telc
LANGUAGE TESTS

TEST SPECIFICATIONS
ENGLISH

B1·B2

Contents

1 Background Information

1.1 Dual-level Examinations

This chapter will briefly explain how language skills are assessed over the two CEFR levels B1 and B2 and why it is important to develop this kind of evaluation carefully. While it might seem a simple solution just to award B1 for test takers who are slightly below B2, this is not how *telc English B1·B2* was constructed. The test development team made an extra effort by carefully defining two cut-off scores, one for B1 and one for B2, instead of the one cut-off score typical for single-level examinations.

telc's aims when developing this test were to

- provide successful candidates with a valid certificate either at level B1 or at level B2,

- achieve this objective within a manageable time frame for the actual examination; i. e., with as few test items as possible,

- give all candidates a profile of their abilities as well as certifying the overall level achieved.

In order to fulfill the second aim, the subtests Listening, Reading and Language Elements are counted together for the final result of the test. Thus 59 items can be taken into account when determining whether a test taker has reached level B1 or B2 in the receptive skills. Each subtest seen by itself (with 23 or 18 items at the most) would not provide the necessary amount of information about the test taker's ability. Therefore, if the results for Listening, Reading and Language Elements were to be reported separately, these subtests would have to include many more items. Considerations of time versus cost as well as practicability led to the decision to combine the three subtests. The productive skills Writing and Speaking are assessed independently, however.

This means that *telc English B1·B2* has three parts which are evaluated separately:

- Listening/Reading/Language Elements

- Writing

- Speaking

The level achieved for each of these parts can be either "B2", "B1" or "below B1". The methods used for this evaluation are explained below.

The B1·B2 test cannot measure a candidate's ability below the CEFR level B1, so a result of this nature is referred to as being "below B1".

Listening/Reading/Language Elements

In this part candidates are awarded one point for each item. The result is graded as follows:

- 43–59 points: B2

- 27–42 points: B1

- 0–26 points: below B1

How were these cut-off scores defined? In the process of test development, different qualitative and quantitative methods were applied.

Test analysis

13. You collect and analyse data on an adequate and representative sample of candidates and can be confident that their achievement is a result of the skills measured in the examination and not influenced by factors like L1, country of origin, gender, age and ethnic origin.

14. Item-level data (e. g. for computing the difficulty, discrimination, reliability and standard errors of measurement of the examination) is collected from an adequate sample of candidates and analysed.

Communication with stakeholders

15. The examination administration system communicates the results of the examinations to candidates and to examination centres (e. g. schools) promptly and clearly.

16. You provide information to stakeholders on the appropriate context, purpose and use of the examination, on its content, and on the overall reliability of the results of the examination.

17. You provide suitable information to stakeholders to help them interpret results and use them appropriately.

1.4 Relevant CEFR Scales

The CEFR provides essential information about the skills needed to successfully complete the examination *telc English B1·B2*. The scales in the following chart and the descriptors they include are incorporated into the examination, although the amount and intensity of their use varies.
Since the examination covers two levels of competence, the descriptors for both levels B1 and B2 (including the plus levels B1+ and B2+) have been listed below. CEFR descriptors which are not relevant for this examination have been omitted.

GLOBAL SCALE

Independent User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, leisure, school, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

LISTENING

	OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION
B2	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.
B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent. Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives.

	UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS
B2	Can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers. Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.
B1	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.

	LISTENING AS A MEMBER OF A LIVE AUDIENCE
B2	Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/ professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.
B1	Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured. Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.

	LISTENING TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS
B2	Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.
B1	Can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.Can follow detailed directions.

	LISTENING TO AUDIO MEDIA AND RECORDINGS
B2	Can understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content. Can understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in standard dialect and can identify the speaker's mood, tone, etc.

2 Test Specifications

2.1 Overview of the Test Format

telc English B1·B2 consists of five subtests:

Subtest	Time
Listening	25 minutes
Reading	40 minutes
Language Elements	20 minutes
Writing	30 minutes
Speaking	approx. 16 minutes

The subtests are divided into parts, as follows:

Written Examination

Subtest Listening	
Part 1	Understanding voice mail messages: ▪ 4 multiple-choice items ▪ Listening for detail
Part 2	Understanding everyday conversations: ▪ 5 true/false items and 5 multiple-choice items ▪ Listening for gist and listening for detail
Part 3	Understanding an interview: ▪ 6 multiple-choice items ▪ Listening for detail
Part 4	Understanding different opinions about a topic: ▪ 3 matching items ▪ Listening for gist

2.2 Listening

Listening, Part 1

In the first part of this subtest, the candidates will have a chance to demonstrate their ability to understand important details in voice mail messages.

Possible situations of language use reproduced by the task are:

- Listening to a message on an answering machine

- Understanding recorded messages on the telephone, e. g. messages from an official institution, a service provider or a doctor's office, etc.

Structure	Instructions Example Audio texts Items
Objective	To assess the candidate's ability to understand specific information in voice mail messages
Intended operations	Listening for detail
Type of task	Multiple-choice items with three options
Number of items	Four (items 1–4)
Channel	Text: spoken Instructions and items: written
Type of text	Monologues: voice mail messages, both in personal and work-related contexts
Nature of information	Everyday situations requiring some kind of concrete action or providing the listener with specific information; e. g. contact someone, make a decision, etc.
Speakers	Number of speakers: One per voice mail message
Text length	65–75 words per voice mail message
Test items	▪ The candidate will hear four voice mail messages. ▪ Each message is played once. ▪ For each message, there is one multiple-choice question with three options. The task is to choose the correct statement for each message. Only one option is correct.
Topics	See *Inventory T – Topics*
Level	Vocabulary and grammar of the audio texts should mostly be at level B1. The language of the items should not exceed level B1.
Weighting	One point per item (0 for incorrect response)

3 Inventory T – Topics

This list of topic areas is primarily designed for item writers and test constructors. For classroom work and test preparation, this list of topics will merely form a "common-core" basis and will need to be further developed and extended to meet the individual needs and interests of the learners.

All the topics in this inventory may be used for test purposes. When selecting texts and test items for the examinations, the editing team takes care to include only such materials that are likely to reflect the learner's range of experience. Candidates are not required to have specialised knowledge in any of the topic areas.

Topic	Sub-topic
Culture and the arts	▪ Cultural traditions and customs ▪ Food and drink ▪ Performing arts and visual arts ▪ Languages
Media and communications	▪ Mass media ▪ Social networks ▪ People skills
Personal life	▪ Lifestyle ▪ Personal development ▪ Friends and family ▪ Leisure activities and recreation ▪ Sport and exercise ▪ Money
Science and Technology	▪ Environmental issues ▪ Natural resources ▪ Plants and animals ▪ Natural hazards
Social issues	▪ Immigration ▪ Education ▪ Youth and old age ▪ Economic issues ▪ Social problems ▪ Healthcare

TEST SPECIFICATIONS

ENGLISH B1·B2

telc English B1·B2 is a standardised dual-level examination intended for adult learners. It measures general language competence across two levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* using a task-based, communicative approach.

The *telc English B1·B2 Test Specifications* are designed for teachers who wish to prepare their learners for telc English examinations as well as for examiners, heads of language departments in schools and other ELT professionals.

The Test Specifications explain the structure and specifications of the examination and provide detailed information on how the subtests Listening, Reading, Language Elements, Writing and Speaking are assessed alongside the relevant CEFR scales at levels B1 and B2.

For additional information regarding the *telc English B1·B2* examination (including sample tasks), please refer to the *telc English B1·B2 Mock Examination.*