

asset
languages

the assessment scheme for
the DCSF languages ladder

INTRODUCING ASSET LANGUAGES:

A USER'S GUIDE TO THE FIRST FOUR STAGES

**BREAKTHROUGH
PRELIMINARY
INTERMEDIATE
ADVANCED**

Introducing Asset Languages:

A user's guide to the first four stages – Breakthrough, Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced

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Status: This introductory guide is based on the formal specification accredited by the regulatory authorities, which is available on the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk. Should there be any discrepancy between this document and the corresponding specification, the terms of the specification shall apply. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date version of this guide.

1. Introduction

This guide is designed as a general introduction to Asset Languages. It contains information relating to the first four stages of assessment under the Asset Languages scheme; Breakthrough, Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced. A separate guide containing information relating to the two higher stages – Proficiency and Mastery – will be available soon via the website.

For useful contacts and additional sources of information on Asset Languages, turn to page 26. Material such as language specifications and sample tasks can be downloaded from the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk.

What is Asset Languages?

Asset Languages is a voluntary assessment scheme which has been developed to support the National Languages Strategy. It provides recognition of achievement and accreditation options for learners of all ages and abilities against the DCSF Languages Ladder. Learners gain credit for their language skills on this 'ladder of recognition' from beginner level to professional fluency. Asset Languages is designed as a measure of proficiency rather than to assess a particular programme of study. Assessments can be incorporated into existing courses without major change.

What is the Languages Ladder?

The DCSF Languages Ladder defines competence in language learning. It describes a scale of achievement through six stages. Each of the six stages – Breakthrough, Preliminary, Intermediate, Advanced, Proficiency and Mastery – is made up of smaller grades which provide short-term motivational goals.

A grade is assessed in relation to simple 'can-do' statements for each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, Speaking Grade 5 is defined by the 'can-do' statement, "*I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, including expressing my opinions.*" The 'can-do' statements describe the outcomes of learning and are designed to be adaptable to any context.

In line with the 'can-do' statements of the DCSF Languages Ladder, Asset Languages provides assessment in the four skills separately, for example, in German Breakthrough Listening or in Arabic Intermediate Reading.

What languages are available?

In 2008/9 Asset Languages will offer assessment in the following languages:

Arabic	German	Italian	Portuguese	Tamil
Bengali	Greek	Japanese	Russian	Turkish
Cantonese	Gujarati	Mandarin	Somali	Urdu
Cornish	Hindi	Panjabi	Spanish	Welsh
French	Irish	Polish	Swedish	Yoruba

Not all languages will be available at each stage so please check the website at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/availability.aspx to see if the languages you are interested in are available at the relevant levels. At Breakthrough Stage, assessment material is also available for some languages in different contexts – Primary, Secondary and Post-16.

In addition, Asset Languages now offers an applied qualification, French, German or Spanish for the World of Work, available at Preliminary and Intermediate Stages. Full details can be found on our website www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/wow.aspx. For Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate stages there are also French qualifications through the medium of Welsh, available on request.

The two assessment methods

There is a choice of assessment options under the Asset Languages scheme. Material is available for classroom-based **assessment by teachers** or for **external assessment** by OCR. The two assessment methods can be combined as they complement each other but are completely separate. Both methods provide assessment of a specific skill within a specific language at a specific level. Only

external assessment is accredited by QCA, leading to nationally-recognised qualifications which attract achievement and attainment points at the appropriate levels.

How Asset Languages compares with other qualifications

External assessment leads to qualifications which are mapped to the National Qualifications Framework as in the table below.

Languages Ladder Stages	NQF	General Quals	National Curriculum	Common European Framework of Reference (approx.)
Mastery: Grades 16 & 17	Level 6			C1/C2
Proficiency: Grades 13–15	Level 4			B2/C1
Advanced: Grades 10–12	Level 3	AS / A Level		B1/B2
Intermediate: Grades 7–9	Level 2	GCSE A*–C	7-EP	A2/B1
Preliminary: Grades 4–6	Level 1	GCSE D–G	4-6	A1/A2
Breakthrough: Grades 1–3	Entry Level	Entry 1–3	1-3	A1

Achievement and attainment points

Asset Languages externally assessed qualifications also attract achievement and attainment points. For further information on points, see page 11.

2. Roles within centres

In the administration of the Asset Languages scheme, reference is made to the following roles within a centre: Head of Centre, exams officer, Centre Coordinator, and Accredited Teacher. All centres offering Asset Languages should identify individuals to fill these roles which are described below. In practice, an individual may carry out more than one of these roles.

Head of Centre

The Head of Centre is the most senior officer in the organisation, e.g. the Head Teacher or Principal of a school/college. The Head of Centre accepts full responsibility for the correct administration and conduct of OCR examinations.

Exams Officer

The exams officer is the person appointed by the Head of Centre to administer the external tests. OCR corresponds formally with the exams officer in this regard.

Secondary schools and colleges will have designated exams officers. In primary schools this will probably be the person who administers the KS2 tests, or it could be the Languages Coordinator.

Centre Coordinator

The Centre Coordinator is the person in a centre who has a detailed understanding of the workings of the Asset Languages scheme. They:

- attend the Centre Coordinator training course and cascade information to teachers who will be using the scheme
- act as point of liaison between the languages teachers in the centre and the exams officer
- act as coordinator of the teachers at the centre to ensure that they understand the practical issues involved with overseeing the tests
- are responsible for the administration of teacher assessment in the centre, including security of teacher assessment materials and ensuring that standardisation takes place where appropriate
- liaise with OCR on general queries related to Asset Languages.

In practice, they may also take on delegated responsibility from the exams officer for running external assessments in class time. In primary schools, this role will normally be filled by the Languages Coordinator. In secondary schools and FE colleges, the role may sit with the Head of Languages.

Accredited Teacher

An Accredited Teacher is necessary only if a centre is using Asset Languages teacher assessment material *and* wishes to reward learners with OCR Grade Award certificates. It is preferable if the Accredited Teacher works in the centre but this is not a requirement – for example, a primary school could present Grade Awards overseen by an Accredited Teacher from a local secondary school.

To give out OCR certificates, the Accredited Teacher must be accredited for the relevant stage – Breakthrough, Preliminary and so on. Please see the section on Accredited Teacher training on page 9 for further details.

3. Teacher Assessment

Teacher assessment is designed to be a simple and flexible way of mapping learners' progress against the DCSF Languages Ladder. This method of assessment is based on learners completing graded tasks, contained in Teacher Assessment Packs, in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The tasks are designed to be completed in class time and to fit around a teacher's existing programme of learning. Each of the tasks is graded against the 'can-do' statements of the Languages Ladder. A degree of supervision is necessary to ensure that the work is a candidate's own but this need not involve formal invigilation.

Teacher assessment provides a good measure of learners' attainment and can be useful preparation for external assessment. Teacher assessment does not lead to a formal qualification but OCR Grade Award certificates can be awarded by teachers to recognise learners' achievements if a centre has access to an Accredited Teacher (See section on Accredited Teacher Training on page 9).

Teacher Assessment Packs

Any teacher can use a Teacher Assessment Pack (TAP) following purchase by a centre. Each TAP contains a series of quick and easy-to-adapt tasks in all four skills in a specific language and covering a specific stage of the Languages Ladder, for example Spanish Breakthrough. (Breakthrough Stage TAPs are available in a choice of contexts in some languages).

A Breakthrough Stage TAP contains listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks at Grades 1, 2 and 3, a Preliminary TAP contains tasks at Grades 4, 5 and 6, an Intermediate TAP contains tasks at Grades 7, 8 and 9, and an Advanced TAP contains tasks at Grades 10, 11 and 12. Teachers can adapt some of the tasks to fit in with their own programme of study, following the guidelines given in the pack. As well as TAPs, centres receive a range of support materials to enable teachers to use the pack as effectively as possible.

Details of the TAPs available in different languages and at different stages can be found at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/availability.aspx. A link explaining how to buy a TAP is on the same page on the website. Alternatively, teachers can order a TAP via the OCR Order Line: 0870 770 6622.

4. Accredited Teacher training

If a centre is using teacher assessment material to map the progress of its learners, it might like to give out OCR's Grade Award certificates to reward achievement. In order to purchase and distribute these certificates, a centre must have – or have access to – a teacher who has become accredited at the relevant stage, not language. For example, to give out OCR's Breakthrough Grade Award certificates to learners of any language, a centre must have access to a teacher who is accredited at Breakthrough Stage. **The training material that must be completed to become an Accredited Teacher is sent out with every TAP.**

Training is provided in the standard of assessment expected at each stage and in how to apply the assessment criteria to writing and speaking tasks. (Mark schemes are supplied for the listening and reading tasks in the TAP). Accreditation training consists of two elements:

1	Applying writing criteria in teacher assessment	How to mark writing to the agreed standard in teacher assessment
2	Applying speaking criteria (in teacher and external assessment)*	How to mark speaking to the agreed standard What constitutes good practice in the conduct of externally assessed speaking tests

* completed with the aid of a DVD

Training can be completed in a variety of ways. It can be done individually at a time and place of a teacher's choice, as part of departmental training within a centre, or as part of a liaison meeting with another centre or centres. The time estimated to complete the training required for each stage is 4 hours, although once accredited for one stage the training for subsequent stages should take significantly less time. When completed, the exercises are returned to OCR. Successful teachers will then receive an Accredited Teacher number. All applicants receive feedback and, upon successful completion of the training, will have a good understanding of the proficiency expected across the stage.

Grade Award certificates

With access to an Accredited Teacher, learners who have successfully completed tasks can be awarded an OCR Grade Award certificate. Learners using teacher assessment receive the certificate for a specific language, skill and grade. For example, a learner might receive a certificate for Spanish Breakthrough Listening Grade 3. Accredited Teachers can buy Grade Award certificates for the appropriate stage using the order form at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/fees.aspx.

5. External Assessment

External assessment under the Asset Languages scheme leads to a formal OCR qualification for a whole stage, French Breakthrough Speaking for example. It is accredited by the regulatory authority, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority). External assessment is mapped to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as shown in the table on page 6.

This form of assessment is used in a particular skill when teachers consider learners are ready to succeed, having reached the end of a stage (Breakthrough, Preliminary, Intermediate or Advanced). For example:

- Hindi Breakthrough Listening
- Japanese Preliminary Speaking
- Polish Intermediate Writing
- French Advanced Reading.

External assessment also attracts achievement and attainment points (see table opposite). The points are per skill and by grade. It is also possible to combine points from different languages and different skills e.g. French Speaking Grade 8, French Listening Grade 9, Chinese Reading Grade 7, and Chinese Speaking Grade 7 = 46 points.

Achievement and Attainment Points

Asset Languages Stages	Grade	Points per skill	Points x 4 skills
Advanced	Grade 12	34.5	138
Each Asset Languages Advanced qualification counts for 10% towards the Level 2 (A*–C) and Level 1 (D–G) thresholds. (So 4 quals count for 40%).	Grade 11	30.75	123
	Grade 10	27	108
Intermediate	Grade 9	13.75	55
Each Asset Languages Intermediate qualification counts for 5% towards the Level 2 (A*–C) and Level 1 (D–G) thresholds. (So 4 quals count for 20%).	Grade 8	12.25	49
	Grade 7	10	40
Preliminary	Grade 6	8.5	34
Each Asset Languages Preliminary qualification counts for 5% towards the Level 1 (D–G) threshold. (So 4 quals count for 20%).	Grade 5	7	28
	Grade 4	4.75	19
Breakthrough	Grade 3	3.5	14
Asset Languages Breakthrough qualifications are at Entry Level, so do not count towards the threshold, but do count towards average points per student and value added.	Grade 2	3	12
	Grade 1	2.5	10

Sample assessment tasks in English for external assessment are available on the Asset Languages website at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/samples.aspx. Target language sample materials are also being made available on the website.

Under external assessment, listening, reading and writing tests are set and marked by OCR. The procedure for speaking tests is different. Teachers record and mark speaking tests themselves, then send the marks and recordings to an OCR moderator who selects a sample to ensure that the marks have been awarded consistently.

Learners who are successful in external assessment receive certificates in the following format:

OCR Entry Level Certificate (Breakthrough) in Urdu Speaking (Asset Languages)

Learners' results are graded according to their level of achievement. At Preliminary Stage for instance, learners who do not reach the standard of Grade 6 do not fail the assessment. Instead, they can be awarded a Grade 4 or Grade 5 as appropriate. However, if a learner does not achieve a Grade 4, they will be awarded a 'U'. For this reason, it is important that candidates should be entered when ready to succeed.

External assessment may take place within the normal classroom environment but must be carried out under controlled conditions. Dictionaries must not be used in any of the external assessments.

Testing windows

There are four testing windows during the academic year: November, March, May and June. This allows a flexible approach by making assessments available at different times of the year. Centres register candidates for external assessment in advance, according to the schedules available on the website at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/exams/officers/scheduling.aspx

Each testing window is designed to give maximum flexibility with regard to timetabling of tests. Rather than fixed dates, reading, writing and listening tests can be taken on any date within the window. Speaking tests can be conducted at any point during the whole year **but must be completed and returned for moderation before the start date of the final testing window**. (Please consult section 11 of the External Assessment Reference Guide for further information).

It is possible for different groups of learners to take an assessment on different occasions within a single testing window. For example, if you have three classes studying French who wish to take the Breakthrough listening test, the tests can be taken in the classrooms at the time each class would normally have its French lesson.

To enable centres to offer tests to learners within normal class time, a number of versions of each test can be requested, as required. These are called test opportunities. Centres also receive an extra version of a test in case of learner absence on the day of a particular test.

For detailed information about external assessments tests, consult the External Assessment Reference Guide.

Computer-based tests

A selection of French, German and Spanish listening, reading and writing tests are provided in a computer-based format. For information on which assessments are available as computer-based tests, please refer to section 11 of the Final Entries Guide.

Centres should contact Asset Languages at least three months before offering the first computer-based test. This will allow sufficient time to ensure that the IT equipment is of the correct specification.

Demonstration versions showing the format of a computer-based test can be seen at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/cbt.aspx.

6. Tables summarising the external assessment tests in all four skills for the first four stages of Asset Languages

Listening

	Breakthrough	Preliminary	Intermediate	Advanced
Timing	20 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes	40 minutes
Format	5 parts, 25 questions	5 parts, 25 questions	5 parts, 25 questions	4 parts, 25 questions
Marks	25	25	25	25
Answering	on an OMR answer sheet *	on an OMR answer sheet*	on an OMR answer sheet	on an OMR answer sheet
Instructions	in English	in English	in English	in English
Questions	in English	in English	in English	in English
Recording	learners hear all texts twice	learners hear all texts twice	learners hear all texts twice	learners hear all texts twice

*Primary candidates may answer on the question paper

Speaking*

	Breakthrough	Preliminary	Intermediate	Advanced
Timing	4 minutes	6 minutes	8 minutes	13 minutes
Format	Part 1: 70% marks	Part 1: 60% marks	Part 1: 60% marks	Part 1: 60% marks
	Part 2: 30% marks	Part 2: 40% marks	Part 2: 40% marks	Part 2: 40% marks
Recorded	Part 1 only**	Part 1 only**	Part 1 only**	Parts 1 and 2
Marking	Parts 1 and 2 by teacher	Parts 1 and 2 by teacher	Parts 1 and 2 by teacher	Parts 1 and 2 by teacher
	Part 1 moderated by OCR	Part 1 moderated by OCR	Part 1 moderated by OCR	Parts 1 and 2 moderated by OCR
Instructions	in English	in English	In target language	in target language
Questions	in target language	in target language	in target language	in target language

*All speaking tests are conducted by the class teacher.

**As Part 2 of the Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate speaking test is not recorded or moderated, teachers are encouraged to conduct this part of the test on a separate occasion.

Reading

	Breakthrough	Preliminary	Intermediate	Advanced
Timing	30 minutes	40 minutes	40 minutes	50 minutes
Format	5 parts, 25 questions	6 parts, 30 questions	6 parts, 30 questions	5 parts, 30 questions
Marks	25	30	30	30
Answering	on OMR answer sheet *	on OMR answer sheet*	on OMR answer sheet	on OMR answer sheet
Instructions	in English	in English	in English	in English
Questions	in English	in English	in English	in English

*Primary candidates may answer on the question paper

Writing

	Breakthrough	Preliminary	Intermediate	Advanced
Timing	20 minutes	25 minutes	40 minutes	60 minutes
Format	Part 1: 3 short sentences from a model	Part 1: 20 – 40 words	Part 1: 50 – 70 words	Part 1: 100 – 120 words
	Part 2: 3 sentences from a choice of two prompts	Part 2: 50 – 70 words from a choice of two prompts	Part 2: 100 – 120 words from a choice of two prompts	Part 2: 180 – 200 words from a choice of three prompts
Marks	Part 1: 40% marks	Part 1: 40% marks	Part 1: 40% marks	Part 1: 40% marks
	Part 2: 60% marks	Part 2: 60% marks	Part 2: 60% marks	Part 2: 60% marks
Answering	on question paper	on question paper	on question paper	on question paper
Instructions	in English	in English	in English	in English and target language

Language specification content and can-do statements

Asset Languages tests are designed to link learners from a wide range of proficiency levels, different languages and contexts of learning into the Languages Ladder framework. While tailored to be relevant to these specific learning contexts, Asset Languages tests reflect a view that progression in communicative language ability in all situations follows a roughly similar path, and in consequence are not tied to any particular programme of study.

Some general guidance in the form of functional areas and language structures is given to help teachers and learners familiarise themselves with the kind of language found in the tests.

7. First Stage: Breakthrough

Language purposes and functions

At Breakthrough Stage, the realisation of these functions will be in a basic way.

- Taking part in simple social situations (e.g. greeting / responding to greetings; expressing thanks; apologising)
- Giving simple information
- Asking simple questions
- Answering simple questions
- Describing (e.g. colour, size, location, possession, appearance)
- Giving simple opinions
- Following / giving simple instructions
- Expressing ability
- Using numbers and expressing quantity
- Expressing time (e.g. clock, days, months)

Grammar and linguistic structures

Language-specific guidelines for grammar and linguistic structures are available on the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/specs.aspx.

Vocabulary areas

At Breakthrough stage, the language purposes and functions will be used within the following vocabulary areas. Vocabulary used in each area takes account of the different needs and interests of learners in Primary, Secondary and Post-16 contexts.

- Personal information
- Home and surroundings
- Studying
- Working
- Health
- Shopping and services
- Eating and drinking
- Free time and entertainment
- Holidays and travelling

Breakthrough tests aim to focus on the core vocabulary commonly taught to learners at this level. The following give some examples of the range of vocabulary likely to appear in each area. This list is not exhaustive but should give an indication of the test content.

Asset Languages Breakthrough external tests are designed to be accessible to learners on a variety of courses. To allow for the different language that may be taught in different situations, each task in the test covers a number of different vocabulary areas. In this way, learners who have not covered one particular area should still have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability.

Personal information	e.g. name, age, address, appearance, family, pets, likes/dislikes
Home and surroundings	e.g. daily life, my bedroom, rooms, helping/housework, weather
Studying	e.g. the classroom, subjects, timetable
Working	e.g. jobs, place of work
Health	e.g. body, illness
Shopping and services	e.g. shops, places in a town, asking for things
Eating and drinking	e.g. food, asking for things, in a restaurant
Free time and entertainment	e.g. hobbies, public places for entertainment, entertainment at home, sports
Holidays and travelling	e.g. transport, directions, countries, holiday activities, accommodation

At Breakthrough stage, learners should be able to use and understand the specified language functions in each vocabulary area. For example:

language purpose or function	example vocabulary area(s)	example
giving simple information	personal information studying home and surroundings	My name is... I have a brother. I go to school by bus. I have a dog.
giving simple opinions	free time and entertainment eating and drinking	I like football. It's fun. I don't like chicken.
asking simple questions	shopping and services holidays and travelling working studying	Where is the bank? What time is the train to Leeds? What time do you go to work? Can I have a pencil?
using numbers	personal information shopping and services	I am fourteen years old. That costs £10.
describing	health home and surroundings	I have a headache. I haven't got a computer in my bedroom.

Breakthrough Languages Ladder ‘Can-do’ statements

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade 1	I can understand a few familiar spoken words and phrases.	I can say/repeat a few words and short simple phrases.	I can recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases.	I can write or copy simple words or symbols.
Grade 2	I can understand a range of familiar spoken phrases.	I can answer simple questions and give basic information.	I can understand familiar written phrases.	I can write one or two short sentences to a model and fill in the words on a simple form.
Grade 3	I can understand the main point(s) from a short spoken passage.	I can ask and answer simple questions and talk about my interests.	I can understand the main point(s) from a short written text in clear printed script.	I can write a few short sentences with support using expressions which I have already learned.
	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You may need to listen several times to get the information you need, depending on how fast and clearly the speaker talks. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your pronunciation will not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the sound system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. You should have some understanding of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to use a basic range of everyday expressions relating to personal details and needs. Your spelling will not always be completely accurate but your meaning will be clear. You should be able to understand and use a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns. You should be familiar with the writing system of the language. You should be aware of how to address people both formally and informally as appropriate.

8. Second Stage: Preliminary

Language purposes and functions

At Preliminary Stage the realisation of these functions builds on the specifications at Breakthrough Stage by adding some range to the language used and occurs in a wider range of areas.

- Taking part in social situations (e.g. greeting / responding to greetings; expressing thanks; apologising)
- Repairing communication (e.g. asking for repetition, checking meaning)
- Giving information
- Asking / answering questions
- Describing
- Asking for and giving opinions
- Following / giving instructions
- Asking for things
- Expressing ability
- Using numbers and expressing quantity
- Expressing time
- Agreeing / disagreeing
- Comparing
- Giving reasons
- Expressing preferences
- Making and responding to suggestions
- Expressing obligation and lack of obligation
- Expressing feelings and emotions
- Talking about the present
- Talking about the future
- Talking about the past

Grammar and linguistic structures

Language-specific guidelines for grammar and linguistic structures are available on the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk.

Vocabulary areas

The vocabulary used in Preliminary Stage consists of common items that normally occur in the everyday vocabulary of native speakers in a range of predictable everyday areas. At this stage learners are expected to increase the range of language they can use and understand within familiar topic areas or those of personal interest. Some items may be glossed to aid learners.

World of Work

More detailed information about content specifications for World of Work qualifications can be found at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/specs.aspx.

Preliminary Languages Ladder ‘Can-do’ statements

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade 4	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a short spoken passage.	I can take part in a simple conversation and I can express my opinions.	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a short written text.	I can write a short text on a familiar topic, adapting language which I have already learned.
Grade 5	I can understand the main points and simple opinions (e.g. likes and dislikes) of a longer spoken passage.	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, including expressing my opinions.	I can understand the main points and simple opinions (e.g. likes and dislikes) of a longer written text.	I can write a short text on a range of familiar topics.
Grade 6	I can understand spoken passages referring to present and past or future events.	I can give a short prepared talk, on a topic of my choice, expressing opinions and answering simple questions about it.	I can understand longer texts and distinguish present and past or future events.	I can write a simple text (e.g. a letter) giving and seeking information.
	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand standard speech relating to a range of predictable everyday matters, providing that it is spoken clearly and directly. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to use and adapt learned language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. Your pronunciation should be clear and you should be able to maintain a simple conversation using strategies such as asking for clarification or repetition. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand standard language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to read clear handwritten text. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.	On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to use and adapt learned language relating to a range of predictable everyday matters. You should be able to write simple texts, with spelling that is generally accurate. You should be able to recognise the difference between past, present and future events and be familiar with simple forms of the verb tenses.

9. Third Stage: Intermediate

Language purposes and functions

At Intermediate Stage the realisation of these functions builds on the specifications at Preliminary Stage by adding length and complexity to the language used and occurs in a wider range of areas.

- Taking part in social situations (e.g. greeting / responding to greetings; expressing thanks; apologising)
- Repairing communication (e.g. asking for repetition, checking meaning)
- Giving information
- Asking / answering questions
- Describing
- Asking for and giving opinions
- Justifying opinions
- Following / giving instructions
- Asking for things
- Expressing ability
- Using numbers and expressing quantity
- Expressing time
- Agreeing / disagreeing
- Comparing
- Asking for and giving reasons
- Expressing preferences
- Making and responding to suggestions
- Expressing obligation and lack of obligation
- Expressing feelings and emotions
- Talking about the present
- Talking about the future
- Talking about the past
- Expressing degrees of certainty and doubt
- Talking about (im)probability and (im)possibility
- Giving advice
- Giving warnings
- Taking turns in a conversation

Grammar and linguistic structures

Language-specific guidelines for grammar and linguistic structures are available on the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk.

Vocabulary areas

The vocabulary used in Intermediate stage consists of common items that normally occur in the everyday vocabulary of native speakers using the target language in a range of familiar areas. At this stage learners are expected to increase the range of language they can use and understand within familiar topic areas or those of personal interest. Some items may be glossed to aid learners.

World of Work

More detailed information about content specifications for World of Work qualifications can be found at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/specs.aspx.

Intermediate Languages Ladder ‘Can-do’ statements

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade 7	I can understand longer passages and recognise people’s points of view.	I can answer simple unprepared questions in a conversation or following a presentation.	I can understand longer texts and recognise people’s points of view.	I can write a text (e.g. a report or a letter) conveying simple opinions and/or points of view.
Grade 8	I can understand passages including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.	I can tell a story or relate the plot of a book or film and give my opinions about it.	I can understand texts including some unfamiliar material from which I can recognise attitudes and emotions.	I can produce formal and informal texts in an appropriate style on familiar topics.
Grade 9	I can understand the gist of a range of authentic passages in familiar contexts.	I can take part in a discussion, giving and justifying my opinions and ideas.	I can understand a wide range of authentic texts in familiar contexts.	I can communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics.
	You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic passages on familiar matters. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to follow much of what is said at near normal speed on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral or written summary of what you have heard.	You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your pronunciation should be generally accurate. You should be able to maintain a conversation on familiar matters or in predictable situations, using a range of simple language.	You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to understand authentic texts on familiar matters. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to follow much of what you read on familiar matters or in predictable situations. You should be able to give an oral / written summary or translation of what you have read.	You should now be comfortable with a range of tenses, and should be able to use language relating to a range of familiar matters. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be using and adapting language for new purposes. Your spelling should be generally accurate. You should be able to write on familiar matters or in predictable situations, using a range of simple language.

10. Fourth Stage: Advanced

Language purposes and functions

At Advanced Stage the realisation of these functions builds on the specifications at Intermediate Stage by adding length and complexity to the language used and occurs in a wider range of areas and contexts.

- Maintaining and managing communication (e.g. asking for repetition, monitoring comprehension)
- Using conversational techniques (e.g. turn-taking, hesitating, handling interruptions)
- Giving information (detailed and general)
- Describing
- Managing ideas (e.g. ordering, presenting, connecting and summarising)
- Asking for and giving opinions
- Justifying opinions
- Responding to opinions
- Agreeing / disagreeing
- Evaluating options
- Adapting performance to context
- Asking for and giving reasons
- Comparing, contrasting
- Highlighting information
- Persuading
- Making and responding to suggestions
- Expressing obligation and lack of obligation
- Expressing and responding to attitudes and emotions
- Talking about the present
- Talking about the future
- Predicting / offering
- Expressing intention
- Talking about the past
- Handling narrative
- Expressing degrees of certainty and doubt
- Talking about ability
- Talking about (im)probability, (im)possibility and hypothesis
- Talking about conditions and consequences
- Giving advice

Advanced Languages Ladder ‘Can-do’ statements

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Grade 10	I can understand the main points of an authentic spoken passage / conversation involving one or more speakers.	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and respond readily to questions.	I can understand authentic written texts of moderate length and complexity. I can produce a summary covering the majority of points.	I can structure my writing to produce a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for a specific purpose (e.g. a letter to an employer, an account of a visit).
Grade 11	I can understand the main points of authentic spoken passages and conversations in a range of different contexts.	I can give a presentation on a chosen theme and argue my viewpoints with some degree of success.	I can understand authentic texts of some degree of complexity and abstraction in a range of different contexts. I can produce a summary covering the most essential points.	I can write a coherent text, in an appropriate register, for different purposes, including communicating information, ideas and opinions (e.g. a review, an article or a report).
Grade 12	I can identify the majority of points and am able to infer the meaning of a range of authentic passages / conversations spoken at near native speed.	I can participate in discussions relating to a variety of situations and topics, taking the initiative where appropriate.	I can understand and am able to infer the meaning of a range of more complex texts. I can produce a detailed report covering all essential points.	I can write extended text using a wide range of language in a variety of registers covering more specialised contexts (e.g. work-related, or a specialised area of study).
	You should now be comfortable understanding a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you hear in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries / communities where the language is spoken.	You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to communicate confidently and maintain a conversation using a wide ranging vocabulary. Your pronunciation and intonation will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries / communities where the language is spoken.	You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to understand the majority of what you read in the target language, including references to the culture and society of countries / communities where the language is spoken.	You should now be comfortable using a range of tenses and a variety of registers. On <i>completing</i> this stage, you should be able to write confidently using a wide ranging vocabulary and more complex structures. Your spelling will be generally accurate. You should be able to make references to the culture and society of countries / communities where the language is spoken.

11. Useful contacts and additional sources of information

There is a wealth of detailed information about the assessment scheme on the Asset Languages website, www.assetlanguages.org.uk.

For example,

For **samples** – visit www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/samples.aspx.

For **specifications** – visit www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/specs.aspx

For **availability** – visit www.assetlanguages.org.uk/about/availability.aspx

To find out more about conducting speaking tests, a booklet and DVD can be ordered from the website at www.assetlanguages.org.uk/centres/support.aspx

The following publications containing detailed information about using Asset Languages can be viewed and downloaded from the website;

External Assessment Reference Guide –

www.assetlanguages.org.uk/examsOfficers/default.aspx

Final Entries Guide – www.assetlanguages.org.uk/examsOfficers/entries.aspx

To make a general enquiry relating to Asset Languages qualifications, please contact OCR Customer Contact Centre.

Telephone: 01223 553998 (8.00am – 5.30pm, Mon to Fri)

Fax: 01223 552627

Email: assetlanguages@ocr.ocr.uk (please include centre name and number)

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