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Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

THiNK

Developing Life
Competencies
Through Think

Better
Learning

How can we prepare our students to succeed in a world that is changing fast? We see the increasing need to work together with people from around the world, to think creatively and solve problems, to analyse sources more critically, to communicate our views effectively, to maintain a positive mindset in an increasingly complex world. How can we support the development of these skills? At Cambridge, we have set out to support teachers in this challenging area.



The Cambridge Framework

Introduction to the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

There have been many initiatives to address the skills and competencies our students need for the 21st century – each relating to different contexts. At Cambridge, we are responding to educators who have asked for a way to understand how all these different approaches to life competencies relate to English language programmes.

The Cambridge Framework sets out to have three dimensions:

BREADTH

Complete view of transferable skills within one system

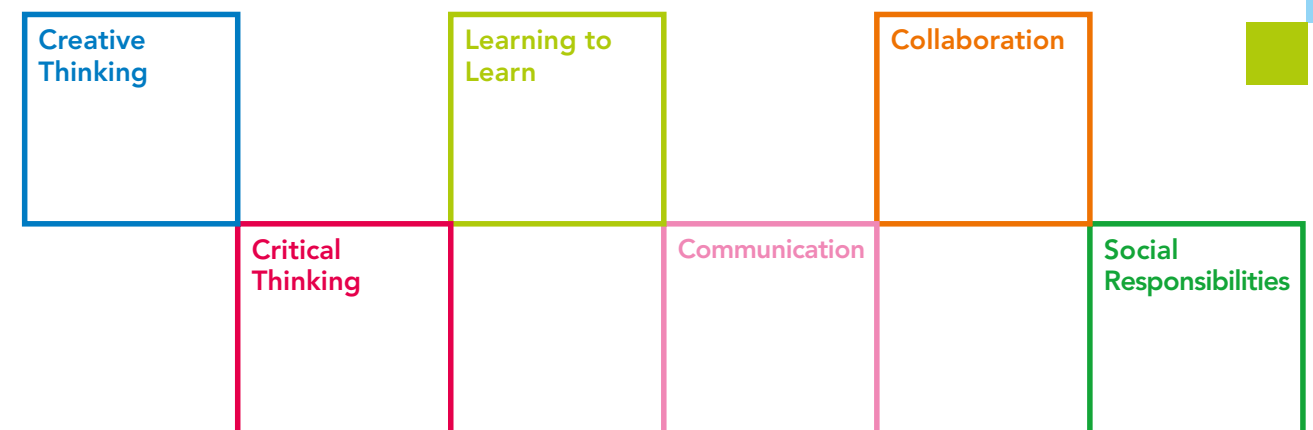
DEVELOPMENT

How the skills develop across stages of the learning journey

DEPTH

Enough detail to guide teaching and assessment in practical ways

We have grouped the different competencies into six main areas.



These are supported by three foundation layers that underpin the Framework:

- Emotional Development
- Digital Literacy
- Discipline Knowledge



Damir
Student, Angola

The Learning Journey

We have also started work on examining the different stages of the learning journey, and how these competencies vary across each stage.



Pre-Primary



Primary



Secondary



Higher Education



At Work

The exact boundaries between each stage will vary between different countries and different contexts, as will the expectations of what learners at each stage will be able to do. This Framework sets out to provide a useful starting point for institutions and educationalists to use in identifying the most appropriate learning outcomes for their particular context.

Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

CORE AREAS

Creative Thinking	Participating in creative activities	Creating new content from own ideas or other resources	Using newly created content to solve problems and make decisions	
Critical Thinking	Understanding and analysing links between ideas	Evaluating ideas, arguments and options	Synthesising ideas and information	
Learning to Learn	Practical skills for participating in learning	Taking control of own learning	Reflecting on and evaluating own learning success	
Communication	Using appropriate language and register for context	Managing conversations	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	
Collaboration	Taking personal responsibility for own contribution to a group task	Listening respectfully and responding constructively to others' contributions	Managing the sharing of tasks in a project	Working towards a resolution related to a task
Social Responsibilities	Understanding personal responsibilities as part of a group and in society – including citizenship	Taking active roles including leadership	Understanding and describing own and others' cultures	Understanding and discussing global issues – environmental, political, financial and social

FOUNDATIONAL LAYERS

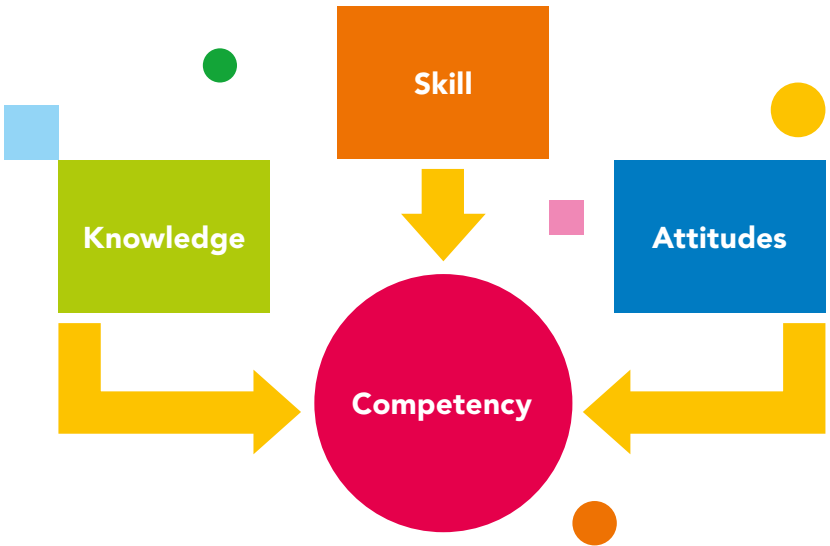
Emotional Development
Digital Literacy
Discipline Knowledge

cambridge.org/clcf



What Are 'Competencies'?

We call these 'competencies' rather than 'skills', because competencies are more than just skills. The competencies in this Framework are complex and require development in three areas:



Knowledge is what you need to know to do something well. Skill is the degree of mastery or fluency in using the competency; skill is what you get from practice. Attitudes refer to the disposition and mind-set you need to develop knowledge and skill in this area.

This approach is consistent with the definitions given by the European Union in their Recommendations on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning.

Competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, where:

a) knowledge is composed of the facts and figures, concepts, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject;

b) skills are defined as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use the existing knowledge to achieve results;

c) attitudes describe the disposition and mind-sets to act or react to ideas, persons or situations.

Council of the European Union, 2018, p14.

Can Do Statements

In this section, we have provided some examples of Can Do Statements which are descriptions of what learners can be expected to do for each competency by the end of that stage of the learning journey. These Can Do Statements will vary in their suitability for learners in different contexts, and so are provided as a starting point in the development of a curriculum, programme or assessment system.

The Can Do Statements at each level generally assume that the learners have developed the skills at a previous stage of learning, although this is not true of the Higher Education and At Work stages, which are treated as being in parallel. We have given a few examples below, but you can read a lot more in our Competency Booklets available at cambridge.org/clc

STAGE OF LEARNING	CAN DO STATEMENTS
CRITICAL THINKING	
Understanding and analysing links between ideas	
PRE-PRIMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sorts and arranges things by shapes, size, colour, weight, texture and positions.• Explores different materials and media and decides what to use.• Matches objects, people, letters, pronunciations and words.• Identifies the difference between puzzles, games, and toys.
PRIMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sorts and classifies objects and activities according to key features (e.g. types of animal, or transport).• Identifies characters, setting, plot and themes in a story.• Compares different types of information.• Explains why things happened (e.g. cause and effect).
SECONDARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compares points and arguments from different sources.• Distinguishes between main and supporting arguments.• Identifies the basic structure of an argument.
HIGHER EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarises key points in a text or an argument.• Identifies unstated assumptions and biases in an argument.• Contrasts different points of view on a specific topic.
AT WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies patterns in business and operational data.• Summarises key points from a business-related report.• Identifies assumptions in a proposal.
COMMUNICATION	
Using appropriate language and register for context	
PRE-PRIMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands and carries out basic instructions for class/school.• Expresses basic likes/dislikes and (dis)agreement.• Uses simple, polite forms of greetings, introductions and farewells.• Adjusts language for playing roles.
PRIMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talks about topics suitable to primary school.• Knows how to ask for permission, apologise, make requests and agree/disagree.• Uses polite forms of greeting and address and responds to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc.• Changes sound level and pitch when doing drama or acting a role in a play.
SECONDARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses appropriate form of address, greetings and farewells.• Knows how to present points clearly and persuasively.• Uses language for effect (exaggerations, cleft sentences).• Knows what language is more appropriate for friends and unfamiliar persons.
HIGHER EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is aware of differences in communication styles, between individuals and between cultures.• Is aware of how suitability of topics can vary according to context and culture.• Expresses a point of view, elicits and responds to others' points of view politely.
AT WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can adapt register to different types of interlocutor (i.e. colleagues, managers and customers).• Keeps a discussion moving by periodically summarising and moving to next topic.• Sums up the outcomes of a discussion and elicits confirmation.

Life Competencies in Think

These life competencies are already embedded into many of your English lessons. The purpose of the Framework is to help you approach this more systematically and effectively. Here are some examples of how the activities in Think help develop life competencies in today's learners.

Think Level 2, page 102

11 MAKING THE NEWS

OBJECTIVES

FUNCTIONS: reporting what someone has said; expressing feelings: anger

GRAMMAR: reported verb patterns: object + infinitive; with make

VOCABULARY: fun; mo

READING

1 Tick (✓) the qualities you need to be a news journalist.

<input type="checkbox"/> funny	<input type="checkbox"/> intelligent	<input type="checkbox"/> brave
<input type="checkbox"/> confident	<input type="checkbox"/> charming	<input type="checkbox"/> talented
<input type="checkbox"/> positive	<input type="checkbox"/> active	<input type="checkbox"/> cheerful
<input type="checkbox"/> warm	<input type="checkbox"/> serious	
<input type="checkbox"/> adventurous		

2 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. What other adjectives can you think of?

3 **SPEAKING** Would you like to be a journalist? Say why or why not.

I'd like to be a journalist because I like finding out things.

I wouldn't like to be a journalist because I'm not adventurous.

4 On April Fool's Day in many English-speaking countries, people play jokes on others. Journalists are usually serious, but sometimes they play jokes, too. Do you have a similar day in your country?

5 **2.27** Read and listen to the article. Which photo relates to each story? Write the dates of the stories on the pictures to match them.

6 Read the article again. Which story are these people talking about?

- 'I saw that. I think they were in the middle of making a nature programme.'
- 'What a great way to get people interested in your product.'
- 'They said the mistake happened because of a bad translation.'
- 'It definitely doesn't come from a plant. I think it's made with flour and water.'
- 'I think people believed the story because he was such an intelligent person.'

April Fool's Day

In 1957 the BBC news programme Panorama told its viewers that Swiss farmers were enjoying a really good year for their spaghetti crop. They showed a film of the farmers picking the pasta from their trees. Many people believed the story and some of them even phoned up the BBC to ask how they could grow their own spaghetti tree. The date, of course, was April 1st, or April Fool's Day – the day when people in many countries across the world like to play jokes on each other.

April 1st seems to be very popular with journalists. They have the extremely important job of reporting the news to us. For 364 days a year they need to be serious. But for one day a year they allow themselves to forget this responsibility for a few minutes and have a bit of fun trying to fool their readers or viewers.

Understanding and analysing links between ideas

Managing conversations

Evaluating ideas, arguments and options

Understanding and describing own and others' cultures

Understanding and analysing links between ideas

Think Level 4, page 88

Empathy and relationship skills

Listening respectfully and responding constructively to others' contributions

Are you in control?

It's not always easy to keep on top of things when there are so many little things in life that are out of your control. But can you keep a cool head when things aren't going your way and all around you others are losing theirs? Take our quiz and find out ...

1 Read the quiz from a teen magazine and choose your answers.

2 Compare your answers with a partner.

3 Now read the key. Do you agree with the advice? Do you think this is a fair description of you? Why (not)?

4 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. The key suggests that c answers are always the best way to behave. Look at each of the questions again and decide if you agree with this. In which instances do you think a or b might be better? Why?

Mostly a's – Oh dear. It seems that you're not really in control of life's little problems. Try not to be so aggressive when things don't go your way.

Mostly b's – You're not bad at dealing with life's little problems, but you still need to assert yourself and not always give in to what other people want.

Mostly c's – You are an expert at dealing with life's little problems. You know what you want and the best way of getting it.

Identifying and understanding emotions

Evaluating ideas, arguments and options

1 Your younger sister is practising the guitar loudly in her bedroom. You're trying to study. What do you say to her?

- Turn it off. Now!
- I'd rather you didn't practise right now. I need to study.
- Would you like to borrow my headphones?

2 Your best friend wants to play a football game on the computer. You'd prefer to go out and play a real game. What do you say to him?

- OK.
- I'd sooner go to the park and play football for real.
- How about we play on the computer for half an hour and then we go to the park and play?

3 It's the weekend and you're having a lie in. Your dad's in a bad mood. He storms into your room and says, 'It's about time you got out of bed and did something.' What do you say?

- Dad, I'm sleeping.
- I'll be down in half an hour.
- OK, Dad. What do you want me to do?

4 You got 60% in a test. How do you feel?

- Really angry. Why didn't I get 70%?
- That's OK, I suppose.
- Oh well, I'll study harder for my next test.

5 Your sister or brother keeps borrowing your clothes without asking. What do you say?

- I'm telling Mum.
- I'd prefer it if you didn't keep taking my things.
- If you want to borrow something, why don't you just ask?

6 You and your friend need to catch a train that leaves in half an hour. Your friend wants to walk to the station but he isn't quite ready. It takes 20 minutes to get there. What do you say to him?

- No way. I'm getting a taxi.
- I'd prefer to take a taxi.
- No problem as long as we leave in the next two minutes.

Competency	Core Area	Can Do Statements	Activity Example				
			Level	Unit	Page	Exercise	Description
Creative Thinking	Participating in creative activities	Acts parts in role plays or dramas	1	2	23, 127, 128	Role play	Role play: buying clothes in a shop
		Encourages group members to make activities more original and imaginative	4	4	41		Listening & speaking: being imaginative; Think values: appreciating creative solutions
		Participates in ‘what if’ (cautionary or wishful thinking) and ‘if only’ (wishful thinking) challenges	3	4	41	Grammar 1 to 3	Wish and if only
		Participates in activities that include creative thinking (e.g. reversals, escapes, and distortions with others)	3	4	39	Quiz and 5	What would you do if...?; thinking of consequences
	Creating new content – from own ideas or other resources		Starter	2	21	1 to 4	Imagine you’re Emily’s classmate
		Writes or tells an original story, given prompts or without prompts	3	12	117	4	Writing: a story about a bad decision
		Responds imaginatively (e.g. in the form of a story, poem, drawing) to contemporary or historical events and ideas	Starter	11	109		Writing: a day in the life of an animal
	Using new content to solve problems and make decisions	Communicates personal response to creative work from art, music or literature	5	10	99	5	Speaking: discuss responses to text content
		Employs new ideas and content in solving a task or activity	Starter	4	45		Writing: A brochure for your town/city
		Employs new ideas and content in solving a task or activity Makes an assignment original by changing the task or adding new angles	2	12	113	Train to think	Make a new version of <i>rock, paper, scissors</i>
Critical Thinking	Understanding and analysing links between ideas	Distinguishes between main and supporting arguments	3	3	30	5	Identifying the main topic of a paragraph
		Identifies the basic structure of an argument	4	11	103		Train to think: spotting flawed arguments
	Evaluating ideas, arguments and options	Distinguishes between fact and opinion	3	9	84	5 & 6	Train to think: fact or opinion?
		Identifies evidence and its reliability	4	10	93		Train to think: identifying the source of a piece of news
			2	6	60	1 & 2	Train to think: different perspectives
		Identifies assumptions and inferences in an argument Gives reasons for an argument’s plausibility	1	9	85	1 & 2	Think values: valuing our world
		Examines possible solutions to a given problem and states how effective they are Assesses strengths and weaknesses of possible solutions	1	10	97	Train to think 1 to 3	Train to think: problem solving
	Synthesising ideas and information	Selects key points from diverse sources to create a new account and/or argument					
Learning to Learn	Practical skills for participating in learning	Takes effective notes in class and from homework reading Organises notes systematically Uses notes to construct original output	1	6	59	Train to think 1 & 2	Train to think: making decisions (mind map)
			5	7	71	Think values 2 to 4	Think values: valuing the beauty around us
		Understands essential phonological terms and concepts (e.g. vowel length, word stress) Understands some key phonemic symbols (e.g. /ə/, /j/)	All levels		120 to 121		Pronunciation focus
	Taking control of your own learning	Reviews vocabulary regularly and systematically	‘Test yourself’ review pages after each two units (e.g. Level 2, p101)				
		Seeks the assistance of an interlocutor to overcome linguistic difficulties	1	Welcome	6	3 to 6	Classroom language
	Reflecting on and evaluating own learning success	Identifies what needs to be revisited before identifying new learning goals	‘Test yourself’ review pages after each two units (e.g. Level 2, p101)				
		Selects and uses a wide range of mind maps and other tools to organise thoughts	1	6	59	Train to Think 1 & 2	Train to think: making decisions (mind map)

Competency	Core Area	Can Do Statements	Activity Example				
			Level	Unit	Page	Exercise	Description
Communication	Using appropriate language/register for context	Uses appropriate forms of address, greetings, and farewells	Starter	Welcome	7		Saying Hello and Goodbye
		Uses language for effect (exaggerations, cleft sentences)	4	6	57	1 & 2	Train to Think: Exaggeration
			5	4	40	1 to 3	Grammar: Emphatic structures
	Managing conversations	Uses appropriate language to negotiate meaning: ... a) to signal lack of understanding; b) to seek repetition; c) to seek clarification	5	8	77	1 to 3	Functions: saying that you don't understand or didn't fully hear
	Participating with appropriate confidence and clarity	Speaks with suitable fluency	5	9	91	1 to 3	Phrases for fluency
		Can develop a clear description or narrative with a logical sequence of points	3	6	63		Functions: talking about sequence
		Uses a number of cohesive devices to link utterances/sentences into clear, coherent discourse	4	11	107	1 & 2	Grammar: cause and effect linkers
Collaboration	Taking personal responsibility for own contributions to a group task	Explains reasons for their suggestions and contributions Takes responsibility for completing tasks as part of a larger project	5	12	112	Speaking 1 to 3	Speaking: planning an award
	Listening respectfully and responding constructively to others' contributions	Listens to, acknowledges different points of view respectfully	1	6	59	Train to think 1 & 2	Train to think: making decisions (mind map)
		Is ready to justify, adapt, and abandon a proposal or point of view in response to others' queries and contributions	4	3	31	2 & 3	Train to think: changing your opinions
			4	7	67	1 & 2	Train to think: learning to see things from a different perspective
	Managing the sharing of tasks in a project	Participates with others to plan, organise and carry out events Works with others to plan and execute class projects	5	12	112	Speaking 1 to 3	Speaking: planning an award
	Working towards a resolution for a task	Is aware when others have divergent views and ideas for solving a problem or task Is able to propose solutions that include other views and ideas to own	5	6	59	Think values 1 to 4	Think values: teamwork
Emotional Development	Identifying and understanding emotions	Describing a wider range of different emotions	1	4	43	1 & 2	Vocabulary: feelings
			5	7	71	1 to 3	Vocabulary: emotional responses
		Discussing what makes them feel different emotions	1	3	33	1 & 2	Think self esteem: being happy
			4	7	71	1 to 3	Think self esteem: what cheers me up
	Managing own emotions	Managing stress by employing strategies	1	1	13	1 & 2	Reading & speaking: taking care of yourself
		Discussing own emotions mainly with friends and choosing the best coping strategy	4	7	67	1 & 2	Train to think: learning to see things from a different perspective
	Empathy and relationship skills	Showing understanding of other people's perspectives and feelings	Starter	2	21	1 to 4	Imagine you're Emily's classmate
			5	3	37	Functions 1 to 3	Functions: giving encouragement to someone who's feeling nervous
		Attending to maintaining relationships and feeling a sense of belonging	4	7	67	1 & 2	Train to think: learning to see things from a different perspective
			5	1	15	1 & 2	Think values: relationships

COMPETENCY	CORE AREA	CAN DO STATEMENTS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLE				
			Level	Unit	Page	Exercise	Description
Social Responsibilities	Understanding personal responsibilities as part of a group and in society – including citizenship	Is aware of positive behaviour in different groups (e.g. class, home and with friends)	5	6	59	1 to 4	Think values: teamwork
		Makes informed choices (e.g. in relation to diet, exercise, sexual health, environmentally-friendly products)	1	11	103	1 & 2	Think values: exercise and health
	Taking active roles including leadership	In group work, makes consultative decisions	Starter	10	93	2	Reading & discussion
		Shows confidence in speaking in public (e.g. to present a project)	4	12	113	2	Think values: human activity and the natural world – presentation
	Understanding and describing own and others’ cultures	Appreciates themselves and recognises their own value	2	1	15	1 & 2	Think self esteem: personal qualities
		Accepts others and shows respect for cultural difference, challenging prejudice and discriminatory views	1	10	93	1 & 2	Think values: appreciating other cultures
		Makes informed comparisons between their own society and other societies					
		Understands the contributions of different cultures to their own lives					
	Understanding and discussing global issues – environmental, political, financial and social	Is aware of different global issues (e.g. poverty, migration, global warming, human rights violations, pandemic diseases)	2	6	57	1 & 2	Think values: caring for the world
		Is aware of different global issues (e.g. poverty, migration, global warming, human rights violations, pandemic diseases)	4	12	113	1 & 2	Think values: human activity and the natural world
		Understands the importance of international cooperation					
		Understands how personal habits and behaviour have the capacity to affect others and the environment	3	2	23	1 & 2	Think values: animal rights
		Understands how personal habits and behaviour have the capacity to affect others and the environment					



You can find information about the other competencies in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework at cambridge.org/clcf

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Creative Thinking
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Emotional Development
- ✓ Learning to Learn
- ✓ Social Responsibilities

cambridge.org/think

