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## **PON Lingua letteratura e cultura nella dimensione europea a.s. 2009-2010 area lingue**

### **Percorso didattico**

***Analizzare i livelli di competenza e adattare i descrittori del Quadro  
secondo le indicazioni del syllabo – Analysing levels and scales in the  
Common European Framework***

***di Stefania Madella***

- **Argomenti:** Comprensione orale, Comprensione scritta, Produzione orale, Produzione scritta, Inglese
  - **Progetto:** Lingua, letteratura e cultura in una dimensione europea - Area lingue straniere
  - **Grado scolastico:** Secondaria di I grado
  - **Tipologia:** Percorso didattico
  - **Condizioni d'uso:** Copyright © Indire
  - **Livello linguistico:** Livello A2
  - **Lingue:** Inglese

**Tematica affrontata:** analizzare i livelli di competenza e adattare i descrittori del QCER secondo le indicazioni del syllabo.

Ogni insegnante di lingua è ormai consapevole che la pietra miliare del processo di insegnamento/apprendimento delle lingue in Europa è da alcuni anni il Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue (QCER). Si tratta di un documento basilare, tuttavia di non semplice utilizzo.

Questa risorsa ha perciò il compito di aiutare i docenti di lingua inglese ad accostarsi all'uso del Quadro attraverso attività di lettura di alcune sue parti.

**Nota redazionale: il percorso si basa sulle indicazioni 2007 tuttavia le attività e temi proposti sono utili anche alla luce dell'attuale normativa in considerazione dello sfondo comune dato dal QCER e dal livello linguistico proposto dalle attività.**

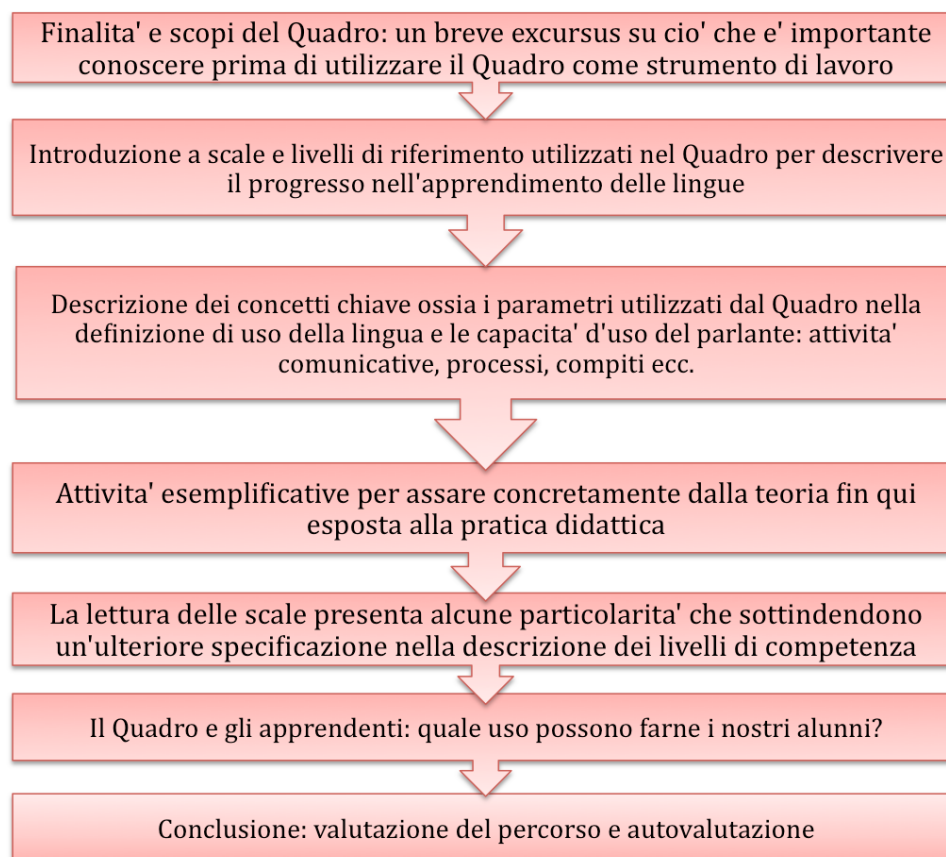
**Revisione linguistica a cura del British Council, coord. dott.ssa K. Harris, J. Ritter**

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## Introduction

The main aim of the path is to help teachers in the comprehension of selected materials from the CEFR and the possible uses they can do of it in everyday teaching.



## Aims

- Promoting professional development through reflection and cooperation
- Facilitating the comprehension of the Common European Framework: levels and scales
- Encouraging learners' involvement in language learning, developing their autonomy, recording their language progress and valuing success through self-assessment tools.

## Learning Objectives

The main objectives of this path will be:

- to help teachers have a better understanding of the Common European Framework content, terminology and levels
- to help teachers analyse the descriptors of levels and scales of the CEFR in order to provide tools for describing learners' performances
- to practice the use of the scales in everyday teaching through some examples of activities provided.

## Final Competences

- At the end of this path, **teachers** will improve the comprehension of the rationale behind scales and descriptors of the Common European Framework. They will be able to use the document for their teaching aims and they will succeed in sharing the terminology of the CEFR with other teachers.
- The **students** will be given the opportunity to engage in communicative activities, to use new materials from the web and to be introduced to self-evaluation.

## Methodology and activity steps:

### Teaching strategies

- Problem solving
- Cooperative work
- Switching from theory to practice
- **STEP 1 – Aims and purposes of the CEFR**  
**Teacher task 1.1** - What do you already know about the CEFR?  
**Teacher task 1.2.**  
 At the end of this first step, you can collect the several aims and purposes of the CEFR in a grid divided as the following one
- **STEP 2 - Different kinds of scales**  
**Teacher Task 2.1** - Levels of proficiency defined by appropriate descriptors.
- **STEP 3 – The definition of language use and its key concepts**  
**Teacher Task 3.1** - Definitions of the keywords from the CEFR
- **STEP 4 – From theory to practice**  
**Teacher Task 4.1** - In the following grid you can compare how one

descriptor (visual reception: reading) has been analyzed by the CEFR scales, by lend in its document and by the "indicazioni per il curricolo". In your training group, discuss which one is the most suitable for your teaching. Class activities.

**Task 4.2** - Class activity 1 - read and follow the instructions.

**Task 4.3** - Class activity 2.1. And 2.2 - writing an email

**Task 4.4** - Class activity 3 - listening and speaking

**Task 4.5** - Class activity 4 - make a cd cover for a favourite singer

**Task 4.6** - Class activity 5 - reading a text and infer new words

**Teacher Task 4.7** - Use table A to analyze the activities of the previous tasks. Discuss your choices with your training group.

- **STEP 5 - How to read the scales of illustrative descriptors**

**Teacher Task 5.1** - Examples of activities belonging to the overall reading comprehension scale showing the differences among three levels.

- **STEP 6 - The CEFR and the learners**

**Teacher Task 6.1** - Compare class activities to a list of descriptors of Portfolio Europeo delle lingue della Lombardia.

- **STEP 7 - Path's Evolution Checklist**

## STEP 1 – Aims and purposes of the CEFR

The beginning of this path will lead you to reflect on what you already know about The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning , teaching, **assessment** (from now on, CEFR , see CEFR.pdf). The following definition has been taken from the first chapter of the document. Read it and then perform Task 1.

*"The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis" (Chapter 1 p. 1).*

### Teacher task 1.1 - What do you already know about the CEFR?



Join your group to reflect and discuss. Take notes of what the other teachers say with reference to the following questions.

- What is the CEFR?
- What are its main purposes?
- Do you use it? Or, have you ever used it? Why/Why not?
- Go back to the definition of the CEFR: what are its main concepts?
- Find and discuss them with other teachers.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning , teaching, assessment has opened up a new era in the history of modern language teaching in Europe by constituting the first language policy tool that embraces all modern languages.

The CEFR is a document prepared between 1993 and 2000 by experts brought together and directed by the Council of Europe. It was officially adopted after very broad consultation during the European Year of Languages in 2001.

The essential aim of the CEFR is to encourage transparency and comparability in language teaching arrangements and language qualifications. To this end, it proposes:

- a common methodology for analyzing and describing situations and choices in language teaching and learning;
- a common terminology for all languages and educational contexts;
- a common scale of levels of language proficiency to assist with goal-setting and learning outcome assessment.

At the end of this first step, you can collect the several aims and purposes of the CEFR in a grid divided as the following one

The CEFR uses an action-oriented approach basing language teaching and learning on the performance of communicative tasks and on language communication activities.

*"CEF serves the overall aim of the Council of Europe[....]: 'to achieve greater unity among its members' and to pursue this aim 'by the adoption of common action in the cultural field'. (Chapter 1.1 p 2). Moreover, further in the chapter, (Chapter 1.4 p.5),: "It is desirable to develop a Common European Framework of reference for language learning at all levels, in order to:*

- *promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries;*
- *provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications;*

- *assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts."*

And again (Chapter 1.5 p. 6) "The **uses** of the Framework include:

**The planning of language learning programmes** in terms of:

- their assumptions regarding prior knowledge, and their articulation with earlier learning, particularly at interfaces between primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher/further education;
- their objectives;
- their content.

**The planning of language certification** in terms of:

- the content syllabus of examinations;
- assessment criteria, in terms of positive achievement rather than negative deficiencies.

**The planning of self-directed learning**, including:

- raising the learner's awareness of his or her present state of knowledge;
- self-setting of feasible and worthwhile objectives;
- selection of materials;
- self-assessment."

## Teacher task 1.2.



Work in your training group and focus on the previous list of aims of the CEFR: the table below will help you in analysing them. Decide together if those purposes are aimed mainly for teachers, students or for a general language user.

age user.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE CEFR	For you as a teacher	For your students	For any language user
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.....			



## STEP 2 - Different kinds of scales

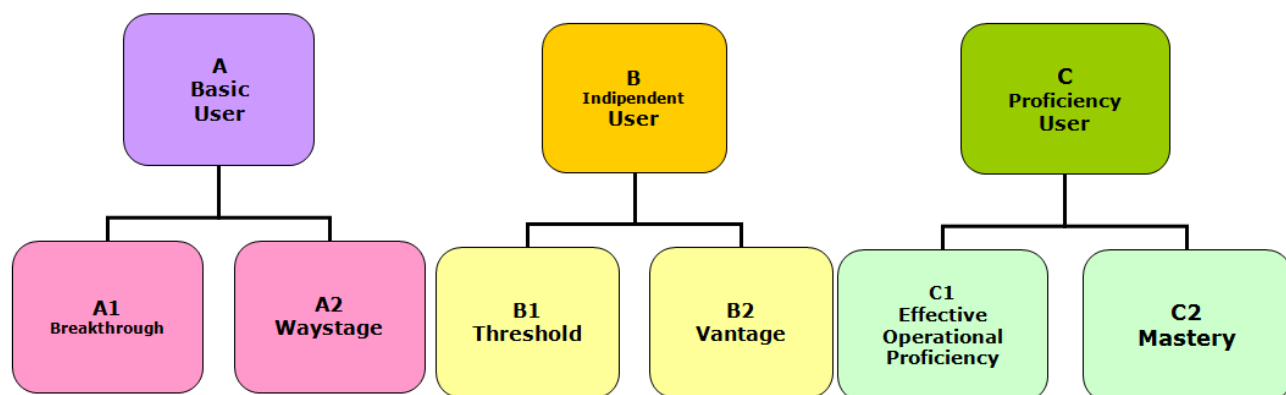
The core feature of the CEFR is the system of six common reference levels starting from the elementary language proficiency of a basic user and ending with the highly-advanced language mastery of a proficient user.

Breakthrough, Waystage, Threshold, Vantage, Effective Operational Proficiency and Mastery are the six broad levels used to cover the learning space. These six levels are higher and lower interpretations of the classic division into **basic**, **intermediate** and **advanced**.

In order to outline learners' proficiency according to specific communicative language activities, '**can do**' statements are used to define the six defined criterion levels of communicative proficiency grouped in **three bands**:

- **A1, A2 – basic user;**
- **B1, B2 – independent user;**
- **C1, C2 – proficient user**

The following scheme shows how the different kinds of levels are related.



**Teacher Task 2.1** - Levels of proficiency defined by appropriate descriptors.



Read these questions, think about them and take notes.

1. How do you usually define your students' competence at the beginning of the first year of Scuola media?
2. At the end of the third year?
3. Are you familiar with the CEFR six common scales and levels?
4. Why and when do you use them?

Now exchange your ideas with the other teachers in your training group.

The Common Reference Levels describe **progress** in language learning that can be calibrated in terms of a flexible series of **levels of proficiency** defined by appropriate **descriptors**. The characteristics considered relevant in descriptors formulation are: positiveness, definiteness, clarity, brevity, independence. The CEFR analyses the **Common Reference Levels** in [three main tables](#) (see attachment table1\_2\_3.doc):

- **Table1 - Common Reference Levels: Global scale**, a broad representation which makes it easier to communicate the system to non-specialist users.
- **Table 2 - Common Reference Levels: Self-assessment grid**: a learner's level of competence can only be observed through language activities. That is why the CEFR breaks down this scale of levels according to listening – reading – writing – spoken interaction – spoken production in terms of **"Can do" statements**.
- **Table 3 - Common Reference Levels: Qualitative aspects of spoken language use** was designed to assess **spoken performances**. It focuses on different qualitative aspects of language use.

Tasks and language activities are found throughout the definitions of the reference levels. They are also present on a daily basis in the teaching relationship between teacher and students. They are central to all language learning and the pedagogical challenge is to match these reference levels to suitable communicative tasks.

### STEP 3 – The definition of language use and its key concepts

The CEFR is a comprehensive document. It seeks to cover a very large number of language teaching and learning situations and most of the problems encountered in such situations. Due to this ambition, some of its ideas are complex. At a first sight, a reader may be puzzled by the number of concepts introduced and the detailed explanations given in the various chapters. A full understanding of the CEFR will require several readings over a period of time, with certain sections being selected according to individual needs and interests. To facilitate the first reading, we shall select a small number of concepts and to illustrate the argument, we shall introduce

these different concepts and the proposed terminology (printed in bold type in the subsequent text) on the basis of some extracts from textbooks.

The CEFR is based on an analysis of the context of **language use**. Chapter 2 (pp.9-20) states clearly that the document adopts an action-oriented approach in so far as it views users and learners of a language as 'social agents', i.e. members of a society who have **tasks** to accomplish in a given set of circumstances (not exclusively language-related), in a specific environment and within a particular field of action, within **language activities**, as part of a wider social context.

The definition of **language use** gives the insights into the main concepts or **keywords of the CEFR** that give start to the definitions of levels and scales i.e. they represent *the rationale* behind them:

*"..... Any form of language use and learning could be described as follows: Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of **competences**, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various **contexts** under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to themes in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences". (Ch. 2 p. 9)*

Any act of language learning or teaching is in some way concerned with at least one of these concepts. There is an important interrelationship among all of them. Let's see what their meanings are. In order to better understand these fundamental elements, we will ask you to perform the following task where the definitions of the keywords have to be inferred one by one. In [keywords](#) (see attachment keywords.doc) you can read the full text.

### **Teacher Task 3.1** - Definitions of the keywords from the CEFR

Read the following definitions from the CEFR and match them to [keywords](#) (see attachment keywords.doc)

The underlined words and the corresponding definitions in bold type are the most important ones.

#### **1. Context – 2. Competences – 3. Text – 4. Language activities –**

**5. A strategy – 6. Language processes – 7. A task - 8. General competences - 9. Communicative language competences – 10. Domain**

**A.** They are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions. ....

**B.** They are those not specific to language, but which are called upon for actions of all kinds, including language activities.....

**C.** They are those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means.....

**D.** It refers to the constellation of events and situational factors (physical and others), both internal and external to a person, in which acts of communication are embedded.....

**E. They involve the exercise of one's communicative language competence in a specific domain in processing (receptively and/or productively) one or more texts in order to carry out a task.....**

**F.**They refer to the chain of events, neurological and physiological, involved in the production and reception of speech and writing.....

**G.** It is any sequence or discourse (spoken and/or written) related to a specific domain and which in the course of carrying out a task becomes the occasion of a language activity, whether as a support or as a goal, as product or process.....

**H.**It refers to the broad sectors of social life in which social agents operate. A higher order categorisation has been adopted here limiting these to major categories relevant to language learning/teaching and use: the educational, occupational, public and personal ones.....

**I. It is any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task which he or she sets for himself or herself or with which he or she is confronted.....**

**J.**It is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved. ....

The learners' **communicative language competence** is activated in the performance of different **language activities**, involving *reception, production,*

*interaction and mediation*. Each of these activities can be performed either with *oral* or *written texts*, or both.

Following the keywords we can't forget that language activities are contextualised within **domains**, broadly classified as the *public, the personal, the educational and the occupational* domains. (CEFR, p. 45) Within the various domains we may distinguish **themes**, *conversation, reflection or composition*, as the focus of attention in particular communicative acts. (CEFR, pp.51-52)


Communication and learning involve the performance of **tasks** which are not solely language tasks. These tasks are neither routine nor automatic, in fact they require the use of **strategies** in communicating and learning. (CEFR, pp.157-167)

*"[...] someone who has to move a wardrobe (task) may try to push it, take it to pieces so as to carry it more easily and then reassemble it, call on outside labour or give up and convince himself or herself that it can wait until tomorrow, etc. (all strategies)"* .(CEFR, p.15)

Depending on the strategy adopted, the performance (or avoidance, postponement or definition) of the task may or may not involve a **language activity** and **text** processing (reading instructions for dismantling, making a telephone call, etc.). Similarly, a learner at school who has to translate a text from a foreign language (**task**) may look to see if a translation already exists, ask another learner to show what he or she has done, use a dictionary, try to work out some kind of meaning on the basis of the few words or structures he or she knows, think of a good excuse for not handing in this exercise, etc. (all possible **strategies**). For all the cases envisaged here there will necessarily be **language activity** and **text** processing (translation/mediation, verbal negotiation with a classmate, letter or verbal excuses to the teacher, etc.).

## STEP 4 – From theory to practice

**Teacher Task 4.1** - In the following grid you can compare how one descriptor (visual reception: reading) has been analyzed by the CEFR scales, by LEND in its document and by the "indicazioni per il curricolo" (see Indicazioni2007.pdf) . In your training group, discuss which one is the most suitable for your teaching. Class activities.

 In the grid you can compare how one descriptor (for example, visual reception: reading) has been analyzed by the CEFR scales, by LEND in its document (see

lend.doc) and by the "Indicazioni per il curricolo". In your training group, discuss which of the three is the most exhaustive.

<p><b>CEFR for ILLUSTRATIVE SCALES IN VISUAL RECEPTION (reading) activities</b></p> <p><b>Levels B1</b></p>	<p><b>Proposta dell'associazione LEND –Lingua e Nuova Didattica- Curricoli di Educazione linguistica per le Lingue Straniere nel primo ciclo d'istruzione (P.3)</b></p> <p><b><i>Ricezione scritta (lettura) – B1</i></b></p>	<p><b>"Indicazioni per il curricolo" Obiettivi di apprendimento al termine della classe terza della scuola secondaria di primo grado per la prima lingua straniera(pp. 61-62)</b></p> <p><b><i>Ricezione scritta (lettura)</i></b></p>
<p><b>Overall reading comprehension</b> Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.</p> <p><b>Reading correspondence</b> Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.</p> <p><b>Reading for orientation</b> Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.</p> <p><b>Reading for information and argument</b> Can recognize significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.</p> <p><b>Reading instructions</b> Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment.</p>	<p>L'allievo è in grado di leggere e di individuare informazioni concrete e prevedibili in testi quotidiani semplici (per esempio un annuncio, un prospetto, un menu o un orario...); può capire una lettera personale su argomenti familiari; sa leggere globalmente testi relativamente lunghi (opuscoli, articoli di giornale...) per trovare informazioni specifiche relative ai suoi interessi o ai suoi studi; è in grado di leggere e capire testi riguardanti istruzioni per l'uso di un oggetto.</p>	<p>– Leggere e individuare informazioni concrete e prevedibili in semplici testi di uso quotidiano (per esempio un annuncio, un prospetto, un menu, un orario...) e in lettere personali.</p> <p>– Leggere globalmente testi relativamente lunghi (opuscoli, articoli di giornale...) per trovare informazioni specifiche relative ai propri interessi.</p> <p>– Leggere e capire testi riguardanti istruzioni per l'uso di un oggetto.</p>

As we have already stated, one of the essential aspects of the conception of learning underlying the CEFR, is "the action-oriented approach" to the learning and teaching of modern languages. This approach identifies the users of a language (and the learners) as "*'social agents', i.e. members of society who have **tasks** [...] to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action*" (CEFR, p. 9).

In this second part of the path, we will see to what extent the CEFR can be exploited for a practical and concrete use i.e. how we can switch from theory to practice. Some examples of class activities will show how they develop a task, a strategy or a communicative language activity.

- **At the end of each task you will find the recommended scales to assess the performances of your students**

**Task 4.2** - Class activity 1 - read and follow the instructions.

Activity 1 (see attachment Activity 1)

**Class level:** beginning of the first year of Scuola media

**Aim:** to revise prepositions of place and colours and learn new lexis through the reading of short, simple written instructions. Students will show understanding if all the flags will be coloured correctly.

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Prerequisites:** Students are required to know the names of colours, the prepositions of place and European countries. They also need to know the affirmative forms of the verbs be and have.

**Procedure:**

Brainstorm the language that can be useful for the activity: names of European countries, colours and the prepositions of place.

Elicit new vocabulary related to flags by some drawings on the board: FLAG; POLE; STRIPE; CROSS; BACKGROUND; HORIZONTAL; VERTICAL; DIAGONAL; THICK; THIN.

Every students has a copy of the handout with the flags and the descriptions

As a start, you might read the text aloud for the class.

Before starting colouring, students have to match the descriptions to the right flags.

Students need crayons to sort out the task.

The recommended scales for the description of this activity are:

**Level A1 - Reading for orientation:** Can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

**Level A1- Reading for information and argument:** Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

**Task 4.3** - Class activity 2.1. And 2.2 - writing an email



Activity 2.1 ([see attachment lazy-letter.doc](#))

**Class level:** end of the third year of Scuola media

**Time:** 30/40 minutes

**Prerequisites:** Students are required to know the basic vocabulary related to holidays, free time activities, travelling. They have to handle different tenses: present simple and continuous, past simple, future (for plans).

**Aim:** to get students to write a controlled and semi-controlled text about their own experience in real life.

### Procedure

You need to hand out a copy of "[A lazy e-mail from Australia](#)" ([lazy-letter.doc](#)) in the attachment for every student.

Teacher tells the students that they have to imagine being in Australia for a school exchange and they have to write an email to someone they know. S/he tells them to cross out one of the choices given in the text in a coherent way.

Afterwards, the teacher asks the students to copy the whole text in their folders and check the spelling carefully.



### Activity 2.2

This is a follow up activity where the students have to write their own emails. To help them, a list of questions is provided below. They have to write about 50-60 words:

- Where are you at the moment?
- When did you arrive?
- Where are you staying?
- Are you having a good time?
- What are you doing?
- Say something about the place



- What did you do yesterday? you are staying.

### Procedure:

You should encourage your students to refer to a real experience they have had recently.

Then you can get the students to swap and read each other's emails and correct any mistakes they find. (Optional).

At the end, collect the texts in for evaluation.

As a follow up computer activity you could join your class to the website [www.epals.com](http://www.epals.com). ePals connects teachers, students, parents and educators from around the world, enabling them to communicate, interact and collaborate on academic and cultural projects and establish international friendships.

The recommended scales for the description of this activity are:

**Level A2 - Overall written production:** Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.

**Level A2 - Orthographic control:** Can copy short sentences on everyday subjects – e.g. directions how to get somewhere. Can write with reasonable phonetic accuracy (but not necessarily fully standard spelling) short words that are in his/her oral vocabulary.

**For level A2+** Creative writing: Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.

**For level B1 - Reading for orientation:** Can [find and] understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, [brochures and short official documents].

### Task 4.4 - Class activity 3 – listening and speaking



### Activity 3

**Class level:** end of the third year of Scuola media

**Time:** 30 minutes

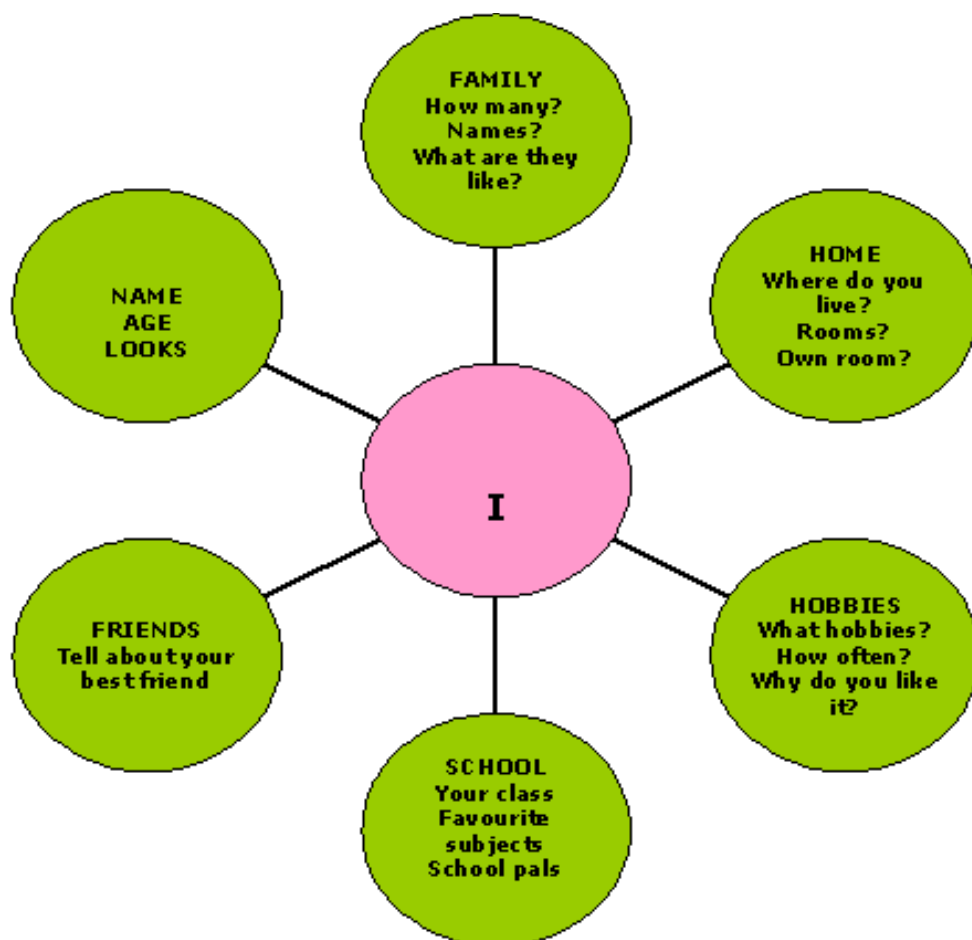
**Prerequisites:** Students are required to know the basic vocabulary related to their personal and educational backgrounds.

**Aim:** to activate and consolidate knowledge and competences referred to a real speaking activity.

### Procedure:

Before starting the activity, you might play a recording so that students can have a model. [Choose a listening lesson](#), the diagram can be drawn on the board to help students in writing their notes or organise the ones taken during the listening.

Diagram:



You can encourage your students to practice in pairs before telling their presentations in front of the class.

While a student's speaking, the others have to take notes of what is said in order to report it later. In this way all the class is involved.

The recommended scales to describe this activity are:

**Level A2- Overall oral production** Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.

**Level A2- Sustained monologue.** Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background

Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience.

**Level A2+ Sustained monologue.** Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.

**Task 4.5** - Class activity 4 - make a cd cover for a favourite singer

**Class level:** second year of Scuola media

**Time:** 30/45 minutes

**Prerequisites:** Students are required to know the basic vocabulary related to music and leisure and the present simple of ordinary verbs.

**Aim:** : To make a CD cover for a favourite singer or band

To activate and consolidate knowledge and competences in order to produce a text (a biography) to be presented to an audience regarding a personal interest.

### **Procedure**

This is a group activity. You can split the class into groups according to their musical interests. Before starting this activity, elicit different musical genres onto the board.

To make the Cd cover, students can use real pictures from magazines or from the web. They have to design the record cover, including the name of the group and the album on the front; the biographies and pictures are written on the back of the cover.

It's a good idea to tell them to bring real CDs, cassettes, records from home to focus on those designs.

Limit the amount of time for this particular task because they love arts and crafts.

Then they will present their singer or band to the class.

The recommended scales to describe this activity are :

**Level A2- Addressing audiences:** Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.

**Level A2- Creative writing:** Can write short, simple imaginary biographies about people

**Task 4.6** - Class activity 5 – reading a text and infer new words



Activity 5 ([see attachment Activity 5](#))

**Class level:** second year of Scuola media

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Prerequisites:** Students are required to know the past simple of ordinary verbs and some vocabulary related to everyday activities.

**Aims:** to read a text to get the gist and understand specific information and descriptions. To Infer the explanation of unknown words.

### **Procedure**

You should give a couple of minutes to read the whole text.

Then go through it and ask students to read the descriptions and match them to the words written in bold type.

Afterwards, elicit the answers.

From: Richieri- Marangon, COME ABOARD! Vol. 3 Loescher p. 30

The recommended scales to describe this activity are:

**Level A2- READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT** Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.

**Level A2- IDENTIFYING CUES AND INFERRING** (Spoken & Written)

Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words from the context.

**Teacher Task 4.7** - Use table A to analyse the activities of the previous tasks. Discuss your choices with your training group.



After performing tasks 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 with your students, you can use [table A](#) ( see task4\_7\_table.doc) to analyse the previous activities and decide which of them develop a **task**, which a **strategy** or a **communicative language activity** and why. Discuss your choices with your training group.

## STEP 5 - How to read the scales of illustrative descriptors

In some scales, levels A2, B1, B2 are cut off into two parts: the description written in the lower part represents the criterion level. The descriptor placed in the upper part defines a higher level of proficiency but which does not achieve the standard for the following level. The next task gives you the example of two scales, A2 and B1 where A2 has the cutoff point. At the end of each descriptor there is a link to an activity representing the level. The following checklist will help you in better understanding the differences between the levels.

**Teacher Task 5.1** - Examples of activities belonging to the overall reading comprehension scale showing the differences among three levels.

In some scales, levels A2, B1, B2 are cut off into two parts: the description **written in the lower part** represents the criterion level. The descriptor placed **in the upper part** defines a higher level of proficiency but which does not achieve the standard for the following level. The next task gives you the example of two scales, A2 and B1 where A2 has the cutoff point. At the end of each descriptor there is a link to an activity representing the level. The following checklist will help you in better understanding the differences between the levels.



Read the following descriptors belonging to the **OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION** scale and click on the links which offer examples of activities.

<b>B1</b>	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension. (activity 3) <a href="#">Example of activity (online)</a>
<b>A2 +</b>	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language. (activity 2) <a href="#">Example of activity (online)</a>
<b>A2</b>	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items. (activity 1) <a href="#">Example of activity (online)</a>

To compare the three examples you can use this CHECKLIST.

### CHECKLIST

<p>Activity 1 can be placed at level <b>A2</b> because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the subject is simple</li> <li>the vocabulary is quite common to this target group of learners</li> </ul>	<p>Yes No  Yes No</p>
<p>Activity2 differs from the former because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the higher level of difficulty</li> <li>the subject is targeted for adults</li> </ul>	<p>Yes No  Yes No</p>
<p>Activity 3 shows why an <b>A2+</b> reading text cannot achieve the standard for level <b>B1</b> because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the subject is NOT familiar or interesting enough</li> <li>the level of performance required is too different.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes No  Yes No</p>

## STEP 6 - The CEFR and the learners

Up to now, we have seen how the CEFR can be used by teachers.

But, what do the scales mean for students? If they are at level A2, how can they understand what's the meaning of it?

The CEFR makes it clear by the "Can Do" statements of the Self-assessment scale. Teachers should use the descriptors of this scale to make their students aware of their achievements.

As Luciano Mariani explains: "... we need to make these descriptions user-friendly, that is, easily manageable by the students themselves. The Common European Framework, the European Language Portfolio, and our course books help us a lot in this respect, because they provide us with many ready-made checklists, but the

*problem is how to make these competences recognizable by the students. This is a problem which is often underestimated...."*

For several years, almost all course books have provided assessment grids, questionnaires or complete Portfolios for students to assess their progress and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. A complete overview about self-assessment and Portfolios can be found in the Core topic n. 2.

In this attachment, a grid of [user-friendly descriptors](#) (see griglia\_pel.doc) is offered where your students' language competences are described according to the different levels of the CEFR. This grid is part of the Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue della Lombardia (2001) like the following page which shows how some statements of the [Self-assessment scale](#) (see table1\_2\_3.doc) can be presented in a user-friendly way.

Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue Biografia linguistica

Lingua

Quando parlo...  
Io sono in grado di:

- ☐ ☐ ☐ descrivere in modo semplice alcune mie esperienze
- ☐ ☐ ☐ descrivere in modo semplice persone, animali, oggetti e luoghi
- ☐ ☐ ☐ commentare brevemente il testo di una canzone/poesia
- ☐ ☐ ☐ integrare un breve testo in una drammatizzazione offerta e situazioni conosciute (ad es. al ristorante, in un negozio...)

Quando prendo parte a una conversazione...  
Io sono in grado di:

- ☐ ☐ ☐ chiedere e fornire informazioni (ad es. su sport, tempo libero, istituzioni stradali...)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ dialogare con qualcuno su temi familiari, se posso spiegare le stesse gli argomenti
- ☐ ☐ ☐ esprimere la mia opinione su argomenti conosciuti

Quando scrivo...  
Io sono in grado di:

- ☐ ☐ ☐ fornire risposte adeguate a un questionario riferito alla mia esperienza personale
- ☐ ☐ ☐ scrivere un invito o un biglietto d'auguri
- ☐ ☐ ☐ preparare un breve testo descrittivo su argomenti conosciuti
- ☐ ☐ ☐ scrivere un breve testo per una canzone o una poesia utilizzando parole note
- ☐ ☐ ☐ scrivere un testo personale come una lettera o una pagina di diario
- ☐ ☐ ☐ esprimere in modo semplice la mia opinione riguardo a un tema su cui si è discusso

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**MIUR- Ufficio Scolastico Regionale per la Lombardia, 2002 RCS Scuola-La Nuova Italia-Oxford, p. 25**

**Teacher Task 6.1** - Compare class activities to a list of descriptors of Portfolio Europeo delle lingue della Lombardia.

Look back at the activities in **STEP 4**: can they be referred to any of the descriptors of the Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue della Lombardia present in this page?

Now answer these questions about the self assessment tools in your course books

- What kind of self evaluation tools are there in your course books? (simple charts, complete Portfolios, etc.)
- Are they written in a user-friendly language?
- Have you ever completed them with your students? Why?/Why not?
- Are you going to change your attitude towards them?

### • **STEP 7 – Path’s Evolution Checklist**

At the end of this path,

1. Have you improved your knowledge of the CEFR?
2. Have you changed your awareness about it?
3. Have you understood anything new?
4. Are you going to adopt the CEFR terminology?
5. Will you describe your students’ competences according to the CEFR’s scales?
6. Will your way of teaching upgrade?
7. Have the tasks provided been useful for better understanding the materials of the path?
8. Have you shared your experiences and your choices with other teachers effectively?

## Bibliography

**MIUR**, *Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue*, 2002, USR Lombardia, La Nuova Italia-Oxford.

**Jim Scrivener**, *Learning teaching*, Macmillan, 2006.

## Websites

[CEFR](#) - Download the complete text in English.

[Implementing Language And Cross-Curricular Portfolio Projects: Some Pedagogical Implications](#), a site” dedicated to all those who wish to help themselves or others to learn” by Luciano Mariani.

[PEL Italiani validati - Il modello della Lombardia](#) where you can get some information about the PEL of Lombardia.



[CEFTrain](#) - training materials in the use of CEFR scales for rating language samples.

## Sintesi in italiano

Ogni insegnante di lingua è ormai consapevole che la pietra miliare del processo di insegnamento-apprendimento delle lingue in Europa è da alcuni anni il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento. E' questo un documento basilare ma anche di non semplice utilizzo.

Il primo percorso di questo nucleo ha perciò il compito di aiutare i docenti di lingua inglese ad accostarsi all'uso del Quadro attraverso attività di lettura di alcune sue parti ma soprattutto utilizzando la metodologia comune a tutti i percorsi: discussioni di gruppo, scambi di esperienze tra i docenti e attività con gli alunni. In particolare il percorso ha il seguente schema di sviluppo:

