

2023



Preparation Guide

FOR TEACHERS



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Michigan Language Assessment's ECCE Preparation Guide for Teachers. The Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English (ECCE) has been certifying learners at a high-intermediate level since 1993. Backed by the University of Michigan and Cambridge University Press & Assessment, part of the University of Cambridge, the ECCE certifies English at the B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

At Michigan Language Assessment, we know teachers play a vital role in their students' language learning success. You know your students the best and are in a great position to choose engaging and helpful activities that will get your students excited about learning English. This preparation guide has been designed to help teachers to confidently prepare students to earn this international English language certification. It features sections on the proficiency expectations for B2-level language users, the four sections of the test, and some suggested strategies and classroom activities to use at this level.

The guide has been designed to be useful for both teachers who are new to teaching ECCE and teachers with experience in preparing students for the examination.

Remember to visit our website at michiganassessment.org for more information and free preparation resources for ECCE and other Michigan Language Assessment exams.

- The Michigan Language Assessment team



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ECCE SECTION OVERVIEW

The ECCE is a 4-skill test of English competency at the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It is a secure exam administered by Authorized Test Centers around the world. The writing, listening, and reading sections are taken in that order during a single session while the speaking section is taken separately with a trained examiner.

ECCE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

- 2 hours 45 minutes
- 4 skills
- Authorized Test Centers only
- High-intermediate (B2) level of English

ECCE Writing

1 task | 30 minutes

Test takers are given a choice between two writing tasks: an essay or an email/letter.

ECCE writing tasks will ask the test taker to present and support their opinion on a given topic. There is no word limit for this task, and test takers are encouraged to produce a well-developed response to demonstrate their ability to communicate their ideas in written English.

The ECCE Writing Section is evaluated by trained raters. The criteria to evaluate this section are described on the [ECCE Writing Rating Scale](#). Ratings take into account Content and Development, Organization and Connection of Ideas, Linguistic Range and Control, and Communicative Effect.

ECCE Listening

2 parts | 45 questions | 45 minutes

Listening Part 1 consists of short conversations, each followed by a multiple-choice question with three answer options. The answer choices are presented as images, and test takers choose the most appropriate image. Each conversation is played once.

Listening Part 2 consists of four short talks by a single speaker, followed by five questions each. Each multiple-choice question has four possible answers. Each talk is played twice.

The ECCE Listening Section is scored automatically by computer.

ECCE Reading

3 parts | 65 questions | 75 minutes

The ECCE Reading Section has three parts: grammar, vocabulary, and reading

In the first two parts, grammar and vocabulary questions are each presented as an incomplete sentence, with a choice of four words or phrases to complete the sentence correctly. There are 15 grammar items and 14 vocabulary items.

The third section has two types of reading passages. In the first one, test takers will read two passages, each followed by six comprehension questions.

Next test takers will be given two sets of four reading passages linked by their theme. Each set is followed by 12 multiple-choice questions.

The ECCE Reading Section is scored automatically by computer.

ECCE Speaking

4 stages | 15 minutes

The speaking examination is conducted in person with one test taker and one examiner. The section has four stages that build on each other as the test progresses.

The ECCE Speaking Section gives test takers an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to ask and answer questions, provide suggestions or recommendations, present and justify a decision, and discuss a topic in detail.

The ECCE Speaking Section is evaluated by certified speaking examiners. Ratings take into account the overall Communicative Effectiveness, Language Control and Resources, and Delivery/Intelligibility. These criteria are described at various levels on the [ECCE Speaking Rating Scale](#).

PREPARATION TIP

Project Based Learning (PBL) can be an effective tool for improving all language skills. PBL encourages students to be active and interactive participants in linguistic activities and can support collaboration and negotiation, among other skills. Project stages could include research (reading and listening), planning (writing and speaking), presentations (speaking and listening), feedback interactions or negotiations (speaking, listening, and writing), and reflective activities. All of these stages help support the holistic language development of learners and will help prepare them well for ECCE if completed in line with the expectations of the B2 CEFR level.

CEFR OVERVIEW (B2 LEVEL)

ECCE is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) developed by the Council of Europe. The CEFR describes what language learners need to learn in order to communicate in another language. It also provides a way to measure learners' progress at each stage of their learning .

ECCE is designed for teenagers and adults who want to certify high-intermediate English language proficiency, or B2 level on the CEFR. In order to successfully prepare students for ECCE, it can be helpful to understand what is expected of a user of English at the B2 level both in general linguistic terms and in each of the specific skills.

The following statements are taken from the 2020 CEFR Companion Volume and describe what a user of language can do at the B2 level in general linguistic terms. "Can-do" statements for each of the four skills relevant to ECCE can be found in the individual skill sections of this guide.

Users of English at the B2 level...

- can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. (Council of Europe, 2020: 130)
- can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. (Council of Europe, 2020: 130)
- have a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so. (Council of Europe, 2020: 130)
- can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization. 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. (Council of Europe, 2020: 175)

Test takers planning to take ECCE are expected to have this level of control of their language. Having an understanding of the linguistic expectations at this level can help teachers identify classroom strategies and activities to help students achieve success on the ECCE. Purposeful tasks can be designed to help students learn how to use the language effectively. This information can also be useful to help learners self-assess their language use as they prepare for the examination. It is recommended that teachers share these level descriptors (or other self-assessment checklists from CEFR publications) with their students in order for students to be able to regularly self-assess their progress.

At the B2 level, classroom activities should stretch and challenge the language abilities of the learners so they are able to constantly improve their abilities and practice higher order thinking skills. Listening and reading materials should be authentic rather than materials produced especially for a language classroom. This will ensure learners become used to the natural flow, pace, and lexical range of English in real world contexts. At this level, according to the CEFR, learners should be able to understand "linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety." (Council of Europe, 2020: 48) Similarly, B2 learners "can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively." (Council of Europe, 2020: 54) With this in mind, authentic materials will expose learners to such linguistically complex and diverse content. Scaffolding activities will help unfamiliar learners become more used to this type of material. Teachers can then gradually reduce the level of support and increase the difficulty of tasks as the learners make progress in their linguistic abilities.

¹ Council of Europe. Council for Cultural Co-operation. Education Committee. Modern Languages Division. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

² Council of Europe (2020) *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment - Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. Available at: www.coe.int/lang-cefr

TEST CONTENT

ECCE content reflects a range of situations likely to be familiar to test-takers in any country. The four domains identified by the CEFR - personal, public, educational, and occupational (Council of Europe, 2001: 48-49) - are represented in ECCE. The following table lists some examples of settings that commonly occur in each domain:

Domain	Common settings
Personal	home (house or any private space) and interactions or settings among family members or social networks (friends, acquaintances)
Public	public spaces (street, shops, restaurants, sports or entertainment) and other social networks outside the home
Educational	schools, colleges, classrooms, and residence halls, etc.
Occupational	workplace settings (offices, workshops, conferences), etc.

ECCE includes a variety of topics across these domains, and test items are designed to ensure test takers do not need any particular specialized knowledge or experience to understand the content.



PREPARATION TIP

In terms of grammar and vocabulary required at this level, test takers are expected to have acquired the syntactic and semantic resources to communicate effectively and appropriately as defined for the B2 level. Students should be given access to, and be encouraged to explore on their own, a wide range of topics and relevant language across the four domains listed above as part of their ECCE preparation. Additionally, preparation content should include a range of audiences, genres and text types to give students access to a wide variety of resources for practicing their language skills.

SKILLS & SUBSKILLS

ECCE certifies competency in all four skills of the English language at the B2 level. The test includes the four main language skills of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Subskills are identified within these macro skills and are divided into three areas, namely global, local and inferential. The subskills and some example question types are outlined below.

GLOBAL

The global subskills refer to identifying the main or general ideas of a reading text or listening passage.

Example Reading Task

This passage is about a type of fish.

Most fish are classified as ectotherms. This means they need heat from the environment to stay warm. Animals of this type are commonly referred to as "cold-blooded." Recently, however, the moonfish, or opah, was discovered. The moonfish is entirely warm-blooded, making it an endotherm and the first of its kind that scientists know of. Endotherms, unlike ectotherms, can maintain their own temperature as they descend into cold water.

Approximately the size of a car tire, moonfish often weigh more than 45 kilograms. They spend most of their time in deep, cold water approximately 50 to 400 meters below the surface. Moonfish don't regularly return to the surface, yet their average muscle temperature is about 5 degrees Celsius higher than the temperature of the surrounding water. Moonfish maintain this temperature by constantly flapping their large fins, which can grow up to nearly 2 meters long. This helps create and distribute heated blood throughout the body. As this warm blood flows out from the body to the gills, it heats cool blood moving in from the gills to the body.

This higher body temperature increases muscle capacity and improves the function of the eyes, the brain, and the nervous system. With faster swimming, quicker response times, and better vision, moonfish have an edge in hunting slower, cold-blooded prey. They can use their internal warmth to stay in deep waters for longer periods of time to catch prey such as squid and smaller fish.

1. What is this passage mainly about?
- A. where a particular fish is found
 - B. how a particular fish has evolved over time
 - C. why a particular fish is unique
 - D. what a particular fish prefers to eat

Example Listening Task

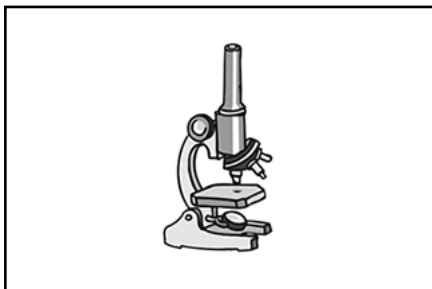
Speaker 1: Did you hear someone broke into the school last night and stole all the microscopes from the science rooms?

Speaker 2: Yeah, terrible, but I'm surprised they didn't take the new computers. They're worth a lot.

Speaker 1: Well, I wish they'd taken that old movie camera. Nobody uses it any more.

Q: What is missing from the school?

A



B



C



LOCAL

The local subskills refer to identifying detailed information within a reading or listening passage.

Example Reading Task

This passage is about a type of fish.

Most fish are classified as ectotherms. This means they need heat from the environment to stay warm. Animals of this type are commonly referred to as "cold-blooded." Recently, however, the moonfish, or opah, was discovered. The moonfish is entirely warm-blooded, making it an endotherm and the first of its kind that scientists know of. Endotherms, unlike ectotherms, can maintain their own temperature as they descend into cold water.

Approximately the size of a car tire, moonfish often weigh more than 45 kilograms. They spend most of their time in deep, cold water approximately 50 to 400 meters below the surface. Moonfish don't regularly return to the surface, yet their average muscle temperature is about 5 degrees Celsius higher than the temperature of the surrounding water. Moonfish maintain this temperature by constantly flapping their large fins, which can grow up to nearly 2 meters long. This helps create and distribute heated blood throughout the body. As this warm blood flows out from the body to the gills, it heats cool blood moving in from the gills to the body.

This higher body temperature increases muscle capacity and improves the function of the eyes, the brain, and the nervous system. With faster swimming, quicker response times, and better vision, moonfish have an edge in hunting slower, cold-blooded prey. They can use their internal warmth to stay in deep waters for longer periods of time to catch prey such as squid and smaller fish.

2. According to the passage, what is true about ectotherms?

- A. They require heat from their environment.
- B. They have a higher body temperature.
- C. They normally live on land.
- D. They normally live in cold places.

Example Listening Task

Speaker 1: How many people are we expecting tonight at dinner? Just us?

Speaker 2: No, I invited Sara and Dillon too.

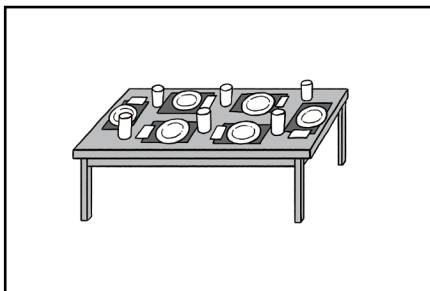
Speaker 1: Ok. So I'll call the restaurant and reserve a table for four, then.

Speaker 2: Well, it's actually six people if we're including their kids at the same table.

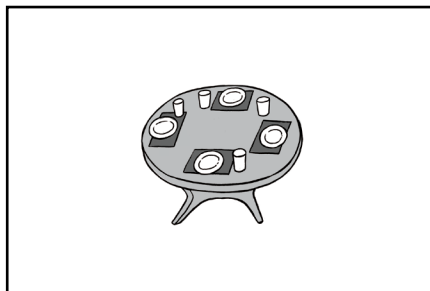
Speaker 1: Oh, right.

Q: What will the dinner table look like?

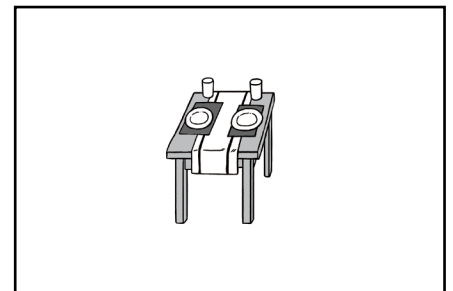
A



B



C



INFERENTIAL

The inferential subskills refer to identifying information not explicitly stated in the reading or listening passage. Test takers are tested on their ability to infer meaning, using context clues and other linguistic references within the passage.

Example Reading Task

This passage is about a type of fish.

Most fish are classified as ectotherms. This means they need heat from the environment to stay warm. Animals of this type are commonly referred to as “cold-blooded.” Recently, however, the moonfish, or opah, was discovered. The moonfish is entirely warm-blooded, making it an endotherm and the first of its kind that scientists know of. Endotherms, unlike ectotherms, can maintain their own temperature as they descend into cold water.

Approximately the size of a car tire, moonfish often weigh more than 45 kilograms. They spend most of their time in deep, cold water approximately 50 to 400 meters below the surface. Moonfish don’t regularly return to the surface, yet their average muscle temperature is about 5 degrees Celsius higher than the temperature of the surrounding water. Moonfish maintain this temperature by constantly flapping their large fins, which can grow up to nearly 2 meters long. This helps create and distribute heated blood throughout the body. As this warm blood flows out from the body to the gills, it heats cool blood moving in from the gills to the body.

This higher body temperature increases muscle capacity and improves the function of the eyes, the brain, and the nervous system. With faster swimming, quicker response times, and better vision, moonfish have an edge in hunting slower, cold-blooded prey. They can use their internal warmth to stay in deep waters for longer periods of time to catch prey such as squid and smaller fish.

3. What is most likely true of the fish the moonfish captures?
- A. Their populations are declining.
 - B. They live near the water’s surface.
 - C. They are mostly unknown to scientists.
 - D. They are ectotherms.

Example Listening Task

Speaker 1: I was wondering if someone could help me with my new table?

Speaker 2: Of course. We’ll have someone carry it to your car for you.

Speaker 1: My car is small. What if it doesn’t fit?

Speaker 2: We have a truck, but we can’t deliver it until next week.

Speaker 1: I wish my friend still had her van. I guess we’ll have to make it fit.

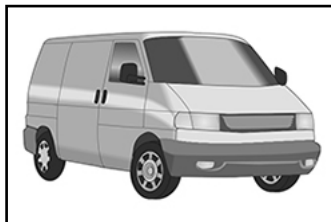
Speaker 2: I’m sure we can.

Q: How will she get the table home?

A



B



C



Test takers will also be evaluated on their ability to synthesize information from multiple text passages in the reading section.

In order to be successful on ECCE, it is necessary to give students access to a wide range of activities to practice each of these subskills. More information about question types and ways to practice the subskills will be provided in the corresponding skill sections of this guide.

Classroom Activities for Subskills

In this next section you will find some example activities that can be used in the classroom environment to give students the opportunity to practice each of the main subskill areas.

Global skills

Listening and reading for gist: Select a listening or reading passage and ask your students to answer a question related to the overall theme or main idea of the passage. These are possible questions:

- What is the topic being discussed?
- What is their conversation about?
- What is the text mainly about?

An alternative way to practice global subskills can be to ask students to write a brief summary (50 words or less, for example) of the passage.

Local skills

Listening and reading for detailed information: Select a listening or reading passage and ask your students to answer more detailed questions about the passage. These questions could include

- identifying vocabulary from the passage,
- sequencing of events that occur in the passage,
- true or false questions,
- completing a grid or chart based on information in the passage.

Fill-in-the-blank activities can also be used to help students practice listening and reading for detailed information. Provide students with a text summary, review or other genre of text related to the original passage with words and phrases removed. As students listen or read, have them fill in the gaps with information provided by the original stimuli. The missing information should require them to listen or read for detailed information, not just the overall themes or ideas.

Inferential skills

Listening and reading for implication: Select a listening or reading passage which contains both fact and opinions. Have students sort statements from the text or listening passage into two columns-facts and opinions. Ask the learners to then identify the clues they used to decide, and discuss the differences in how facts and opinions are presented.

Use charts or tables to be completed while reading or listening. Include information explicitly stated in the text, a space for the learner to include any background knowledge they have, and then a conclusion they draw by synthesizing that information.

For example;

What I heard/read	What I already know	Conclusion
The dog hid under the bed during the thunderstorm.	Thunderstorms can be loud and loud noises can alarm animals.	The dog was probably scared or alarmed during the storm.

PREPARATION TIP

Encourage daily reading of or listening to local, national, and global news stories. Facilitate classroom discussions about what students have been reading.

Have students prepare a:

- Summary of the content (Global)
- List of key vocabulary or details about each story (Local)
- Description of the writer's opinion or attitude, with supporting evidence (Inferential)

PREPARE FOR ECCE WRITING

ECCE test takers are expected to have achieved a B2 level on the CEFR in all skill areas. According to the CEFR, writers at a B2 level ...

- can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments. (Council of Europe, 2020: 66)
- can give clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned. (Council of Europe, 2020: 67)
- can give clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects. (Council of Europe, 2020: 67)
- can produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. (Council of Europe, 2020: 68)
- can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem. (Council of Europe, 2020: 68)
- can produce an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (Council of Europe, 2020: 68)
- can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. (Council of Europe, 2020: 72)
- can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and emails. (Council of Europe, 2020: 83)
- can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions. (Council of Europe, 2020: 136)
- can spell and use punctuation reasonably accurately, but may show signs of mother-tongue influence. (Council of Europe, 2020: 136)

While preparing students for the ECCE Writing Section, it is important to be familiar with both the expectations of a B2 level user of English and the [ECCE Writing Rating Scale](#).

ECCE WRITING SCALE

Content & Development	Organization & Connection of Ideas	Linguistic Range & Control	Communicative Effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of content to task • Quality of ideas used to develop the response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangement of content • How language is used to link ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety and precision of grammar and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well communicative goals are achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and development • Relevance • Supporting details • Reliance on prompt content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth flow of ideas • Cohesion and coherence • Connection of ideas across paragraphs • Paragraphing conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy • Severity of errors • Use of prompt-specific vocabulary • Repetition of vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the prompt • Establish context • Genre requirements • Appropriate register

ECCE Writing Section Format

The ECCE Writing Section has two possible tasks to choose from, and students have 30 minutes to complete ONE of these two tasks. The tasks will be either an email/letter or an essay.

Please see the example ECCE Writing tasks below:

Writing Prompt

Task 1: Email

The principal of a local high school is considering requiring all students to stay after school for one hour every day to work on their homework. She would like to know how students feel about this policy.

- Write an email to the principal to explain your opinion. Give reasons to support your ideas.
- Start your email, "Dear Principal Smith."

Task 2: Essay

Famous actors play an important role in society and deserve a lot of money.

- Write an essay on whether you agree or disagree with the statement above.
- Include specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

The requirements and expectations for these writing tasks are appropriate for test takers at this level. There is no word limit for either task; test takers are encouraged to write a well-developed response that demonstrates their skills in written English and that fully addresses the writing prompt. Some strategies for helping to prepare students for ECCE writing are provided below.

Classroom Strategies and Activities

A. Help students to become familiar with current events

- Watch the news every day;
- Make a list of events that have an impact on our communities, and suggest solutions;
- Report on world events or trends that we should be aware of;
- Include local, national, and international news sources;
- Keep a journal with news headlines and topics that they are interested in learning about (dates, source, headline, a one sentence summary and a personal reflection)

B. Help students to develop ideas and organize content

Scaffolding

Scaffold the writing process by...

1. Analyzing examples of written texts on similar topics or with a similar structure.
2. Building vocabulary and/or background knowledge by pre-teaching some of the content, also known as *frontloading*.
3. Free writing: have learners write down everything they can think of on the given topic for a set time, then review what they have written to pick out the key ideas or themes that arise.
4. Creating mind maps of ideas related to the topic.
5. Connecting and grouping similar ideas to form topic sentences.
6. Creating detailed plans including topic sentences and supporting details for each paragraph, whether the student is planning to write an essay, a letter or an email.

Collaborative Planning

Have students work together in groups to generate ideas, discuss the topic and plan their writing. It can be helpful to do this with a gradual release of individual responsibility: have them plan and write together, then plan together and write alone, then finally both plan and write alone. Working collaboratively allows students to help and support each other as well as generate ideas together which can be challenging to do alone at first. As they gain confidence in their linguistic abilities, and become more practiced at writing in English, they will start finding the process of writing less intimidating. Learners can also collaborate with each other by offering and receiving feedback on their drafts, which also allows them to familiarize themselves with the task rubric or rating scale for practice exam tasks.

C. Help students to develop an argument

- Encourage students to spend time analyzing example arguments, both written and spoken. Identify rhetorical devices and techniques used by the speaker, and incorporate them into the students' own work. Review the structure, content, and how the argument is developed.
- Classroom debates can be a helpful tool for writing as well as speaking. Debate topics should cover the four domain areas outlined earlier in this guide. Ask students to prepare their arguments, anticipate opposing viewpoints, and support their opinions with relevant evidence where possible.
- Simple speaking activities where students justify an opinion or preference can also help develop effective arguments for writing. Starting small, with topics of personal interest or relevance, can help learners to develop their abilities to support their responses with additional details without focusing on learning new information. Once these skills have been practiced and developed, they will be more confident in developing arguments for less familiar topics.

General Writing Section Advice

It helps to view and teach writing as a 4-stage process:

- Stage One: Read and analyze,
- Stage Two: Pre-writing,
- Stage Three: Composing,
- Stage Four: Editing and revising.

- Practice exam timing by using timers in the classroom; start by giving learners slightly more time than the exam allows, and gradually reduce the time available until students are able to plan and write a response in slightly less time than the exam. For paper-based exams, practice writing by hand rather than on a computer.
- Use the CEFR level descriptors as a guide for assessing students' abilities in writing and to develop purposeful practice activities. Encourage students to self-assess and peer assess using the rating scale and the CEFR. There are several self-assessment resources available on the ¹Council of Europe's website.
- Remind students to pay attention to the audience for the chosen writing task—the email will specify the audience and students should adjust their language accordingly. The essay will always be a formal academic essay, and students should be well prepared to write in a formal style. Teach a variety of linking words appropriate for each genre of writing, and ensure students understand how to use them accurately.
- Make sure their ideas are fully supported, relevant to the topic, and well developed with lots of examples. Both sides of the argument should be addressed in the body of the writing task.

¹ Available at: www.coe.int/lang-cefr

- Self-assessment, including editing and revising, is an integral part of the writing process. Time should be spent on learners reviewing their own work, either before or after receiving feedback from teachers and/or classmates. Ensure students are familiar with the rubric or rating scale being used. Help them interpret what each of the rating categories refers to. Have them give themselves a score and provide reasons and evidence for that score.
- Assign purposeful and meaningful writing assignments that are relevant to the students' interests and passions, and provide constructive feedback.
- Remember that practice makes perfect. Encourage learners to practice their writing skills as much as possible, and allow ample time for writing in the classroom. Once the actual process of planning and writing comes more easily, students will be able to focus more closely on improving the linguistic aspects of their writing.

PREPARATION TIP

Using graphic organizers or visual analogies for paragraph structure can be really helpful for students at this level to ensure their writing is well developed and ideas are supported. This can then allow them to focus on the linguistic aspects of their writing to ensure they are able to really show what they are capable of in English.



PREPARE FOR ECCE LISTENING

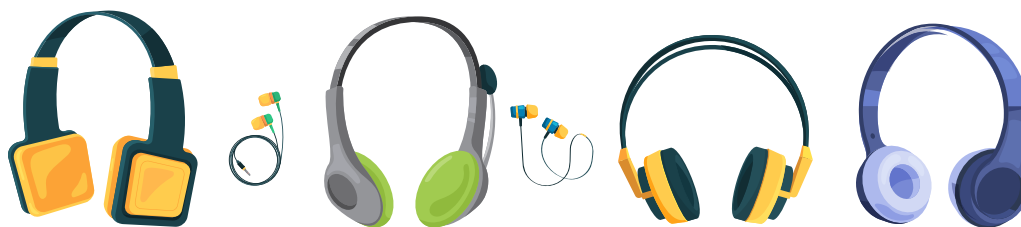
ECCE test takers are expected to have achieved a B2 level on the CEFR in all skill areas. When listening, a B2-level user of English ...

- can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand. (Council of Europe, 2020: 48)
- can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety. (Council of Europe, 2020: 48)
- can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers. (Council of Europe, 2020: 48)
- can keep up with an animated conversation between proficient users of the target language. (Council of Europe, 2020: 49)
- can with some effort catch much of what is said around them, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several users of the target language who do not modify their language in any way. (Council of Europe, 2020: 49)
- can identify the main reasons for and against an argument or idea in a discussion conducted in clear standard language or a familiar variety. (Council of Europe, 2020: 49)
- can follow chronological sequence in extended informal discourse, e.g. in a story or anecdote. (Council of Europe, 2020: 49)
- can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex. (Council of Europe, 2020: 50)
- can recognize the point of view expressed and distinguish this from facts being reported. (Council of Europe, 2020: 50)

ECCE Listening Section Format

ECCE listening has two parts: short conversations between two people (dialogues) and short talks (monologues).

In Part 1, the test takers will hear 25 short conversations. Each conversation will be played once, followed by a multiple-choice question. The questions have three possible answers, which are represented by pictures. Conversations take place in a variety of contexts and test global, local, and inferential listening skills. It is recommended that students look at the pictures before the audio is played, in order to consider what the passage might be about and what information they should be listening for.



Here is an example of an ECCE Listening Part 1 question, with the accompanying transcript:

Listening Part 1 Example

Speaker 1: Professor, for my presentation next week can I start by playing a song for the class?

Speaker 2: Sure, as long as its related to your topic. You can play it from my laptop if you have it on cd.

Speaker 1: Great, thank you. Oh, and how many copies of the handout shall I bring?

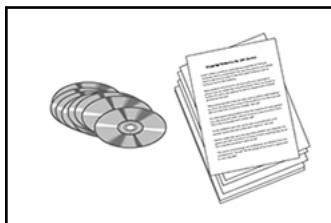
Speaker 2: There are 20 students, plus myself.

Q: What will she bring to class?

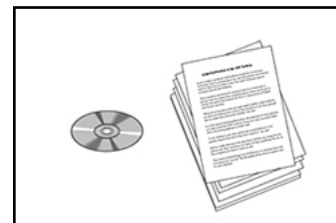
A



B



C



In Part 2, the test takers will hear four short talks, or monologues. Each monologue will be played twice, and is followed by five multiple-choice questions with four possible answers. These talks reflect a variety of situations people in most countries could experience. As with Part 1, ECCE Listening Part 2 questions test global, local, and inferential listening subskills.

Here is an example of an ECCE Listening Part 2 question, with the accompanying transcript:

Listening Part 2 Example

Narrator: Listen to a radio broadcast about health.

You might have heard some buzz about coconut oil, but do you know why people are choosing to cook with it and even rub it on their skin? It turns out coconut oil has many health benefits. Take skin care. By putting coconut oil on your face, you can prevent wrinkles and it's also used to treat skin problems like dermatitis or other conditions. If you put it on your hair it's a natural conditioner and can help heal damaged hair, and prevent your scalp from being too dry. Well, let's cut to the chase. Why are most people using coconut oil to improve their health? By ingesting coconut oil, you're being kind to your heart. It prevents heart problems like high cholesterol and high blood pressure. And if you need to lose weight, well, you're in luck. Eating coconut oil helps increase the body's metabolic rate; the amount of energy one uses while resting. That, in turn, burns more energy and helps people lose weight. While you're consuming coconut oil, it's also aiding your digestion-the ability to break down food when you eat. The saturated fats in coconut oil help fight against various bacteria that can cause stomach troubles.

I know what you're thinking-it seems too good to be true! By adding small amounts of coconut oil to your diet, keep in mind that you're still eating fat. So definitely make sure to eat healthy fat sources in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins.

1. **Why does the speaker mention damaged hair?**
 - A. as something coconut oil can help prevent
 - B. as a common health problem people have
 - C. as a reason why people should wash their hair
 - D. as a warning against eating coconut oil

Classroom Strategies and Activities

When preparing students for success on ECCE Listening, it can be helpful to use authentic materials as much as possible so students get used to listening to people speaking at a regular pace and in a variety of real-life situations.

Active listening is an essential strategy for the classroom. To keep students focused and engaged, ensure listening activities have a clear goal and learners have a task to complete. .

Teaching effective note-taking strategies can also help students to listen effectively during the exam, particularly for Listening Part 2.

Listening practice can be divided into three key stages: pre-listening, while listening, and post-listening. Some suggestions for classroom activities to help prepare students for ECCE Listening are outlined below.

Pre-Listening Tasks

- Develop vocabulary to activate background knowledge on the topic and expand linguistic resources. This will help with all aspects of English proficiency, not just listening!
- Elicit and teach background knowledge on the topic of the listening passage.
- Predict content based on the track title / available answer options / related pictures.
- Practice reading the questions and looking at the answer options before the listening track is played. This can help learners identify key words, phrases or signposts to listen for.

While Listening Tasks

- Play the listening passage more than once during practice activities with different purposes and tasks each time they listen to the passages. As learners get more comfortable, allow them to listen only once (to short dialogues) or twice (to longer monologues) in order to realistically replicate the exam experience.
- Complete more than one task per listening passage (identify the main idea, then infer an opinion, then identify details) to ensure practice and development of all subskills.
- Identify tone/mood and opinion of the speaker by picking out vocabulary, context clues, or other relevant references.
- Teach and practice note-taking strategies. Note-taking is allowed during ECCE Listening.

Post-Listening Tasks

- Give students a transcript to mark intonation and stress. This can then also be used as a speaking practice activity, where students practice changing the inferred meaning of the words by varying the intonation and stress. The transcript can also be used to confirm details and check for any misunderstandings after finishing the main listening tasks.
- Provide opportunities for creative writing/editing tasks. For example, write about what could happen next, rewrite the audio script from a different perspective, rewrite the audio script in a different tone or mood, or rewrite it for a different audience.
- Perform as a role play activity.
- Discuss the ideas or concepts heard in the talk.

PREPARATION TIP

Utilize podcasts and other authentic media in the classroom, starting with topics that students find personally relevant and interesting before branching out to other topic areas. For more confident students, they could even create their own listening activities for classmates to complete, and orally justify or explain their decisions.

PREPARE FOR ECCE READING

When preparing students for ECCE, it is important to keep in mind the expectations for a B2 level user of English. According to the CEFR, a B2-level user...

- has good grammatical control; occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. (Council of Europe, 2020, 132)
- shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. (Council of Europe, 2020, 132)
- does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. (Council of Europe, 2020, 132)
- has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy. (Council of Europe, 2020, 132)
- has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field* and most general topics. (Council of Europe, 2020, 131)
- can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. (Council of Europe, 2020, 131)
- can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. (Council of Europe, 2020, 131)
- demonstrates a generally high level of lexical accuracy, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication. (Adapted from Council of Europe, 2020, 132)
- can read with a large degree of independence ... Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms. (Council of Europe, 2020, 54)
- can scan quickly through several sources (articles, reports, websites, books, etc.) in parallel, in both their own field and in related fields, and can identify the relevance and usefulness of particular sections for the task at hand. (Council of Europe, 2020, 55)
- can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. (Council of Europe, 2020, 55)
- can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles, and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile. (Council of Europe, 2020, 55)
- can understand specialized articles outside their field, provided they can use a dictionary occasionally to confirm their interpretation of terminology*. (Council of Europe, 2020, 57)
- can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted. (Council of Europe, 2020, 57)
- can recognise when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something. (Council of Europe, 2020, 57)
- can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem-solution presentation and cause-effect relationships. (Council of Europe, 2020, 57)
- can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues. (Council of Europe, 2020, 60)
- *Dictionaries are not allowed during the exam, but effort is made to provide definitions for unfamiliar, specialized vocabulary that may appear on ECCE.

ECCE Reading Section Format

The ECCE Reading Section has three parts:

- Part 1: Grammar
- Part 2: Vocabulary
- Part 3: Single and Multiple Text Reading

Test takers have 75 minutes to answer all 65 questions. Every multiple-choice question has four possible answer options and one correct answer. As with the listening section, reading questions cover global, local, and inferential skills. The reading section includes a variety of texts with different purposes on a range of topics.

ECCE Reading Part 1: Grammar

Part 1 of the ECCE Reading Section is where test takers show their understanding of reading at the sentence level and their knowledge of grammar. This section includes 15 grammar questions, which may include up to three grammatical structures. Questions will take the form of a sentence with a word or phrase missing. Test takers choose the correct answer from four possible options. Though all four options may be correct in different contexts, only one answer will correctly fit the context of the question.

Successful ECCE test takers will have a knowledge of grammar commensurate with the B2 level on the CEFR. Grammar items are created in such a way that they do not require any specialized knowledge or experience to understand them, thus allowing test takers to focus on the grammatical structures themselves. The wording of the items is intended to reflect language use in real situations.

See below for two example grammar questions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Michaela tried ____ lights in the conference room, but they did not work.
A. the switch on
B. to switch on the
C. switch it on
D. switching them on | 2. ____ a famous local architect named Jeremy L. McIntosh.
A. It's a house built of
B. He built the house
C. The house was built by
D. The house is being built |
|--|---|

PREPARATION TIP

In order to successfully prepare students for ECCE Reading, it is recommended they are exposed to a wide variety of different authentic texts and a variety of genres. Example texts should be analyzed for use of grammar, allowing students to become familiar with how English structures are used in different contexts and situations.

ECCE Reading Part 2: Vocabulary

In Part 2 of the ECCE Reading Section, test takers show their understanding of reading at the sentence level and their vocabulary range and control. There are 14 vocabulary items in ECCE reading. Similar to the grammar items, each vocabulary item will be a sentence with a word or phrase removed. Test takers choose the correct answer from four possible options; only one answer will correctly fit the context of the sentence.

As with grammar, it is expected that test takers will have knowledge and control of vocabulary commensurate with the B2 level on the CEFR in order to pass ECCE. Test takers should not require any specialized knowledge or experience to understand the content of the vocabulary items. The wording of the items is intended to reflect language use in real situations based on the four domains discussed in Section 3: Test Content Overview—Personal, public, educational, and occupational.

See below for two example vocabulary questions:

1. If you listen _____, you can hear the sound of the river far off in the distance.
 - A. hardly
 - B. closely
 - C. precisely
 - D. sharply
2. The company plans to _____ all its financial operations from Chicago to New York.
 - A. alter
 - B. reform
 - C. transfer
 - D. attract

PREPARATION TIP

In order to successfully prepare students for ECCE Reading, it is recommended they are exposed to a wide variety of different authentic texts and a variety of genres. Example texts should be analyzed for use of grammar, allowing students to become familiar with how English structures are used in different contexts and situations.



ECCE Reading Part 3: Single and Multiple Text Reading

In the first part of Reading Part 3, test takers will be given a single text to read and respond to multiple-choice questions. These reading questions are designed to test learners' global, local, and inferential reading skills and will be on a range of topics.

Here is an example of a single text passage with multiple-choice questions:

This passage is about a type of computer software.

People encounter many kinds of printed information every day. In the past, such information was inaccessible to blind people unless someone would read it aloud for them. These days, though, several devices have made almost every written word accessible.

Since the 1970s, there have been reading machines that convert printed matter such as books and magazines into computerized audio output. Originally these were the size of a photocopy machine and cost more than a new car. They were generally found only in special libraries. Today they are the size of a VCR or DVD player, cheaper, and easily used in the home or workplace. Still, they are not very portable, which is a key reason for the development of a new device, the talking camera. A talking camera is the size of a normal camera, but works much like a reading machine. It allows blind people to "read" receipts, bus schedules, and other small texts they might encounter in daily life.

There is also computer software that allows blind people to access webpages on the Internet. Known as screen readers, these software programs are specially designed to read the important content of webpages and not the advertising and other information often found around the edges of pages. They can also be used to operate common word processing systems. Since many blind people find it difficult to use a computer mouse, screen readers are designed to be controlled through keyboard commands alone.

1. **What is the main topic of this passage?**
 - A. computer use by blind people
 - B. improvements in the lives of blind people
 - C. reading machines for blind people
 - D. problems of blind people

2. **Where were the earliest reading devices usually located?**
 - A. in photocopy machines
 - B. in homes of blind people
 - C. in offices
 - D. in public libraries


3. **What do all the reading devices described in the passage have in common?**
 - A. They change sound into print.
 - B. They make every word accessible.
 - C. They change print into sound.
 - D. They highlight important words.

Multiple Text Reading

The final part of the ECCE Reading Section includes a set of four thematically related text passages followed by multiple-choice questions. The texts in each set will be on a related topic but will be different types of text: for example, an advertisement, an interview, an email, and a short article. Each set of passages is followed by 12 multiple-choice questions designed to assess test takers' understanding of main ideas, details, and inferences. The final question or questions in these reading sets will be about more than one text in the set, demonstrating the ability to understand and connect ideas from multiple sources.

Here is an example of a multiple text passage with multiple-choice questions:

A

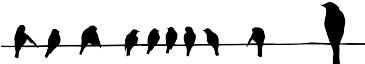


Segal Binoculars – now only \$29.99!

Segal brand binoculars make the smallest of objects appear up to seven times larger, allowing you to enjoy watching animals, birds, or sporting events at a distance!

- easy to use, great choice for beginners
- distant objects appear 7x larger
- lightweight—less than 600 grams!
- experts admire its sharp focus

Mention this advertisement at Bart's Birds on Main Street for an **additional \$3 off** a pair of Segal Binoculars!



C

Interview with Bart Bourne: The Great Snowy Owl
by Julia Scott


Many *Great Birds Magazine* readers have inquiries about snowy owls. Bart Bourne, expert birder and owner of Bart's Birds, answers some of your questions:

Q: People have seen snowy owls nearby, but I haven't—where should I look?

A: Great question! You might think you should look in trees, but actually, you want to look in open spaces instead. Find some farmland, and you'll be more likely to spot them there.


Q: I'm a beginner birdwatcher—do I need anything special to see snowy owls?

A: Well, since they're so large, they're often visible to the naked eye. However, I'd recommend you buy a nice pair of binoculars—the birds are rather impressive to see close up.



B

RARE BIRD ALERT




Have you ever wanted to see the rare snowy owl in the wild? Now might be your only chance! These impressive birds live in the Arctic, but every year they migrate, or travel, to warmer weather. Normally these birds don't fly this far south in the United States, but a few have been spotted not too far from here.

The Birdwatchers Club will meet at Bart's Birds at 4 p.m. this Thursday; together, we'll head outdoors in search of this beautiful bird. Anyone interested in birdwatching—beginner or expert—is welcome to join. Bring your binoculars or buy a pair at the store; you won't want to miss your chance to see a snowy owl!

D

Snowy Owl Migration
by Jeff James



Birdwatchers and nature lovers lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the snowy owl in the wild will likely never forget the experience. It is quite exciting to see these large creatures in person. Adult male snowy owls can be completely white, and the span of their wings can measure almost two meters!

Since snowy owls live in the Arctic tundra for most of the year, chances are slim that you'll see them if you live in the southern part of the United States. However, snowy owls migrate during the winter to relatively warmer climates. Some years an *irruption* occurs, or sharp increase in number of snowy owls, and the birds can be seen migrating as far south as the state of Florida. An irruption often takes place after a year where the food the snowy owls consume was abundant, and therefore results in higher reproduction rates. Interestingly, it is often the less dominant, young male owls that wander the farthest South. The dominant birds, typically adult females, stay closer to the Arctic.

If you would like to see a snowy owl near you, check to see if there was a recent snowy owl irruption. This may predict your likelihood of witnessing these magnificent creatures in the wild this year.

- What sections mention beginner birdwatchers?
 - A, B, and C
 - A, B, and D
 - A, C, and D
 - B and D
- Why might snowy owls mentioned in section B have flown so far south?
 - The snowy owls needed to reproduce.
 - The snowy owls got lost on their journey.
 - There was a recent irruption of snowy owls.
 - There were more open spaces for the snowy owls.

Classroom Strategies and Activities

When preparing students to succeed on the ECCE Reading Section, it can be helpful to use authentic materials as much as possible so students are exposed to a wide variety of genres, contexts, and purposes. At the B2 level, learners should be able to read and comprehend a variety of authentic texts on a range of topics, and this is reflected in the content of ECCE Reading Section tasks.

- Reading practice can be divided into three key stages: pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading. Some suggestions for classroom activities to help prepare students for the ECCE Reading Section are outlined below.

Pre-Reading Tasks

- Develop vocabulary to activate background knowledge on the topic and expand linguistic resources. This will help with all aspects of English proficiency, not just reading.
- Elicit and teach background content knowledge on the topic of the reading passage. This is known as frontloading and also helps activate any prior knowledge of the topic or relevant vocabulary. Frontloading the content knowledge allows students to focus on the linguistic challenges of the task, without needing to also work to understand the content. This can also be achieved through having students conduct research into the topic themselves or through collaboration in small groups.
- Predict content based on the headline or title, available answer options, or related pictures.
- Read through the questions first, identifying key words or phrases or noting down things to look out for while reading.

While Reading Tasks

- Always aim to complete more than one task per reading passage (identify the main idea, then infer an opinion, then identify smaller details) to ensure all subskills are being developed through practice.
- Practice skimming and scanning a text to understand the main idea (global) or locate specific details (local), as well as reading closely.
- Identify the tone/mood and opinion of the speaker by picking out vocabulary and other linguistic features that support the suggestions.
- Identify context clues and other details that help to answer the question. This can be achieved through highlighting, underlining or otherwise annotating the reading passage while reading the text.

Post-Reading Tasks

- Summarize and/or paraphrase the text. These types of activities demonstrate comprehension as well as provide opportunities to practice global, local and inferential subskills. These activities can be done with the text as a whole or with individual paragraphs or sections.
- Elicit a creative response. Creative writing or editing can be useful follow-on activities after reading a text. Activities could include writing about what happens next, re-writing the passage from a different perspective, re-writing in a different tone or mood, or re-writing for a different audience. These types of activities can demonstrate reading comprehension as well as provide an opportunity for students to develop their own writing skills.
- Ask learners to adapt the text into a speaking activity. As with creative writing, this type of task will give learners the opportunity to demonstrate and enhance their comprehension of the text as well as develop their speaking skills.
- Discuss the ideas or concepts raised in the text as a class. Classroom discussions are excellent opportunities to clarify and enhance understanding, develop language skills, and overcome challenges presented during the task.

General Reading Section Advice

- It is strongly recommended that students carefully read the questions before they read the text in order to give them a clear purpose while reading.
- It is recommended that students be given plenty of opportunities to practice reading for the main idea, reading for specific information, and reading for implication as part of their preparation for ECCE.
- Always ask students to support their answers to any reading activity with evidence from the text, or indicate where they found the information within the text. This will ensure they are not just guessing the correct answer, and are developing their skills effectively.
- When preparing students for ECCE, test takers should keep a vocabulary notebook they can add to whenever they come across a new word. They should note down the definition, collocations, example sentences, and pronunciation, and try to use these new words frequently in order to internalize them.
- Test takers should be encouraged to read, listen to, and watch a wide variety of authentic English-language materials independently as well as during classroom activities. This will ensure they are being exposed to a range of vocabulary which will help aid their success in all areas of ECCE. Encourage them to read for pleasure as well as for educational purposes.
- Practice reading activities within the exam timings when possible.

PREPARATION TIP

Remind your students that they can practice their reading skills even while watching their favorite television shows or movies. Turning on English subtitles can help aid reading comprehension as the audio-visual clues enhance understanding and reinforce the words being read. Reading while listening can also aid listening comprehension because it helps learners understand word boundaries and familiarize themselves with how language flows naturally in real contexts.



PREPARE FOR ECCE SPEAKING

ECCE test takers are expected to have achieved a B2 level on the CEFR in all skill areas. When speaking, users of English at a B2 level...

- can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. (Council of Europe, 2020, 62)
- can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples. (Council of Europe, 2020, 62)
- can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest. (Council of Europe, 2020, 62)
- can describe the personal significance of events and experiences in detail. (Council of Europe, 2020, 62)
- can communicate detailed information reliably. (Council of Europe, 2020, 63)
- can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. (Council of Europe, 2020, 64)
- can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples. (Council of Europe, 2020, 64)
- can construct a chain of reasoned argument. (Council of Europe, 2020, 64)
- can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. (Council of Europe, 2020, 64)
- can use the language fluently, accurately, and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational, or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. (Council of Europe, 2020, 72)
- can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. (Council of Europe, 2020, 72)
- can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. (Council of Europe, 2020, 72)
- can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments. (Council of Europe, 2020, 72)
- can generally use appropriate intonation, place stress correctly, and articulate individual sounds clearly; accent tends to be influenced by the other language(s) they speak, but has little or no effect on intelligibility. (Council of Europe, 2020: 134)
- can articulate a high proportion of the sounds in the target language clearly in extended stretches of production; are intelligible throughout, despite a few systematic mispronunciations. (Council of Europe, 2020: 134)
- can generalize from their repertoire to predict the phonological features of most unfamiliar words (e.g. word stress) with reasonable accuracy (e.g. while reading). (Council of Europe, 2020: 134)

While preparing students for the ECCE Speaking Section, it is important to be familiar with both the expectations of a B2 level user of English and the [ECCE Speaking Rating Scale](#).

ECCE Speaking Section Format

ECCE Speaking Section assesses the test taker’s abilities and skills in spoken English. As with the rest of ECCE, test takers should require no specialized knowledge or experience to engage with the content of the speaking section. The speaking test has been designed to elicit spoken language that reflects real life situations and is appropriate for the B2 level. Test takers are expected to actively participate in the conversation and expand their responses to provide sufficient detail.

The test is conducted with one examiner and one test taker, in person, at a separate time from the other sections. It lasts approximately 15 minutes.

The four stages of the test build on each other and increase in complexity as the test progresses. Test takers will receive a test taker card that contains a text to read and two pictures that represent a given situation.

The format of the test is represented in the table below:

Stage 1	Test taker and examiner introduce themselves.
Stage 2	Test taker asks questions and gathers information.
Stage 3	Test taker presents and justifies a decision, providing suggestions and recommendations.
Stage 4	Examiner asks elaboration questions and there is an opportunity for an in-depth discussion.

PREPARATION TIP

Utilize technology! Many online tools are useful for speaking practice, in particular apps where learners can record themselves speaking. Some apps also allow for the teacher to record spoken feedback, which can help develop listening skills concurrently.

Recording a student (either audio only, or audio-visual) giving an oral presentation and then having them watch themselves is also a very effective way to encourage self-reflection. This can also provide a meaningful method of delivering immediate feedback; you can rewatch the presentation together and discuss strengths and any areas for improvement.



Here is an example of a test taker sheet for ECCE Speaking:

ECCE SPEAKING TEST	HELP SOLVE A PROBLEM
<p>Situation I am the principal of an elementary school. We would like to hold an outdoor event for our students. The goal is to have a large, fun outdoor event to encourage children to be more active. Find out what our options are and tell me which one you think is best.</p> <p>First You should look at the pictures below and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the options?• What are the advantages of each option?• What are the disadvantages of each option? <p>Then When you have all the information you need, explain which option/solution you think is best and why. Be ready to explain why you didn't choose the other option/solution. Remember to use information you learn from asking questions to explain your final choice.</p> <p>Finally After you have shared your advice, you will be asked more questions about the topic.</p>	

Option 1



Option 2



The elaboration questions for Stage 4 of the examination are not provided on the test taker card. The questions that could be asked in this example are the following:

1. What is your favorite outdoor activity?
2. People usually find it easier to exercise if they do it with another person. Why do you think this is the case?
3. Some people think health is a private/personal issue that should not be a concern of government/employers. What are some reasons for and against this view?

More sample speaking tests can be found in the [Resources section](#) of our website, and a full video of a speaking exam can be found on our YouTube channel.

Classroom Strategies and Activities

Speaking can take time to master, but it is an essential component of language learning for communication. It can sometimes be a source of anxiety for language learners, so an important strategy for exam preparation is to make efforts to eliminate the source of that anxiety and give learners enough practice so they are able to go into their ECCE Speaking examination with confidence.

A useful strategy for alleviating such anxiety is to give students material to study or a task to complete prior to a lesson (for example, learning relevant vocabulary, researching a topic, or thinking of some recommendations for a situation). Having time to prepare the language they may need to use can help them feel more confident about speaking activities. This strategy also allows classroom time to be spent on practicing the skill of speaking, with opportunities to provide feedback, reflect, and make improvements.

Collaborative learning is also a useful strategy for practicing speaking in the classroom, encouraging learners to work together and learn from each other as they develop their skills. Learners can work in groups to

- prepare and deliver oral presentations,
- create and take part in situational role play activities and,
- rehearse and perform a dramatic production.

These are just a few of the collaborative activities that can help prepare learners for their speaking examination by building confidence and linguistic skills.

Another suggestion for a classroom activity to develop speaking skills is to have students prepare simple presentations on a topic of their own choosing: a hobby, their family, or something equally familiar. This will allow them to focus on their intelligibility and delivery, rather than being concerned about the content of the presentation, while they practice and develop their skills and self-confidence.

Similarly, have students begin with prepared presentations or speaking tasks and gradually reduce the preparation time until they are able to speak more spontaneously. This will help them get used to thinking on the spot and feel more confident and comfortable in their skills.

Make sure that some of these activities require the description of possible courses of action and advantages and disadvantages of certain options and that learners support their choices with sufficient information.

General Speaking Section Advice

- Download the ECCE sample test resources from michiganassessment.org and have students practice the speaking exam tasks either with a partner or a teacher. Give feedback according to the ECCE Speaking Rating Scale and encourage students to self-assess their performance.
- Watch and listen to example performances and, where possible, read the commentary from ECCE examiners. It can be helpful to have students review the example performance along with the rating scale and give the performance a grade themselves. They can then compare their grade and feedback with the examiner commentary. This activity will not only help familiarize students with the format and exam tasks but also with the linguistic expectations of the exam.
- Analyze examples of people orally presenting and justifying a decision as well as providing suggestions and recommendations. Have students note down how the speakers present and support their ideas as well as their delivery, pronunciation, intonation, and other aspects of their spoken language.
- Use the CEFR level descriptors as a guide for assessing students' abilities in speaking and to develop purposeful practice activities. Encourage students to self-assess and peer assess, using the rating scale and the CEFR. There are several self-assessment resources available through the Council of Europe's website.
- Practice timed speaking activities. Start with a visible timing device, and have students practice exam-style speaking tasks so they can get used to how much time they have available in the speaking section and self-regulate their time. Then, as they increase in confidence and are used to the time limitations, have them practice without the timer visible in order to replicate the exam conditions as much as possible.