

Mapping the TOEFL Junior® Standard Test onto the Common European Framework of Reference

Executive Summary

Background

The *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* provides a common basis for describing the skills needed to reach different levels of language proficiency and is used by language instructors, educators, curriculum designers and agencies working in the field of language development.

The CEFR describes language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening on a six-level scale:

- A1–A2 (Basic User)
- B1–B2 (Independent User)
- C1–C2 (Proficient User)

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language tests. If a test score corresponds to one of the levels of the CEFR, what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do becomes clear.

ETS's Goal

The *TOEFL Junior*® tests are designed specifically for students ages 11 to 15 for whom English is a foreign language. The tests are an objective and reliable measure of students' English communication skills.

The *TOEFL Junior* Standard test measures listening and reading ability as well as knowledge of language form and meaning in both academic and social contexts.

The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the *TOEFL Junior* Standard test that correspond to each level of the CEFR. Minimum scores were identified separately for the Listening Comprehension, Language Form and Meaning, and Reading Comprehension sections.

Because the *TOEFL Junior* test is being rolled out in two testing modes, the *TOEFL Junior* Standard test (paper-based) and the *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive test (computer-based), a second mapping study was conducted to identify the minimum scores on the *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive test that correspond to each level of the CEFR. Further research was also conducted employing equipercentile equating of the Reading and Listening measures of the *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive test to their corresponding *TOEFL Junior* Standard scores. These additional studies allow ETS to align the reported test scores and the CEFR cut scores for both tests.

Standard-Setting Study

Standard setting is the process by which a panel of informed experts makes score requirement recommendations that correspond with the level of knowledge, skills, proficiency, mastery or readiness candidates need in order to be placed in a certain category. The end result of standard setting is one or more recommended minimum score requirements, or cut scores. The minimum scores for each CEFR level in this particular study are presented as lower limits of the level for the Listening Comprehension, Language Form and Meaning, and Reading Comprehension sections.

For this study, the panel consisted of 14 middle school and high school teachers of English as a foreign or second language from nine countries.

Scale Aligning

In addition to the standard-setting study, a scale-aligning study was conducted that was aimed at empirically determining what *TOEFL Junior* Standard Reading and Listening scores were comparable to the *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive Reading and Listening scores. Approximately 1,000 examinees were recruited to take both *TOEFL Junior* Standard and *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive assessments. The equipercentile method was used to link the Reading and Listening scores between the *TOEFL Junior* Standard and *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive tests. Specifically, this method determines which scores on the *TOEFL Junior* Standard test have the same percentile rank as scores on *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive test; the aligned scores on the two tests will pass the same proportion of examinees that may take either test.

Results

The table below presents the scaled cut scores for each section of the *TOEFL Junior* Standard test:

Sections	CEFR Level A2	CEFR Level B1	CEFR Level B2
Listening Comprehension	225–245	250–285	290–300
Language Form and Meaning	210–245	250–275	280–300
Reading Comprehension	210–240	245–275	280–300

Interpreting Results

Users of the *TOEFL Junior* Standard test can interpret the recommended minimum scores by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR, which can be found at www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (see page 24).

The results incorporate the recommendations of informed experts using a recognized standard-setting approach and the results of equipercentile equating of the Reading and

Listening measures of the *TOEFL Junior* Comprehensive test to their corresponding *TOEFL Junior* Standard scores. However, they should be considered guidelines only, as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

For more information about the *TOEFL Junior* tests, visit www.etsglobal.org.