

The Languages Ladder Can-Do Statements

The Languages Ladder, part of the DfES National Languages Strategy (NLS), is a six-stage learning programme introduced to extend the opportunities for learning foreign languages.

Each stage comprises different grades which uses a can-do statement to describe typical behaviour of a candidate at that stage.

Within each stage the grades are progressive but may address different aspects of each skill.

The Proficiency and Mastery stages are planned for future development.

LISTENING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases.
	Grade 2	I can understand a range of familiar spoken phrases.
	Grade 3	I can understand the main point(s) from a short spoken passage.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a short spoken passage.
	Grade 5	I can understand the main points and simple opinions (e.g. likes and dislikes) of a longer spoken passage.
	Grade 6	I can understand spoken passages referring to present and past or future events.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can understand longer passages and recognise people's points of view.
	Grade 8	I can understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.
	Grade 9	I can understand the gist of a range of authentic passages in familiar contexts.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage/conversation involving one or more speakers.
	Grade 11	I can understand the main points of authentic spoken passages and conversations in a range of different contexts.
	Grade 12	I can identify the majority of points and am able to infer the meaning of a range of authentic passages/conversations spoken at near native speed.

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You may need to listen several times to get the information you need, depending on how fast and clearly the speaker talks. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand standard speech relating to a range of predictable everyday matters, providing that it is spoken clearly and directly. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic passages on familiar matters. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to follow much of what is said at near normal speed on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral or written summary of what you have heard.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you hear in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.

SPEAKING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases.
	Grade 2	I can answer simple questions and give basic information.
	Grade 3	I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can take part in a simple conversation and I can express my opinions.
	Grade 5	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, including expressing my opinions.
	Grade 6	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, expressing opinions and answering simple questions about it.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can answer simple unprepared questions in a conversation or following a presentation.
	Grade 8	I can tell a story or relate the plot of a book or film and give my opinions about it.
	Grade 9	I can take part in a discussion, giving and justifying my opinions and ideas.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions.
	Grade 11	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and argue my viewpoints with some degree of success.
	Grade 12	I can participate in discussions relating to a variety of situations and topics, taking the initiative where appropriate.

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your pronunciation will not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to use and adapt learned language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. Your pronunciation should be clear and you should be able to maintain a simple conversation using strategies such as asking for clarification or repetition. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. On *completing* this stage, you should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your pronunciation should be generally accurate. You should be able to maintain a conversation on familiar matters or in predictable situations, using a range of simple language.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to communicate confidently and maintain a conversation using a wide ranging vocabulary. Your pronunciation and intonation will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.

READING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases.
	Grade 2	I can understand familiar written phrases.
	Grade 3	I can understand the main point(s) from a short written text in clear printed script.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a short written text.
	Grade 5	I can understand the main points and simple opinions (e.g. likes and dislikes) of a longer written text.
	Grade 6	I can understand longer texts and distinguish present and past or future events.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can understand longer texts and recognise people's points of view.
	Grade 8	I can understand texts including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.
	Grade 9	I can understand a wide range of authentic texts in familiar contexts.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can understand authentic written texts of moderate length and complexity. I can produce a summary covering the majority of points.
	Grade 11	I can understand authentic texts of some degree of complexity and abstraction in a range of different contexts. I can produce a summary covering the most essential points.
	Grade 12	I can understand and am able to infer the meaning of a range of more complex texts. I can produce a detailed report covering all essential points.

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand standard language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to read clear handwritten text. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic texts on familiar matters. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to follow much of what you read on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral/written summary or translation of what you have read.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you read in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.

WRITING

Breakthrough	Grade 1	I can write or copy simple words or symbols.
	Grade 2	I can write one or two short sentences to a model and fill in the words on a simple form.
	Grade 3	I can write a few short sentences with support using expressions which I have already learned.
Preliminary	Grade 4	I can write a short text on a familiar topic, adapting language which I have already learned.
	Grade 5	I can write a short text on a range of familiar topics.
	Grade 6	I can write a simple text, e.g. a letter, giving and seeking information.
Intermediate	Grade 7	I can write a text (e.g. a report or a letter) conveying simple opinions and/or points of view.
	Grade 8	I can produce formal and informal texts in an appropriate style on familiar topics.
	Grade 9	I can communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics.
Advanced	Grade 10	I can structure my writing to produce a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for a specific purpose e.g. a letter to an employer, an account of a visit.
	Grade 11	I can write a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for different purposes, including communicating information, ideas and opinions e.g. a review, an article or a report.
	Grade 12	I can write extended text using a wide range of language in a variety of registers covering more specialised contexts e.g. work-related, or a specialised area of study.

Breakthrough – grades 1–3

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your spelling will not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

Preliminary – grades 4–6

On *completing* this stage, you should be able to use and adapt learned language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to write simple texts, with spelling that is generally accurate. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

Intermediate – grades 7–9

You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. On *completing* this stage, you should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your spelling should be generally accurate. You should be able to write on familiar matters or in predictable situations, using a range of simple language.

Advanced – grades 10–12

You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On *completing* this stage, you should be able to write confidently using a wide ranging vocabulary and more complex structures. Your spelling will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.