MFL aims to develop communicative language proficiency broadly aligned with the A band (A1 to A2, Basic User) of the CEFR and CEFR CV and its descriptors.

Figure 3 CEFR Language Proficiency Scale

Across all levels, language learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences. At the basic user level of language learning, students' own lived experiences play a key role. Students

learn to interact in situations of immediate relevance, drawing on and transferring existing knowledge, skills and strategies to the new language they are learning.

As students' language proficiency develops across the A1-A2 band, they learn to navigate a broader range of familiar topics, events, and experiences appropriate and relevant to their own age and stage of development.

The role of texts

All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Texts are an invaluable source of language as it is used for the purpose of communication in real life. In Junior Cycle MFL, students will be exposed to a range of authentic and adapted oral, written, and multi-modal texts in a variety of genres and formats.

As basic users, students learn to process, understand and create short and simple texts in familiar contexts related to areas of immediate relevance in the personal, public and educational domains of language use. As their proficiency grows, students manage to process, understand and create texts of increasing length and complexity related to concrete and familiar topics relevant to their own lives.

The action-oriented approach

The CEFR advocates for an action-oriented approach to language learning which emphasises the learning of a language to achieve real-life goals. Evolving from the Communicative Approach, this approach views language as a vehicle for communication, and language learners are language users from the outset. It is built on the understanding that language exists in a social context and communication is influenced by many external and internal factors. These include the social setting, cultural factors as well as the learners' competences.

Learning and teaching is centred around the functional use of language to achieve goals and accomplish tasks which reflect real-life language use outside of the classroom. When learners engage with tasks, they are required to draw on their knowledge, skills and general competences to achieve a specific goal. The action-oriented approach enables learners to see real and immediate benefits to their language learning.

The action-oriented approach is flexible in nature and allows teachers to draw on students' needs and interests when planning learning experiences that are engaging, appropriate and relevant to their context. Further supports on the CEFR and CEFR Proficiency Scales and the action-oriented approach can be found in the appendices.

The student language portfolio

This curriculum specification sees language learners as language users, who play a key role in their own language learning journey. Over the three years of Junior Cycle MFL, each student develops a student language portfolio (SLP). The purpose of this is to encourage, support and facilitate students in this journey to becoming lifelong, autonomous language learners.

The SLP is a broad collection of student work that provides students with the opportunity and space to set goals, to document and celebrate their achievement, and reflect on their growing communicative competence, language awareness, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness. The SLP will include a broad range of items created by students, including written, spoken, and multi-modal texts to demonstrate their increasing competence in completing communicative tasks and activities across the three strands. Learning goals, student reflections and learning logs will facilitate them in demonstrating their deepening awareness of the process of language learning and their awareness of themselves as language learners.

When students use language creatively for the purpose of communication and are allowed to take risks in a safe learning environment, they develop the confidence needed to become autonomous, lifelong language learners.

The role of the student

To reflect their growing autonomy, each student's language portfolio will be unique and contain texts that reflect their unique personality, identity and age and stage of learning, where work is presented in different formats including handwritten, digital and multimodal.

As students' language proficiency grows, they should be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate their achievements to date. To this end, self-assessment of and evaluative reflection on work is fundamental to the SLP. Students are encouraged and supported to set goals for their learning, monitor their own progress and set goals for improvement using criteria such as *Can-Do Statements* (see Appendix C).

The role of the teacher

Teachers will support students through guidance on suitable tasks, activities and texts which reflect the learning outcomes across the three strands. While students play a key role in the development of their SLP, teachers can support students by providing formative feedback on students' work, appropriate to the age and stage of learning.

The development of the SLP is formative in nature and should form an integral part of learning and teaching from the outset. Further guidance on the SLP can be found in the Portfolio Guidelines.

Insights into second language acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process of acquiring a second or subsequent language once the mother tongue (L1) is established. SLA is influenced by many factors including cognitive, social and societal factors.

SLA research has led to many useful insights and generalisations which can try to approximate, in the classroom, conditions that children experience both within and outside of school as they develop language skills in their L1.

These insights have been included to provide additional support to teachers in planning for teaching, learning and assessment. They are purely illustrative and not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.

Insights into Second Language Acquisition

Adapted from Ó Duibhir and Cummins (NCCA Research Report No. 16 (2012, pp. 37-58)

Language learners need both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.

Some chunks or expressions are memorised and can be easily accessed, while other language is stored in rule-based form and requires more working memory.

Successful instructed language learning requires extensive meaningful and comprehensible L2 input.

The quantity and the quality of the L1 input have been shown to influence the speed of acquisition. The more exposure the learners have to the L2 the more they will learn and the faster they will learn it.

Successful instructed learning also requires opportunities for output.

Meaningful comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for successful L2 acquisition. Frequent opportunities for the productive use of the target language in meaningful contexts gives the learner the opportunity to test their current understanding and reflect on the language they have produced.

The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.

Through interaction, learners learn how to communicate in a way that they will be understood. When a communication problem arises, they are forced to engage in negotiation for meaning which can lead to modification of what they have said and encourage new learning.

Language learning activities that develop implicit knowledge of the L2 are supported by a focus on explicit knowledge.

Implicit knowledge acquired through participation in communicative activities leads to the unconscious acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. Focus on form activities can help focus learners' attention on desired linguistic features as well as drawing learners' attention to grammatical errors.

Instruction needs to take account of the learner's 'built-in syllabus'.

When acquiring the linguistic features of a language, learners follow a predictable pattern which may not coincide with the features taught in a lesson. When the content of language lessons is based on the communicative needs of the learners, expressions can be acquired as unanalysed chunks and analysed later when learners are developmentally ready.

Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.

When language learners are exposed to a variety of activities and strategies, learning becomes multi-sensory. The greater the number and variety of senses used by language learners in their learning, the stronger the connections in their brain will be, leading to more effective learning.

In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

Language learners' language progression can be assessed through a range of learner- and teacher-led approaches, including communicative tasks, self-assessment as well as assessment of discreet features of language.

Table 3: Insights into Second Language Acquisition

Primary curriculum

The Primary Language Curriculum (2019) is an integrated language curriculum, which encourages a plurilingual approach to language learning and exploration. This approach draws on the knowledge and experiences of languages that children bring to the classroom. It recognises that every child has their own unique linguistic repertoire which is shaped by their experiences since birth. The Primary Curriculum Framework (2023) supports the introduction of modern foreign languages (MFL) in Stages 3 and 4, incrementally building on children's existing knowledge and awareness of language and progressing from a language awareness model to a competency model in Stage 4.

Taken together, the Primary Language Curriculum and the Primary Curriculum Framework seek to support children on their language-learning journeys, in English, Irish, and a modern foreign language (MFL) (for Stages 3 and 4), while also encouraging the use of other languages spoken in the home and in primary schools. They aim to develop children's appreciation of their own linguistic repertoire and cultural identity while building a broader awareness of languages and cultures. They aim to nurture a curiosity and interest in language learning which can support them in cultivating a lifelong interest in and love of language learning for personal enjoyment and enrichment. This plurilingual approach to language learning builds a solid foundation for students' learning of additional languages in junior cycle and beyond.

Senior cycle

As students progress from junior cycle to senior cycle, they are afforded many opportunities to build on their language proficiency. For many, these opportunities begin in Transition Year, where students may further explore the language and associated cultures which they have studied in junior cycle and/or experience learning a new language.

Learning modern foreign languages in senior cycle will allow students to build on previous language learning experiences, supporting them to further develop as autonomous language learners so they can continue their lifelong journey as plurilinguals, empowering them to engage with the wider world, to integrate socially, and to be active global citizens.

Expectations for students

Expectations for students are set out in three integrated strands. An overview of each strand is provided below, followed by the learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having studied modern foreign languages in junior cycle.

The outcomes are numbered within each strand. The numbering is intended to support teacher planning in the first instance and does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.

Junior cycle modern foreign languages are offered at a common level. The JC MFL specification sets out what is expected of students at the end of their three years of study. As such, the learning outcomes focused on at a point in time will not have been 'completed' but will continue to support the students' learning of modern foreign languages up to the end of junior cycle.

The learning outcomes describe what students will be expected to be able to do in the target language. The learning outcomes are broadly aligned to the A band of the CEFR (A1-A2). They refer to specific domains of language use (public, personal and educational[8]), which are appropriate to the students' age and experience, and are designed to lend themselves to differentiated teaching, learning and assessment. Across all strands, students should be given every opportunity to use a range of media to display and present what they have learned.

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[8] See appendix B for further supports on the personal, education and public domains of languages use.

Strand 1. Communicative competence

Communicative competence enables students to communicate effectively in the target language for meaningful purposes. In this strand, students engage in language activities and tasks across the public, personal and education domains of language use involving the four modes of communication identified in the CEFR and CEFR CV[9]. The four integrated modes of communication reflect real-life language use, which often involves a number of activities. Figure 4 illustrates the interconnected and interrelated nature of the four elements.

Active engagement with the learning outcomes in this strand further supports the development of language awareness and sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness.
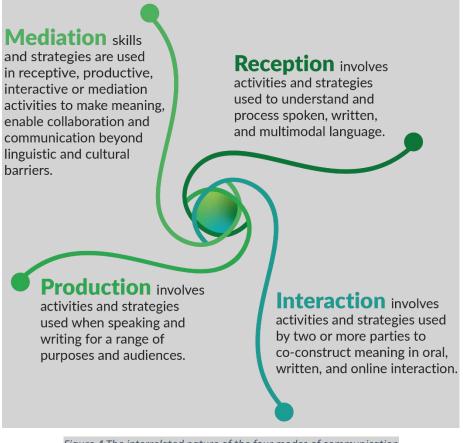
Mediation skills and strategies are used in receptive, productive, interactive or mediation activities to make meaning, enable collaboration and communication beyond linguistic and cultural barriers.

Reception involves activities and strategies used to understand and process spoken, written, and multimodal language.

Production involves activities and strategies used when speaking and writing for a range of purposes and audiences.

Interaction involves activities and strategies used by two or more parties to co-construct meaning in oral, written, and online interaction.

Figure 4 The interrelated nature of the four modes of communication

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[9] CEFR CV, Council of Europe, 2020, p.34

Elements	Learning outcomes
Reception: Understanding and processing written, spoken and multimodal language	*Students should be able to* 1.1 understand and follow simple classroom instructions 1.2 understand simple written and spoken questions and statements on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations 1.3 identify the topic and general sense of short and simple texts expressed in everyday language, using visual information and general knowledge to support comprehension 1.4 identify routine information (e.g., numbers, personal details, dates, prices, directions, instructions*)[10] in simple spoken and written texts related to everyday living 1.5 understand key information in descriptions of people, places, events, and personal experiences in familiar contexts expressed in simple everyday language 1.6 understand the main points in a range of authentic and adapted texts on familiar topics encountered in everyday life in a variety of genres, registers and formats
Interaction: Co-constructing meaning in oral, written and online interaction	1.7 use simple words and expressions to start, maintain and end a conversation, asking for help, clarification and repetition where necessary 1.8 use simple words, expressions and phrases to collaborate with others in routine classroom tasks and activities (e.g., group work, drama, role plays, simple games*) 1.9 ask and answer short and simple questions about people, events, experiences and activities in spoken, written, and online interactions 1.10 complete simple transactions in everyday situations (e.g., shopping, making reservations, exchanging personal information*) 1.11 interact with others in routine familiar situations to exchange information, opinions and ideas and make plans using simple everyday language
Production: Speaking and writing for a range of purposes and audiences	1.12 describe people, places and likes and dislikes in simple terms using words, expressions and simple phrases 1.13 create a range of short and simple texts in various formats and media on familiar topics, using supports to aid communication

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[10] * All examples are illustrative in nature and not intended to be exhaustive. See appendices for further supports.

	1.14 prepare and present short presentations on topics related to everyday life, and give brief reasons and explanations for opinions using visual prompts and gestures to support communication
	1.15 describe present, past, and future events, activities, and personal experiences (real or imagined) encountered in everyday life using short and simple phrases and sentences and link them with simple connectors (e.g., "and", "but", "because"*)
Mediation: Developing skills and strategies to make meaning and enable communication beyond linguistic and cultural barriers	1.16 convey simple predictable information given in short, simple texts (e.g., signs, notices, posters, brochures*) 1.17 list the main points encountered in short, simple conversations or texts on predictable everyday subjects when they are expressed clearly in simple everyday language 1.18 recognise when people disagree and use short and simple expressions to ask someone to explain something, to show interest, and to seek agreement

Strand 2: Language Awareness

Language awareness draws on students' existing linguistic resources and enhances the students' general awareness about languages and language learning. In this strand, they analyse how the target language works, they compare the languages they know (English, Irish and/or their mother tongue) and they reflect on the development of their own developing plurilingual repertoire, where all linguistic abilities have a place. Active engagement with the learning outcomes of this strand supports the development of communicative competence and sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness.

Elements	Learning Outcomes
Reflecting on how the target language works	*Students should be able to* 2.1 recognise and use simple language patterns and structures (e.g., verbal system, syntax, etc.*) for the purpose of communication in familiar contexts 2.2 recognise and use a basic range of vocabulary including words, expressions and phrases for the purpose of communication in familiar contexts 2.3 recognise how target language usage is influenced by the audience and purpose of the communication (e.g., register, format, language style, social conventions, etc.*)
Comparing the target language with other languages they know	2.4 identify similarities and differences between the grammar and vocabulary of the target language and other languages they know to support their comprehension of oral, written and multi-modal texts. 2.5 recognise similarities and differences between the target language and other languages they know (e.g., spelling, word order, pronunciation, intonation and rhythm etc.*) 2.6 compare and contrast the use of numbers in the target language country/countries and in their own, with regard to areas of immediate relevance (e.g., dates, prices, age, time etc.*)
Reflecting on how they use and learn languages	2.7 use what they know about other languages to help them compensate for gaps in understanding and avoid misunderstandings 2.8 develop a range of strategies for learning and using the target language and use some of them independently for the purpose of communication 2.9 set goals, monitor and assess their own learning, using feedback they receive to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to improve

Strand 3: Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness

Socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness gives students access to new cultural dimensions and encourages them to reflect on their own culture. In this strand, students acquire knowledge about the target countries and are encouraged to develop attitudes of curiosity, openness and empathy towards cultural groups that are different to their own.

Active engagement with the learning outcomes in this strand supports students in deepening their awareness of the link between languages and cultures and further enables them to develop their communicative competence and language awareness.

Elements	Learning Outcomes
Learning about relevant facts, people, places and history about the countries related to the target language	*Students should be able to* 3.1 identify, name and describe in simple everyday language some features of the target language countries in areas of immediate relevance (e.g., geographical features, weather, famous people and places, food, festivals, inventions, etc.*) 3.2 explore a range of facts and figures related to everyday living in the target language countries and reflect on what they have learned about the target language countries 3.3 research information of personal interest about the target language countries and present it in simple everyday language using a range of media
Learning about traditions, customs and behaviours	3.4 identify, name and appreciate some customs, traditions, and social conventions of the target language countries related to everyday living 3.5 identify and reflect on some common stereotypes about their own and the cultures associated with the target language 3.6 gather, appreciate, and share a range of authentic texts (e.g., songs, poems, rhymes, tongue twisters, etc. *) related to the target language countries through the appropriate use of digital technologies
Comparing their culture with that of the countries related to the target language	3.7 identify similarities and differences in relation to their peers' lives in the target language countries related to everyday living (e.g., school, socialising, sport, eating habits, etc.*) 3.8 compare and contrast aspects of personal interest in the target language countries with those in their own country and present them in short and simple phrases and sentences using supports to aid communication 3.9 recognise cultural similarities and differences and appreciate their influence on social interactions

Assessment and reporting

Assessment in Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages

Assessment in education involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to test and certify achievement, to determine the appropriate route for learners to take through a differentiated curriculum, or to identify specific areas of difficulty (or strength) for a given learner. While different techniques may be employed for formative, diagnostic and summative purposes, the focus of the assessment and reporting is on the improvement of student learning. To do this it must fully reflect the aim of the curriculum.

The junior cycle places a strong emphasis on assessment as part of the learning process. This approach requires a more varied approach to assessment in ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students. Assessment in Junior Cycle MFL will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this. This rests upon the provision for learners of opportunities to negotiate success criteria against which the quality of their work can be judged by peer, self, and teacher assessment; and upon the quality of the focused feedback they get in support of their learning.

Providing focused feedback to students on their learning is a critical component of high-quality assessment and a key factor in building students' capacity to manage their own learning and their motivation to stick with a complex task or problem. Assessment is most effective when it moves beyond marks and grades, and reporting focuses not just on how the student has done in the past but on the next steps for further learning. This approach will ensure that assessment takes place as close as possible to the point of learning. Final assessment still has a role to play but is only one element of a broader approach to assessment.

Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. Parents/guardians should receive a comprehensive picture of student learning. Linking classroom assessment and other assessment with a new system of reporting that culminates in the awarding of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will offer parents/guardians a clear and broad picture of their child's learning journey over the three years of junior cycle. To support this, teachers and schools will have access to an Assessment Toolkit.

Along with the guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process, the Assessment Toolkit will include learning, teaching and assessment support material, including:

- formative assessment
- planning for and designing assessment
- assessment activities for classroom use
- judging student work – looking at expectations for students and features of quality
- reporting
- thinking about assessment: ideas, research and reflections
- glossary of assessment terms.

The contents of the Assessment Toolkit will include a range of assessment supports, advice and guidelines which will enable schools and teachers to engage with the new assessment system and reporting arrangements in an informed way, with confidence and clarity.

Assessment for the JCPA

The assessment of Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages for the purposes of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will comprise two Classroom-Based Assessments (Examples from my student language portfolio and Oral communication), an Assessment Task linked to the Student Language Portfolio and a final examination. The Assessment Task and the final examination will be assessed by the State Examinations Commission.
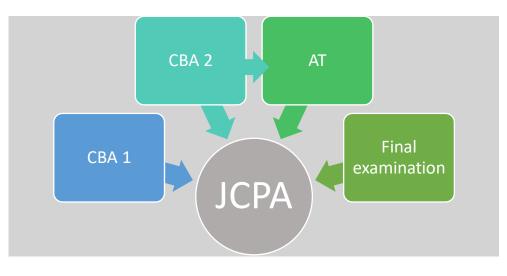

Figure 5 The assessment components reported on as part of the JCPA

Rationale for the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in MFL

Over the three years of junior cycle, students will have many opportunities to enjoy and learn the target language across the strands. They will engage in language activities and tasks to

- communicate in the target language for meaningful purposes

- gain insights into the target language culture/s

- deepen their awareness of how the target language works.

Through these activities they will develop knowledge, understanding and skills in language, culture and literacy, thereby achieving the learning outcomes across the strands.

Junior Cycle MFL will have two Classroom-Based Assessments across second and third year of junior cycle education. The two Classroom-Based Assessments are distinct markers in the student's learning journey, while still being an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. In this way they are similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class. However, in the case of the Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for the purpose of subject learning and assessment review, and for the school's reporting to parents and students.

Over the three years of junior cycle, students will be provided with many opportunities to communicate in the target language across the four modes of communication. As a result, they communicate with increasing independence, confidence and creativity. Classroom-Based Assessments will provide an opportunity for students to:

- communicate with confidence in the target language
- deepen their awareness of the link between languages and cultures
- research information on the target language countries and associated cultures
- collaborate with others on creative tasks
- express their unique personalities and interests
- make their own choices
- recognise, appreciate and celebrate their progress and achievements.

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Examples from my student language portfolio (SLP)

Over the three years of junior cycle, each student develops a language portfolio. The SLP will be a collection of work created by students over time. In second Year, students will choose three pieces in a variety of media from those compiled over time and present them for assessment in the first Classroom-Based Assessment: *Examples from my student language portfolio*. This Classroom-Based Assessment offers students an opportunity to celebrate their achievements to date as increasingly confident and competent language users.

Over time, each student will create a broad range of items to reflect their language learning journey across the three strands. As the student learns to interact in the target language, they complete tasks and activities across the personal, educational and public domains of language use (see appendices for further supports). They will document their progress by creating simple written, spoken and multimodal texts such as posters, infographics, blogs, videos, podcasts, etc. Due to the unique and personal nature of the SLP, texts may be presented in different formats—handwritten, digital, multi-modal, and so on. These examples are not exhaustive but serve to indicate that the collection of texts should be a varied one which values all modes of communication.

Students learn a lot from the process of using a portfolio to document and reflect on their language learning. The language portfolio will also include learning goals and student reflections to document and monitor their progress over time. Through regular peer and teacher feedback on their work they will develop confidence in interaction and an awareness of the process of language learning as well as themselves as language learners.

Evidence of learning

The first Classroom-Based Assessment: *Examples from my student language portfolio* offers students a chance to celebrate their achievements as language learners by choosing three pieces

in a variety of media from those compiled over time and presenting them for assessment in second year.

In completing CBA1 students demonstrate their communicative ability, language awareness and socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness to create texts in the target language for the purpose of communication.

The focus of this CBA is the developmental and incremental nature of language learning. This is best supported when work associated with the SLP is an integral part of classroom practice and students are encouraged to draw on their interests and play to their strengths.

In completing this CBA, each student selects three texts for assessment from the portfolio they have created over time. In the majority of cases, the work in the student's collection will arise from normal classroom practice. The three pieces chosen should represent a student's best work and reflect the multimodal nature of communication and the interconnected nature of the three strands. Students are free to choose any three items they have created, as long as:

- at least one item is in oral format*[11] (a spoken piece or audiovisual piece)
- at least one item demonstrates socio-cultural knowledge and/or intercultural awareness[12]
- the three pieces reflect a variety of presentation modes.

A student reflection must be included with each of the three texts chosen for assessment purposes. This is intended to give students the opportunity to set out a brief statement on the purpose of the communication for items they chose and asks the students to indicate what they have learnt from the process and what they might do differently in the future. The student reflection may support teachers when using the features of quality.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Oral Communication

Over the three years of junior cycle, students will have many opportunities to engage in tasks and activities to develop their communicative competence. As students engage in authentic tasks and experiences using the target language for the purpose of communication, they learn to interact with confidence in everyday situations across the personal, educational and public domains of language use. Communication is multimodal and the development of oral language proficiency is vital in developing overall communicative competence. To this end, the development of oral language proficiency is encouraged from the outset to support students' overall language development.

For this CBA the student will prepare and perform an Oral Communication in front of an audience of their peers. The purpose of this CBA is for the student to demonstrate the skills of oral production and oral interaction in line with the learning outcomes of this specification. In

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[11] Students may present more than one item in oral format as long as items reflect a variety of presentation modes (audio, audiovisual, multimodal etc).
[12] Due to the integrated nature of the strands and the social nature of language, it is likely that more than one item will demonstrate some intercultural awareness. In this case, the student reflection note may support students in explaining their choices.

preparing for the Oral Communication, students will use knowledge and skills they have developed over time, including reading, writing, listening, and basic research.

This CBA builds on the developmental and progressive nature of language learning and students' understanding of themselves as communicators. When students are given opportunities to interact in the target language as part of normal classroom practice, they develop their confidence in using the target language for the purpose of communication.

The SLP will provide students with the necessary ongoing practice and support in developing oral proficiency in preparation for the CBA2. Each student's language portfolio will contain a range of texts including oral texts. Students should be encouraged to create very short and simple oral texts from the outset, and as their oral language proficiency increases, their texts will increase in length and complexity, in line with the learning outcomes of the specification and the student's age and stage of development.

Evidence of learning

For the second Classroom-Based Assessment: *Oral Communication,* the student will prepare and perform a short Oral Communication task in front of an audience of their peers.
In completing the CBA2, students demonstrate their communicative ability in real life situations with fluency, accuracy and range of vocabulary in line with the learning outcomes of the specification and the student's age and stage of development.

The focus of this Oral Communication can be an aspect of the target language countries or culture; **or** on a simulation of a real-life experience in a target language country; **or** on a topic or stimulus of personal interest.

Students may work individually, in pairs or in groups. However, where students have collaborated to complete the activity, the teacher should ensure that each student makes a meaningful individual contribution.

In completing the Oral Communication, students may choose any one of the following formats:
- an interview
- a role-play
- a presentation
- a conversation in response to stimulus material.

Each of the formats will include a number of straightforward follow-up questions by the teacher. The student can ask for repetition and some help with the formulation of their reply to manage these questions. While the student cannot choose the same material for both Classroom-Based Assessments, they may consider items from their language portfolio as a stimulus when preparing for their second Classroom-Based Assessment.

Features of Quality

Features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess the pieces of student work. Features of

quality will be provided in the assessment guidelines for junior cycle MFL. All students will complete both CBAs.

CBA	Completion of the assessment	Subject Learning and Assessment (SLAR) meeting
Examples from my student language portfolio	In second year	One review meeting
Oral communication	In third year	One review meeting

Table 4: Timeline for completion of Classroom-Based Assessments in JC MFL

Assessing the Classroom-Based Assessments

More detailed material on assessment for reporting in JC MFL, setting out details of the practical arrangements related to assessment of the Classroom-Based Assessments, will be available in separate assessment guidelines. These will include, for example, guidelines for using and presenting the items for the *Examples from my student language portfolio* CBA, and the suggested length and formats for the *Oral communication* CBA. It will also provide features of quality for both CBAs and support in using 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality. The NCCA's Assessment Toolkit will also include substantial resource material for use and reference in ongoing classroom assessment of junior cycle MFL, as well as providing a detailed account of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review process.

The Assessment Task

Students complete a formal written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking along with the final examination for modern foreign languages. It is allocated 10% of the marks used to determine the grade awarded by the State Examinations Commission.

The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and related to the learning outcomes on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based.

The Assessment Task is devised from some or all of the following elements:
- A short stimulus in written, audio, audio-visual or multi-modal format to prepare for the written task.
- A written task that tests the students in
  - their ability to outline and/or discuss their experience of completing the Oral Communication
  - their understanding and evaluation of that experience
  - their capacity to reflect on the knowledge and skills they have developed
  - their understanding of how their oral proficiency has developed over the three years of junior cycle.

Inclusive assessment practices

This specification allows for inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. The accommodations e.g., the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

The final examination

There will be one examination paper at a common level, set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). Students will sit this written examination paper of up to two hours duration at the end of the third year. They will be required to engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and respond to stimulus material, which will include an aural stimulus. In any year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the outcomes from the tables of learning outcomes. The aural component will be allocated 35% of the marks used to determine the grade awarded by the State Examinations Commission.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Action-oriented: This approach views learners as social agents and active participants in their own learning. It implies the use of the target language by learners while engaging in purposeful, collaborative tasks.

Audience: a group of people together in one place to watch or listen to a play, film, someone speaking. The audience of a written text refers to the person or group to whom the text is addressed.

CEFR: The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* was published by the Council of Europe in 2001. This framework of reference provides tools, guidelines, and resources to support the teaching, learning and assessment of languages.

CEFR CV: The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment Companion Volume* was published in 2020. It extends and updates the original CEFR with additional descriptors and updated language to clarify key concepts and replace the original 2001 descriptors.

Domain refers to the broad sectors of social life relevant to language learning and use in which we operate. The major categories identified in the CEFR are the *educational, occupational, public* and *personal* domains (see page XX), however the occupational domain is not considered to be directly relevant to the language learning needs of junior cycle students.

Familiar topics: Topics that are familiar to the learner through their own lived experience.

Focus on form: Drawing the learners' attention overtly to linguistic features as they arise incidentally in lessons where the main focus is on communication or meaning.

Formulaic expressions: A sequence of words that has been memorised or stored. It is easily accessible for spontaneous use. It can be referred to as a prefabricated chunk.

Genre: is the term used to indicate the type of text that has become commonplace for particular purposes. Genres have particular objectives and organisational patterns depending on their purpose and audience/interlocutor, as well as appropriate language registers.

Intercultural awareness: An awareness of the student's own and other cultures, values and beliefs. It builds understanding, empathy, respect, and acceptance of other people and cultures by focusing on the development of specific knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Interlocutor: a person who takes part in a conversation/dialogue

Learning logs: provide a way for students to record what they are learning in a flexible way. They are sometimes also called learning journals and can be in paper format or digital format.

Mediation: when using mediation skills and strategies, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning; collaborating to construct new meaning; encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning; and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic, or professional.

Multilingualism: The co-existence of different languages in society.

Plurilingualism: Plurilingualism is the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner in which they draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to participate more fully in social and educational contexts.

Pluriculturalism: In a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence.

Social agent: a language learner who uses the language to act in a social setting and take ownership in their learning process. Seeing language learners as social agents recognises the social nature of language learning and language use.

Strategy: any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task which he or she sets for himself or herself or with which he or she is confronted.

Task: a purposeful action that requires the use of language and broader competences to achieve a clear goal or outcome. Tasks can cover a wide range of actions such as making plans, playing a game, ordering a meal, or preparing a class newspaper through group work.

Text: All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Texts have many different functions in social life, and differences in purpose, function and audience lead to corresponding differences in the content of messages, and in the organisation, presentation and register.

> **Authentic texts:** A literary or non-literary text created to fulfil a personal or social purpose. It is created in and directed at the language community in which it is produced.

> **Multi-modal text**: combines language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound, and the spoken word.

> **Oral text:** a form of communication that is spoken or transmitted by word of mouth.

Abbreviations:

AT	Assessment Task
CBA	Classroom-Based Assessment
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEFR CV	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume
DE	Department of Education
JC	Junior Cycle
JCPA	Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement
L1	a person's native or 1st language / the language medium of a school
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLAR	Subject Learning and Assessment Review
SLP	Student Language Portfolio
TL	Target Language (French, German, Italian, Spanish)

Appendix B: Implementing the action-oriented approach

Illustrative examples of social language use across the domains

Over the three years of studying a JC MFL, students are supported in developing communicative language proficiency broadly aligned with the A1-A2 band (basic user) of the CEFR CV. As basic users, students will interact in everyday situations of immediate relevance to their age and stage across the **personal, education** and **public domains** of language use. Their learning will be supported by authentic texts and tasks that reflect real-life experiences in such situations. The chart below may support students and teachers in imagining everyday situations or scenarios of immediate relevance when sourcing authentic material and/or planning authentic tasks to support them in working with the learning outcomes of the specification. The examples are purely illustrative and suggestive and not intended to be in any way exhaustive.
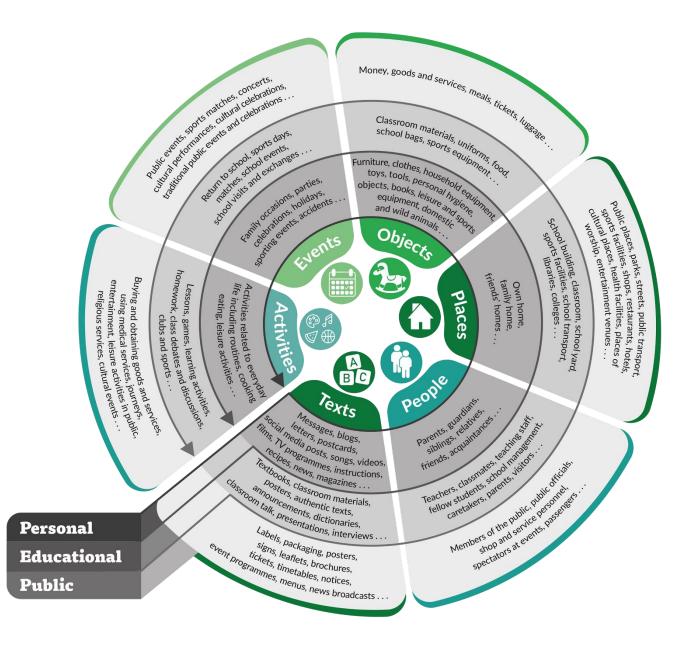

Figure 6: Illustrative examples of social language use, adapted from the CEFR, 2001:p. 48-49

Considerations for planning authentic tasks

In line with the action-oriented approach outlined in the CEFR CV, the use of authentic tasks is central to the development of communicative competence. A task is a purposeful action that requires the use of language competences along with broader competences to achieve a clear goal or outcome. Tasks can cover a wide range of actions such as making plans, playing a game, ordering a meal, or preparing a class newspaper through group work. Tasks offer students **an opportunity to use language for a real purpose**. The use of tasks further supports an integrated approach to planning with learning outcomes across the three strands of **Communicative Competence, Language Awareness and Socio-Cultural Knowledge and Intercultural Awareness**.
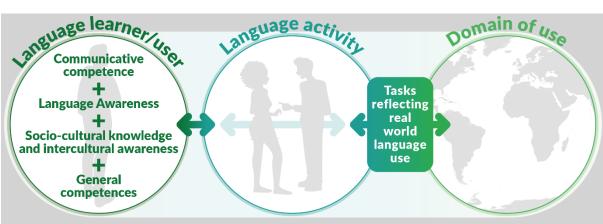

Figure 7: Model of language use within the action-oriented approach

This resource includes illustrative examples of authentic tasks within the A1-A2 band of the CEFR and key considerations for planning action-oriented tasks. These resources are purely illustrative in nature and may support teachers in planning authentic tasks for the purpose of teaching, learning and assessment, both individually, and collaboratively with their colleagues.

Key considerations when planning authentic tasks

The key considerations below can support teachers in planning authentic tasks individually and/or collaboratively in line with the action-oriented approach. They have been adapted from the *Action-oriented Handbook, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers* (CASLT), 2019:

- Does the action have a real purpose that can be applied in the real world?
- Does it take place in an authentic social context?
- Is there a clear goal that results in a product or outcome?
- Is learning supported by authentic real-life texts and experiences?
- Do conditions promote creative and critical thinking?
- Do learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences?
- Do learners make choices?
- Is task completion attainable for all learners?

These key considerations above have been used in annotating the Illustrative examples of task scenarios on the following pages.

Annotated Task Scenarios

The annotated task scenarios outlined below are intended to support teachers in planning tasks in line with the action-oriented approach. Task scenarios 1 and 2 have been developed using the CEFR illustrative examples of social language use (see Figure 5). These examples are illustrative and not intended to be prescriptive.
Both examples show examples of language use within the educational domain. They illustrate simple everyday interactions and have been chosen to demonstrate progression from A1 to A2 level.

Task Scenario 1: Proposing a local hero (CEFR — A1)

Domain of language use (as per Fig.5): **Educational Domain**

People: student reporters

Places: your school

Objects: an application form

Events: school newsletter submission

Activities: complete a form, give personal details

Texts: application forms, photos, personal details, ID cards,

Task Scenario:

Transition Year students are publishing a monthly French/German/Italian/Spanish newsletter for your school community. This month's issue with feature an article called "Local Heroes" and is looking for students to nominate a close friend or family member for this honour. The person featured must live in the community. To nominate your hero, submit an online form on the school website. Your submission is selected as a finalist. A member of the news team calls you to discuss your nomination.

Preparation for the task:	To complete the task:
- prepare to give your personal information (e.g. name, age, address) - gather information on your hero: - name, age, personal details - relationship to you (e.g., father, friend, neighbour) - why they are a hero	- Submit the online form on the school website - Speak to the news team to share: - your nominee's details - your own personal information

Table 5: Task Scenario 1

Teacher Annotations for Task Scenario 1

The annotations outlined below are intended to further support teacher planning. They have been developed with reference to the key considerations when planning authentic tasks (p.34) and the learning outcomes of this specification across the four modes of communication (drawn from Learning Outcomes in Strand 1). They are illustrative in nature and not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.

- **Does the action have a real purpose that can be applied in the real world?**

Students gather information;

Students complete and submit a form on a website.

- **Does it take place in an authentic social context?**

The task takes place in the students' school and local community;

The student nominates a close friend or family member.

- **Is there a clear goal that results in a product or outcome?**

The goal is to submit a form and speak to the newsletter team about their nomination.

- **Is learning supported by authentic real-life texts and experiences?**

Authentic real-life texts and experiences may include short articles on a local hero, online forms, short interviews.

- **Do conditions promote creative and critical thinking?**

To complete the task, students must think creatively and critically when choosing a person to nominate, when gathering information, explaining reasons for their nomination, and when speaking to the news team to share the information they have prepared.

- **Do learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences?**

To complete the task, students draw on newly developed and existing competences across the four modes of communication (see Strand 1 learning outcomes) such as :

PRODUCTION: describe people, likes and dislikes

RECEPTION: understand simple questions, identify routine information,

INTERACTION: ask for clarification, repetition, exchange information and opinions

MEDIATION: convey simple predictable information

- **Do learners make choices?**

Students make choices when nominating a close friend or family member, when sharing their personal details, when naming reasons for their choice.

- **Is task completion attainable for all learners?**

The task includes a number of task elements to be achieved, such as gather and prepare information, submit a form, share information with the news team.

Table 6: Teacher Annotations for Task Scenario 1

Task Scenario 2: Naming a cultural event (CEFR — A2)

Domain (as per Figure 5): Educational Domain
People: an event committee (teachers and students)   **Places:** your school   **Objects:** a presentation   **Events:** a cultural school event   **Activities:** complete an application form, give a presentation, answer some questions, research   **Texts:** newspaper articles/ short videos on important people from a TL country
Task Scenario: Your school is planning an annual cultural event to celebrate the target language and cultures. The event committee is holding a competition to choose a name for the annual event that will honour an important person from the target language community. You would like to nominate someone and decide to research possible choices. To enter the competition, you will first need to complete an application form to explain your choice. You will then be invited to make a formal two-minute presentation of your choice to the event committee of 2 students and 1 teacher, followed by a brief question period.

Preparation for the task:	To complete the task:

• Research people who could potentially be honoured
 • Decide on your nominee and gather information to support your proposal
 • Complete the application form
 • Prepare a slide-show presentation on your nomination
   - Include personal details
   - Include reasons why this person should be honoured
 • Anticipate possible questions that may be asked by the event committee
	• Present to the committee
	 • Answer questions from the committee

Table 7: Task Scenario 2

Teacher Annotations for Task Scenario 2

- **Does the action have a real purpose that can be applied in the real world?**

Students research an important person from the TL community;

Students complete an application form;

Students prepare and deliver a 2-minute presentation;

Students answer some follow-up questions

- **Does it take place in an authentic social context?**

The cultural event takes place within the students' school community;

The presentation involves an important person from the TL community

- **Is there a clear goal that results in a product or outcome?**

The goal is to submit an application form and deliver a 2-minute presentation.

- **Is learning supported by authentic real-life texts and experiences?**

Authentic texts and experiences may include newspaper articles and/or short video clips on important people from the TL community, websites for cultural events, application forms, interviews with people from the TL community.

- **Do conditions promote creative and critical thinking?**

To complete the task, students think creatively and critically when researching people, gathering information, preparing their short presentation with reasons for their proposal, and when anticipating questions from the event committee.

- **Do learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences?**

To complete the task, students draw on newly developed and existing competences across the four modes of communication (see Strand 1 learning outcomes) such as:

PRODUCTION: prepare and present short presentations, describe people, likes and dislikes

RECEPTION: understand simple questions, identify routine information, understand key information in descriptions of people

INTERACTION: ask and answer short and simple questions about people, ask for clarification, repetition, exchange information and opinions

MEDIATION: convey the main points involved in short, simple texts on everyday subjects

- **Do learners make choices?**

Students make choices when researching and deciding on their nomination, when giving reasons to support their proposal, when choosing a format for their presentation.

- **Is task completion attainable for all learners?**

The task includes a number of steps to be achieved, such as researching possible choices, preparing a short presentation, anticipating and answering questions.

Table 8: Teacher Annotations for Task Scenario 2

What is the CEFR CV?

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), published in 2001, is part of the Council of Europe's continuing work to ensure quality inclusive education as a right of all citizens. The CEFR CV, published in 2020, updates and extends the CEFR. It sets out to be a comprehensive and pedagogically neutral framework for language teaching, learning and assessment. It takes an innovative stance in seeing learners as language users and social agents and seeing language as a vehicle for communication rather than a subject to study.

What is the action-oriented approach (AOA)?

The methodological message of the CEFR is that language learning should be directed towards enabling learners to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures. Thus, the criterion suggested for assessment is communicative ability in real life, in relation to a continuum of ability (Levels A1-C2). This implies that the teaching and learning process is driven by action, that it is action-oriented. It also clearly suggests planning backwards from learners' real-life communicative needs, with consequent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment.

What does the AOA look like in the classroom?

At the classroom level, there are several implications of implementing the action-oriented approach. Seeing learners as social agents implies involving them in the learning process. It also implies recognising the social nature of language learning and language use, namely the interaction between the social and the individual in the process of learning. Seeing learners as language users implies extensive use of the target language in the classroom – learning to use the language rather than just learning about the language (as a subject). Seeing learners as plurilingual, pluricultural beings means allowing them to use all their linguistic resources when necessary, encouraging them to see similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures. Above all, the action-oriented approach implies purposeful, collaborative tasks in the classroom, the primary focus of which is some product or outcome (such as planning an outing, making a poster, creating a blog, designing a festival).

What is the role of the learner and the teacher in this process?

Both the CEFR descriptive scheme and the action-oriented approach put the co-construction of meaning (through interaction) at the centre of the learning and teaching process. This has clear implications for the classroom. At times, this interaction will be between teacher and learner(s), but at times, it will be of a collaborative nature, between learners themselves. The precise balance between teacher-centred instruction and such collaborative interaction between learners in small groups is likely to reflect the context, the pedagogic tradition in that context and the proficiency level of the learners concerned. In the reality of today's increasingly diverse societies, the construction of meaning may take place across languages and draw upon user/learners' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires.

Source:https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4; p.29)

Appendix C : CEFR CV Descriptive scales

As the expectations for students in this specification are broadly aligned with A1/A2 levels of the CEFR CV (CoE, 2020)[13], the descriptive scales which follow are illustrative samples taken from it. They are not intended to replace learning outcomes, but to provide further supports in planning for learning, teaching and assessment at these levels. All CEFR illustrative descriptive scales can be found in the CEFR Companion Volume (ibid). The learning outcomes can be found on pages 38-45 of this document.

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[13] Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR CV), 2020

Overview of CEFR CV Common Reference Levels

This overview has been included to provide additional guidance on students' typical progression across different levels. As progression is fluid and differentiated in nature, these level descriptors are illustrative in nature and should not be seen as threshold levels which must be achieved in order to progress to the next level. Considering the progressive nature of language learning, students will move across the levels in a fluid and complex manner.

A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where someone lives, people they know and things they have. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	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 their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	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 while 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.	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. 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. 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.	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express them-selves fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for ex-pressions. 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.	Can understand virtually all types of texts. Can summarise information from different oral and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express them-selves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Source: Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2020

CEFR CV Self-assessment grid (with online interaction and mediation)

The self-assessment grid has been included to provide additional support for teachers and students to support them in developing resources for the SLP, including success criteria and/or self-assessment checklists. This self-assessment grid gives an overall view of CEFR descriptors linked to the modes of communication relevant for A1/A2 level. Descriptors for other levels can be found here.

		A1	A2
Reception	Oral comprehension	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak/sign slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.
	Reading comprehension	I can understand familiar names, words/ signs and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material, such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables, and I can understand short simple personal letters.
Interaction	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate and help me formulate what I am trying to express. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities.

I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself. |
| | Written and online interaction | I can post short, simple greetings as statements about what I did and how I liked it, and can respond to comments in a very simple way.

I can react simply to other posts, images and media. | I can engage in basic social interaction, expressing how I feel, what I am doing or what I need, and responding to comments with thanks, apology or answers to questions. |

		I can complete a very simple purchase, filling in forms with personal details.	I can complete simple transactions such as ordering goods, can follow simple instructions and can collaborate in a shared task with a supportive interlocutor.
Production	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job
	Written production	I can produce simple isolated phrases and sentences.	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
Mediation	Mediating a text	I can convey simple, predictable information given in short, simple texts like signs and notices, posters and programmes.	I can convey the main point(s) involved in short, simple texts on everyday subjects of immediate interest provided these are expressed clearly in simple language
	Mediating concepts	can invite other people's contributions using short, simple phrases. I can use simple words/signs and signals to show my interest in an idea and to confirm that I understand. I can express an idea very simply and ask others whether they understand me and what they think.	I can collaborate in simple, practical tasks, asking what others think, making suggestions and understanding responses, provided I can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time. I can make suggestions in a simple way to move the discussion forward and can ask what people think of certain ideas.
	Mediating communication	I can facilitate communication by showing my welcome and interest with simple words/signs and non-verbal signals, by inviting others to contribute and indicating whether I understand. I can communicate other people's personal details and very simple, predictable information, provided other people help me with formulation.	I can communicate by using simple words/signs to invite people to explain things, indicating when I understand and/or agree. I can communicate the main point of what is said in predictable, everyday situations about personal wants and needs. I can recognise when people disagree or when difficulties occur and can use simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement.

Source: Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2020

CEFR CV Written assessment grid

The written assessment grid and qualitative features of spoken language have been included to further support teachers in creating age and stage appropriate success criteria for spoken and written tasks across the three years of JC MFL that reflect students' growing communicative competence. These descriptors have also been used in the development of the features of quality for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 and 2 (see MFL Assessment Guidelines).

	A1	A2
Overall	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences. Longer texts contain expressions and show coherence problems that make the text very hard or impossible to understand.	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because". Longer texts may contain expressions and show coherence problems which makes the text hard to understand.
Range	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information mainly in everyday situations.
Coherence	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" and "then".	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
Accuracy	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire. Errors may cause misunderstandings.	Uses simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. Errors may sometimes cause misunderstandings.
Description	Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do, etc.	Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences. Can write short simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
Argument	There are no descriptors for argument at A1 level.	There are no descriptors for argument at A2 level.

Source: Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2020

CEFR CV Qualitative features of spoken language (expanded with phonology)

	A1	A2
Range	Has a very basic repertoire of words/ signs and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.
Accuracy	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.
Fluency	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly prepackaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.
Interaction	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can ask and 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.
Coherence	Can link words/signs or groups of words/signs with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and, "but" and "because".
Phonology	Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by interlocutors used to dealing with speakers of the language group concerned. Can reproduce correctly a limited range of sounds as well as stress on simple, familiar words and phrases.	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 other language(s) he/she speaks on stress, rhythm and intonation may affect intelligibility, requiring collaboration from interlocutors. Nevertheless, pronunciation of familiar words is clear.

Source: Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2020