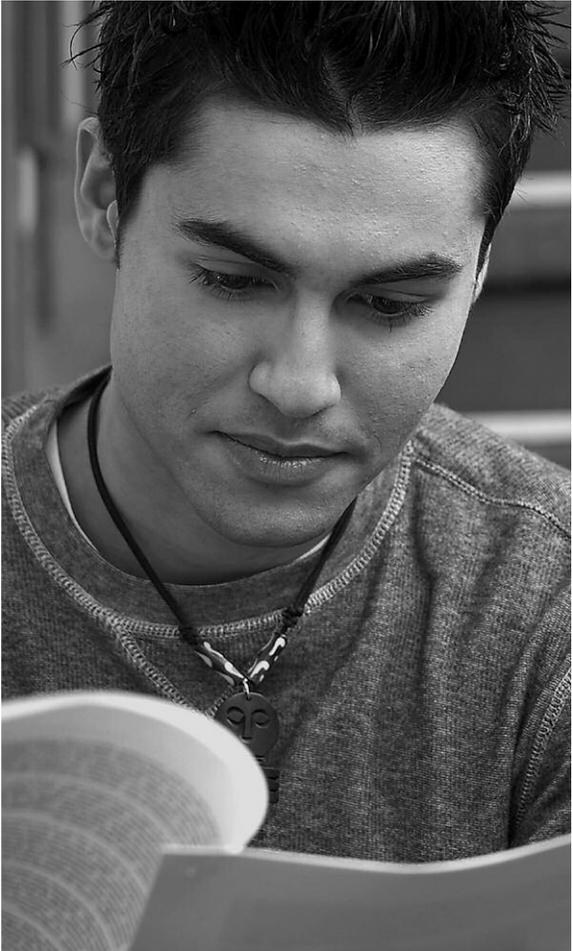


For Learners



Canadian Language Benchmarks for



Study and Work

Understanding the language proficiency levels required to work and study in Canada.



Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

www.language.ca

For use in higher CLB level programs.
e-version ISBN 978-1-897100-54-7

For Learners

The Canadian Language Benchmarks: Introduction



I don't know how good my English is.



I'm at CLB level 8.



I'm a high beginner.

Other words for:

Benchmarks

- reference point
- criterion

Competency

- ability
- skill
- proficiency

How do you describe your ability to speak English?
Why is it important?

- When you read a job description, how do you know if you have the level of English needed to be successful in the job?
- When you decide to take a class, is the language you demonstrate a match for the requirements of the course?
- How will an employer know that you have the language skills to work safely and effectively?

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (the CLB) describe the language skills that individuals demonstrate to show that they can competently use English to complete a set or sets of tasks. The **competencies** are described over three stages and in 12 levels.

Your Canadian Language Benchmarks levels say that you perform (or demonstrate language skills) to a certain standard or expectation. The levels allow an employer, a teacher or instructor, or employment counsellor to understand how you use English.

A CLB level is the same in every province and territory in Canada. It is the same in community classes, universities, colleges and training programs. It is the same no matter what kind of work you do or how much education you have.

What are the Canadian Language Benchmarks?

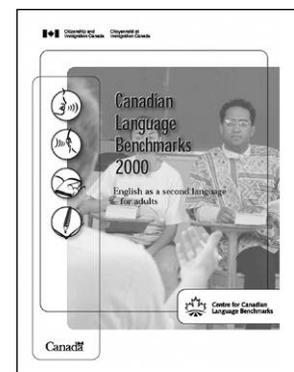
The **Benchmarks** are a **standard**.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks were published in 1996 and revised in 2000. The Benchmarks give newcomers, instructors, teachers, employment counsellors and employers a common understanding of English language competencies.

This national standard describes what people can do in the four communication skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is used with people who speak English as a second language (ESL).

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks is located in Ottawa, Ontario.

The Centre (CCLB) provides resources for learners, instructors, teachers, assessors, and employment counsellors from across the country.



My name is *Jorge*.



Before the Benchmarks, my skills would be described differently in different programs. Now, I can be assessed in New Brunswick at 6 in speaking, reading and writing and 5 in listening and if I move to Manitoba, the CLB level I reached goes with me and teachers in Manitoba know exactly what I have learned and what I still need to learn.

How are the Benchmarks used?

My name is *Sophia*.

I wanted to work with children. I knew that Red River College had a course in Early Childhood Education. When I applied to the college, I was asked for my benchmark level. I didn't know it. I went to the Assessment Centre and I was assessed at CLB 8 in all four skill areas. I was still unsure about what that meant and why it was important. I asked the college why they wanted a Benchmark level. The college told me that Red River College in Manitoba has assigned CLB levels to many of their training courses.



Sophia was able to *successfully* complete the Early Childhood Education Certificate because the CLB levels of the training were 8 or 8/9 in the four skills areas. The college and Sophia were able to predict with great accuracy the increased likelihood of her success.

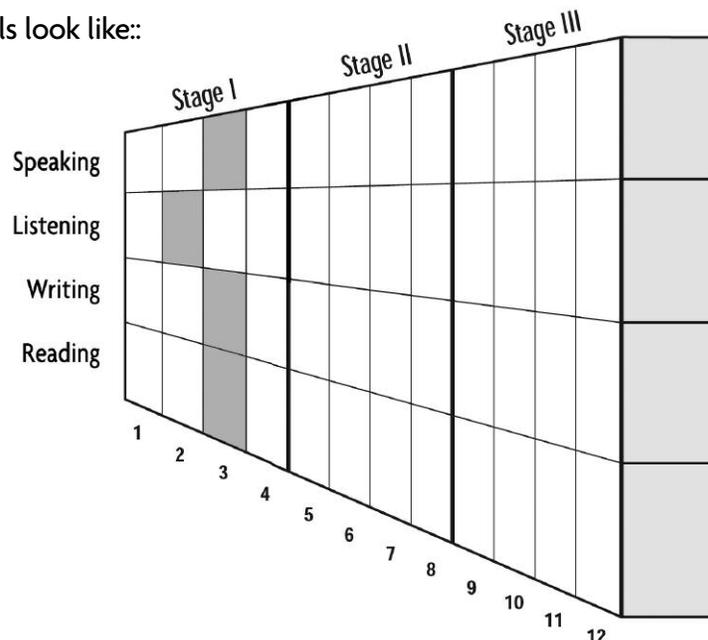
The Benchmarks use a scale to describe levels of achievement in acquiring English or French language competencies. The scale moves from little or no ability in demonstrating competency in English or French as a Second Language to speaking the same as a native speaker.

Jorge and Sophia were also able to use their understanding of the Canadian Language Benchmarks to their advantage.

How do I use my CLB level to my advantage?

Three proficiency stages with 4 language benchmarks in each stage.

This is what Jorge's skill levels look like::



Each of the three levels looks at 4 skills:

1. Reading CLB 1-12
2. Writing CLB 1-12
3. Listening CLB 1-12
4. Speaking CLB 1-12

The CLB is built on the following beliefs:

1. Communication tasks become more difficult (Think about how we learn to speak as a child. We add layers of vocabulary and grammar as we age.)
2. What we talk about becomes more demanding (The skills we use in lower grades are much less demanding. An essay may be two pages in grade 5 instead of twelve pages in grade 9.)
3. As you move from one level to another, you are expected to be more effective (There is a saying “If you don’t use it, you lose it.” So we know that the more we use language, the quality increases and we become more effective communicators.)

CLB can do checklists for levels 5-10 can be found in this book.

How do I describe my competencies?

There are many tools that have been developed to help learners move from one level to another. One tool can be printed from the site www.language.ca. There are checklists for each benchmark level. Checklists for CLB levels 5 to 10 are in this book.

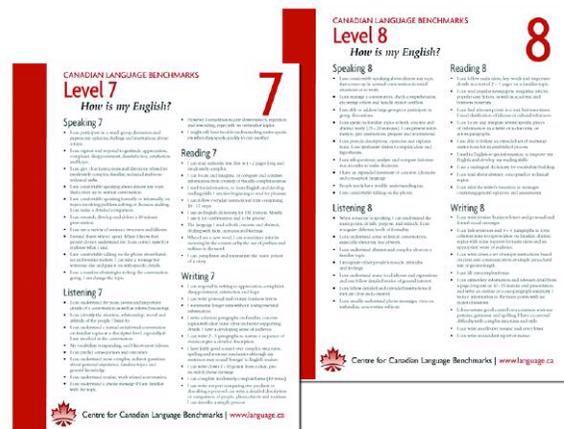
Why do I need a Benchmark level?

Most adult ESL schools use the benchmarks to develop lesson plans or assess and place people in classes. Teachers use the benchmarks to tell you how you are progressing.

Many occupations and college courses have been benchmarked. Knowing your benchmarks will help you plan for the future.

Business uses Benchmarks to measure business progress. So they understand the idea of standards for English. If you know your benchmark and can describe clearly what you can do, you can be more effective in an interview.

Because the Benchmarks are national, you can easily change schools, city or province. You take your Benchmark level with you.



My name is *Mai*.



My Benchmark level is 8. When I was applying for jobs, my employment counsellor and I would take a job ad and look at the communication skills that were described. (Sometimes we had to guess!) We would see if they matched my Benchmark level. Sometimes they did and I was more confident when I applied and got an interview. I am working for a company that offers tuition reimbursement. Since writing is my weakest skill (Benchmark 7), I am taking a Business Writing Course.

Where do I get assessed?

www.language.ca

Click on **Assessment** then

Assessment Centre. Find your province.

There are lists of assessment centres, posted by province and territory on the CCLB web site. Most CLB Assessment Centres assess levels 1-8.

How do I find out more about the CLB and find resources?

www.language.ca

Click on **For Language Learners** (left side of your monitor).

Your first stop should be the CCLB site.

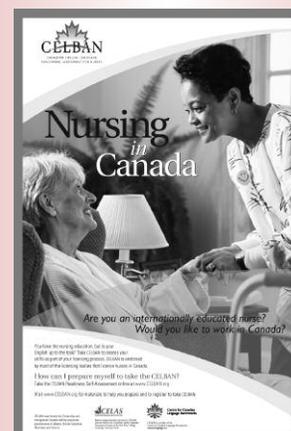
It is rich with resources about the CLB and links to other websites.

Bookmark it because new resources are added on a regular basis.

How to contact us:

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

www.language.ca



Benchmarks for nursing in Canada

Visit

www.CELBAN.org

Benchmarks for many tourism occupations

Visit

www.itsessential.ca

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