



Mapping the TFI™ Test onto the Common European Framework of Reference

Executive Summary

Background

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment provides a common basis for describing the skills needed to reach different levels of language proficiency, and is used by language instructors, educators, curriculum designers and agencies working in the field of language development. The CEFR describes language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening on a six-level scale:

- A1–A2 (Basic User)
- B1–B2 (Independent User)
- C1–C2 (Proficient User)

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language tests. If a test score corresponds to one of the levels of the CEFR, what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do becomes clear.

ETS's Goal

The TFI™ (*Test de Français International*™) test measures general listening and reading skills that people may use to communicate in French in daily life and across a range of workplace settings. The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the TFI corresponding to four levels of the CEFR: A2, B1, B2 and C1. Minimum scores were identified separately for the Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension sections.

Standard Setting Study

Standard setting is the process by which a panel of informed experts makes score requirement recommendations that correspond with the level of knowledge, skills, proficiency, mastery or readiness candidates need in order to be placed in a certain category. The end result of standard setting is one or more recommended minimum score requirements, or cut scores. The minimum scores for each CEFR level in this particular study are presented as lower limits of the level for the Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension sections.

For this study, the panel consisted of 16 experts (French-language instructors, administrators or directors of language programs or schools, and language testing experts) from seven different countries.

Results

The expert panel was able to make connections between the constructs of the test and the CEFR. Prior to the standard setting study, ETS testing experts identified the CEFR levels A2 through C1 as those most clearly aligned with the TFI Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension sections. The table below presents, for the Listening and Reading sections, the total scaled score range and the minimum scores at each of the four CEFR levels.

TFI Test Section	Total Scaled Score Range	Minimum Scaled Score			
		A2	B1	B2	C1
Listening Comprehension	5–495	85	160	300	395
Reading Comprehension	5–495	105	185	305	430

Interpreting Results

Users of the TFI can interpret the recommended minimum scores by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR at www.ets.org/results/cefr.html. The results represent the recommendations of informed experts using a recognized standard setting approach. However, they should be considered guidelines as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

Technical Report

This standard setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Patricia A. Baron, Ed.D. and Richard J. Tannenbaum, Ph.D., in March 2010.