An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic

For introduction to schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

Contents

Senior Cycle

Senior cycle aims to educate the whole person and contribute to human flourishing. Students' experiences throughout senior cycle enrich their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall health and wellbeing. Senior cycle has 8 guiding principles.

Senior Cycle Guiding Principles
Wellbeing and relationships
Inclusive education and diversity
Challenge, engagement and creativity
Learning to learn, learning for life
Choice and flexibility
Continuity and transitions
Participation and citizenship
Learning environments and partnerships

These principles are a touchstone for schools and other educational settings, as they design their senior cycle. Senior cycle consists of an optional Transition Year, followed by a two-year course of subjects and modules. Building on junior cycle, learning happens in schools, communities, educational settings, and other sites, where students' increasing independence is recognised. Relationships with teachers are established on a more mature footing and students take more responsibility for their learning.

Senior cycle provides a curriculum which challenges students to aim for the highest level of educational achievement, commensurate with their individual aptitudes and abilities. During senior cycle, students have opportunities to grapple with social, environmental, economic, and technological challenges and to deepen their understanding of human rights, social justice, equity, diversity and sustainability. Students are supported to make informed choices as they choose different pathways through senior cycle and every student has opportunities to experience the joy and satisfaction of reaching significant milestones in their education. Senior cycle should establish firm foundations for students to transition to further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and participate meaningfully in society, the economy and adult life.

The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity. Students vary in their family and cultural backgrounds, languages, age, ethnic status, beliefs, gender, and sexual identity as well as their strengths, needs, interests, aptitudes and prior knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected, and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

At a practical level, senior cycle is supported by enhanced professional development; the involvement of teachers, students, parents, school leaders and other stakeholders; resources; research; clear communication; policy coherence; and a shared vision of what senior cycle seeks to achieve for our young people as they prepare to embark on their adult lives. It is brought to life in schools and other educational settings through:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation, reflection and evaluation

- teaching and learning approaches that motivate students and enable them to improve

- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

Rationale

Language is one of the means by which we think, organise our knowledge, express our thoughts and feelings, and communicate with others. It is a medium of interaction through which knowledge and experience are communicated and organised.

One of the main ways that societies define and share their culture and identity is through language. We live in a world which is rich in languages and Ireland, too, has its own rich linguistic heritage.[1] Every language has its own rich, distinctive features and complexities, as well as an intrinsic value as a resource for social participation, social cohesion, lifelong employment possibilities and mobility opportunities.

Young people in 21st century Ireland are growing up in a dynamic, multilingual, and multicultural society which is rapidly changing at local, national and global levels. They live in a world in which digital technologies, migration and mobility are bringing people closer together than ever before. In this society, shaped by social, political, and economic forces, the opportunity to develop their plurilingual repertoire can be a source of empowerment for students.

Language is also the means of self-expression as well as being the conduit for learning in the education process. It is a central factor in the growth of the student as a person: how we learn about ourselves, others, and the multilingual and multicultural world in which we live. Being exposed to language-learning experiences offers students opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions, so that they can participate fully and effectively in our multilingual society and in the world of work.

When students use more than one language, the spheres in which they can communicate are expanded. This empowers them to more fully enjoy and appreciate a variety of cultural backgrounds; to participate in and contribute to society as global citizens; and to access employment and mobility opportunities.

As well as benefitting society, a rich language learning repertoire has positive effects for students' personal and intellectual development and their leisure activities. Cognitive development is enhanced by language learning, and it can contribute to higher levels of achievement in other educational areas such as mathematical abilities and the formulation of scientific hypotheses.

The curriculum in Ireland is language-rich and therefore progress in every learning area involves competence in language. When students gain knowledge, skills, and literacy strategies in one language, they can build upon this learning, enabling them to apply and transfer their existing knowledge and skills across all learning in other senior cycle subjects and on their journey of lifelong learning.

Each student undertaking Leaving Certificate Arabic brings their own unique language repertoire and experiences to learning languages. Learning Arabic in senior cycle allows students to build on previous language learning experiences, empowering 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.

It is intended that the experience of learning Arabic in senior cycle will be highly relevant to the lives of students. It will further inspire in them an interest and curiosity about how they can use and learn languages in general and cultivate a greater appreciation of the similarities and differences between different countries, communities, and cultures.

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[1] Framework for Consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy for Ireland (DES, 2014, p.3)

Aims

Leaving Certificate Arabic aims to develop the ability of students to use the Arabic language for communicative purposes; explore the interdependence between language and culture; foster an appreciation of the value of languages for lifelong personal, educational, vocational and leisure purposes; and derive enjoyment from language learning.

It aims to develop students' plurilingual and pluricultural competence through language use and awareness, encouraging the development and use of language-learning strategies, fostering an understanding of how Arabic works, and recognising that making connections between languages can assist the process of language learning. This Leaving Certificate Arabic specification is intended for students with a basic language proficiency in Arabic and students from a heritage/ community/ home language background who wish to improve their communicative repertoire and plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

Finally, this specification aims to support social integration and active citizenship as well as an appreciation for the unique and exciting opportunities offered by languages at school, outside the classroom and in the workplace.

More specifically, Leaving Certificate Arabic aims to enable students to:

- communicate effectively and participate in everyday communications in a variety of media, in Arabic

- develop the capacity to communicate effectively with others from across diverse Arabic-speaking communities in a variety of media, using mediation where required

- develop the capacity to recognise, understand and use appropriate structures and vocabulary across the four modes of communication

- extract information and derive enjoyment from a variety of sources, including a range of media and authentic texts, in Arabic

- become reflective and autonomous language learners who are actively involved in monitoring and assessing their own progress

- foster an appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity and of the value of using their linguistic repertoire to better understand, celebrate and foster links with Arabic communities

- enjoy their language learning experiences and develop appropriate language proficiency to actively pursue leisure activities, further language study, and/or career opportunities through the medium of Arabic

- develop a greater awareness of how languages work and relate to one another, building on their linguistic knowledge and skills to support and motivate lifelong language learning and learning in general.

Language in context

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

This curriculum specification has been informed by the educational aims of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR[2]). The CEFR organises language proficiency into a progressive scale from A1 to C2 level (see Figure 1 for languages below).
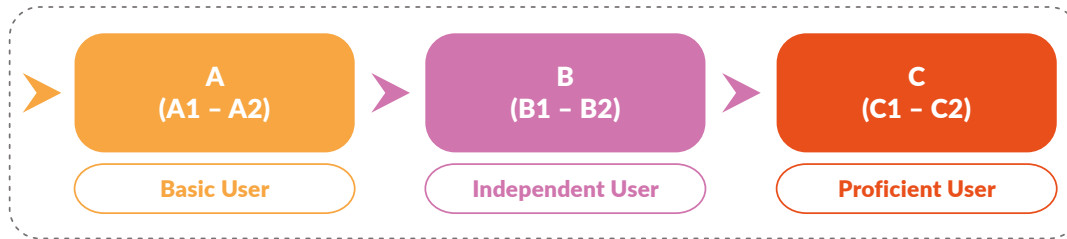

Figure 1: CEFR Language Proficiency Scale

The specification for Leaving Certificate Arabic aims to develop communicative language competences broadly aligned with the A2 – B1 bands of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its descriptors.

Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectical Arabic

Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages globally. It is a Semitic language and has two forms: Modern Standard Arabic (fuṣḥā) and Dialectical Arabic (lahjah/ ʿāmmiyah).
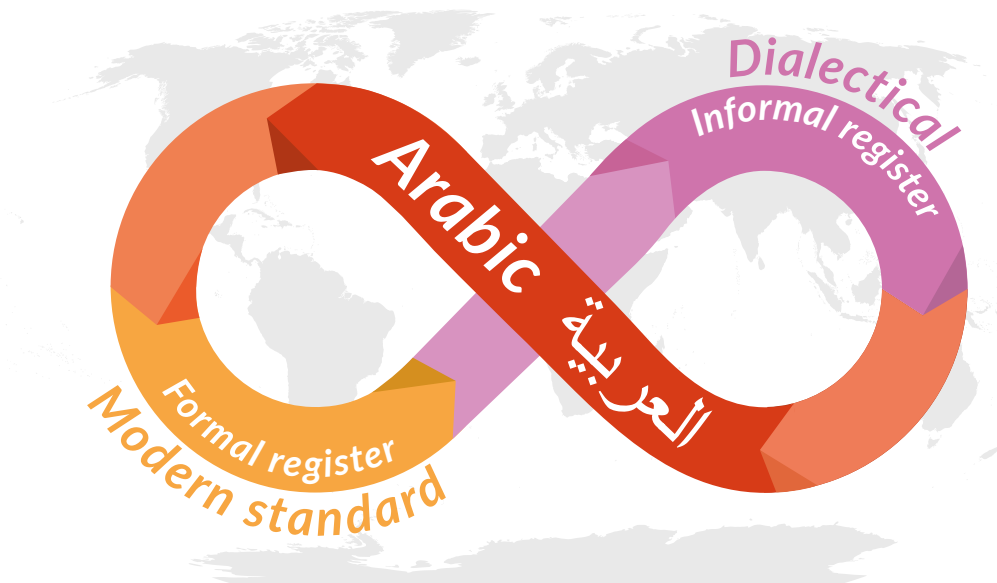
Figure 2: Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectical Arabic

[2] The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was published by the Council of Europe in 2001 and updated in its Companion Volume (CEFR CV) in 2020. The aim of the CEFR and CEFR CV is to provide a 'common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe' (Council of Europe 2001, p. 1).

Modern Standard Arabic (fuṣḥā) evolved from Classical Arabic and is the official language taught and used worldwide in formal situations, such as at school, at university and in official media. Standard Arabic (Classical and Modern) has been and continues to be the basis for a rich heritage of classical poetry and literary prose.

Dialectical Arabic (lahjah/ʿāmmiyah) varies according to geographical location. It is used in everyday situations, such as at home and in the marketplace, the street, restaurants, cafés, and popular culture and social media.

Arabic speakers often mix and/or switch between standard Arabic and the dialectical language depending on the context and audience/interlocutor. As Modern Standard Arabic is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world, it is used as a medium of mediation between speakers from different dialectical Arabic backgrounds. As such, the target language of this specification will be Modern Standard Arabic.

As the learning outcomes and experiences are intended to reflect real world language use and meet the needs of all students, classroom communication can involve Modern Standard Arabic and Dialectical Arabic. For instance, students will explore authentic texts such as films, songs, social media posts, etc. which may include dialectical forms of Arabic. Students should be encouraged to compare and contrast these forms to develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

Teachers and students bring their own unique plurilingual repertoire to learning Arabic. This may include existing knowledge of one or more variations of Dialectical Arabic. Students should be encouraged to maintain and draw on their existing linguistic and cultural competence when learning Leaving Certificate Arabic. This inclusive approach, which celebrates all variations of Arabic, prepares students for communication in the real world, where they will use their plurilingual and pluricultural competence to mediate communication with Arabic speakers from different dialects.

Arabic language communities

Students' engagement, motivation, and sense of progress is enhanced as they use Arabic to successfully and meaningfully communicate with diverse language communities, be they within the classroom, the school environment, or the wider language community.

Exposure to Arabic language communities, like any other language communities, provides students with examples of the living language and plays a central role in their learning progress. Students observe and engage with elements of the language which, in turn, acts as a stimulus for more learning. They come to understand the variances and overlaps between their own language and that of the language community. This development of language awareness, and intercultural awareness, helps to deepen their appreciation of Arabic language communities.

Through engagement with diverse Arabic language communities, students are exposed to a range of phonological, lexical, and grammatical variations within the Arabic language. Communication involves the negotiation of meaning, and as such involves using mediation activities and strategies to facilitate communication with speakers from dialects that are different to that of the interlocutor/speaker.

Continuity and progression

Leaving Certificate Arabic builds on the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that stem from learners' early childhood education through to the junior cycle curriculum.

The majority of students study Irish and English in the post-primary phase of their education. In addition, all junior cycle students are given the opportunity to learn a third or subsequent language. Junior cycle language specifications equip students with the skills and strategies to underpin further language learning, including additional languages which they can use for meaningful purposes. Students are enabled to reflect on their language-learning journey, to compare their target language with other languages they know, and to reflect on and become more aware of their own and other cultural identities.

Student learning in senior cycle

Student learning in senior cycle consists of everything students learn within all of the subjects and modules they engage with and everything students learn which spans and overlaps across all of their senior cycle experiences. The overarching goal is for each student to emerge from senior cycle more enriched, more engaged and more competent as a human being than they were when they commenced senior cycle.

For clarity, the learning which spans across all of their senior cycle experiences is outlined under the heading 'key competencies'. The learning which occurs within a specific subject or module is outlined under the heading 'strands and learning outcomes'. However, it is vital to recognise that key competencies and subject or module learning are developed in an integrated way. By design, key competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of specifications. In practice, key competencies are developed by students in schools via the pedagogies teachers use and the environment they develop in their classrooms and within their school. Subjects can help students to develop their key competencies; and key competencies can enhance and enable deeper subject learning. When this integration occurs, students stand to benefit

- during and throughout their senior cycle
- as they transition to diverse futures in further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and
- in their adult lives as they establish and sustain relationships with a wide range of people in their lives and participate meaningfully in society.

When teachers and students make links between the teaching methods students are experiencing, the competencies they are developing and the ways in which these competencies can deepen their subject specific learning, students become more aware of the myriad ways in which their experiences across senior cycle are contributing towards their holistic development as human beings.

Key competencies

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop in an integrated way during senior cycle.

Figure 3: The components of key competencies and their desired impact

The knowledge which is specific to this subject is outlined below under 'strands of study and learning outcomes'. The epistemic knowledge which spans across subjects and modules is incorporated into the key competencies.
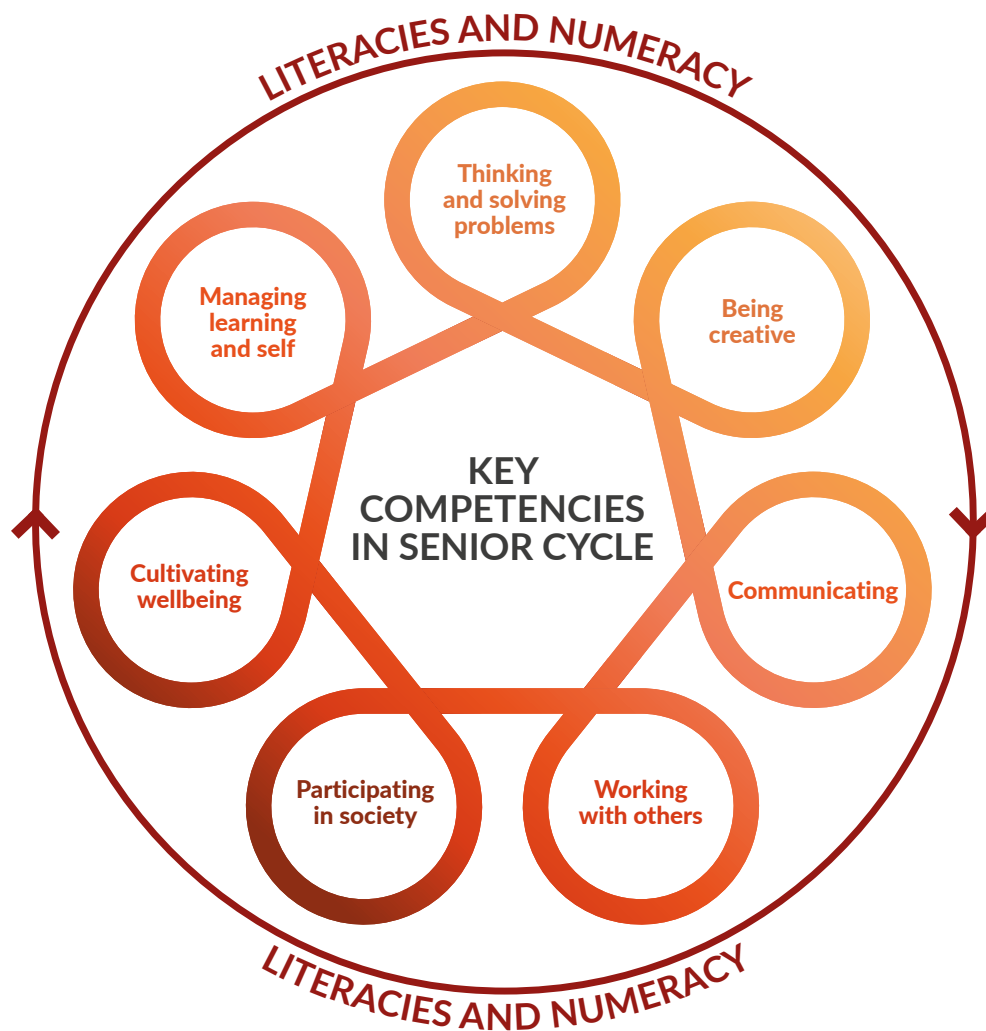
Figure 4: Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy.

These competencies are linked and can be combined; can improve students' overall learning; can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning; and are important across the curriculum.

The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice-versa. Key competencies are supported when students' literacies and numeracy are well developed and they can make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.

The key competencies come to life through the learning experiences and pedagogies teachers choose and through students' responses to them. Students can and should be helped to develop their key competencies irrespective of their past or present background, circumstances or experiences and should have many opportunities to make their key competencies visible. Further detail in relation to key competencies is available at https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/student-key-competencies/

The key competencies can be developed in Leaving Certificate Arabic in a range of ways. Students engage with the fundamental concepts and processes of language learning through participation in a range of learning and communication activities where they encounter the key competencies in an integrated way.

Thinking and solving problems

In Leaving Certificate Arabic, students process information by exploring, understanding, and creating a wide range of texts, critically engaging with a variety of sources to determine their reliability and suitability for different purposes. Leaving Certificate Arabic provides students with many opportunities to express their own ideas, develop and reflect on their own creativity and language learning strategies. They examine language patterns and make connections between Arabic and other languages they know to build a deeper understanding of the Arabic language and the way languages work in general.

Communicating and being creative

In Leaving Certificate Arabic, students will, from the outset, enjoy many opportunities to engage in meaningful communication across a range of media, including spoken text, printed texts, broadcast media, visuals, and digital media. Students are required to use their curiosity, imagination, and creativity to communicate authentically, meaningfully and effectively using the Arabic language across the modes of communication using a wide range of media.

Working with others

Learning languages enables students to cooperate to achieve shared goals, to adapt their language to suit the context and audience, showing appreciation of people with diverse views, cultures and ways of conveying information and emotions, and understanding and appreciating their role in dynamic and diverse groups. Communication skills are developed as students collaborate and as they engage in conversations and discussions, listening attentively and critically and eliciting information, opinions, ideas, and emotions.

Participating in society

Learning another language offers many opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in school, families, communities, and society, at local, national, and global level, in person and online. Developing their language proficiency in Arabic allows speakers to see the world through the lens of Arabic speakers, allowing students to develop and express their own ideas and place in society. Students can work with others to contribute towards sustainable futures for all and contribute ethically and positively to society in general.

Cultivating wellbeing

In Leaving Certificate Arabic students cultivate their wellbeing by developing and expressing their own personal identity and learning more about others' identities as they create their own texts and engage with each other's work. The Leaving Certificate Arabic classroom can be a collaborative and communicative environment, supporting students to be empathetic and compassionate towards self and others. Learning a language is a fulfilling, and challenging activity. As students build their own language portfolio, they build resilience and confidence, and as they learn to face challenges and learn from their mistakes to become proficient, autonomous Arabic speakers.

Managing learning and self

In Leaving Certificate Arabic, students build on their knowledge and understanding of language learning and form positive attitudes to learning in general. They develop values and dispositions which support their learning as they set goals, reflect on their learning, and use and expand their strategies for learning and using the language. Students build a language portfolio over two years, which allows them to make choices about the texts they choose to create and reflect on, as they evaluate their own learning. By building their portfolio, they develop an understanding of their own and other's work.

Strands of study and learning outcomes

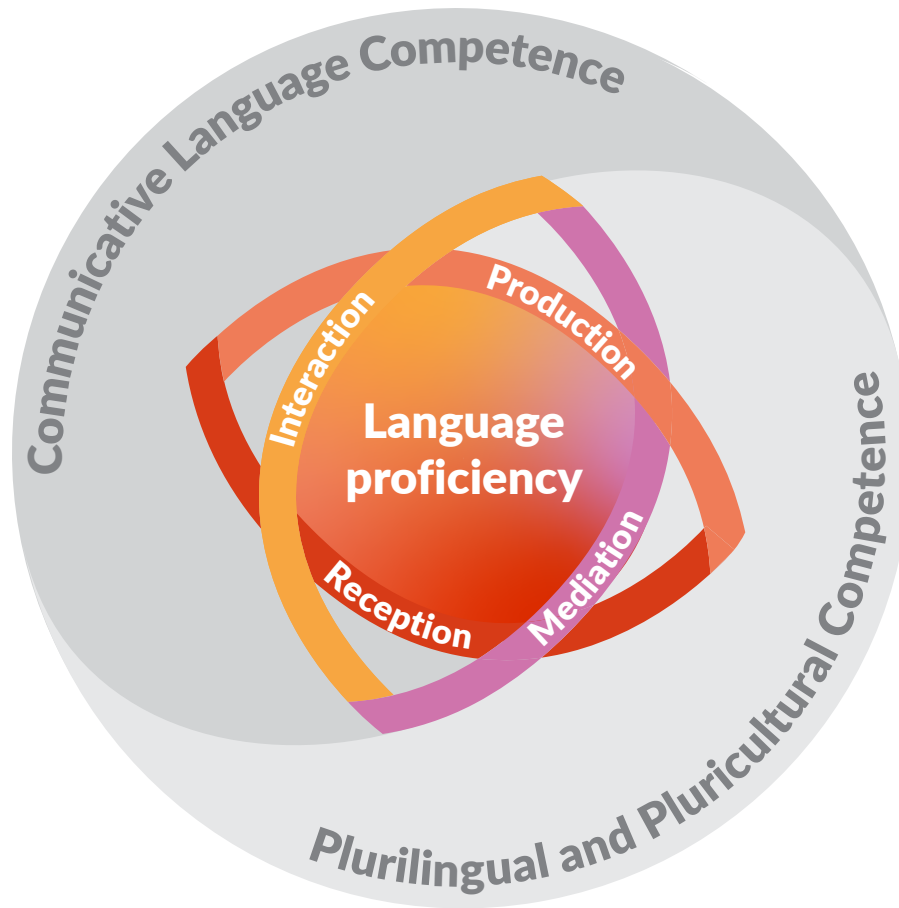This Leaving Certificate Arabic specification is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time.

The integrated and interdependent nature of the strands within this specification

An overview of each strand is provided below, followed by a table. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the specification.

Learning outcomes should be achievable relative to students' individual aptitudes and abilities. Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning processes that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally, enabling them to apply their key competencies to different situations as they progress. Students studying at both Ordinary level and Higher level will critically engage with Leaving Certificate Arabic, but the context, information and results arising from that engagement will be different. Appendix 1 sets out a glossary of terms for Leaving Certificate Arabic.

This specification is presented in two inter-related and inter-dependent strands. The strands in the specification are communicative language competence and plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Students develop their communicative language competence through reflective language use which is, in turn, informed by plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

The structure of the strands is set out to support teachers in planning for learning, teaching and assessment and should not be considered in isolation. Teachers identify pathways through the specification that respond to students' prior learning. This leads to deeper comprehension and application of their language skills in increasingly complex situations up to the point of being more proficient and confident language users.

In designing the strands and learning outcomes for this specification, the following concepts and ideas were given particular attention:

- languages are interrelated and interconnected, especially at the level of the individual.

- every student brings a unique and varied linguistic repertoire to their language learning experience.

- languages and cultures are not kept in separate mental compartments.

- all knowledge and experience of languages contribute to building up communicative competence.

- barriers between languages can be overcome in communication and different languages can be used purposefully for conveying messages in the same situation.[3]

While the learning outcomes are numbered, this is for ease of identification and does not imply a hierarchy of approach. The strands themselves are not numbered because it is recognised that, in order to acquire language proficiency, one needs to develop communicative competence and plurilingual and pluricultural competence in an integrated way.

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[3] CEFR Companion Volume, Council of Europe, 2020, p.123.

Strand 1: Communicative Language Competence

Language use is central to the development of overall language proficiency. The learning outcomes in this strand are organised under the four modes of communication identified in the CEFR Companion Volume,[4] highlighting the interactive nature of language use and communication, during which meaning is co-constructed for a wide range of purposes.

Mediation is a strategic process which involves the student's engagement in receptive, productive, interactive or mediation activities to make meaning and/or enable communication across languages or varieties or within the same language or variety.

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

Production includes activities and strategies involved in speaking and writing in Arabic in a variety of genres and 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.
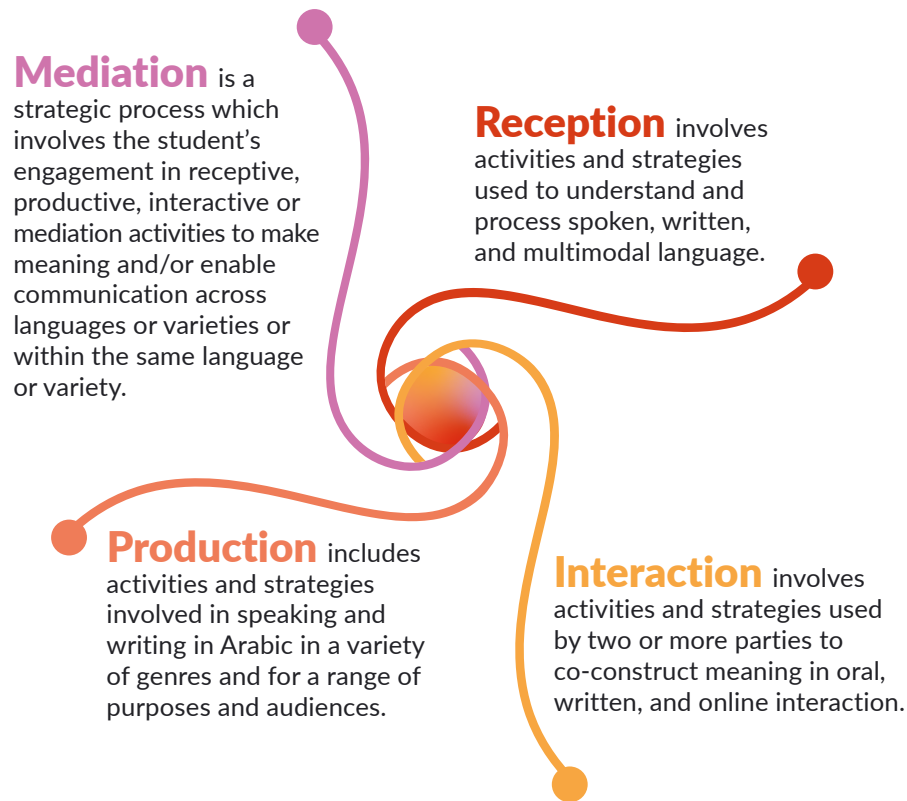
Figure 6: Illustration of the four modes of communication

Active engagement with the learning outcomes in this strand enables students to communicate effectively in Arabic for meaningful purposes and to develop overall language proficiency.

This strand encompasses linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences. As indicated earlier, learning outcomes in this strand are organised by the four modes of communication (reception, interaction, production, and mediation). In this strand, students will actively engage in tasks and activities in order to develop their ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of scenarios/contexts/situations.

Strand 1 Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for the element of Reception

Students learn about	Students should be able to
• exploring a wide range of texts on a broad range of topics related to everyday living as well as topics of interest to them to deepen their understanding of the Arabic language while heightening their awareness and appreciation of the cultures associated with Arabic. • using their increasing knowledge of lexical items and structures and develop the comprehension strategies and processes necessary to manage information. • engaging with a broad range of texts, appropriate to the age and stage of language learning	**1.1.** follow classroom interactions including pair and group work, presentations, and detailed instructions. **1.2.** engage with a range of authentic oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts in a variety of genres and formats for pleasure, research or comparison. **1.3.** identify and gather specific information from a range of oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts for a particular purpose. **1.4.** understand a wide lexical range at the level of individual words and expressions, as well as some commonly used idioms and collocations in context. **1.5.** identify factual information, the main line of argument, different viewpoints, and conclusions in a range of oral, written and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts. **1.6.** understand the main points of oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts such as news bulletins, advertisements, announcements, narratives and other interactions expressed in a range of registers and variations of Arabic. **1.7.** understand descriptions of people, places, events, personal experiences, feelings, and perspectives expressed in everyday language.

Learning outcomes for the element of Interaction

Students learn about	Students should be able to
• using Arabic to interact with others for the purpose of authentic communication in face to face and online interactions.	**1.8.** interact with others orally and in written format to ask and answer questions, make plans, solve problems, exchange simple news, ideas and information on topics that are familiar and of personal or current interest.
• managing written and spoken interactions of increasing complexity through regular communicative tasks and activities.	**1.9.** engage with others in discussion and debate on topics that are familiar and or personal or current interest.
• developing their competence in the Arabic language as well as their full plurilingual repertoire and intercultural awareness including communication and comprehension strategies to negotiate meaning.	**1.10.** deal with most transactions likely to arise while obtaining goods and services. **1.11.** compose and respond to communications in a range of written formats. **1.12.** give accounts of social and personal events, experiences, and activities, and respond with reasonable detail in real time in face-to-face and online interactions.
• learning to communicate on a wide range of concrete and abstract topics of interest and/or immediate relevance and in a range of social contexts, including familiar, informal, and formal settings.	**1.13.** use a range of suitable expressions, phrases, and idioms to initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversations, such as giving instructions, asking for details and/or clarifications as appropriate. **1.14.** use a range of strategies to help focus a discussion, such as by summarising the main point, reporting back, reacting to what has been said, inviting others to contribute.

Learning outcomes for the element of Production

Students learn about	Students should be able to
• creating increasingly complex spoken, written and multimodal texts in Arabic on a broad range of topics related to everyday living, as well as topics of interest to them within the personal, public, and educational domains of language use for the purpose of communication and enjoyment.	**1.15.** convey their message clearly enough to be understood with generally clear pronunciation, intonation, stress, and rhythm. **1.16.** use linguistic patterns, structures, and strategies to communicate with reasonable precision in familiar contexts. **1.17.** produce continuous and coherent text using spelling, punctuation, and a range of linguistic devices appropriately to connect simple elements. **1.18.** express opinions, feelings, and experiences, in writing and orally, on subjects relating to everyday life and use simple expressions to justify viewpoints, plans and/or actions.
• broadening their linguistic competence in Arabic while developing their awareness and appreciation of the cultures associated with Arabic.	**1.19.** create a range of texts on subjects of personal interest in oral, written, and multi-modal formats, for example, songs, poems, drama, stories.

Learning outcomes for the element of Mediation

Students learn about	Students should be able to
• developing, articulating, and sharing their thoughts and ideas, facilitating understanding and communication with others. • collaborating to share different ideas, and opinions, explaining information, and working together in order to achieve a goal. • making sense of, interpreting, explaining, summarising, and paraphrasing to construct or convey meaning, using communication and compensation strategies to support communication.	**1.20.** convey, in writing and orally, the main points involved in clear, well-structured literary and non-literary texts on subjects that are familiar and of personal or current interest. **1.21.** collaborate in simple practical tasks, asking what others think, making suggestions and understanding responses, asking for repetition or reformulation, as necessary. **1.22.** communicate the main point of what is heard/read in predictable, everyday situations, inviting others to explain things, indicating understanding and/or agreement or disagreement. **1.23.** support a shared communication culture by introducing people and exchanging information about priorities, recognising when difficulties occur and using simple phrases to seek compromise and agreement. **1.24.** respond to creative authentic oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary texts in a range of ways, for example, by relating events to personal experiences, explaining the significance of events, making connections between them and describing characters and their relationships. **1.25.** explain the main points of ideas and problems, summarising factual information including data, identifying advantages and disadvantages, and giving a personal response through written and multimodal texts in familiar contexts.

Strand 2: Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence Strand

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence is developed by and through the use of Arabic. As outlined in the CEFR:

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures... The various cultures (national, regional, social), to which a learner has gained access, do not just exist side by side but they are compared, contrasted and they actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence[5]

The learning outcomes in this strand are organised as follows:

- Plurilingual competence
- Pluricultural competence.

Active engagement with these learning outcomes is central to supporting the development of overall language proficiency.

In this strand students will develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Plurilingualism places value on the linguistic and cultural diversity of students. Students' knowledge of different languages and cultures is not compartmentalised; all knowledge and experience of languages and cultures interact and contribute to building communicative competence.

Plurilingualism highlights the need for students to draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to more fully participate in social and educational contexts.[6] This helps them to achieve mutual understanding, to gain access to

knowledge and thus further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire. The aim is not simply to achieve 'mastery' in one, two or three languages, each in isolation, but rather to 'develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place'.[7] Plurilingual comprehension involves, for example, using one's receptive knowledge in one language to deduce the meaning of texts in another language.

Pluriculturalism describes the use of pluricultural competences in a communicative situation when competences other than language competences come into play.[8] The various cultures to which a student has access to do not coexist side by side; they are not mentally compartmentalised. They are compared, contrasted, and actively interact to enable the student to communicate more effectively, for example, taking into consideration differences in behaviours (including gestures, tones and attitudes), discussing over-generalisations and stereotypes.[9]

[5] CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168.
[6] CEFR Companion Volume, Council of Europe, 2020, p. 123.
[7] CEFR, Council of Europe 2001, Section 1.3, p. 5.
[8] Ibid, p. 53.
[9] Ibid, p. 158.

Strand 2 Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes for the element of Plurilingual Competence

Students learn about

Students should be able to

- understanding and using Arabic as a distinct linguistic entity with its own particular linguistic features such as lexical, grammatical, and phonological elements for the purpose of communication in everyday language.

- heightening their awareness of similarities and differences between Arabic and other languages they know.

- building a network of all the languages and variations that they are learning as well as language learning and communication strategies to develop their plurilingual repertoire.

- developing a clear idea of the appropriateness of language in particular contexts with a particular audience.

- developing learner autonomy by learning to take initiatives and reflecting on their language use.

2.1. make sense of unfamiliar words by considering the constituent parts of the word, such as word roots and lexical elements, as well as the wider context of an oral, written, and multi-modal text.

2.2. use language resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, grammar, and online resources) independently in order to assist their language development.

2.3. recognise and use a range of linguistic patterns and structures for the purpose of communication.

2.4. apply communication and compensation strategies when communication is impaired (such as by describing something similar, using synonyms, gestures, translanguaging) and thereby avoid misunderstandings.

2.5. further develop language learning strategies to recall, understand and use Arabic for the purpose of oral and written communication.

2.6. creatively exploit their plurilingual repertoire in different languages and dialects in order to communicate with others in unexpected situations or to make sense of texts.

2.7. recognise similarities and differences in the way concepts are expressed and understood across different languages and dialects.

2.8. compare and contrast linguistic patterns and lexical expressions in Arabic to the languages/varieties they know to support their comprehension of oral, written, and multi-modal texts.

2.9. reflect on the language-learning process, using feedback to improve.

Learning outcomes for the element of Pluricultural Competence

Students learn about	Students should be able to
• building their knowledge and awareness of practices and norms associated with their own and other cultures. • deepening their knowledge of cultures of communities associated with Arabic. • becoming aware of and sensitive to the suitable use of culturally appropriate conventions. • showing sensitivity to differences, a readiness to offer and ask for clarification to mitigate against risks of misunderstandings. • engaging with a broad range of texts, critical evaluation of sources, class discussions and tasks.	**2.10.** explore and appreciate popular culture through a range of media. **2.11.** research and discuss a range of aspects of country/countries, communities and cultures associated with the Arabic language, for example geographical features, significant historical events, facts, famous people, and places. **2.12.** research aspects of the diverse cultural heritage, for example cuisine, folklore, music, traditions, the arts, and religions. **2.13.** interpret aspects of cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language in everyday living, social conventions, interpersonal relations and evolving values and beliefs through engagement with a range of oral, written, and multi-modal texts. **2.14.** develop and demonstrate awareness of customs, beliefs, and attitudes of people in cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language. **2.15.** explain features of the cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language to people with different cultural backgrounds, using a range of relevant formats and media. **2.16.** demonstrate an awareness of and use appropriate verbal and non-verbal social conventions when interacting with others. **2.17.** consider similarities and differences between cultures associated with the Arabic language and other cultures, respectfully recognising the feelings and different world views of others. **2.18.** support communication and interaction across cultures by showing interest, empathy, agreement and understanding.

Teaching for student learning

Leaving Certificate Arabic provides numerous opportunities for teachers to respond to the strengths, needs and interests of all students. Throughout their time in senior cycle, students are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values that will enable them to become more independent learners and to develop a lifelong commitment to improving their language learning.

The action-oriented approach

The expectations for students articulated in this specification are broadly aligned to A2 - B1 levels of the CEFR. As such, this specification offers opportunities to develop communicative capacity and linguistic and intercultural awareness in a wide range of real-life contexts related to the personal, public, and educational domains[10] of language use. The aim of the Leaving Certificate Arabic specification is for students to use Arabic to perform the functions of everyday interaction across the four modes of communication (reception, interaction, production, and mediation) across the personal, educational and public domains of language use. At the Basic User level of language learning, learners are engaged in tasks and activities focused on simple everyday interaction across these modes. Students learn to interact in situations of immediate relevance, drawing on their own lived experience, transferring their prior knowledge, skills and strategies to learning Arabic. Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences. Students learn to understand and create a range of short and simple texts in familiar contexts.

As they become independent users of Arabic, students manage to understand and create texts of increasing length and complexity on concrete and familiar matters related to their field of interest and experience. As students' language proficiency develops across the B1 band, they learn to navigate a broader range of topics, events, and experiences relevant to their own lived experience and personal interests.

The action-oriented approach is flexible and inclusive 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 in line with the Learning Outcomes of the specification.

Students vary in the amount and type of support they need to be successful. Students bring different ideas and levels of understanding to each language learning task or activity. This specification gives students and teachers the flexibility to use a range of relevant and appropriate learning and teaching strategies, such as adjusting the level of skills required, varying the amount and the nature of teacher supports, and varying the pace and sequence of learning. The creation of assessment criteria, guided by the descriptors of quality outlined in the Assessment section of this specification, along with the CEFR descriptors (see appendices), can further support inclusivity.

The action-oriented approach highlights the social nature of language and encourages teachers to draw on the connections between language, society and interpersonal relationships.

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[10] Further information regarding the domains of language use and the action-oriented approach is available in chapter 2 of the CEFR.

The language learning journey

The learning and acquisition of Arabic can be viewed as a language learning journey. The focus of students on this journey is to become capable, independent, and self-governing language users. An important part of the journey is prior language learning and acquisition. The skills students have developed acquiring their first and subsequent language(s) play a very important role in the acquisition and development of Arabic. They have developed knowledge, skills, and language learning strategies that are transferable across different languages, enabling them to make connections between aspects of language and everyday experiences.

Within the action-oriented approach to language learning, teaching, and learning is centred around communicative tasks and activities. As students begin to learn Arabic, these activities draw on the language of everyday interaction, including familiar topics from students' own lived experiences, where they can transfer their prior knowledge across to the new language they are learning. As students develop their language proficiency, they navigate concrete topics, events, and experiences as well as topics of personal interest that may be less familiar to all students. Students' individual interests play a key role in developing their language proficiency at this stage of learning. As they become more and more independent language users, they are increasingly able to navigate more complex tasks and activities related to less familiar topics, with increasingly complex language.

Self-awareness is the most effective tool that language learners can use to make progress. With help and feedback from teachers and by reflecting on their language learning journey, students take the necessary steps to develop language proficiency. Students and teachers collaborate on this aspect of lifelong language learning. The interactive, communicative use of Arabic by both parties provides the input that is essential for language development. Teachers have expertise in the language and have particular knowledge

and special skills relating to the teaching and assessment of language to facilitate learning. When students encounter challenges and difficulties, teachers provide guidance, encouragement, help, feedback, and support so that they may progress. Output is of particular importance for students on this journey, as is a language-rich learning environment and opportunities for use of and interaction in the language. To support this language-rich environment, it is desirable that students are encouraged and scaffolded to engage with authentic texts. The role and uses of texts is outlined in the next section.

Classmates, the learning environment, and the community also have a role to play. By taking advantage of opportunities to communicate with classmates in group work, pair work and other collaborative activities and by engaging in tasks through Arabic, students can interact through Arabic and develop skills in communication, listening to each other and reflecting on their own work and that of others.

Engaging in a variety of meaningful tasks and language activities will enable students to take charge of their own learning, motivating them to set goals, develop action plans, and to receive, respond to and reflect on assessment feedback. As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support learning and provide information that can be used as feedback. In this way learning and teaching activities can be designed and/or delivered in ways that best suit individual students and their language skills. By setting appropriate, real-life, and engaging tasks, by asking higher-order questions and by giving feedback that promotes student agency, assessment will support learning as well as capturing achievement.

Observation is another tool used by students to make progress. A sense of curiosity and a desire to learn are created, and students become self-aware. Through this awareness, they acknowledge the disparity between the level of their own language system (interlanguage) and richer, more accurate

and more natural versions and examples of the language produced by others. They understand why they make mistakes and take responsibility for correcting those mistakes, producing richer, more accurate and more natural language themselves.

As described below, students may use their language portfolio to regularly describe what they observe about the language, reflect on their progress and on the cultures and communities associated with the Arabic language. They might also describe the steps they must take to make progress as a student and a language user. Such elements necessarily underpin their ongoing progress in the language.

The role and uses of texts in learning Arabic

An underlying principle of this specification is the integrated nature of the development of language skills and the exploration of texts (both literary and non-literary texts). Students expand their comprehension skills, their analytical skills and their general learning skills when exploring texts and in doing so, they use all their language skills and competences across the four modes of communication.

Literary and non-literary Arabic texts are used to support the integrated development of the skills and competences of students. All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts.

Key terms related to the use of texts in Leaving Certificate Arabic	
Authentic text	a literary or non-literary text created to fulfil some personal or social purpose, a genuine communicative purpose, in the language community in which it was produced.
Genre	is the term used to indicate the type of text, whether oral or written. Genres have particular objectives and organisational patterns depending on their purpose and audience, as well as appropriate language registers.
Literary text	a creative text which demonstrates the state or circumstances of an individual, a narrative, poem, song, or drama which derives from emotions, life experience and memories of a person. Students are offered insights into the culture of their own language community and that of other cultures through engaging with literary texts.
Multi-modal text	combines language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound, and the spoken word.
Non-literary text	a text that is created to share knowledge or information. Literary elements could be evident in a non-literary text.
Oral text	a form of communication that is spoken or transmitted by word of mouth.

Table 1: Key terms related to the use of texts in Leaving Certificate Arabic

Literary and non-literary Arabic texts are used to support the integrated development of the skills and competences of students. A rich and wide variety of such texts is a valuable and important source of language for students. They develop an awareness of the various mediums/ contexts in which Arabic can be used by engaging with and creating texts that serve a variety of purposes. This allows students to develop both their language awareness and their awareness as language learners, which empowers them to demonstrate their language competence and creative abilities across a range of genres in Arabic.

Arabic literature is of particular importance within this specification and is central to the students' language acquisition and learning process. Literature is important in terms of the learning and the contextualisation of the language.

It is an important resource that provides students with insights into aspects of cultures associated with the Arabic language. Literature is also an important resource for personal development and the development of cultural identity.

In Leaving Certificate Arabic, students will be exposed to a range of authentic oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary Arabic texts in a variety of genres and formats. This involves both fiction and non-fiction texts, including, for example, magazine and newspaper articles, announcements, advertisements, infographics, as well as poems, short stories, simple novels, films, TV programmes, documentaries, etc. taking into account real world language use, the interests of the students, and their motivation to learn. These texts will be selected by students and their teachers.

Skills and competences	Arabic literature is a learning resource which: • builds students' vocabulary and richness of expression. • provides samples of language accuracy and grammatical traits in the context of the living language • empowers students to undertake independent reading. • assists students in developing analytical skills and independent thinking.
Culture and heritage of Arabic-speaking communities	Arabic literature gives students insight and understanding: • into the culture, history, and heritage of Arabic-speaking communities in times past and present • on elements of the cultural and political heritage of Arabic-speaking communities • on the Arabic language itself as a creative medium and as a living community language • on the environment and on local, national, and international cultural heritage.
Personal development and empathy	The reading of literature nurtures imagination and self-understanding in various ways. It: • provides students with mental and imaginative stimulation. • inspires creativity and novel thinking in students. • nurtures the development of humanity in students and inspires empathy and emotional sensitivity. • challenges students and entices them to understand opposing insights and go beyond the limits of their own experience. • builds an understanding of the beauty of literature itself and the pleasure of reading.

Table 2: Summary of the role and use of texts in the learning process

Language portfolio

Over the two years of Leaving Certificate Arabic each student develops a language portfolio. The language portfolio focuses on the student's language journey, on the process and progress of their language-learning experiences. It places the student at the centre of learning, teaching and assessment and facilitates autonomous learning.

The purpose of the language portfolio is to create a space in which students can record and reflect on their growing language proficiency. It provides them with an opportunity to set personal learning goals across the four modes of communication (reception, interaction, production, and mediation) and to develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence by becoming more aware of themselves as language learners and users.

Using the language portfolio supports ongoing formative assessment in the language classroom and facilitates students in showcasing their language-learning achievements. Self-assessment is fundamental to the language portfolio and students are encouraged to set goals for their learning and monitor their own progress through evaluative

reflection. In addition to teacher feedback, students will be encouraged to self-assess and peer-assess their work. This will further develop their autonomy as language learners and users.

The language portfolio will include a broad range of items, such as written texts, projects, audio-visual materials, learning logs, student reflections and learning goals. It is recognised that in this context, the students' created texts may be presented in different formats—handwritten, multi-modal, and so on.

Using the portfolio as a means of documenting and reflecting on their learning will help students to develop an awareness of the language-learning process, to develop language-learning strategies and to become more independent in their language learning.

As outlined in the assessment section of this specification, students will engage in conversation about their language portfolio during the oral examination. The language portfolio is a stimulus for conversation and discussion. However, the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using, and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for students through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of strength or difficulty for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual students. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions, and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification is based on the rationale, aims and learning outcomes of this specification. There are three assessment components: a written examination and two additional assessment components comprising an aural and oral examination. The written examination and the additional assessment component, the aural examination, will be at higher and ordinary level. In the additional assessment component, the oral examination, the tasks will be common for higher level and for ordinary level. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

In the written examination, Leaving Certificate Arabic will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary (Table 2). Examination questions will require students to demonstrate learning appropriate to each level. Differentiation at the point of assessment will also be achieved through the stimulus material used, and the extent of the structured support provided for examination students at different levels. All components of assessment will reflect the integrated nature of the strands outlined in this specification. The senior cycle key competencies (Figure 2) are embedded in the learning outcomes of this specification and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes.

Assessment component	Ordinary level	Higher Level
Oral examination	25%	30%
Aural examination	30%	25%
Written examination	30% Reading	25% Reading
	15% Writing	20% Writing

Table 3: Overview of assessment for certification

The different weighting applied to each component across ordinary and higher levels is based on the understanding that for most language learners the development of receptive skills outpaces the development of productive skills during the process of language learning. Therefore, a greater weighting is allocated to receptive tasks at ordinary level and to productive and interactive tasks at higher level.

Additional assessment component: Oral examination

The oral examination will assess spoken language proficiency in line with the learning outcomes in this specification. In doing so, a range of learning outcomes will be assessed across both strands in line with the assessment criteria outlined below.

The oral examination will:

- focus on the student's ability to engage in a number of reception, interaction, production, and mediation tasks, using Arabic appropriately and effectively to negotiate meaning.

- involve a discussion of a selection of texts from their Language Portfolio.[11] During the oral examination the language portfolio will be a stimulus for conversation and discussion. However, the content of the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

In the oral examination, the focus is on oral proficiency and communicating the message clearly. During the oral examination questions will be presented in Modern Standard Arabic.

Students may use mediation skills and strategies in responding to questions.

[11] See page 28 for more information about the Language Portfolio.

Descriptors of quality for Oral examination

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Oral examination.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Task completion	Can communicate the message fully and clearly with a high level of awareness of register appropriate to the context and target audience.	Can communicate the message clearly enough to be understood, showing good awareness of the register appropriate to the context and target audience.	Can communicate the message somewhat clearly with limited awareness of the register appropriate to the context and target audience.
Interaction	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions with confidence in unscripted conversations in a wide range of familiar situations and topics.	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions using simple, direct phrases in unscripted conversations in familiar situations and topics, provided they are supported by the interlocutor.	Can begin, maintain, and end interactions with limited confidence and effectiveness in unscripted conversations and about very familiar situations and topics, with collaboration from the interlocutor.
Mediation	Can summarise the main points in texts on topics of interest and answer further questions about details (e.g. characters, events, experiences and emotions). Can ask appropriate questions to check understanding of concepts that have been explained. Can creatively and appropriately use communication and compensation strategies to sustain communication.	Can summarise the main points in texts, at times supplementing with other means to aid communication. Can answer further questions about key aspects in high frequency everyday language. Can answer simple questions to ask for clarification and to help keep the conversation going. Can appropriately apply communication and compensation strategies to avoid misunderstandings.	Can summarise the main points in short and simple texts, supplementing their limited repertoire with other means to further communication. Can express their reactions to a work, reporting their feelings and ideas in simple language. Can pose occasional questions to show that they are following.
Plurilingual and pluricultural competence	Can demonstrate high levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.	Can demonstrate adequate levels of awareness and understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.	Can demonstrate very little awareness or understanding of cultures associated with Arabic, appropriate to the task and their stage of learning.
Range	Has a sufficient range of language to give clear descriptions and express viewpoints on most general topics, using some more complex sentence forms to do so. Can make a connected, linear sequence of points.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events. Can link shorter elements into connected sequences.	Can use basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words/signs and formulae to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations. Can use simple connectors like 'and', 'but', 'because'.

28

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Accuracy and fluency	Can keep going comprehensibly, with only few pauses, hesitations, and searching for expressions and very few errors that cause misunderstanding. Self-corrects where appropriate.	Can make themselves understood, with pauses, especially in longer stretches. Frequently used expressions in predictable situations are reasonably accurate.	Can use very short and simple sentences with many pauses, hesitations, reformulations. Uses some structures correctly but makes basic mistakes.

Table 4: Descriptors of quality for Oral examination

Additional assessment component: Aural examination

The aural examination will assess listening comprehension skills in line with the learning outcomes in this specification. In doing so, a range of learning outcomes will be assessed across both strands.

The aural examination will assess the ability of students to engage in a variety of reception, interaction, production, and mediation tasks consistent with the learning outcomes of the specification and the assessment criteria outlined below.

During the aural examination students will engage with spoken stimulus material reflecting real world use of Arabic in a range of real-life contexts. The materials presented will be in Modern Standard Arabic so as to be linguistically accessible to a diverse range of Arabic speakers.

Descriptors of quality for Aural examination

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Aural examination.

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Comprehension/ Mediation	Can understand the main points of shorter and extended speech on familiar topics, topics of personal interest and current affairs in a variety of contexts. Can clearly relay the contents of straightforward informational texts using their own words. Can take clear notes on a well-structured presentation on a topic within their field of interest or experience.	Can understand shorter and extended speech on familiar topics, topics of personal interest and current affairs. Can relay relevant information in short, simple texts, using their own words. Can identify the essential information in a straightforward informational text. Can list key points during a straightforward presentation on a familiar subject.	Can understand short and simple conversations, reports, and discussions when the topics are familiar. Can relay the point made in short, clear, simple messages, instructions, announcements, provided they are expressed slowly. Can take simple notes during a short presentation on familiar and predictable topics.
Plurilingual and pluricultural competence	Can creatively use their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.	Can demonstrate use of their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.	Can demonstrate in a limited way the use of their plurilingual and pluricultural competences to make sense of texts.

Table 5: Descriptors of quality for Aural examination

Written examination

The written examination will consist of a range of question types. The senior cycle key competencies (figure 2) are embedded in the learning outcomes and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes. The written examination paper will include a selection of questions that will assess, appropriate to each level:

- students' ability to engage with written and multimodal stimulus material presented in Modern Standard Arabic to complete a range of reception, interaction, production, and mediation tasks consistent with the strands and learning outcomes of the specification

- students' ability to communicate effectively and accurately in Modern Standard Arabic

- students' ability to communicate a message clearly, demonstrating an awareness of the influence of audience and register on appropriate language use

- students' knowledge and awareness of aspects of communities or cultures associated with Arabic.

The stimulus materials used in the written examination will be presented in Modern Standard Arabic. Students will respond in Modern Standard Arabic using mediation skills and strategies to aid communication.

Reasonable accommodations

This Leaving Certificate Arabic specification requires that students engage with the nature of the subject on an ongoing basis throughout the course. The assessment for certification in Leaving Certificate Arabic involves a written examination worth 45% of the available marks and two additional components worth 55%. In this context, the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), is designed to assist students who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical, visual, sensory, hearing, or learning difficulty. The scheme assists such students to demonstrate what they know and can do, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The focus of the scheme is on removing barriers to access, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions as are assessed for all other students and to apply the same standards of achievement as apply to all other students. The Commission makes every effort when implementing this scheme to accommodate individual assessment needs through these accommodations.

There are circumstances in which the requirement to demonstrate certain areas of learning when students are being assessed for certification can be waived or exempted, provided that this does not compromise the overall integrity of the assessment.

More detailed information about the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations, including the accommodations available and the circumstances in which they may apply, is available from the State Examinations Commission's Reasonable Accommodations Section.

Before deciding to study Leaving Certificate Arabic, students, in consultation with their school and parents should review the learning outcomes of this specification and the details of the assessment arrangements. They should carefully consider whether or not they can achieve the learning outcomes, or whether they may have a special educational need that may prevent them from demonstrating their achievement of the outcomes, even after reasonable accommodations have been applied. It is essential that if a school believes that a student may not be in a position to engage fully with the assessment for certification arrangements, they contact the State Examinations Commission.

Leaving Certificate Grading

The Leaving Certificate Arabic examination will be graded using an 8-point grading scale at both Ordinary level and Higher level. The highest grade is a grade 1, the lowest grade is a grade 8. The highest seven grades, 1–7, divide the marks range 100% to 30% into seven equal grade bands, each 10% wide, with a grade 8 being awarded for percentage marks of less than 30%. The grades at Higher level and Ordinary level are distinguished by prefixing the grade with H or O respectively, giving H1–H8 at Higher level, and O1–O8 at Ordinary level.

Grade	% marks
H1/O1	90 – 100
H2/O2	80 < 90
H3/O3	70 < 80
H4/O4	60 < 70
H5/O5	50 < 60
H6/O6	40 < 50
H7/O7	30 < 40
H8/O8	< 30

Table 6: Leaving Certificate grading scale

Appendix 1 Glossary

This glossary is intended to clarify concepts and terms used in this specification.

Action-oriented	This approach views students as social agents and active participants in their own learning. It implies the use of Arabic by students while engaging in purposeful, collaborative tasks.
Aural	In aural reception activities, the language user receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers.[12]
Authentic texts	A literary or non-literary text that was created to fulfil some personal or social purpose, a genuine communicative purpose, in the language community in which it was produced.
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, published by the Council of Europe in 2001. This is a framework of reference that provides tools, guidelines, and resources for the development of language curricula, textbooks and assessment tools and programmes to support the teaching and learning of languages. The CEFR Companion Volume was published in 2020.
Dialectical Arabic	Dialectical Arabic is used in everyday situations, such as at home and in the marketplace, the street, restaurants, cafés, and in popular and social media. Dialectical Arabic varies according to geographical location.
Input	Instructions, materials, etc. selected or produced by teachers and/or learners.[13]
Interaction	Interaction includes communicating, collaborating, turn-taking and/or asking for clarification in order to co-construct meaning and is fundamental to language learning.
Mediation	In mediation, 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.
Modern Standard Arabic	Modern Standard Arabic is the official language taught worldwide and used in formal situations, such as at school, at university and in official media. Modern Standard Arabic is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world.
Multilingualism	The co-existence of different languages in society.
Oral interaction	In oral interaction at least two individuals participate in an oral exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap.[14]
Oral production	In oral production activities the language user produces a spoken output.
Oral text	A form of communication that is spoken or transmitted by word of mouth.
Output	Language composed or generated by the students themselves.

[12] CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p. 65.
[13] Ibid, p55.
[14] CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001, p.9

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.[15]
Plurilingualism	Plurilingualism is the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner[16] 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.[17]
Reception	Receiving and processing language through listening and/or reading.
Task-based language learning	An approach to language learning where students engage with real-life and authentic tasks through communication, providing meaningful opportunities to acquire language by using it.
Text	All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.
Translanguaging	The process whereby multilingual speakers use their plurilingual repertoire, as an integrated language system. This is also known as code-switching.

[15] Ibid, p. 6.
[16] Ibid, p. 28.
[17] Ibid, p. 157.

Appendix 2 The Common European Framework of Reference

As the expectations for students in this specification are notionally aligned with A2/B1 levels of the CEFR CV (CoE, 2020), the illustrative descriptor scales which follow are samples taken from it. They are not intended to replace learning outcomes, but to provide guidance about A2 and B1 levels. All CEFR illustrative descriptor scales can be found in the CEFR Companion Volume (ibid). The learning outcomes can be found on pages 38-45 of this specification.

Overview of CEFR Common Reference Levels

This overview illustrates 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 themselves 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 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 the development of the student language portfolio. They may inform 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 A2/B1 level. Descriptors for other levels can be found here.

		A2	B1
Reception	**Oral comprehension**	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.	I can understand the main points of clear standard language on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is slow and clear.
	Reading comprehension	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.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings, and wishes in personal letters.
Interaction	**Spoken interaction**	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.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g., family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
	Written and online interaction	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 simple transactions such as ordering goods, can follow simple instructions and can collaborate in a shared task with a supportive interlocutor.	I can interact about experiences, events, impressions and feelings provided that I can prepare beforehand. I can ask for or give simple clarifications and can respond to comments and questions in some detail. I can interact with a group working on a project, provided there are visual aids such as images, statistics and graphs to clarify more complex concepts.
Production	**Spoken production**	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.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
	Written production	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".	I can write straightforward connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.

		A2	B1
Mediation	**Mediating a text**	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	I can convey information given in clear, well-structured informational texts on subjects that are familiar or of personal or current interest.
	Mediating concepts	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.	I can help define a task in basic terms and ask others to contribute their expertise. I can invite other people to speak, to clarify the reason(s) for their views or to elaborate on specific points they made. I can ask appropriate questions to check understanding of concepts and can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.
	Mediating communication	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.	I can support a shared communication culture by introducing people, exchanging information about priorities, and making simple request for confirmation and/or clarification. I can communicate the main sense of what is said on subjects of personal interest, provided speakers articulate clearly and I can pause to plan how to express things.

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

CEFR Written assessment grid

The written assessment grid have been included to further support teachers in creating age and stage appropriate success criteria for written tasks across the two years of LC Arabic to reflect students' growing communicative competence.

	A2	B1
Overall	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.	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence. The texts are understandable but occasional unclear expressions and/or inconsistencies may cause a break-up in reading.
Range	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information mainly in everyday situations.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
Coherence	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".	Can link a series of shorter discrete elements into a connected, linear text.
Accuracy	Uses simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes. Errors may sometimes cause misunderstandings.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more common situations. Occasionally makes errors that the reader usually can interpret correctly on the basis of the context.
Description	Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences. Can write short simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. Can write a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined. Can narrate a story. Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.
Argument	There are no descriptors for argument at A2 level.	Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest. Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on a familiar routine and non-routine matters, within his field with some confidence. Can write very brief reports to a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.

CEFR Qualitative features of spoken language (expanded with phonology)

The 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 two years of Leaving Certificate Arabic to reflect students' growing communicative competence. These descriptors have also been used in the development of the Descriptors of Quality for Additional Assessment Component: Oral examination.

	A2	B1
Range	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
Accuracy	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
Fluency	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.
Interaction	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.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.
Coherence	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and, "but" and "because".	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
Phonology	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.	Pronunciation is generally intelligible; can approximate intonation and stress at both utterance and word levels. However, accent is usually influenced by other language(s) he/she speaks.

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

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