Bundesministerium
Bildung, Wissenschaft
und Forschung

Assessment Scale B2 and Guidelines

SR(D)P Lebende Fremdsprachen

I Basic Information

1. Two scales have been developed, one to assess performances at B2 level and one to assess performances at B1 level (see national curricula).
2. Candidates need to be made familiar with the criteria on which their performance in the *Reifeprüfung* is to be assessed. Teachers are advised to use the Assessment Scale in assessing both homework and class tests.
3. Teachers should also familiarise themselves with how the Assessment Scale is applied to test takers' performances by working through the benchmark performances available.

II The Assessment Scale

1. General description of the Assessment Scale

This Assessment Scale was developed for use in the written paper of the *standardisierte Reifeprüfung (SRP)* in Austria. It is linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) and is designed to assess written performances at B2 level. The majority of the scales currently in use in Austria predate the CEFR and do not describe in detail the attributes of a B2 writer across a range of criteria of assessment.

It is recommended that this Assessment Scale be used for tests in class, homework or B2 writing tasks in process portfolios in order to familiarise students with these assessment criteria and their application to writing performance.

The Assessment Scale has four independent criteria:

- Task Achievement
- Organisation and Layout
- Lexical and Structural Range
- Lexical and Structural Accuracy

These criteria are equally weighted.

The Scale incorporates three criteria used in "*Table C4: Written Assessment Criteria Grid*" (CEFR Manual, Version 2009). These criteria are:

- *Range* which has been adapted into *Lexical and Structural Range* to include descriptions of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence
- *Accuracy* which has been adapted into *Lexical and Structural Accuracy* to include descriptions of linguistic and semantic competence
- *Coherence* which has been adapted into *Organisation and Layout* to include descriptions of discourse competence.

In addition, where possible, descriptors from the CEFR scales and subscales describing *written production* and *written interaction* have been adopted.

The Scale has eleven bands, six of which contain detailed descriptions (bands 0, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10). Individual descriptors express different aspects of writing for a specific criterion at a specific band. Five bands are not defined. These should be used for performances that lie between two described bands.

Awarding band 6 to a performance means that this performance fulfils the minimum requirements for CEFR level B2 for that particular criterion. The bands below (5–0) should be awarded to performances that do not fulfil these requirements.

2. General descriptions of the four criteria

Task Achievement (TA)

This criterion assesses the test takers' ability to complete the set task according to the specific requirements of the task. It looks at the way the language has been used to address the specific components defined by the task. It is not explicitly concerned with the range or the accuracy of the language the test taker has produced – this is dealt with in two other criteria: Lexical and Structural Range and Lexical and Structural Accuracy.

The specific components of the task include the observation of text type convention, the development of the content points (as defined by the bullet points) with supporting details, the application of the functions indicated and the completion of the task within the required number of words.

Because the requirements of the task on which this criterion is based vary for each task and text type, it is the most complex of all four criteria to apply and requires sound knowledge of the text type conventions on the part of the rater.

Task Achievement is also the only criterion to include a "veto" descriptor in band 0: "Performance fails to address the task". If this descriptor applies to a performance, it means that the test taker has written a text that does not correspond to the task he/she was set (even though it may be related to the general theme of the task). In such a case the other three criteria should not be assessed at all and a band 0 should be awarded as the final overall band.

Organisation and Layout

This criterion takes into account the writing at both text and paragraph level. It considers the interactive nature of writing and assesses the extent to which the test takers have taken the reader into account. It further assesses how logically test takers have organised their ideas and how well they have linked these within the text. It also judges the test takers' awareness of different layout conventions for different writing tasks.

Lexical and Structural Range (LSR)

This criterion looks at the range of structures and lexical phrases the test takers use for the set task. It also takes into account how appropriately the test takers adapt their register to the set task.

Lexical and Structural Accuracy (LSA)

This criterion looks at how accurately the test takers use structures and lexical phrases. It takes into account accuracy, appropriateness, spelling and punctuation of the language used in the set task.

3. Guidelines for use

3.1.   Grading must start with criterion 1, Task Achievement, because of the veto descriptor in band 0. If a test taker has not responded to the set task but has instead written about something else (even if this is loosely linked with the general topic addressed by the task), band 0 for Task Achievement must be awarded, and no other criteria should be considered.

3.2.   It is strongly recommended that raters start with band 6 in each of the criteria and decide whether the descriptors there apply to the script being assessed. If the criteria do not apply, the rater should move up (if the performance is better than the band 6 descriptors) or move down (if the performance is weaker than the band 6 descriptors) as necessary.

3.3.   It is further recommended that the performance be graded in this order:
  – Task Achievement
  – Organisation and Layout
  – Lexical and Structural Range
  – Lexical and Structural Accuracy

3.4.   The four criteria are equally weighted and must be rated independently from one another. This will require reading the text several times focusing each time on one of the criteria only. Since the four criteria are considered independently in the assessment process, it is possible that the performance may be awarded different bands for different criteria (e.g. band 6 for Task Achievement and band 8 for Organisation and Layout).
  Awarding a certain band to a performance does not mean that all the descriptors from that band have to be applied. For example, some may be text type specific (see point 3.6 below). Raters should try to assess each performance as efficiently and accurately as possible with the descriptors available, using as many descriptors as possible and necessary.

It is also possible that a performance may best be characterised by descriptors from different bands (e.g. a band 8 descriptor may be applicable for one aspect of a criterion and a band 6 descriptor for another).

However, the performance can only be awarded ONE band for each criterion. The final band decision depends on the number and weighting of the descriptors chosen from different bands. In cases where the performance lies between two described bands, the raters should award the undefined band.

3.5. In the Scale the descriptors are broadly ranked according to their importance in assessment and should be read from top to bottom in each band. In most cases, they also move from the general to the specific. In the criterion *Task Achievement*, descriptors 3 and 4 have more weight than the others.

3.6. For the criterion *Task Achievement* some descriptors can only be applied to certain tasks. These are indicated by the letters TSD (Task Specific Descriptor) at the end of the descriptor:

Band 6 (extract)

(2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing meaningful and adequately worded

(3) Two out of three content points addressed, one may not be fully developed / all content points addressed, but none fully developed

(4) Relevant supporting details / examples generally provided

(5a) Some attempts to evaluate different ideas / facts / graphs **TSD**

(5b) Explains advantages / disadvantages **TSD**

(5c) Gives some reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD**

3.7. Some descriptors consist of more than one part (separated by a forward slash "/") out of which only the relevant part(s) for the task at hand should be selected.

EXAMPLE 1: Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing meaningful and adequately worded

EXAMPLE 2: Two out of three content points addressed, one may not be fully developed / all content points addressed, but none fully developed

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3.8. Occasionally, some descriptors in two bands are worded the same. This is because no further progression is expected within this CEFR level:

Bands 8 and 10 of Lexical and Structural Range:

(3) Uses a range of complex structures / sentence forms

(5) Varies formulation to avoid repetition

3.9. Some descriptors only appear in certain bands, e. g. the descriptor in Lexical and Structural Range relating to lifting words from the prompt appear only at Bands 2/4/6 as this behaviour is not expected at Bands 8/10 where the test takers should have sufficient linguistic ability.

4. Further information about specific descriptors

4.1. 1 Requirements of set task type (Task Achievement): this descriptor refers to whether the script contains an introduction, a body and a conclusion. This descriptor refers to the content of the performance and to task fulfilment in terms of text type conventions. The introduction of an article, for instance, should be written to attract the reader's interest. Similarly, the closing of a letter is expected to be appropriate for the recipient and the content of the letter. These criteria are not covered by the content points and can only be fulfilled on the basis of prior knowledge of the text type conventions.

4.2. Highlights the personal significance of events ... (Task Achievement): this descriptor comes from the table Correspondence and refers to the writer's linguistic ability to relate abstract facts, events and opinions to his or her own personal views, beliefs and experience, e.g. from a performance on the task „Kids' vacation":
"*I really like children and it would be a pleasure for me to work with them.*"

4.3. Follows standard layout (Organisation and Layout): this descriptor refers to the visual properties of the performance and how this relates to the text type conventions; whether, for instance, a report is organised into subsections with appropriate subheadings.

4.4. Formal or informal register (Lexical and Structural Range): the following examples may help:
"*I am writing to inform you about recent changes ...*" vs. "*I wanted to let you know what we've been up to ...*"
"*Your colleague agrees with the appropriateness of the examples ...*" vs. "*My mates thought they were OK ...*"

4.5. Uses some complex structures / sentence forms (Lexical and Structural Range): this descriptor refers to the presence of such complex sentence forms and complex structures in the piece of writing being assessed but not to how well they have been used. The latter comes under Lexical and Structural Accuracy.
Complex sentence forms: refers to the use and variety of subordinate clauses (relative – who/which; reason – because ...; condition – if ... etc.).
Complex structures: refers to the range and use of grammatical structures such as passives (*All my money was stolen*), modals (*I should have asked her*), conditionals (*If only I had known, I would have ...*) and gerund constructions (*I look forward to hearing from you*), and lexical structures such as phrasal verbs (*It took me a long time to get over it*), adverbial (*He knows very well*), adjectival (*The film was very strange*) and prepositional (*He gives consideration to something*) structures.

	Assessment Scale B2			

	Task Achievement*		Organisation and Layout
10	(1) Requirements of set task type fully observed (2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing appropriate and precise (3) All content points addressed and fully developed (4) Relevant supporting details / examples are provided for all content points (5a) Evaluates different ideas / facts / graphs or solutions to a problem very well **TSD**** (5b) Explains advantages / disadvantages very well **TSD** (5c) Gives very good reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD** (5d) Successfully and convincingly highlights the personal significance of events / ideas **TSD** (5e) Expresses news and views effectively and relates convincingly to those of others **TSD** (6) Set word length (+/- 10 %) observed	10	(1) Performance has a very clear overall structure at the text level (2) Highly effective use of paragraphing (3) Develops points in a very clear and systematic way (4) Marks relationships between ideas in a very clear way (5) Uses a wide variety of linking devices (6) Follows standard layout for required task type throughout (visual)
9		9	
8	(1) Requirements of set task type almost fully observed (2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing appropriate (3) All content points addressed but one or two not fully developed (4) Relevant supporting details / examples provided for most content points (5a) Evaluates different ideas / facts / graphs or solutions to a problem well **TSD** (5b) Explains advantages / disadvantages well **TSD** (5c) Gives good reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD** (5d) Successfully highlights the personal significance of events / ideas **TSD** (5e) Expresses news and views effectively and relates well to those of others **TSD** (6) Set word length (+/- 10 %) observed	8	(1) Performance has a clear overall structure at the text level (2) Good use of paragraphing (3) Develops points systematically (4) Most relationships between ideas marked (5) Uses a variety of linking devices (6) Follows standard layout for required task type throughout (visual)
7		7	
6	(1) Requirements of set task type mainly observed (2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing meaningful and adequately worded (3) Two out of three content points addressed, one of which may not be fully developed / all content points addressed, but none fully developed (4) Relevant supporting details / examples generally provided (5a) Some attempts to evaluate different ideas / facts / graphs **TSD** (5b) Explains advantages / disadvantages adequately **TSD** (5c) Gives some reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD** (5d) Highlights the personal significance of events / ideas **TSD** (5e) Expresses news and views effectively and relates to those of others **TSD** (6) Set word length (+/- 10 %) observed	6	(1) Performance has a satisfactory overall structure at the text level (2) Generally follows paragraphing conventions (3) Develops points largely systematically (4) Some relationships between ideas marked (5) Uses a limited number of linking devices (6) Has produced clearly intelligible continuous writing (7) Follows standard layout for required task type most of the time (visual)
5		5	
4	(1) Requirements of set task type partially observed (2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing not meaningful / not adequately worded / partially missing (3) Two out of three content points addressed but none fully developed / sometimes makes up and develops irrelevant content points (4) Not enough relevant supporting details provided / supporting details sometimes irrelevant or include irrelevant information (5a) Poor attempts to evaluate different ideas / facts / graphs **TSD** (5b) Poor attempts to explain advantages / disadvantages **TSD** (5c) Gives poor reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD** (5d) Fails to highlight the personal significance of events / ideas **TSD** (5e) Little / no attempt to express news and views effectively **TSD** (6) Set word length (+/- 10 %) not observed	4	(1) Performance has inadequate overall structure at the text level (2) Seldom follows paragraphing conventions (3) Links only shorter, simple elements into a connected linear sequence (4) Only a few relationships between ideas marked (5) Only some simple linking devices used (6) Has difficulty in producing clearly intelligible continuous writing (7) Follows standard layout for required task type only some of the time (visual)
3		3	
2	(1) Requirements of set task type not observed (2) Title / subject line / section headings / salutation / closing not included (3) Only one content point addressed / hardly any content points developed / frequently makes up and develops irrelevant content points (4) Hardly any relevant supporting details provided / supporting details mostly irrelevant (5a) No attempts to evaluate different ideas / facts / graphs **TSD** (5b) No attempts to explain advantages / disadvantages **TSD** (5c) Gives no reasons in support of / against points of view **TSD** (5d) No attempt to highlight the personal significance of events / ideas **TSD** (5e) Unable to express news and views effectively **TSD** (6) Set word length (+/- 10 %) not observed	2	(1) Performance has little if any structure at the text level (2) Paragraphing conventions largely ignored (3) Ideas are presented in a random order without logical connections (4) Lack of linking devices (5) Lacks clearly intelligible continuous writing (6) Standard layout largely ignored (visual)
1		1	
0	(1) Performance fails to address the task* (2) Insufficient language for assessment (3) Communication fails due to illegible handwriting	0	(1) Performance shows no attempt at organisation

* If a test taker has written off topic, none of the other criteria will be assessed and a 0 should be awarded.

** TSD = Task specific descriptor means that this descriptor can only be applied to certain tasks.

Assessment Scale B2		
Lexical and Structural Range		**Lexical and Structural Accuracy**
10	(1) Expresses him / herself very clearly without any sign of having to restrict what he / she wants to say (2) Uses a very good variety of structures (3) Uses a range of complex structures / sentence forms (4) Uses a very wide range of vocabulary for the set task (5) Varies formulation to avoid repetition* (6) Expresses him / herself very confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register appropriate for the set task (7) Uses a very good range of language to give clear descriptions / express view-points / develop arguments as required in the set task	10 (1) Very good structural control (2) Hardly any slips or errors (3) Excellent control of spelling (4) Lexical accuracy is very high; hardly any incorrect word choice (5) Highly accurate use of linking devices (6) Meets all expected standard punctuation conventions (7) No re-reading necessary
9		9
8	(1) Expresses him / herself clearly without much sign of having to restrict what he / she wants to say (2) Uses a good variety of structures (3) Uses a range of complex structures / sentence forms (4) Uses a wide range of vocabulary for the set task (5) Varies formulation to avoid repetition* (6) Expresses him / herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register appropriate for the set task (7) Uses a good range of language to give clear descriptions / express viewpoints / develop arguments as required in the set task	8 (1) Good structural control (2) Occasional slips or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare (3) Good control of spelling (4) Lexical accuracy is high; occasional incorrect word choice does not hinder communication (5) Accurate use of linking devices (6) Meets almost all expected standard punctuation conventions (7) No re-reading necessary
7		7
6	(1) Expresses him / herself clearly though there may be some signs of restriction (2) Uses some variety of structures (3) Uses some complex structures / sentence forms (4) Uses a good range of vocabulary to cope with the set task (5) Varies formulation to avoid frequent repetition* (6) Occasional lifting of words from the prompt may occur (7) Expresses him / herself appropriately in the set task (8) Uses a sufficient range of language to give clear descriptions / express view-points / develop arguments as required in the set task	6 (1) Good control of frequent patterns and structures (2) Any structural mistakes do not cause misunderstanding (3) Mistakes in spelling occur but do not hinder communication (4) Lexical accuracy is reasonably high on the whole; any incorrect word choice does not usually hinder communication (5) Relatively accurate use of linking devices (6) Meets most of the expected standard punctuation conventions (7) Reader seldom has to stop to re-read
5		5
4	(1) Occasionally unable to express him / herself clearly (2) Uses a limited variety of structures (3) Only occasionally uses complex structures / sentence forms (4) Uses a limited range of vocabulary to cope with the set task (5) Few attempts to vary formulation* (6) Some lexical limitations cause repetition and / or frequent lifting of words from the prompt (7) Sometimes fails to express him / herself appropriately in the set task (8) Uses a limited range of language to give clear descriptions / express viewpoints / develop arguments as required in the set task	4 (1) Limited control of frequent patterns and structures (2) Errors occur and structural mistakes sometimes cause misunderstanding (3) Noticeable lexical and structural influence from other languages (4) Spelling frequently inaccurate (5) Good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts (6) Lexical inaccuracies sometimes impede communication (7) Some inaccurate use of linking devices (8) Meets only some of the expected standard punctuation conventions (9) Requires effort on the part of the reader
3		3
2	(1) Frequently unable to express him / herself clearly (2) Uses little / no variety of structures (3) Uses hardly any complex structures / sentence forms (4) Uses only basic vocabulary (5) No attempts to vary formulation* (6) Lexical limitations frequently cause repetition and / or lifting of words from the prompt (7) Frequently fails to express him / herself appropriately in the set task (8) Fails to use a range of language to give clear descriptions / express viewpoints / develop arguments as required in the set task	2 (1) Hardly any structural control (2) Mistakes repeatedly cause misunderstanding (3) Accuracy limited to frequently used routines and patterns (4) Spelling frequently inaccurate (5) Lexical inaccuracies prevent communication (6) Inaccurate use of linking devices (7) Fails to meet the expected standard punctuation conventions (8) Reader frequently has to stop to re-read sections
1		1
0	(1) Insufficient language to make an assessment	0 (1) Insufficient language to make an assessment
* at the phrase/expression level – e.g. however / nevertheless / then again etc.		