United Nations Language Framework

UN Levels of Language Competence
Core Curriculum

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1. Introduction

With the vision of promoting multilingualism in the United Nations system, the mission of the Language Harmonization Project is to create a common United Nations Language Framework[1] for language learning and assessment, in the six official UN languages. One of the main components of this Framework is the definition of four levels of language competence, specifically in the context of the United Nations.

The Framework and UN levels aim to build consistency among all United Nations language programmes while also remaining flexible and adaptable to local realities. The adoption of this Framework will allow for more efficient management of language programmes, stronger recognition of language skills, and smoother transitions in career mobility and development.

This document aims to help users to better understand the UN levels, which build upon each other. Each UN level is defined by one overall and four specific descriptors that can be read as a whole. Users may also want to read the overall descriptors first, and then the specific ones, or they may choose to read how one specific descriptor changes through the UN levels.

[1] The UN Language Framework draws on the work of governmental institutions, in particular the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Center for Canadian Benchmarks and the Council of Europe (ACTFL Guidelines, Canadian Benchmarks, Common European Framework of Reference CEFR).

This document contains:

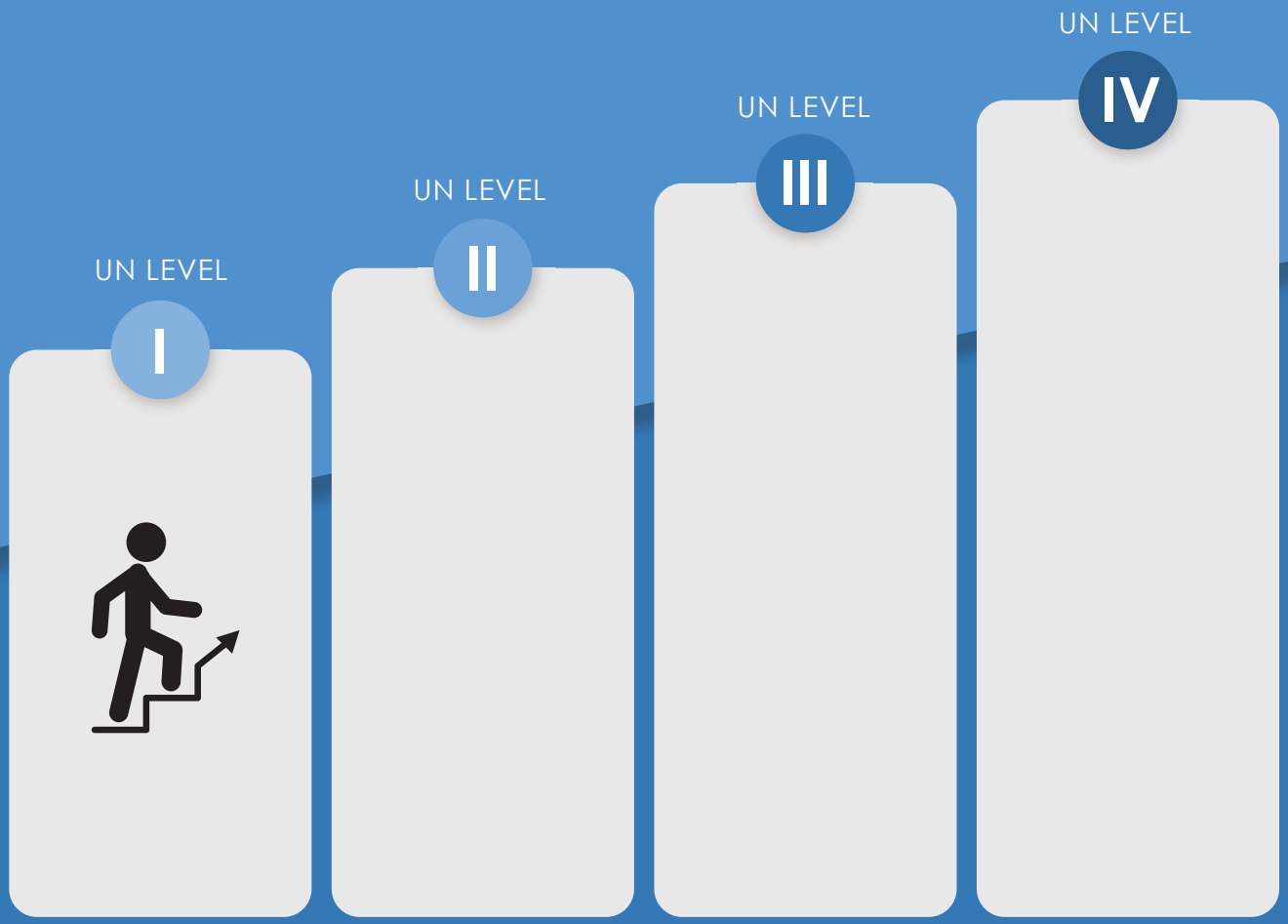
- an overview of the four language levels
- overall descriptors for the four language levels
- specific descriptors for the four skill areas: Receptive activities: Listening, Receptive activities: Reading, Spoken Production and Interaction, Written Production and Interaction
- the Core Curriculum for UN levels I to III
- a glossary of the terms used in the descriptors. Although other interpretations and definitions may exist for these terms, please bear in mind that readers should understand them as they are defined in the glossary, which explains how the terms are used specifically in the context of these descriptors.

Please note that additional documentation and concrete examples will be available to any interested parties. In this respect, readers are invited to regularly check for updates.

In 2018, the Secretary-General honoured the project "Harmonization of Language Learning and Assessment throughout the UN Secretariat" with a UN Secretary-General Award in the category of Multilingualism. It was awarded to both the Language Training Programme (LTP) at the UN Office of Geneva and the Language and Communications Programme (LCP) at UNHQ, New York. This project won the award principally for creating the United Nations Language Framework, a framework with wide-reaching implications for multilingualism and which is outlined in this guide.

2. UN Levels of Language Competence

At every level of language competence, UN staff members are expected to function as social agents in a variety of multilingual and multicultural contexts and, as such, use existing plurilingual and pluricultural competences to further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire(s), and to facilitate and promote successful communication and cooperation throughout the Organization.



OVERALL DESCRIPTORS per UN level of language competence

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

BASIC

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

INTERMEDIATE

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

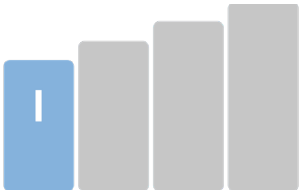
ADVANCED

- Use the language efficiently and flexibly, consistently maintaining a high degree of fluency, accuracy and precision. Function in a large variety of demanding contexts and situations, even adverse or unpredictable, when dealing with a wide range of matters, even highly specific or sensitive, in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an excellent command of a wide range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet any communication need.
- Respond to and follow up on any required action appropriately and without hesitation.
- Use reference resources to enhance communication with sophisticated precision.

EXPERT

UN LEVEL I

Basic Language Competence



OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
READING

Understand the main message and find specific information, often with the help of visuals or background knowledge, in straightforward, clearly written factual texts of a limited variety of different genres.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
LISTENING

Understand the main message in texts delivered clearly at a slow to average rate, in the spoken standard and in favourable conditions, often with the help of visuals and/or background knowledge.
Usually request repetition or reformulation.

SPOKEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

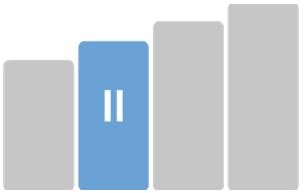
Participate with some effort in simple, brief and routine exchanges, often requiring the help of the interlocutor.
Produce simple, previously prepared, brief spoken texts.

WRITTEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Write or draft short simple texts, notes and messages, and produce longer texts with the help of a variety of resources and tools.
Write and respond to simple everyday correspondence.

UN LEVEL II

Intermediate Language Competence



OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
READING

Understand the general meaning, and identify the main conclusions and the most relevant details in straightforward, clearly written factual texts of different genres.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
LISTENING

Understand the general meaning and identify the main conclusions in texts delivered clearly at an average rate, in the spoken standard.
May often require reformulation or repetition of a word or a phrase.

SPOKEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Take part with ease in routine interactions, making statements and expressing personal opinions.
Produce, with or without previous preparation, short to medium-length spoken texts.
Relay the key points contained in an oral or written communication.

WRITTEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Write or draft short texts in different genres on concrete matters.
In written exchanges, respond appropriately using writing conventions.
Relay the key points contained in an oral or written communication.

UN LEVEL III

Advanced Language Competence

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
READING

Understand most written texts of different genres and of different lengths, identifying essential information, the most relevant details, and the tone and the viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit.
Understand most commonly used idiomatic and figurative language, and explicit sociocultural references.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
LISTENING

Understand the general meaning and identify essential information, the most relevant details, and the attitudes and viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit – in texts delivered clearly at an average to fast rate, in standard varieties, and in moderately demanding contexts or noisy backgrounds.
May occasionally require repetition of a word or a phrase.

SPOKEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Take part naturally in a variety of interactions, arguing opinions and showing the ability to respond to different viewpoints.
Produce clear and well-structured spoken texts of different lengths with appropriate detail.
Relay and efficiently summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication.

WRITTEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Write clear and well-organized texts in different genres.
In written exchanges, respond showing the ability to competently match register and style to the communicative situation.
Relay and efficiently summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication.

UN LEVEL IV

Expert Language Competence

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently and flexibly, consistently maintaining a high degree of fluency, accuracy and precision. Function in a large variety of demanding contexts and situations, even adverse or unpredictable, when dealing with a wide range of matters, even highly specific or sensitive, in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an excellent command of a wide range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet any communication need.
- Respond to and follow up on any required action appropriately and without hesitation.
- Use reference resources to enhance communication with sophisticated precision.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
READING

Thoroughly understand linguistically and/or conceptually complex written texts of different genres and lengths, capturing implicit meanings and subtleties, concrete or abstract, even in unfamiliar contexts.
Understand a wide range of idiomatic and figurative language, and sociocultural references.

RECEPTIVE ACTIVITIES:
LISTENING

Understand without any notable effort, capturing implicit meanings and subtleties, linguistically and/or conceptually complex texts delivered at an average to fast rate, in a range of varieties, even in unfavourable situations.
Understand a wide range of idiomatic and figurative language, and sociocultural references.

SPOKEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Take part fluently in a variety of demanding situations, arguing opinions skilfully, building on different contributions, and showing the ability to take the lead and to intervene diplomatically.
Produce a wide range of spoken texts with different purposes.
Relay and synthesize information contained in texts of varied typology and complexity in oral or written communication.

WRITTEN
PRODUCTION AND INTERACTION

Write reasonably complex and/or long texts in different genres.
In demanding written exchanges, respond effectively, confidently matching register and style to the communicative situation.
Relay and synthesize information contained in texts of varied typology and complexity in oral or written communication.
Proofread or edit own texts or texts produced by others.

3. Core Curriculum

Core Curriculum - Introduction

To expand the UN level descriptors, the Core Curriculum contains sets of learning objectives, with related domains and examples of text types and communicative situations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives are statements that describe what language users are able to do in the four language activities. The objectives also comprise their applicable domains, conditions and restrictions, as well as how well the user achieves them.
The sets of objectives connect directly to the UN-level specific descriptors expanding them with suggested concrete examples that are non-restrictive. Like the descriptors, the sets build on each other, the acquisition of one set carrying through to the following UN level.
A language user will have mastered the learning objectives of a given level before acquiring that level. Thus, the objectives can be used to define learning outcomes, focus language training, prioritize learning and inform assessment.

RELATED DOMAIN

Each learning objective is associated with one or two icons of three. These icons represent the domain(s) of application. The domain defines the area in which the interaction or communication takes place. The UN Language Framework takes three domains into consideration: the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.

Therefore, all domains are to be understood primarily in the UN context.

The personal domain concerns interpersonal relationships, individual social practices, discussions with colleagues or friends on personal matters, such as likes or dislikes, hobbies, housing, family, etc.

The public domain refers to activities taking place within, and extended to the general public, including transactions of various kinds, such as dealing with public services, engaging in cultural and leisure activities, etc.

The professional domain encompasses everything concerned with a person's activities in the exercise of their occupation, mainly related to international organizations. It also includes educational elements, especially if they are related to training and development.

The attributed domains are considered a priority, but other domains besides these priorities can be applied depending on the local context.

TEXT TYPES AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

The Core Curriculum also includes a set of suggested texts and communicative situations related to the receptive and productive language activities for each UN level I to III.

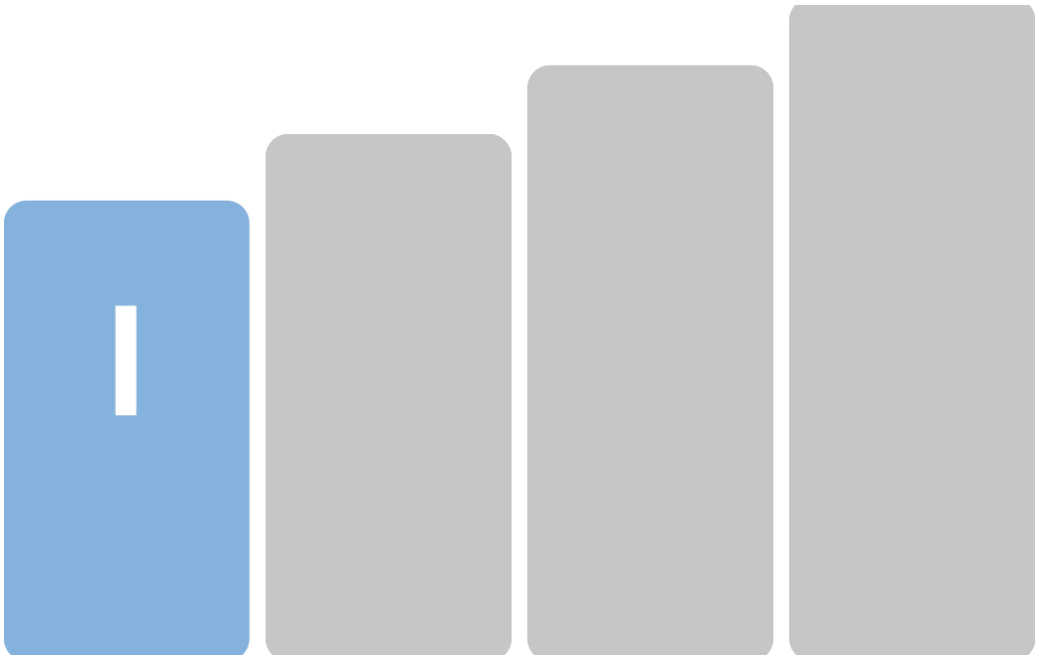
Texts, spoken or written, are those that a user is required to listen to, read or produce both orally and in writing.

Communicative situations represent both the communication tools conveying the texts and the context in which the texts are produced. This set is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

The texts and communicative situations may appear more specific or extended according to the UN level and the communicative situation.

Example illustrating Receptive activities: Listening:

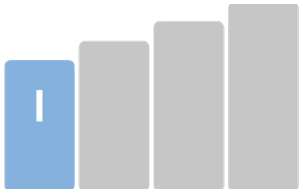
UN Level I: Basic advice and instructions
UN Level II: Advice on day-to-day problems, Detailed Instructions
UN Level III: Advice on work-related issues, Specialized instructions



Core Curriculum

UN LEVEL I

Basic Language Competence



UN LEVEL I

LISTENING

Understand the main message in texts delivered clearly at a slow to average rate, in the spoken standard and in favourable conditions, often with the help of visuals and/or background knowledge. Usually request repetition or reformulation.

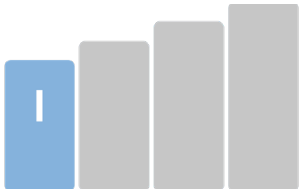
OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

Learning Objectives	Domains
Understand simple, key factual information such as numbers, times and dates, and location.	
Understand information pertinent to one's everyday life, including routines, hobbies and daily tasks, and descriptions of people and places.	
Follow simple everyday conversations, such as exchanges of opinion and factual information.	
Understand basic requests, instructions or advice, particularly in a work-related context.	
Understand the main ideas and key details in simple, short presentations, speeches and interviews on familiar subjects, with visual support.	
Follow the sequence of ideas in short, simple narratives and descriptive texts, such as stories, plans and biographies.	

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Everyday social exchanges
- Clear public announcements
- Basic advice and instructions
- Basic advertisements
- Simple work-related requests
- Simple, clear voice messages
- Information sharing meetings - moderated, with supporting material
- Short informative presentations
- Interviews - familiar subjects
- Biographical summaries



UN LEVEL I

READING

Understand the main message and find specific information, often with the help of visuals or background knowledge, in straightforward, clearly written factual texts of a limited variety of different genres.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Understand factual information with visual support, including charts, notices, announcements, agendas and instructions.

Understand simple e-mails on everyday matters, mainly work-related, including requests for information, instructions and acknowledgements.

Understand forms requesting basic information, for example personal details.

Identify key details in routine texts, such as completed forms, advertisements for jobs, services and cultural events.

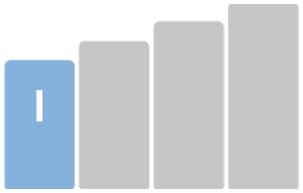
Understand the main ideas in simple online exchanges related to familiar subjects.

Understand the sequence of events and the general meaning in simple narratives and descriptive texts.

Understand simple news stories and magazine articles, with the support of resources if needed.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Formulaic, everyday notes and emails
- Simple text messages and social media posts
- Simple online exchanges
- Basic administrative forms
- Simple instructions
- Simple meeting agendas
- Announcements and notices with visual support
- Brochures and leaflets
- Webpages with much visual content
- Charts, signs, tickets and cards
- Basic advertisements
- Biographical summaries
- Book and film summaries
- Simple news stories, magazine articles and reviews
- Simple surveys and questionnaires
- Simple Informative handouts



UN LEVEL I

SPOKEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Participate with some effort in simple, brief and routine exchanges, often requiring the help of the interlocutor. Produce simple, previously prepared, brief spoken texts.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Participate in simple social exchanges, in the workplace and elsewhere, such as welcoming, making introductions and exchanging personal information.

Participate in simple discussions to reach agreement by sharing points of view, making suggestions and so on.

Participate in simple exchanges to discuss everyday topics, interests or plans by sharing opinions and preferences.

Participate in routine exchanges to make reservations and appointments, and order goods or services.

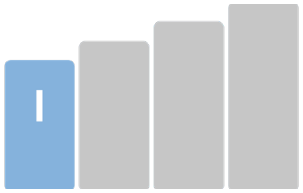
Participate in social exchanges to make arrangements through inviting, accepting and declining, in a simple manner.

Describe experiences, events and the immediate environment, including where one lives, works and socializes, using basic language.

Give a simple, brief presentation mainly at work on a familiar subject, with previous preparation, such as providing basic instructions and describing procedures.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Simple social exchanges and personal conversations
- Introductions
- Information exchanges on general tasks
- Basic instructions and advice - practical information
- Simple work-related requests
- Basic public exchanges - transactions
- Information sharing meetings - moderated, with supporting material
- Routine permission requests
- Simple voice messages
- Basic informative presentations



UN LEVEL I

WRITTEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Write or draft short simple texts, notes and messages, and produce longer texts with the help of a variety of resources and tools. Write and respond to simple everyday correspondence.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language in a simple manner, in non-demanding everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with routine or predictable matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show basic linguistic competence and use a restricted range of social language conventions to meet simple communication needs.
- Show limited facility in understanding if an action or response is required and some autonomy to respond.
- Usually require reference resources and models, templates or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding or repair communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Interact in brief, simple online exchanges related to familiar subjects, such as in discussing plans, and sharing opinions and ideas.

Fill in forms requiring simple personal and professional information.

Write notes and messages to, for example, thank or apologize, invite, give instructions or information and make suggestions.

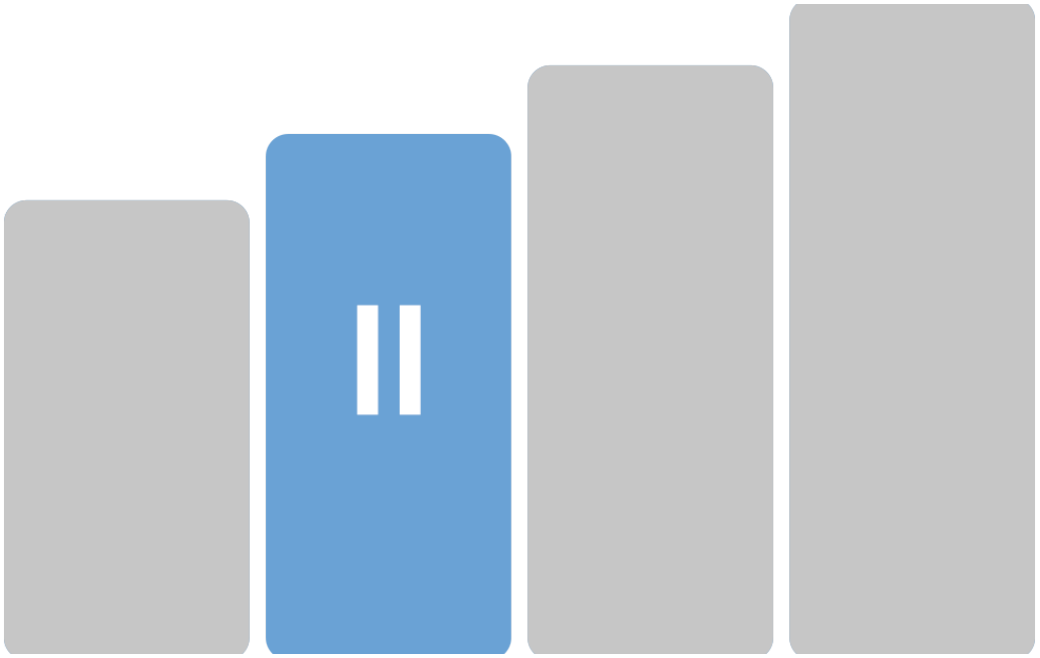
Write notices, such as descriptions, announcements and advertisements for objects, services and events.

Write and respond to simple emails for mainly work-related purposes, using formulaic phrases and reference resources to inform, request, organize and so on.

Write descriptions about experiences, events and the immediate environment, including where one lives, works and socializes, using basic language.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

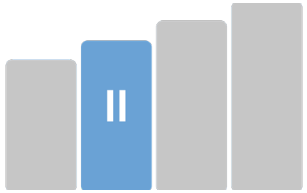
- Formulaic, everyday emails
- Simple text messages and social media posts
- Simple online exchanges
- Formulaic notes, messages and cards
- Simple personal and work-related forms
- Simple notices, announcements and advertisements
- Basic personal profiles
- Basic biographical summaries



Core Curriculum

UN LEVEL II

Intermediate Language Competence



UN LEVEL II

LISTENING

Understand the general meaning and identify the main conclusions in texts delivered clearly at an average rate, in the spoken standard. May often require reformulation or repetition of a word or a phrase.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Understand the key instructions in clear informational messages, sometimes about unforeseen circumstances, such as public announcements and warning messages.

Extract the key information from discussions in, for example, moderated meetings on general matters, conducted in clear speech with familiar accents.

Follow everyday conversations, such as exchanges of opinion and factual information, sometimes with emotional content or nuances, with some repetition or clarification.

Understand the general meaning of a variety of requests, instructions or advice, in many public and work-related contexts, if delivered clearly.

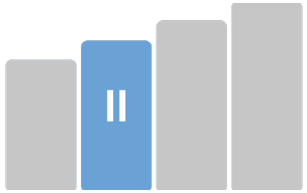
Understand the main ideas and key details in live broadcasts, speeches, interviews and presentations with visual support, on familiar subjects, even if clarification may be needed.

Follow the main content of much recorded media, such as documentaries and podcasts in standard varieties, sometimes requiring resources to improve understanding.

Understand the main points of of positive or negative feedback, professional or otherwise, from colleagues, supervisors or other interlocutors, if delivered explicitly.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Social exchanges
- Public announcements with some interference
- Warning messages
- Advice on day-to-day problems
- Advertisements
- Detailed instructions
- Work-related requests
- Feedback on work-related tasks or projects
- Voice messages with some interference
- Information sharing meetings - moderated
- Live broadcasts
- Informative and instructional presentations
- Short speeches
- Self-paced training sessions
- Podcasts with transcripts
- News and interviews in the media - topical subjects, recorded
- Documentaries and films with subtitles



UN LEVEL II

READING

Understand the general meaning, and identify the main conclusions and the most relevant details in straightforward, clearly written factual texts of different genres.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Understand detailed factual information in straightforward messages, such as public announcements, rules and warning messages.

Understand the general meaning and key details in a variety of public and work-related texts, such as meeting minutes, advertisements for services and informational booklets.

Follow the content and relevant details of most correspondence, mainly in familiar professional fields, including requests, instructions and information.

Understand the relevant details in a variety of social media exchanges, describing facts and feelings, related to personal subjects or those of public interest.

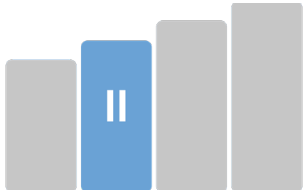
Understand the general meaning and relevant details in clearly written narratives and descriptive texts, for instance biographical articles and reviews.

Understand the main conclusions in news stories and articles on topics of general interest, with the occasional support of resources if needed.

Extract key information in work-related documents of an official nature, such as completed forms, regulations and general reports, with the support of resources if needed.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Standard, professional emails and letters
- Text messages and social media exchanges - familiar subjects
- Blogs - familiar subjects
- Detailed administrative forms
- Instructions - familiar subjects
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes and summaries
- Information circulars - familiar subjects
- Public announcements, rules and warning messages
- Regulations
- Vacancy notices
- Handbooks or booklets - familiar subjects
- Webpages
- Advertisements for goods or services
- Intranet articles, broadcasts and cultural announcements - familiar subjects
- News stories, magazine articles and reviews - familiar subjects
- Biographical or historical articles
- Work-related documents with some technical detail:
  General reports - non-specialized audiences,
  Surveys and questionnaires,
  Feedback and comments in questionnaires,
  Instructional presentation handouts,
  CVs or resumes / PHPs, cover letters



UN LEVEL II

SPOKEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Take part with ease in routine interactions, making statements and expressing personal opinions. Produce, with or without previous preparation, short to medium-length spoken texts. Relay the key points contained in an oral or written communication.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

Learning Objectives

Domains

Engage in general social exchanges on personal or professional matters, such as sharing news and updates, using a moderate range of language, expressing degrees of feeling or empathy.

Participate in everyday discussions to reach agreement by requesting and expressing opinions and feelings, providing possible solutions, with moderate fluency and accuracy, occasionally needing repetition.

Deal with routine administrative issues and enquiries, such as medical and travel arrangements, clarifying understanding through checking information and reformulating adequately if necessary.

Describe personal and professional experience, events, attributes and aspirations, with moderate fluency and accuracy, for instance in segments of professional interviews.

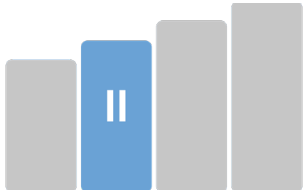
Give routine explanations by, for example, offering procedural instructions, often with previous preparation, dealing with questions and giving details with moderate fluency and accuracy.

Relay the main points of various communications, such as broadcasts and short meetings, in adequate detail to inform, justify, clarify and so on.

Give short to medium-length presentations, at work or in a public setting, on a variety of subjects, such as project status updates, with preparation if necessary.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- General social exchanges and personal conversations
- Social exchanges with some emotional content
- Routine discussions on work duties and tasks
- Detailed instructions and advice - procedures
- Routine work-related requests
- Routine administrative exchanges
- Information sharing meetings - moderated
- Training sessions - as attendee
- Permission requests and granting
- Voice messages
- Informative and instructional presentations
- Feedback - work-related tasks or projects
- Summaries - general, on familiar subjects
- Segments of professional interviews - as interviewee



UN LEVEL II

WRITTEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Write or draft short texts in different genres on concrete matters.
In written exchanges, respond appropriately using writing conventions.
Relay the key points contained in an oral or written communication.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language with moderate fluency and accuracy, in everyday contexts and situations, when dealing with ordinary or general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an appropriate command of a moderate range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet ordinary general communication needs.
- Understand if any action or response is required and show adequate autonomy to respond.
- Often require reference resources and models or external help to prepare in advance, check understanding and improve or support communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Interact in short, synchronous online exchanges on personal and professional general matters, occasionally varying degrees of formality and directness.

Write informational material in some detail, such as notices, advertisements, descriptions or procedures to inform, advise or give instructions, using a moderate range of language.

Describe circumstances and different points of view in short organized texts, such as essays and reviews, using a moderate range of language and providing a logical structure, with writing conventions.

Write and respond to general emails on a variety of matters, using appropriate style and writing conventions, reporting factual and occasionally sensitive information.

Relay the key points and some detailed information on familiar, mainly work-related, tasks, projects or documents.

Describe experiences, events and expectations in adequate detail, for instance in blogs, using a moderate range of language.

Write general professional documents of moderate complexity, including agendas, surveys and presentations, with the support of resources if needed.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Standard, professional emails and letters
- General text messages and social media exchanges
- Webpages and blogs - familiar subjects
- General notices and advertisements
- Short essays and reviews
- Biographical summaries
- Book and film summaries
- Work-related documents with some technical detail:
  Meeting agendas - following a template,
  Meeting minutes - following a template,
  Work-related summaries - familiar subjects,
  General surveys and questionnaires,
  Feedback and comments in questionnaires,
  Short presentations - familiar subjects,
  General procedures and instructions

Core Curriculum

UN LEVEL III

Advanced Language Competence

UN LEVEL III

LISTENING

Understand the general meaning and identify essential information, the most relevant details, and the attitudes and viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit – in texts delivered clearly at an average to fast rate, in standard varieties, and in moderately demanding contexts or noisy backgrounds. May occasionally require repetition of a word or a phrase.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Understand requests, specialized instructions or advice in detail, in public and work-related contexts, with few misunderstandings.

Understand interactions, such as exchanges of opinion with justifications, even with emotional content or nuances, with occasional clarification.

Understand the most relevant details in live speeches, presentations and interviews in standard varieties, sometimes given in unfamiliar accents, and understand the speakers' points of view and tone.

Understand the essential information, the most relevant details and inferences made from extended professional feedback, sometimes delivered at a fast rate, with occasional clarification.

Understand the general meaning and identify essential information in much recorded audio and audiovisual media, occasionally requiring resources to refine understanding.

Understand informational messages in detail, even delivered at a fast rate or in noisy backgrounds, sometimes about unforeseen circumstances, such as public announcements and warning messages.

Understand discussions in meetings, conducted in clear speech and standard varieties, sometimes including unfamiliar accents, and understand the participants' arguments and decisions made.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Social exchanges with emotional content
- Public announcements in demanding contexts
- Warning messages with some interference
- Advice on work-related issues
- Specialized instructions
- Complex work-related requests
- Feedback in performance reviews
- Decision-making meetings
- Work-related discussions between fluent speakers
- Conferences
- Speeches
- Persuasive presentations and lectures
- Live training sessions
- Podcasts
- News and interviews in the media - unfamiliar subjects
- Documentaries, series, films and plays

UN LEVEL III

READING

Understand most written texts of different genres and of different lengths, identifying essential information, the most relevant details, and the tone and the viewpoints expressed – both implicit and explicit.
Understand most commonly used idiomatic and figurative language, and explicit sociocultural references.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Understand the content of most correspondence in detail, mainly in professional fields, including requests, advice and complaints, even of a complex nature.

Extract essential information and relevant details on a given topic from a wide range of professional and public research sources, for example intranet articles, webpages, and journals.

Understand complex social media exchanges related to a wide range of general subjects, and recognize the tone and writer's implicit and explicit points of view.

Understand the general meaning of narrative and descriptive texts which use commonly used idiomatic and figurative language, and explicit socio-cultural references.

Understand essential information and relevant details in news stories and articles, on a wide range of topics, including contemporary issues.

Understand essential information and relevant details in work-related documents of an official nature, such as concept notes, talking points and terms of reference, with the support of resources to refine interpretation.

Extract information from most procedural material, for example, administrative instructions and staff rules, with the support of resources to refine interpretation.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Complex emails and letters
- Complex text messages and social media exchanges
- Blogs
- Procedures and guidelines
- Official rules and regulations
- Staff rules
- Administrative instructions
- Information circulars
- Webpages with little visual content
- Manuals or books
- Essays and journals
- Job descriptions
- Intranet articles, broadcasts and cultural announcements
- Complex news stories, magazine articles and reviews
- Complex press releases and statements
- Specialized work-related documents: Reports and proposals, Memos, Concept notes, Talking points, Terms of reference (ToR), Resolutions, Work plans, Performance reports

UN LEVEL III

SPOKEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Take part naturally in a variety of interactions, arguing opinions and showing the ability to respond to different viewpoints. Produce clear and well-structured spoken texts of different lengths with appropriate detail. Relay and efficiently summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

Learning Objectives — Domains

Engage in extended social conversations, in the workplace and elsewhere, by sharing news, expressing points of view and feelings naturally, using a wide range of language and nuances.

Give clear instructions with appropriate detail on how to carry out a work-related procedure and solve arising problems, sometimes without preparation.

Give clear and well-structured presentations on various subjects, at work or in a public setting, highlighting relevant details, and providing updates and responses to impromptu questions if requested.

Describe events, experiences and aspirations in detail in professional exchanges, such as discussions, interviews and performance evaluations, sometimes including emotionally sensitive topics and occasionally without preparation.

Interact in a variety of complex situations, such as complaints and tentative requests, providing hypotheses and justification, and respond to disagreement appropriately.

Engage in meetings and negotiations, in professional or public settings, to reach agreement by sustaining or refuting viewpoints, providing relevant explanations and arguments, clarifying and confirming mutual understanding.

Relay outcomes and decisions, and efficiently summarize the main information delivered during a meeting or negotiation, or in a report, at work or in a public setting.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Complex social exchanges and personal conversations
- Impromptu discussions
- Emotionally challenging exchanges
- Complex work-related discussions
- Detailed, specialized instructions and advice - troubleshooting
- Complex work-related requests
- Problem-solving and decision-making meetings
- Press releases, short public statements
- Announcements in demanding contexts
- Training sessions - as trainer
- Persuasive presentations
- Short speeches
- Feedback - performance review
- Summaries - complex, unfamiliar subjects
- Status-update reports
- Professional interviews - as interviewee or panel member

UN LEVEL III

WRITTEN PRODUCTION & INTERACTION

Write clear and well-organized texts in different genres. In written exchanges, respond showing the ability to competently match register and style to the communicative situation. Relay and efficiently summarize the main information contained in an oral or written communication.

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy, in a variety of contexts and situations, when dealing with a wide variety of general matters in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show a good command of a range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet most communication needs.
- Respond autonomously and sufficiently to most required actions.
- Use reference resources to confirm and refine interpretation, and to improve communication.

Learning Objectives

Domains

Interact in synchronous online exchanges on a wide variety of personal and professional topics, including emotionally sensitive topics, expressing news or viewpoints efficiently, aligning register and style appropriately.

Write and respond appropriately to correspondence to inform, make suggestions, request and complain, for instance, with a high degree of fluency and accuracy and using socio-cultural writing conventions.

Describe detailed work experience, tasks and responsibilities to complete self-evaluation forms, CVs or cover letters, for instance, using a high degree of fluency and accuracy.

Relay outcomes and decisions, and efficiently summarize the main information from a meeting, a negotiation or a report, for example, reformulating ideas or emphasizing points.

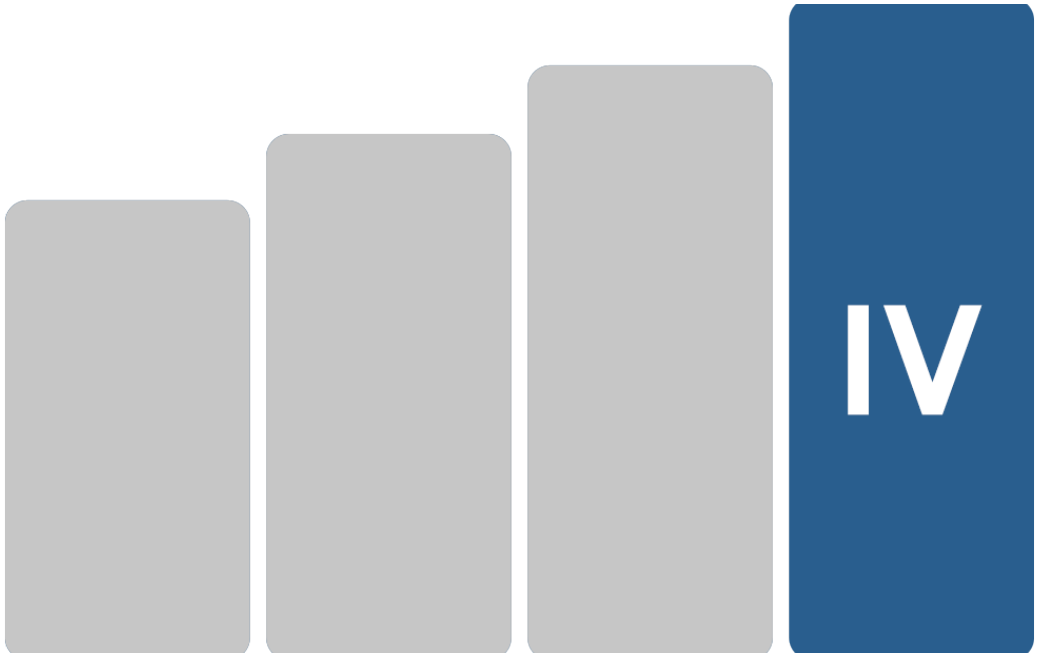
Draft a variety of specialized work-related documents, such as concept notes and terms of reference, with the use of templates and resources if needed.

Write well-structured standard texts, such as general reports, essays and analyses, in some technical detail while maintaining clarity, presenting hypotheses or arguments, using socio-cultural writing conventions.

Write detailed informational material, such as brochures and newsletters, to provide updates and promote initiatives, aligning register and style appropriately.

SUGGESTED TEXTS AND COMMUNICATIVE SITUATIONS

- Complex emails and letters
- Complex text messages and social media exchanges
- Webpages and blogs
- Promotional material - brochures, leaflets and advertisements
- Broadcasts and information circulars
- Newsletters
- Complex essays and reviews
- Work-related summaries - complex subjects
- Press releases
- Intranet articles
- Notices of vacancy with job descriptions, following a template
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Extended presentations
- Specialized work-related documents - drafts, following a template: Terms of reference (ToR), Talking points, Administrative instructions, Concept notes, Reports and proposals, Analyses, Memos
- CVs or resumes, PHPs and cover letters
- Work plan descriptions - following a template
- Performance appraisal documents
- Self-evaluation forms - mid-point and end-of-cycle



Core Curriculum

UN LEVEL IV

Expert Language Competence

UN LEVEL IV

OVERALL DESCRIPTOR

- Use the language efficiently and flexibly, consistently maintaining a high degree of fluency, accuracy and precision. Function in a large variety of demanding contexts and situations, even adverse or unpredictable, when dealing with a wide range of matters, even highly specific or sensitive, in the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization.
- Show an excellent command of a wide range of linguistic and pragmatic competences and of social language conventions to meet any communication need.
- Respond to and follow up on any required action appropriately and without hesitation.

As UN Level IV is the expert level of language competence, the learning objectives of the language user are highly specialized and will vary significantly depending on the given context, the field of expertise and the tasks required.

Therefore, the sets of learning objectives are solely included for UN levels I to III.

4. Glossary

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Accuracy	Accuracy refers to how correct learners' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.
Adequate	Satisfactory or acceptable in quality or quantity.
Appropriate/ Appropriately	Suitable or correct for a particular situation or set of circumstances.
Context/ Situation	Context refers to the macro-level circumstances surrounding a communication act, such as the time, place, status of interlocutors, and other factors which affect the interaction. A group of contexts will make up a given domain. Situation refers to the micro-level communicative functions which take place in a variety of contexts.
Domain	A domain defines the area in which the interaction or communication takes place. The UN Language Framework takes three domains into consideration: the personal, public and professional domains, throughout the Organization. Therefore, all domains are to be understood primarily in the UN context. - The personal domain concerns interpersonal relationships, individual social practices, discussions with colleagues or friends on personal matters, such as likes or dislikes, hobbies, housing, family, etc. - The public domain refers to activities taking place within, and extended to, the general public, including transactions of various kinds, such as administrative tasks, dealing with public services, engaging in cultural and leisure activities, etc. - The professional domain encompasses everything concerned with a person's activities in the exercise of their occupation, mainly related to international organizations. It also includes educational elements, especially if they are related to training and development.
Efficiency	The ability to convey the intended message as effectively as possible, while also maintaining an appropriate register.
Everyday/ Routine	Everyday: mostly familiar contexts or situations, occurring frequently. Routine: elements of verbal, and non-verbal, communication that are almost formulaic and can be performed automatically, such as repetitive tasks.
Facility	The ability to do something well without a lot of difficulty or effort.
Flexibility	The ability to readily improvise and adapt language to changing circumstances without advance preparation, including the communication form, whether written or spoken. This includes register (formal, informal, etc.), social context (neutral, ironic, etc.) and vocabulary (technical, vernacular, etc.).

TERM	DEFINITION
Fluency	The ability to use a language automatically, spontaneously and without much hesitation, such that the communication goal is achieved without undue strain on anyone involved.
General/ Ordinary	General: not specialized or limited in range of subject, application, or activity. It also conveys the idea of being accessible to a large public. Ordinary: commonplace; not different, special, or unexpected in any way. It also conveys the idea of familiar, frequent, everyday activities.
Key Points	These are the principal or most salient ideas in a text. You can understand the key points in a text without necessarily understanding all the details in that text.
Matter	A matter is a subject or situation under consideration. For the purpose of clarity, matter could be replaced by topic, a more general concept.
Models/ Templates	Model: an existing example of a text, i.e. an email, an article, a recording, etc., that can be used as a reference for generating similar ones. Template: a highly structured text form or layout, typically with minimal content, used to generate copies or new texts with only content related modifications.
Multilingualism	For the purpose of this Framework, multilingualism is not only understood as the concept of multiple languages coexisting in a society or organization. It also includes the user's perspective, as described by the Council of Europe's plurilingualism - the interconnected knowledge of languages and the ability to switch between them for ease of communication depending on the given situation.
Ordinary/ General	See "General/Ordinary" above.
Precision	This includes accuracy but goes beyond the mere absence of errors to include exactitude and specificity.
Reference Resources	Any source that provides help to better prepare, understand or produce a linguistic message. Examples of most commonly used reference resources: - authoritative or official works, i.e. dictionaries, encyclopaedias, glossaries, etc. - tools, such as voice recognition, digital correctors, online references, etc. - people who provide help or feedback on the linguistic message

TERM	DEFINITION
Relay/ Summarize	Relay: to receive and transfer information. Summarize: to provide a brief restatement of the main ideas of a written or oral text.
Routine/ Everyday	See "Routine/Everyday" above.
Situation/ Context	See "Context/Situation" above.
Social Agent	Language learners/users, as social agents, are members of society who have tasks to accomplish in a given set of circumstances and in a specific environment. These tasks are often language-related but not exclusively so. Social agents collaborate, negotiate meaning, arrive at consensus, and communicate effectively both orally and through various text forms, thereby developing plurilingual and pluricultural competence, as well as developing communication strategies.
Standard (spoken or written)	(Short for 'standard varieties of a language') Standard varieties are generally understood and used by a large group of people. They are usually encoded in reference works and used primarily in semi-formal and formal contexts, and in public discourse, both spoken and written.
Summarize/ Relay	See "Relay/Summarize" above.
Templates/ Models	See "Models/templates" above.
Texts	Any passage of written or spoken words, of whatever length, that forms a connected whole to express a unified message. Examples of written texts include reports, proposals, memorandums, letters, emails, press releases, text messages, newsletters, posters, essays, etc. Examples of spoken texts include news stories, interviews, dialogues, monologues (e.g., a speech or a lecture), phone conversations, discussions, etc.

United Nations Language Framework
UN Levels of Language Competence
Core Curriculum

Language & Communication Programme (LCP) at UN Headquarters New York
Language Training Programme (LTP) at UN Office in Geneva
United Nations