

# The European Language Portfolio

## A Guide for Language Learners (15+)

### What is the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)*?



It is a complex instrument for **self-assessment** of language competences, in accordance with the reference levels introduced by the Council of Europe and, at the same time, it is a "**document**" which provides information on its owner's (the language learner's) communication competences in several languages.

It may accompany the language learner wherever s/he travels, just like a passport, and it may serve as evidence for a variety of purposes, such as:

- job interviews
- applications for a study grant
- mobility through-out Europe and beyond

### What are the main aims of the ELP?

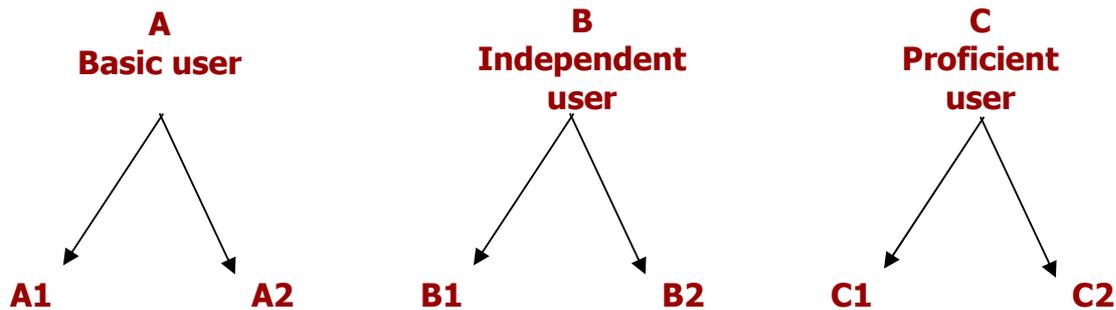
- To stimulate lifelong language learning in a spirit of tolerance and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, *all* languages being given equal status, whether learned in school, at home or elsewhere outside the organized school environment
- To empower the learner by transferring the responsibility for language learning from the *teacher* to the *learner / language user*
- To provide a basis for consistent (**self-**) **assessment** of communication competences
- To allow learners to present their language skills certifications in any language, at any level, in a clearly understandable way, using a standardized common European system of six language proficiency levels



## Which are the "proficiency levels"?

The levels referred to in the European Language Portfolio are those of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)* - "The Common Scale of Reference Levels", introduced by the Council of Europe (for more details, see <http://www.coe.int/portfolio> - click on "Levels")

The "Common Scale of Reference Levels" describes user competence at 6 levels:



### Examples of descriptors:

<p><b>A1 (beginner/elementary level)</b></p> <p>"Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at satisfaction of needs of a concrete type."</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p><b>C2 (proficiency level)</b></p> <p>"Can understand with ease everything heard or read." .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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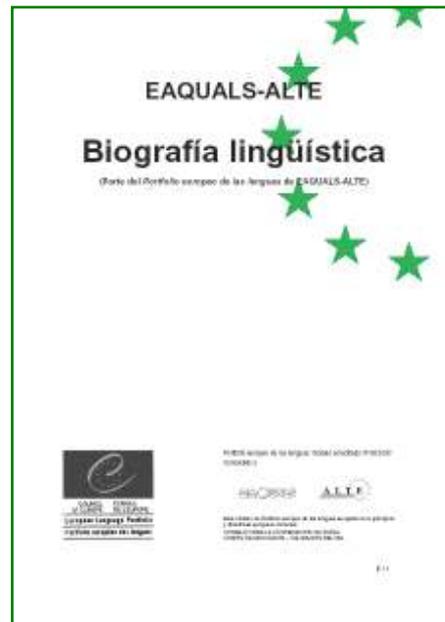
Look at the descriptors below (taken from the *CEFR*) and decide where they belong in the boxes above:

- (i) Can introduce him / herself and can ask and answer questions about personal details, such as where he/ she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- (ii) Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
- (iii) Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
- (iv) Can express himself / herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

## The three components of the *European Language Portfolio* are:

### □ the **Language Biography**

« diary »: personal history of the owner's language learning experience and progress;  
it includes:  
⇒ information on linguistic and cultural experiences in and outside class;  
⇒ self-assessment checklists



EAQUALS-ALTE ELP – Spanish & Basque version, published in Spain - Title page of the *Language Biography*



### □ the **European Language Passport**

⇒ provides an overview of the language competences at a given moment, defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels;  
⇒ it includes a self-evaluation grid, and  
⇒ records formal qualifications and certification

EAQUALS-ALTE ELP – original version, published in Italy

### □ the **Dossier**

A selection of materials to document and illustrate achievements, such as:  
⇒ personal work of the learner (e.g. Projects, written work, audio cassettes, videos, computer programmes etc.)  
⇒ certificates. The learners may change the contents as their skills and knowledge develop





## How do I use the *European Language Passport*?

*In order to understand how you can use the Language passport, which is one of the three components of the European Language Portfolio, follow the instructions below.*

### **Step One**

Reflect for a few minutes on how objective/subjective you are when it comes to evaluating your own activity, results, ability to complete certain tasks, etc.).

Remember that the Language Passport is yours in the first place, that you have to be true to yourself and as objective as possible in assessing your own language level, although this document is also meant to be shown to other people who may decide on whether you can obtain a scholarship or a job abroad.

*Which are, in your opinion, the reasons why you should be objective and not overestimate or underestimate yourself?*

### **Step Two**

Think of the implications of being objective /subjective when filling in this document.

### **Step Three**

Now look at the self-assessment grid - which is included in the Language Passport - (see below) and evaluate your present language level for the five skills in the grid.

Some people may have different levels in the different skills. Don't worry, this may be due to your past or current priorities in language learning. You may want, depending on your future plans, to insist more on some skills than on the others.

Remember that the levels in the self-assessment grid stand for:

**A1 and A2 - Basic User**

**B1 and B2 - Independent User**

**C1 and C2 - Proficient User**

### **Step Four**

Use the example below to fill in your own language profile (for English, as well as for other foreign languages).

#### **Example**

Language: French

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>Understanding</b>						
Listening						
Reading						
<b>Speaking</b>						
Spoken interaction						
Spoken production						
<b>Writing</b>						
Writing						

#### **Your profile**

Language:

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>Understanding</b>						
Listening						
Reading						
<b>Speaking</b>						
Spoken interaction						
Spoken production						
<b>Writing</b>						
Writing						

## Self-assessment grid

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>Understanding</b>  Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
<b>Reading</b> 	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
<b>Speaking</b>  Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
<b>Spoken production</b> 	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
<b>Writing</b> 	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration card.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example (thanking someone for something).	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be important.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.

## *Why do I need a Dossier?*

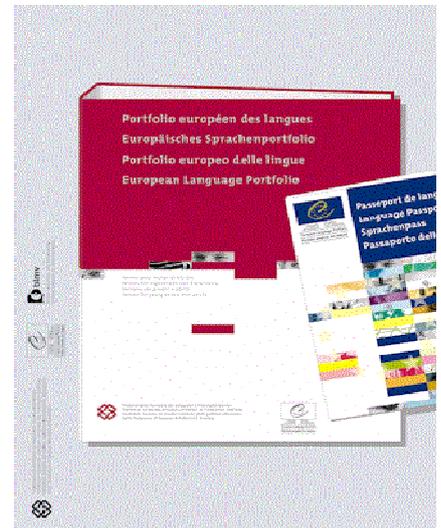
This dossier is for you to collect together samples of work and other documents as evidence of your competence in the languages you are learning.

You should have one Dossier for each foreign language you know/are studying.

The Dossier will help you to reflect on your progress and can also be used to demonstrate to others what you are capable of.

The contents of your Dossier could be any of the following:

- examples of good written language work
- audio / video recordings
- descriptions and results of project work
- documents, diplomas and certificates
- course descriptions
- reflections on language learning progress
- reports from tutors or teachers
- statements from others about your language skills
- things you'd like to keep and show others



You decide about what goes into your Dossier and you can change its contents as you make progress with your language learning. (from **The EAQUALS / ALTE European Language Portfolio**)





## ***If you want to find out more about the ELP...***

The pan-European ELP-version for adult learners has been developed by the European Associations **EAQUALS** (*European Association for Quality Language Services - [www.equals.org](http://www.equals.org)*) and **ALTE** (*Association of Language Testers in Europe - [www.alte.org](http://www.alte.org)*) and it was validated by the Council of Europe in 2000 (accredited model 6.2000)

The EAQUALS-ALTE European Language Portfolio ('eELP') is also available in electronic format: [www.equals.org](http://www.equals.org) → click on "Download your electronic Language Portfolio" → select the language (English or French) → enter your name and all requested details, and start downloading the necessary programme, that will allow you to download the eELP and to fill it in. You can then save **Your eELP** on a CD-ROM, a memory stick or on your computer and update it electronically on an on-going basis.

Through the "EuroIntegrELP" project, it is now available in a multilingual version in 15 languages: EN, FR, DE, IT, RO, HR, EE, EL, LT, PL, RU, SK, NL, EUSK, ES. Do you know what languages these abbreviations stand for?

Here is the title "European Language Portfolio" in all these languages:

**das Europäische Sprachenportfolio - Le Portfolio Européen des Langues -  
Europska jezična mapa - Euroopa keelemapp - Europos kalbų aprašas -  
Portofoliul European al Limbilor - Het Europese Taalportfolio - Το Ευρωπαϊκό  
Χαρτοφυλάκιο Γλωσσών - Hizkuntzen Portfolio Europarra - Európske jazykové  
portfólio - Europejskie portfolio językowe - Европейский языковой портфель -  
Il Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue - Portfolio europeo de las lenguas**

Do you recognize the language? Which of these languages do you know?

Following a decision by the **European Parliament**, the **European Language Portfolio** is promoted by **Europass**, a unique European scheme for the transparency of qualifications and competences, by the inclusion of the Language Passport as one of the Europass documents.

For instructions on how to fill in the Europass CV, go to <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>.

You can fill it in online or you can download a template, instructions and examples.

**Relevant web sites for details on the ELP and related projects:**

<http://www.coe.int/portfolio>; [www.equals.org](http://www.equals.org); [www.alte.ro](http://www.alte.ro); [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at);  
[www.quest.ro](http://www.quest.ro); [www.prosper.ro/EuroIntegrELP/EuroIntegrELP.htm](http://www.prosper.ro/EuroIntegrELP/EuroIntegrELP.htm)

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.  
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