



ABC English & Me Curriculum Standards

The **ABC English & Me** curriculum was designed using the standards for language proficiency set forth in the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or CEFR, was developed by the Council of Europe in 2001 to provide a common reference point for describing levels of ability in any language. The CEFR can also be used to set clear targets for achievements in language learning.

The 2001 Council of Europe Resolution recommended using the CEFR as tool to validate a language learner's abilities in four areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) at six different levels of proficiency. Levels range from the most basic (Level A1) to the most fluent (Level C2). The CEFR approach is learner-centered: language is linked to activities and tasks mastered in situations of communication. More and more countries with a lower (or elementary) school program in foreign language learning use Level A1 (or the Breakthrough level*) as a reference for their teaching of language fundamentals. According to the Council of Europe, Level A1, or the "Breakthrough" level, "is considered the lowest level of generative language use – the point at which the learner can *interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics*, rather than relying on a very finite, rehearsed, lexically organized repertoire of situation-specific phrases"(CEFR, p.33).

The CEFR shares many similarities with the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Proficiency Guidelines. Both provide a substantive and comparative dialogue about language learning and evaluation internationally, and each refers to the same fundamentals in language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The CEFR Level A1 and the TESOL Levels 1 and 2 correspond to the same basic learning activities for pre-K and Kindergarten levels in a school setting.

ABC English & Me program lay an early foundation for future English language study, and will serve to aid students in the attainment of level A1 targets described below.

The program covers many of the fundamental skills in both listening and in speaking; the songs and poems that provide the basis of each lesson serve to help children acquire the phonology and grammar that will become a specific target for mastery of the A1 level.

ABC English & Me Attainment Targets

ABC English & Me is designed for the teaching of **very young learners**, that is, children between three and five or six years of age, who have not yet learned to read. The program lays the foundation for these children's acquisition of English at the breakthrough level (as defined by CEFR).

Listed below is a set of language attainment targets drawn from the CEFR outline of A1-level language ability requirements. Units 1 through 9 of **ABC English & Me** are designed to provide instruction that will help children meet these targeted language ability requirements.

According to CEFR, at the A1 level of language ability, the child should be able to:

Understanding

Listening

- recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning, self, family and immediate concrete surroundings if people speak slowly and clearly
- understand simple classroom commands, short statements, and questions

Reading:

- (Reading ability is not an objective for Very Young Learners. However, the ABC English & Me program provides a first contact with the graphic representation of the English language, and thus helps to develop pre-reading skills, through the children's stories included in the program.)

Speaking

Spoken Interaction:

- interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help formulate what the speaker is trying to say
- ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics

Spoken Production:

- use simple phrases and sentences to describe objects of daily life and people
- sing or say a certain number of songs, poems, rhymes

Culture and Lexis

- possess an elementary choice of isolated words and simple expressions about himself, his daily needs, his environment

- possess a few cultural references

Grammar

- have a limited control of certain simple structures and grammatical forms learned by heart
- recognize certain simple sayings

Phonology

- recognize and reproduce sounds, accents, rhythms, and intonations in an intelligible way