



# United Nations Language Framework



English Language Curriculum

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\*Content in bold, available in this document  
Content greyed out, available in other documents



In 2018, the Secretary-General honoured the project “Harmonization of Language Learning and Assessment throughout the UN Secretariat” with a UN Secretary-General Award in the category of Multilingualism.

It was awarded to both the Language Training Programme (LTP) at the UN Office in Geneva and the Language and Communications Programme (LCP) at UNHQ, New York.

This project won the award principally for creating the United Nations Language Framework, a framework with wide-reaching implications for multilingualism.

The purpose of the UN Language Framework is to leverage and mainstream multilingualism, a core value of the United Nations. It is composed of the:

- UN Levels of Language Competence
- Core Curriculum: common learning objectives and related domains, suggested text types and communicative situations
- Language-specific Curriculum: pragmatic, linguistic and socio-cultural competences

The first two elements are common to all languages and can be consulted in the document entitled “United Nations Language Framework – UN Levels of Language Competence – Core curriculum”.

The third element, the “Language-specific Curriculum”, is specific to each of the six official languages. It is the most detailed layer of the UN Language Framework structure and is presented in six separate documents, one for each language. The present document is the Language-specific Curriculum for the English Language.

The Language-specific Curriculum describes the minimum content required to achieve the common learning objectives, as indicated in the Core Curriculum.

Targeted users include:

- language teachers and trainers
- learning focal points and training officers, especially those in charge of language programmes
- instructional designers and developers of learning materials
- exam and assessments writers

The Language-specific Curriculum constitutes a guideline for all local language training programmes across the UN Secretariat to define their course programmes and align them with the UN Language Framework standards.



United Nations Language Framework - Components

## Application in learning and assessment

Applying the UN Language Framework to local language training programmes implies:

- comparing it against existing course programmes and adapting them accordingly to align them to the Framework, and potentially expanding the content and range of courses offered.
- identifying any potential existing gaps between the local training offered and the described learning objectives, considering the three domains: personal, public and personal.
- creating any new course programmes according to the descriptors of the Framework, also taking identified local needs into account.
- identifying up to which UN level the local training programme can reach in each language, as in some duty stations, some languages will not be offered up to UN Level III owing to insufficient need or resources.
- deciding on the number of courses covering the UN levels locally offered, considering that each level will require between 150 and 300 hours of instruction, depending on contextual or language-intrinsic factors.
- deciding on course type (regular or specialized), length and format (face-to-face, online or blended), based on the UN levels they cover in each language.
- taking into account existing best practices and currently used in-house or mainstream learning materials, in light of the Language-specific Curriculum and the descriptors.

The UN Language Framework (UN Levels, Core Curriculum and language-specific content for the six official UN languages) is the result of ongoing work to harmonize language learning and assessment across the Organization.

During the coming years, as this advances, the Language-specific Curriculum will be updated accordingly.

In applying the Framework, future phases will focus on self-assessment, examinations for UN Level I and UN Level II, and the creation of learning materials.

## United Nations Language Model

To define and describe language competence, it is first necessary to agree on a common understanding of how to operationalize language. This understanding is a representation of language called a language model. The model developed for the purpose of the UN Language Framework will be hereafter called the United Nations Language Model<sup>1</sup>.

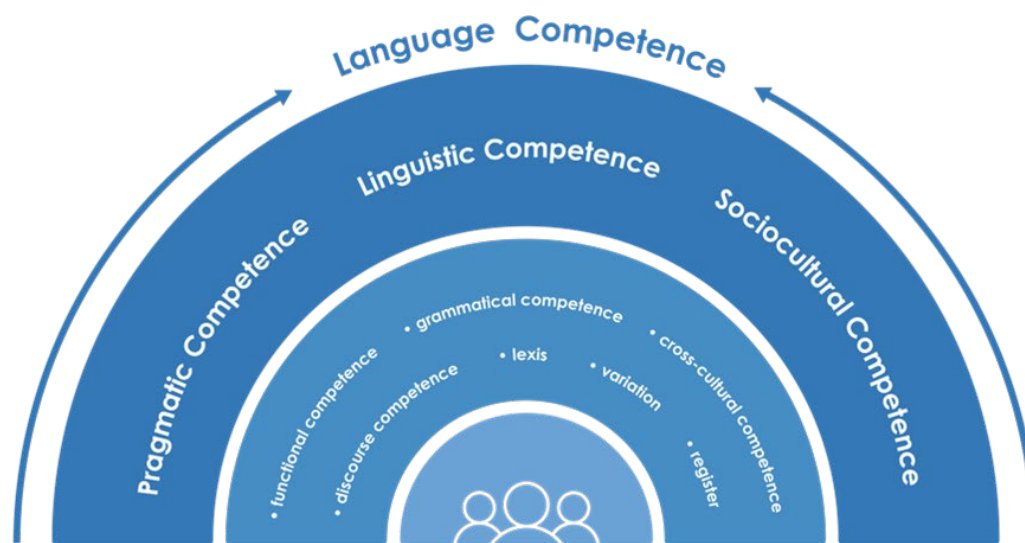
Its components are key in defining how language competence is demonstrated and evaluated, and how pedagogical content is created and delivered.

It underlies how the language-specific content is distributed and informs all other elements of the UN Language Framework by considering:

- the action-oriented nature of human communication
- the role of language users both as individuals and as social agents
- the several components comprised in communicative language competence

The United Nations Language Model considers language as a competence, in terms of knowledge in use, and underlines language as a means of communication. The model follows the principle of the action-oriented nature of human communication and establishes language users at the centre.

The model is presented as a semicircle indicating interdependent, overlapping components and categories. Language competence includes three main sub-competences: pragmatic, linguistic and sociocultural, which, in turn, include their respective categories.



<sup>1</sup> The UN Language Model draws on research and literature sources, such as Bachman and Palmer 1996 and 2010 and Celce-Murcia and Dornyei 1995, and on the work by the Canadian Benchmarks Centre (2015) and the Council of Europe (CEFR 2001, extended set of Descriptors 2017)

Language competence is integrated through **three main sub-competences**.



**Pragmatic competence** allows the user to comprehend and produce oral and written texts aligned with the communicative context and intention.

**Linguistic competence** allows the user to build and recognize well-formed, meaningful messages, according to language system rules at sentence and text level.

**Sociocultural competence** allows the user to recognize and use social and cultural norms and conventions to communicate appropriately in a given context.

Sub-competences include **overlapping categories**.



**Functional competence** allows the user to interpret and perform communicative functions within defined social and professional contexts.

**Grammatical competence** allows the user to recognize lexical, morphological, syntactic, phonological and orthographic features of a language and to use these features effectively to interpret, encode, and decode words and sentences.

**Cross-cultural competence** allows the user to become aware of cultural values, traditions and behaviours, including their own and to tailor communication accordingly.

**Discourse competence** allows the user to connect sentences into functional, cohesive and coherent texts which achieve their objectives, and are accurately and logically connected.

**Lexis:** the level of language consisting of vocabulary.

**Variation:** geographical or social varieties of a language including accents and language use.

**Register:** degree of formality and the adaption of style and tone to the communicative situation.

At the centre of the communicative language model: the users.



**Language users**, as individual and social agents triggering communication, are at the centre of the model.

**Strategic Competence** allows the language users to make effective use of resources that activate competences or compensate for any lack thereof.

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The sub-competences and categories of the United Nations Language Model determine how the content -the language- will be presented in the next sections.

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## Language-specific content

The language-specific content, detailed in the following sections, is presented and categorized according to the language model using the categories below:

- Pragmatic Competence
  - Functional competence
  - Discourse Competence\*
- Linguistic Competence
  - Grammatical competence
    - Morphology and Syntax
    - Phonology\*
    - Orthography\*
    - Lexis\*\*
- Sociocultural Competence
  - Variation (dialects, social and geographical varieties)\*
  - Register (tone, style)\*
  - Intercultural competence (social conventions, traditions, values, UN culture)\*

### Pragmatic Competence sections

Functional Competence presents functions or speech acts: what users do when using the language for a communicative purpose.

### Linguistic Competence sections

Linguistic Competence is composed of morphology and syntax, and lexis: the linguistic tools enabling users to carry out the functions.

The content identified is representative of each level, hence, not exhaustive, and is expanded with examples where possible.

### Sociocultural Competence sections

Sociocultural competence refers to cultural and sociolinguistic conventions: appropriacy regarding the social and cultural context(s). This is a general approach about how to address aspects of variation, register and intercultural competence.

The Language-specific Curriculum expands the Core Curriculum as it guides linguistic experts through language-specific content. Thus, it ensures that the harmonized, common learning objectives for each UN level are achieved in each target language.

Since the highly specialized learning objectives for UN Level IV have not been defined, the language-specific content for this level has been excluded from the present document.

### Approach

In all categories, the content is organized randomly, and is understood as the minimum to achieve the learning objectives for each UN level.

Jargon or highly specialized terminology has been avoided as much as possible. The content has been compiled following a hybrid approach that combines acknowledged sources or publications in foreign language research and teaching experience within the UN context.

For ease of use, both English and the target language are used to present the categories.

The content for each UN level aligns with the Core Curriculum: learning objectives, text types and communicative situations. Each level builds from one to the next. Therefore, the content described in one UN level implies the acquisition of the previous level(s).

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\* Open to future development and application to local course programmes

\*\* Although it is placed under linguistic competence, lexis is considered a cross-cutting category.

Although the Language-specific Curriculum is presented in a linear way within each UN level, the repetition and deepening required for effective language acquisition is necessary and must be reflected on and planned for in the local language training programmes.

The content defined for each UN level is the indispensable minimum that should be mastered to achieve this level. However, it may be extended to respond to locally-defined learning needs, to exemplify, when the target language is the local language or when a specific field of vocabulary is required locally.

### Conventions

- The titles of main groups - macro functions, morphology and syntax, lexis topics - are coloured in orange and bolded.
- The titles of main groups are in English or French, or both in English or French, and the target language.
- All content is numerated for ease of consultation and discussion. The numeration does not imply any sequence or prioritization of any kind.
- Examples are representative, illustrative of the different elements or topics listed in each category. They are not a finite list.
- Examples can be presented as text fragments, sentences, chunks of words and single words.
- Examples are in cursive, except for non-Latin alphabets, and indented.
- In the "Pragmatic competence" section, the titles in orange represent macro-categories that are repeated across all the UN levels.  
However, even if the titles are identical, the content listed under these categories varies depending on the UN level.

### English Language Curriculum Specificities

In addition to being one of the two working languages of the United Nations Secretariat, English is widely used, both functionally and geographically, as a means of communication for speakers of different first languages. English is a lingua franca and, therefore, one of the most studied languages across the globe. The standard at the UN is British English.

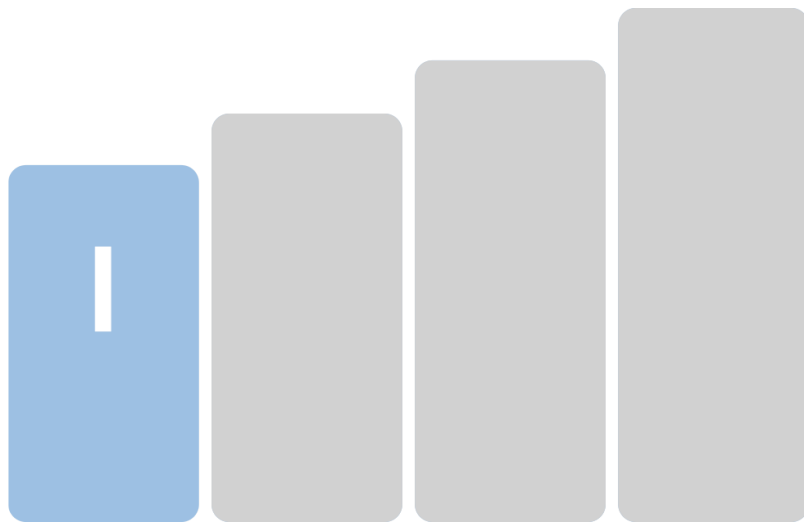
Most UN personnel will have some English competence at the time of their appointment. Local learning programmes will have to carefully analyse learning needs in terms of acquiring, improving or maintaining the language level. In some cases, the learning needs might be above UN Level III.

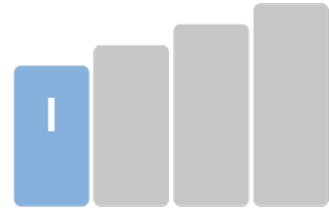
The English Language Curriculum content guides language acquisition, but the content in different levels might be expanded to meet indispensable communication needs, according to the specificities of the workplace and position, and to the local context. In this sense, the section "Linguistic Competence – Lexis" provides a vocabulary reference with topics, such as "myself and others", "my world" and "my professional life", which reflect the personal, public and professional domains.

The content for the English language curriculum has been created following a pragmatic approach, based on well-known publications for English as a second language and builds on long-standing experience in creating, developing and delivering English learning to UN personnel.



## UN LEVEL I BASIC LEVEL OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE





## UN LEVEL I English

### PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE - Functional Competence

#### 1. Greet and introduce oneself or other people

- 1.1 Greet someone using basic expressions and polite forms  
 1) Hello, my name is Paul.  
 2) Nice to see you again. How are you doing?
- 1.2 Receive someone using basic expressions and polite forms  
 1) Welcome to Geneva.  
 2) This is Salman. He's my colleague.  
 3) Let me introduce you to Mia. She's Salman's supervisor.  
 Pleased to meet you. / How do you do?

#### 2. Ask for and give factual information

- 2.1 Ask for and give basic personal information (e.g. name, age, nationality, language, family, occupation)  
 1) Frank is Dutch. He's from Amsterdam in the Netherlands.  
 2) Do they speak Swahili? Yes, they do, but they don't speak English.  
 3) There are three children in my family.
- 2.2 Ask for and describe one's habits and hobbies  
 1) We go to the seaside on the weekend.  
 2) Where does he live / work?  
 3) She lives in France. / He works in Switzerland.
- 2.3 Ask for and give information about routine activities specifying days, time and location  
 1) I arrive at work at 10 a.m.  
 2) He always reads his email. Then he has a coffee.  
 3) When do you finish on Friday?
- 2.4 Ask for and give a simple description of a person, object, or place  
 1) He is tall and has a beard.  
 2) My office is on the third floor. It is spacious and sunny.
- 2.5 Ask for and give simple directions  
 1) Where is the post office?  
 2) It's on the ground floor, near the paper shop, on the right.
- 2.6 Ask for and give information about weather or climate  
 1) The climate in Madrid is continental: hot summers and cold winters.  
 2) What is the weather forecast for this week?

#### 3. Ask for and express opinions, preferences suggestions and advice

- 3.1 Ask for and express likes and dislikes  
 1) What do you like / dislike / think?  
 2) I like dancing. / I don't like skiing because...
- 3.2 Ask for and respond to preferences when comparing people, things or places  
 1) I prefer Friday to Monday.  
 2) Which is easier: learning French or English?  
 3) Your job is more difficult than mine.

#### 3.3 Ask for and express basic opinions

- 1) I think she's a great manager.  
 2) We disagree with you.  
 3) Do you support this initiative?

#### 3.4 Ask for and give simple suggestions / advice

- 1) Why don't we ask the technician?  
 2) He should give the presentation.

#### 4. Make, accept or decline a simple request, order, plan, appointment, reservation or invitation

##### 4.1 Make and respond to a simple request

- 1) Please speak more slowly.  
 2) Would you like a cup of tea? Yes, I would. / No, I wouldn't.  
 Yes, please. / No, thank you.  
 2) Can he come on Friday? Yes, he can. / No, he can't.

##### 4.2 Make a simple order (e.g., food, drink, clothes)

- 1) I'd like a Big Mac, some French fries and a coke, please.  
 2) Could I try the blue shoes in size 40?  
 3) We'll have three beers and a coffee please.

##### 4.3 Make a simple plan (e.g. for a weekend trip) specifying date, time, location and means of transportation

- 1) I'm flying to Dubai tomorrow.  
 2) I'm going to visit him next week.  
 3) Our train leaves at 8 a.m. and we return on Friday morning by plane.

##### 4.4 Make and cancel a simple appointment or reservation

- 1) Can I cancel our appointment?  
 2) Could we meet on Wednesday at 11.30 a.m. instead?

##### 4.5 Extend, accept and decline an invitation

- 1) Would you like to come to my retirement party?  
 2) Yes, thanks. I'd love to. / I'm sorry. I'll be on holiday.

#### 5. Describe and narrate

##### 5.1 Give a simple narration of an experience

- 1) I lived in Nairobi and then I moved to Paris.  
 2) I was living in Naples when the war began.

##### 5.2 Express straightforward logical relations of cause, consequence or addition

- 1) The traffic is always heavy, so neither of them has a car.  
 2) Because communicating well is essential, I study languages  
 3) There was a strike this morning. That's why I was late



# UN LEVEL I English

## LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Morphology and Syntax

### 1. Nouns

- 1.1 Singular / plural
- 1.2. Countable / uncountable

### 2. Determiners

- 2.1 Definite / indefinite article
- 2.2 Zero article
- 2.3 Quantifiers
- 2.4 There is / there are

### 3. Pronouns

- 3.1 Personal
- 3.2 Demonstrative
- 3.3 Possessive
- 3.4 Reflexive
- 3.5 Relative
  - She's the woman who is a doctor.*

### 4. Adjectives

- 4.1 Possessive adjectives
- 4.2 Possessive 's'
- 4.3 Comparatives and superlatives

### 5. Adverbs

- 6.1 Frequency
- 6.2 Manner

### 6. Verb patterns

- 5.1 Infinitive
  - We need to go home.*
  - It's difficult to perfect a language.*
- 5.2 Gerund
  - I enjoy listening to music.*
  - She's interested in reading books.*

### 7. Present

- 7.1 Present simple
- 7.2 Present continuous

### 8. Future

- 8.1 Use of going to
- 8.2 Use of will
- 8.3 Present continuous for arrangements
- 8.4 Present simple for timetables

### 9. Conditionals

- 9.1 Real conditional + when
- 9.2 Zero and first conditional

### 10. Past

- 10.1 Regular verbs
- 10.2 Irregular verbs, incl. was/were
- 10.3 Use of used to
- 10.4 Past continuous

### 11. Present perfect

- 11.1 Simple + ever / never
- 11.2 Past participles
- 11.3 Use of 'for, since, just, yet, already'

### 12. Imperatives

*Walk down the street and take a left.*  
*Don't be late for the meeting.*  
*Please give me my glasses.*

### 13. Contractions

*she/he/it + is → she's/he's/it's*  
*they/we + are → they're/we're*  
*I + am → I'm / I + will → I'll*  
*let + us → let's*  
*is/are + not → isn't/aren't*  
*was/were + not → wasn't/weren't*

### 14. Auxiliary verbs

- 14.1 Be, do, have
- 14.2 Question forms

### 15. Modal verbs

- 15.1 Ability and simple requests: can, could, will
  - I can speak English.*
  - I couldn't give the presentation.*
  - Will you please answer the phone?*
- 15.2 Basic obligation: should, shouldn't, have to, don't have to
  - You should call your mother.*
  - I have to go to a meeting today.*
  - You don't have to pay; it's free.*

### 16. Passive voice: basic uses

*The phone was made in China.*  
*Her proposal was approved.*  
*What cities are the most visited in Canada?*

### 17. Reported speech / statements: basic uses

*She said (that) her name was Marie.*  
*He told us (that) he lived quite near.*

### 18. Common phrasal verbs

*He looked up the word's meaning online.*  
*Please sit down during the presentation.*  
*I need to fill out this application form.*



## UN LEVEL I English LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Lexis

### 1. Talking about myself and others

- 1.1 Name
- 1.2 Age
- 1.3 Numbers  
ordinal and cardinal
- 1.4 Nationalities  
heritage, language
- 1.5 Civil status and titles  
single, married, widowed, divorced, separated
- 1.6 Gender  
forms of address, social gender, gender identity
- 1.7 Professions  
careers and occupations
- 1.8 Family  
tree, ancestry, relationships, generations
- 1.9 Describing people  
tall, bad-tempered, helpful
- 1.10 Greetings, introductions and farewells  
*Pleased to meet you.*  
*Take care.*

### 2. Talking about my world

- 2.1 Time: a.m. / p.m.
- 2.2 Dates  
*Could we meet on Monday 30 March?*
- 2.3 Days of the week
- 2.4 Months of the year

- 2.5 Public holidays  
Good Friday, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Independence Day
- 2.6 Seasons, weather, climate, nature  
spring, rainy, humid, river
- 2.7 Names of places  
countries, cities, regions
- 2.8 Natural environment  
biodiversity, climate change
- 2.9 Geography, regions  
desert, field, rain forest, north-west
- 2.10 Technological devices  
smartphone, headphones, microphone, mouse, printer
- 2.11 Natural disasters  
hurricanes, volcanoes, earthquakes, deforestation, drought, tsunamis
- 2.12 Directions  
cardinal directions, ordinal directions
- 2.13 Culture, religion, education, politics  
customs, traditions, perspectives

### 3. Talking about my domestic life

- 3.1 Accommodation  
renting a flat / apartment, buying a home
- 3.2 House and home  
furniture, layout,  
descriptions of rooms, incl. kitchen, dining room, bedroom
- 3.3 Weights and measures  
length, weight, mass, capacity
- 3.4 Food items and meals  
breakfast, lunch, dinner, meat, dairy, soup

- 3.5 Sports and leisure  
athletics, games, competitions, cinema, concerts

- 3.6 Cooking  
utensils, restaurants, menus

- 3.7 Forms of Transportation  
public transportation, traffic, accident  
*I'm looking for a bus stop. Is there one nearby?*

- 3.8 Holidays  
reservation, travel, rest

- 3.9 Medical  
doctor, dentist, hospital, treatment

- 3.9 Clothes and accessories  
men's, women's and babies' clothing, seasonal / professional attire

- 3.10 Neighbourhood  
urban / rural life, historic, ethnic, urban furniture, shops, places

### 4. Talking about my professional life

- 4.1 Office, business, workplace  
stationary, furniture, equipment
- 4.2 Industries  
primary, secondary, tertiary industries
- 4.3 Organization and hierarchy  
interns, admin, manager, supervisor, chairperson
- 4.4 Government bodies and positions  
Mayor, President, parliament
- 4.5 Business and job titles  
Officer in charge, Assistant, Under-Secretary-General



## SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE

At every level of language competence, UN staff members are expected to function as social agents in a variety of multilingual and multicultural contexts and, as such, use existing plurilingual and pluricultural competences to further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire(s), and to facilitate and promote successful communication and cooperation throughout the Organization.

Given the changing nature of the social and cultural contexts of the language, geographical location, language contact, history, values, etc., deciding on one list of minimum content for the Language-specific Curriculum would be inappropriate. This section presents a general approach on how to get acquainted with sociocultural elements when acquiring the language.

Sociocultural competence encompasses:

- the ability to produce and understand utterances appropriately
- rules of politeness
- sensitivity to register, dialect or variety
- norms of stylistic appropriateness
- sensitivity to "naturalness"
- knowledge of idioms and figurative language
- knowledge of culture, customs and institutions
- knowledge of cultural references
- uses of language through interactional skills to establish and maintain social relationships

Sociocultural competence allows the user to recognize and use social and cultural norms and conventions to communicate appropriately in a given context. According to the UN Language Model, this competency is composed of three main categories:

- o **Variation:** awareness of dialects, social and geographical varieties and their connotations
- o **Register:** awareness of the tone, style (communicative conventions), expression of (in)formality
- o **Intercultural competence:** awareness of individual's and other's culture (traditions, values, social conventions, etc.) and the UN culture (core values, inclusive communication, etc.)

Sociocultural competence can be developed while acquiring new language skills, through immersion in another culture, by individual choice of reflecting with oneself and others.

Among other factors, sociocultural competence takes into account the conjunction of language, cultural expression, expected expressions of human relations, reactions and attitudes. Therefore, sociocultural competence develops in an organic fashion rather than in a linear one, having no predefined order of acquisition.

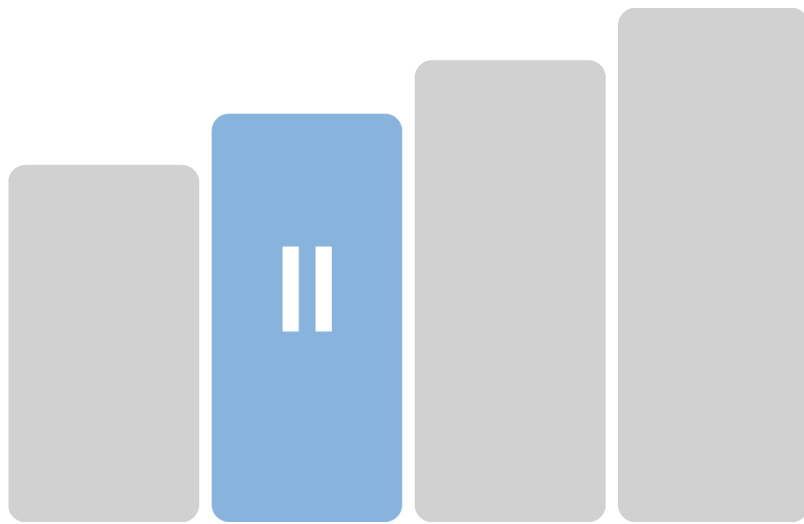
In addition to life experiences, individual factors -such as interest, curiosity and immersion or contact with the target culture(s)- play an essential role in developing sociocultural skills.

While developing sociocultural competence does not necessarily occur in parallel with the improvement of some linguistic aspects, for instance, memorizing vocabulary or mastering the target alphabet, acquiring a language necessarily requires developing sociocultural competence.

In the context of the United Nations, learning and assessing any language shall consistently emphasize sociocultural competence by, for example, selecting learning materials and topics that are socially and geographically representative of cultural realities.

The UN Language Framework principles not only underpin respect for diversity, but all dimensions of the inclusive use of language in multilingual communication.

## UN LEVEL II INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE





## UN LEVEL II English

### PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE – Functional Competence

#### 1. Interact professionally and socially

- 1.1 Ask for and give news
  - 1) How is Max doing? Do you have any news of him?
  - 2) We are doing just fine.
  - 3) We are having a few problems renewing our visas at the moment.
- 1.2 Ask for and offer help or services
  - 1) How may I help you?
  - 2) Shall I give you a lift?
  - 3) Could you tell me where to pay?
- 1.3 Interact on the phone or through software for remote communication
  - 1) Hello, this is Carol. Who am I speaking to?
  - 2) May I speak to the person in charge of deliveries, please? / I'll see if she's around. Can you hold on for a moment?
  - 3) I'll just put you on loudspeaker.
- 1.4 Make and respond to suggestions
  - 1) Why don't we go to the cafeteria for lunch?
  - 2) That's a great idea! I'll see if it's open today.
  - 3) Let's set a meeting time. Can I leave it to you to organize? Or maybe we should hold a video conference call?
- 1.5 Show agreement and disagreement
  - 1) That's exactly what I think.
  - 2) I'm afraid I can't agree with you.
  - 3) Do you really think so?
- 1.6 Show interest
  - 1) How interesting. Can you tell me more?
  - 2) What do you mean by "diplomatic relations"?
  - 3) Good idea; please go on.
- 1.7 Show indifference and negativity:
  - 1) Really? Why do you say that?
  - 2) That doesn't really concern me.
  - 3) How's that possible?
- 1.8 Ask for and give daily work-related information and instructions
  - 1) Could you send the emails to the conference participants, please?
  - 2) Today, we need to plan the meeting and contact technical services as some will attend virtually.
  - 3) What is the schedule for the next two weeks?
- 1.9 Ask for and give clarification and explanations
  - 1) Who should I contact about technical support? What do you mean by "virtually"?
  - 2) We will need webcams, microphones, a good internet connection and ongoing technical support during the session.
- 1.10 Ask for advice and make a recommendation
  - 1) We advise you to go home and have a rest
  - 2) What do you suggest doing in this situation?
  - 3) If I were you, I'd go and see him.

#### 2. Express and justify opinions

- 2.1 Give personal views and opinions
  - 1) In my view, we should review the situation.
  - 2) I feel it would be good to help her.
  - 3) If you ask me, they are too young to get married.
- 2.2 Give reasons to justify a viewpoint
  - 1) I believe telecommuting is a good idea because we can save time.
  - 2) Another reason is because it helps the environment if we don't use our cars.
  - 3) I think the newcomer will win the tennis tournament since the last winner retired.
- 2.3 Identify a problem and suggest solutions
  - 1) We suggest increasing the budget for this project
  - 2) We could delay the start of the meeting so that everyone can come.
  - 3) If you think you'll be late, could you send me a message?
- 2.4 Make hypotheses
  - 1) I wonder if Jin Sook will accept the job offer.
  - 2) What if Julia doesn't turn up at the meeting?
  - 3) What do you think will happen if he cheats in the exam?
- 2.5 Qualify and evaluate
  - 1) I think that Harry Potter is still popular with young audiences even though it seems from another time.
  - 2) The book was a bit disappointing.
- 2.6 Express obligation and necessity
  - 1) I'll have to go now as I need to finish that report by 5 p.m.
  - 2) You mustn't bring your phone into the exam room.
  - 3) We should invite her tomorrow.

#### 3. Describe and narrate situations and events

- 3.1 Describe places
  - 1) Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya. The city itself had a population of 3 million in the 2009 census, while the metropolitan area had a population of 6.5 million.
- 3.2 Describe people
  - 1) She is well-qualified and experienced in project management.
  - 2) They are reliable and meet deadlines on projects.
- 3.3 Describe things
  - 1) The program that we wish to buy can help with publishing.
  - 2) The office you are looking for is downstairs near the coffee machines.
- 3.4 Describe hopes, plans and arrangements
  - 1) I'll help you organize the meeting.
  - 2) Rovshan hopes to take a tour of the capital whenever he goes on mission.
  - 3) I've always wanted to visit the Pyramids.
- 3.5 Describe feelings, emotions, attitudes
  - 1) They felt quite nervous about the exam.
  - 2) I'm fed up with this dreadful weather.
  - 3) He was delighted that she agreed to do the speech.

### 3.6 Describe past experiences

- 1) *When I was young, I grew up in Sydney. We used to play outside with other children in the woods around our neighbourhood. We'd walk to school every day, even though it was quite far.*
- 2) *I was walking the dog in the park when the accident happened.*

### 3.7 Recount a memory

- 1) *I remember discussing this with her last week.*
- 2) *I'll never forget travelling to the Maldives five years ago.*

### 3.8 Talk about past events

- 1) *I moved to Geneva in 2010 with my family. We came from Angola and we settled down quite quickly. The children started in the local school; we joined local clubs and soon made friends.*

### 3.9 Talk about current affairs and news items

- 1) *The European Union is meeting about the new legislation next Thursday. The results will affect how we trade with other countries.*
- 2) *The hurricane in Puerto Rico caused considerable devastation in the region.*
- 3) *Four people were injured in the recent explosion in the city centre.*

### 3.10 Summarize short narratives, biographies, presentations and interviews

- 1) *The new director spent many years in West Africa before joining the section at headquarters.*
- 2) *Both candidates were well-qualified for the post, but the second one speaks three languages fluently.*
- 3) *Each panelist was asked for their view on climate change.*

## 4. Express information, feelings and attitudes

### 4.1 Express encouragement, and congratulations

- 1) *Congratulations on your new job!*
- 2) *Go on! I know you can do it.*
- 3) *I'm sure you'd be good at that. Try it!*

### 4.2 Express intention and willingness

- 1) *I am thinking of going to Madagascar this summer.*
- 2) *I was going to invite you, but they said you were away.*
- 3) *I'll give you a response by tomorrow.*

### 4.3 Express hopes, expectations and ambitions

- 1) *I hope you will visit us soon.*
- 2) *We expect to arrive by 10 p.m.*
- 3) *We aim to reach our donors with this campaign.*

### 4.4 Express wishes

- 1) *I wonder if Hassan would agree on this point.*
- 2) *I wish I could help.*
- 3) *I wish the section would change this rule.*

### 4.5 Express satisfaction or regret

- 1) *We are pleased with the results.*
- 2) *We are sorry that it didn't work out as planned.*
- 3) *We regret making our plans public before we had enough information.*

### 4.6 Express certainty or probability

- 1) *I'm sure he'll be here soon.*
- 2) *She must be caught up in traffic.*
- 3) *She might be a little late as there were traffic delays.*

### 4.7 Express doubt

- 1) *You can't want me to come in at 12 a.m.*
- 2) *I doubt he knows where I am.*
- 3) *I am not sure she has my number.*

### 4.8 Express feelings, emotions and attitudes

- 1) *He was disappointed with the results.*
- 2) *They were delighted to hear the good news.*
- 3) *They felt sad about the match result.*

## 5. Demonstrate discourse competence

### 5.1 Initiate, maintain and close conversations

- 1) *I haven't seen you in ages, John. What have you been doing?*
- 2) *Excuse me. Have you got a minute? I was wondering if the meeting room has changed.*

### 5.2 Check understanding: speaker's point of view

- 1) *Do you know what I mean? Is that clear for you?*
- 2) *Do you understand?*
- 3) *Shall I repeat my request?*

### 5.3 Check understanding: listener's point of view

- 1) *I'm sorry. It's quite noisy here. What did you say?*
- 2) *I'm not sure I understand. Is this what you mean?*

### 5.4 Develop an argument

- 1) *First, we should call a meeting. Then we should decide on the approach to take. Finally, we should make a decision and communicate it to management.*
- 2) *To begin, it's a bigger problem than we thought.*
- 3) *That's why we should call the meeting.*

### 5.5 Interrupt

- 1) *Do you mind if I say something?*
- 2) *Can I interrupt here?*
- 3) *Sorry, I just wanted to say something.*

### 5.6 Change topic

- 1) *By the way, I was meaning to tell you...*
- 2) *Anyway, have you heard that...?*

### 5.7 Resume / Continue

- 1) *Anyway, as I was saying ...*
- 2) *Could we get back to the point, please?*
- 3) *OK, so, where were we?*

### 5.8 Express contrast and contradiction

- 1) *We could go out for dinner. On the other hand, if you are tired, we could stay at home and cook here.*
- 2) *We could drive to work every day. However, it's cheaper to take the bus and it's better for the environment.*

### 5.9 Express cause and effect

- 1) *Owing to the heavy traffic, I was late for the appointment.*
- 2) *Her continued dedication has resulted in great success for the project.*





## UN LEVEL II English

### LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Morphology and syntax

#### 1. Nouns and pronouns

- 1.1 Countable / uncountable + abstract nouns  
*information, training, advice, intelligence*
- 1.3 Noun phrases  
*an eclectic team, the Delta Airlines flight, our decision to get married*
- 1.2 Gender-neutral nouns  
*chair, police officer*
- 1.3. Pronouns: Relative, gender-neutral  
*She's the candidate in whom we are interested.  
The candidate should sign in with their passport.*

#### 2. Word forms

- 2.1 Prefixes / suffixes  
*immoral, morality  
disappear, appearance*
- 2.3 Participles  
*shopping, using  
loved, requested  
taught, been/gone*

#### 3. Determiners

- 3.1 Definite or zero article  
*Jane is based in the UAE, but she's from eastern France.*
- 3.2 Indefinite or zero article  
*Mark has a good knowledge of finance.*
- 3.3 Quantity  
Alternatives to much / many  
*I've taken several courses, so I've learned a great deal of information.*
- (a) few / (a) little  
*Few people went out for lunch because of the bad weather.*
- 3.4 Use of every / each / all  
*All the options were voted on by each team member.*
- 3.5 Correlatives  
*either / or, neither / nor, both / and*

#### 5. Adjectives

- 5.1 Comparatives + (not) as + adjective / adverb as  
*This project wasn't as successful as the previous one.*
- 5.2 superlatives + 'One of the + present perfect'  
*It's one of the most amazing places I've ever been to.*
- 5.2 Adjectives (-ing vs. -ed)  
*I found the lecture very interesting, but my friend was bored.*

#### 6. Adverbs

- 6.1 Intensifiers: so, too, enough  
*The product was too expensive and wasn't effective enough.*
- 6.2 Adverb / adjective intensifier collocations  
*rather hot, extremely cold*
- 6.3 Types: degree, probability, time, place  
*I'll probably see you at the meeting the following week.*
- 6.4 Adverbial phrases  
*She is winning without trying.  
He works as a language teacher.*

#### 7. Questions

- 7.1 Subject versus object questions  
*Who spoke to you? / Who did you speak to?*
- 7.2 Negative questions  
*Don't you like cheese?*
- 7.3 Indirect questions  
*Could you tell me where the bank is?  
Can I ask what you do for a living?*

#### 8. Tag questions

- Everyone was really intrigued, weren't they?  
You should leave now, shouldn't you?  
Take a seat, won't you?*

#### 9. Verb forms: past

- 9.1 Narrative verb forms: Past perfect, past continuous, past simple

*When we arrived at the station, the train had left.  
While we were waiting, we decided to get some lunch.*

- 9.2 Present perfect simple and past simple  
*I've been there on mission. I went there in 2018.*

- 9.2 Used to vs would  
*When I was a child, I used to go to the beach with my family and we'd play in the sand.*

#### 10. The perfect aspect

- 10.1 Present perfect continuous, with 'how long?'  
*I've been working hard all day.*
- 10.2 And present perfect, with 'how much / many?'  
*I've written two reports.*
- 10.3 State verbs  
*She's loved Italian food since she was a child.*

#### 11. Future forms

- 11.1 'Going to' vs 'will' for predictions.  
*Look at those clouds; it's going to rain.  
The sky is blue, but I believe it will rain.*
- 11.2 Future continuous  
*This time next year, I'll be working at my new duty station.*
- 11.3 Other forms: 'be likely to', 'be about to', 'be due to'  
*I believe it's very likely to happen.  
Be quiet please; the lecture is about to start.*

#### 12. Present and future forms to relay a sequence of events

- 12.1 Present forms used for past situations.  
*Well, it's a lovely day and I'm just walking down the street when I see this woman walking towards me. Obviously, she's been having a good time, because she's singing out loud.  
As the virus risk grows, several governments are preparing emergency responses. For now, there have been deaths in 10 countries but more are expected.*

12.2 Present forms summarizing something we have read, heard or seen

*Anthills of the Savannah is a book I enjoyed. In it, they are trying to live and love - and remain friends despite an atmosphere of societal oppression and intimidation. In a world where each day brings a new betrayal, hope is hard to cling on to.*

12.3 Future continuous in contrast with other forms

*I'll be living abroad in two months' time, but I have not started preparing the move yet.*

### 13. Modal verbs: permission, deduction, obligation, necessity, possibility, prohibition, advice and probability

13.1 Modal verbs: can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, must

*Staff members must request additional family leave.*

*I feel that we should go now.*

*I may not have time to finish this evening.*

13.2 Modal phrases: have to, ought to, had better, was able to, managed to

*He ought to talk to his director about his proposal.*

13.3 Past modals

*Lina can't have written this.*

*I think you should have gone to the conference.*

### 14. Passive voice: uses of passive verbs

14.1 Other verb forms

*The course has been cancelled (by the secretariat).*

*Anne could be delayed in traffic this morning, but I'm not sure.*

14.2 No agent

*Mike's car was stolen outside the compound last night.*

*One protestor was arrested in the demonstration.*

### 15. Phrasal verbs

15.1 Three-part phrasal verbs

*I'm looking forward to my trip.*

*You can rest now and catch up with us later.*

15.2 Verbs with two parts: transitive and inseparable

*We'll call for you about 8 p.m., so please be ready. Mark was ill, but he's getting over it now.*

15.3 Verbs with two parts: transitive and separable

*We called the meeting off due to the lack of attendees.*

*Could you fill him in on the latest news?*

15.4 Verbs with two parts: intransitive

*The car broke down when we were almost there.*

*I grew up in a small town in Peru.*

### 16. Verb patterns

16.1 Verb patterns taking the 'gerund' or 'preposition and gerund'

*I was thinking of going abroad.*

*I avoided meeting her.*

16.2 Verb patterns taking the 'infinitive' with or without 'to'

*I let her stay out late last night.*

*She made me come home early.*

*He helped me (to) prepare for the meeting.*

16.3 Verb + infinitive or gerund with similar meanings.

*We like skiing / to ski in powder snow.*

### 17. Conditionals

17.1 First conditional with alternatives to 'if': unless, as soon as, after

*Unless you work harder, you won't be able to finish the work.*

17.2 Second conditional

*If we had enough money, we would move to the countryside.*

17.3 Third conditional

*We could have told you if we had known.*

### 18. Reported speech

18.1 Reported statements

*They told us that it could be done.*

18.2 Reported questions

*Mary asked us if we had already eaten.*

18.3 Reporting verbs, list of patterns: verb + -ing, verb + that, verb + infinitive, verb + wh-word, verb + object + infinitive

*They informed us that the work would take a long time.*

*She invited us to attend the meeting.*

### 19. Clause connectors / Linking devices

19.1 Addition

*moreover, in addition, furthermore*

19.2 Consequence

*consequently, therefore, it is for this reason, so that, so, as a result*

19.3 Concession or contrast

*nevertheless, however, although, even though, on the other hand, in contrast, but*

19.4 Reason

*because of, due to*

19.5 Conditional aspect

*unless, as long as*

### 20. Clauses

20.1 Independent / dependent

*I will allow it if you can give me two reasons. He finally finished his novel after months of research.*

20.2 Adverb / noun

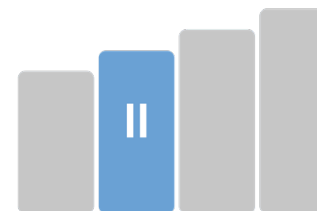
*When the president arrives, ... Since I don't have enough money, ... ...what she anticipated ...why she said that*

20.3 Adjective: relative, essential and non-essential

*...which is located in Italy. ...whose writing is always intriguing.*

20.4 Reduced clause

*The woman smiling in the photo is my mother. The elephant born in captivity was set free*



## UN LEVEL II English LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Lexis

### 1. Talking about myself and others

#### 1.1 Personal identification

character, feelings, personality, physical appearance, relationships, colleagues, friends

#### 1.2 Emotions, attitudes

positive, negative, neutral

#### 1.3 Family and social situations

meeting new people, dating, talking on the phone, talking to co-workers

#### 1.4 The human body

functions, hygiene

#### 1.5 Stages of life

infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood

#### 1.6 Opinions, hypotheses

majority, concurring, dissenting

#### 1.7 Biographies, narratives

*The Nobel Committee said in its Award Ceremony Speech about Dag Hammarskjöld's views: "In every situation with which he was faced he had one goal in mind: to serve the ideas sponsored by the United Nations".*

### 2. Talking about my world

#### 2.1 Animals and insects

invertebrates, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish

#### 2.2 Travel, destinations, accommodation

youth hostel, resort, camping, hotel

#### 2.3 Education

school, college, university, continuing education

#### 2.4 Culture

fine arts, museums, literature, landmarks, theatre, cinema, story genres, short stories, novels, fiction, non-fiction

#### 2.5 Health and Wellness

diseases, prevention, vaccination, fitness, alternative and traditional health care, exercises, lifestyle, equipment

#### 2.6 Historical events, social issues, pop culture

globalization, consumerism, societal beliefs, fake news

#### 2.7 Social and public events

openings, speeches, farewells

*Ladies and Gentlemen, we are gathered here in honour of our dear friend and colleague, who has made an amazing contribution to our team over the years.*

#### Familiar and social events

*I was saddened to hear that your father has passed away. Please know that we are here for you in this difficult time.*

#### Unexpected situations, emergencies

*I would kindly ask all of you to leave your belongings behind and exit the building from the nearest available exit. Please do so in an orderly manner; thank you.*

#### 2.8 Society and citizenship

demonstrations, news, community engagement, social events, enterprises

#### 2.9 Communications methods

face-to-face, mobile, electronic, broadcast, written

#### 2.10 Communication types

emails, memos, reports, proposals, essays, articles, reviews, summaries, newsletters, blogs

#### 2.11 Technology processes

online payment, sign up, sign in, installation, update

#### 2.12 Products, processes, services

*Our team is involved in implementing projects for the United Nations System, international financial institutions, governments and other partners around the world.*

### 3. Talking about my domestic life

#### 3.1 Hobbies

specialties, interests, movies, theatre, podcasts, books

#### 3.2 Music and instruments

brass, strings, percussion, keyboard

#### 3.3 Food and Drink

diet, eating habits, nutrition

#### 3.4 News and Media

newspapers, articles, radio, TV, multimedia, Wi-Fi, internet connection

#### 3.5 Internet Search

social networking, live streaming

#### 3.6 Shopping, E-commerce

habits, trends

#### 3.7 Household tasks

gardening, laundry, vacuuming

#### 3.8 Daily life

commuting, telecommuting, shops and services

#### 3.9 Income and personal finance

banking, credit, loan

#### 4. Talking about my professional life

##### 4.1 Goals, achievements

qualifications, licences, certificates

##### 4.2 Career aspirations

skills, professional attributes

##### 4.3 Field of studies

social sciences, natural sciences, humanities

##### 4.4 Education

subjects, university, training

##### 4.5 Job search and recruitment

posts, job titles, tasks and duties, references, resumes, emails, letters

##### 4.6 Employment types

continuous, consultant, temporary, fixed-term

##### 4.7 Workplace

onboarding, mobility, retirement, meetings, working conditions, salary and pay

##### 4.8 Working modes

telecommuting, hotdesking, shared office space

##### 4.9 Getting to the workplace

commuting, park and drive, carpooling, bike to work, public transport

##### 4.10 Administrative requirements

background checks, health screenings, basic training standards

##### 4.11 Government systems and functions

oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, democracy, legislation, policy

##### 4.12 Missions and duty stations

in the field, on mission, on the ground, at headquarters



## SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE

At every level of language competence, UN staff members are expected to function as social agents in a variety of multilingual and multicultural contexts and, as such, use existing plurilingual and pluricultural competences to further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire(s), and to facilitate and promote successful communication and cooperation throughout the Organization.

Given the changing nature of the social and cultural contexts of the language, geographical location, language contact, history, values, etc., deciding on one list of minimum content for the Language-specific Curriculum would be inappropriate. This section presents a general approach on how to get acquainted with sociocultural elements when acquiring the language.

Sociocultural competence encompasses:

- the ability to produce and understand utterances appropriately
- rules of politeness
- sensitivity to register, dialect or variety
- norms of stylistic appropriateness
- sensitivity to "naturalness"
- knowledge of idioms and figurative language
- knowledge of culture, customs and institutions
- knowledge of cultural references
- uses of language through interactional skills to establish and maintain social relationships

Sociocultural competence allows the user to recognize and use social and cultural norms and conventions to communicate appropriately in a given context. According to the UN Language Model, this competency is composed of three main categories:

- o **Variation:** awareness of dialects, social and geographical varieties and their connotations
- o **Register:** awareness of the tone, style (communicative conventions), expression of (in)formality
- o **Intercultural competence:** awareness of individual's and other's culture (traditions, values, social conventions, etc.) and the UN culture (core values, inclusive communication, etc.)

Sociocultural competence can be developed while acquiring new language skills, through immersion in another culture, by individual choice of reflecting with oneself and others.

Among other factors, sociocultural competence takes into account the conjunction of language, cultural expression, expected expressions of human relations, reactions and attitudes. Therefore, sociocultural competence develops in an organic fashion rather than in a linear one, having no predefined order of acquisition.

In addition to life experiences, individual factors -such as interest, curiosity and immersion or contact with the target culture(s)- play an essential role in developing sociocultural skills.

While developing sociocultural competence does not necessarily occur in parallel with the improvement of some linguistic aspects, for instance, memorizing vocabulary or mastering the target alphabet, acquiring a language necessarily requires developing sociocultural competence.

In the context of the United Nations, learning and assessing any language shall consistently emphasize sociocultural competence by, for example, selecting learning materials and topics that are socially and geographically representative of cultural realities.

The UN Language Framework principles not only underpin respect for diversity, but all dimensions of the inclusive use of language in multilingual communication.

## UN LEVEL III ADVANCED LEVEL OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE





## UN LEVEL III English

### PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE – Functional Competence

#### 1. Manage or participate in professional and social interactions

- 1.1 Identify one's most important qualities
  - 1) I'm an active person, since I like to get involved in activities.
  - 2) Leila is a highly dedicated professional always willing to go the extra mile.
- 1.2 Identify one's achievements.
  - 1) I've successfully carried out several projects at work with the help of my team.
  - 2) There were many accomplishments to acknowledge at the ceremonial banquet.
  - 3) The rapid development of new innovations has left the group proud of their accomplishments.
- 1.3 Show passion about something
  - 1) I've been leading a bike-to-work group, as I strongly believe in healthy, ecological transport.
  - 2) Those who take pride in their work demonstrate a satisfaction in their job.
  - 3) Her passion for helping people has been the motivation behind her career choices.
- 1.4 Discuss a proposal
  - 1) I suggest we be as proactive as possible in dealing with the new telecommuting arrangements.
  - 2) How should we go about updating the proposal to reflect the new policies?
  - 3) The initial stages of the project had better represent the perspectives of both departments.
- 1.5 Keep the conversation going
  - 1) If you would just allow him to finish, please.
  - 2) What I was trying to say was...
  - 3) It's time we moved on to the second agenda item now.
- 1.6 Participate in or conduct an interview
  - 1) Could you outline why you are the ideal applicant for this post?
  - 2) My CV touches on some of these skills, but perhaps I could elaborate.
  - 3) I'd like to know more about your experience working with the latest relevant software.

#### 2. Make complaints, express disagreement, negotiate and find solutions

- 2.1 Make a complaint or give a warning
 

Written:

  - 1) The assistance provided at the conference was, unfortunately, not of the standard we had been promised.

Oral:

  - 1) Excuse me if I am overstepping my boundaries, but I was under the impression that the missions were being invited to the conference.
  - 2) Should no one be in a position to assist us, we will be forced to cancel the meeting.
- 2.2 Express disagreement and respond to disagreement tactfully
  - 1) While we agree with the proposal in section 1, we have some issues with the proposal in section 2.
  - 2) I have a different perspective and am concerned about the change in status.
  - 3) You make a valid point, although have you considered...?
- 2.3 Acknowledge a problem and propose a solution
  - 1) If we were to try these different techniques, is there any chance we may persuade them to change their minds?

- 2) But for the timely arrival of our newest recruit, we would have been forced to cancel the project as we were short on staff.
- 3) Would you be willing to agree to the terms, if we adjust the protocol?

- 2.4 Confirm common ground and acknowledge differences
  - 1) While the participants agreed in principle on the way forward, there were still unresolved issues.
  - 2) We appear to be on the same wavelength on item 1 despite our opposing views on item 2.
- 2.5 Give an explanation and justification
  - 1) The reason I have been keeping this to myself is that I wasn't sure how you would take it.
  - 2) It's really because of the extreme workload lately that she's close to burnout.
  - 3) Due to the lack of survey responses, we will be extending the timeframe by two days.
- 2.6 Concede a point
  - 1) Admittedly, this may not be a popular decision.
  - 2) I think you may well have a point there.
  - 3) Given the data trends, I think that we will have to forgo implementing the new tasks until next year.
- 2.7 Negotiate
  - 1) Provided that you help me with this report, I could try to solve your computer problem.
  - 2) Were we to request additional funding, we could probably finish the project earlier.
  - 3) On condition that we receive the documents before noon, then we can move forward with scheduling arrangements.

#### 3. Describe, analyse and narrate detailed personal and external situations and events

- 3.1 Give a detailed description of a person, object or place
  - 1) People often describe me as giving attention to detail.
  - 2) I acknowledge that I am meticulous in my approach to writing, but I feel I am quite flexible in other aspects.
  - 3) Given the recent developments, we will have to more clearly define all documentation at the initial stage of the rostering process.
- 3.2 Narrate in-depth personal experience
  - 1) Before moving to New York, I had been working in London for many years.
  - 2) I'll just give you an example of something that happened to me recently while on mission.
- 3.3 Convey impressions of events and situations
  - 1) I'd like you to cast your mind back to when you first travelled to that region.
  - 2) The speech motivated me to pursue my dream of working abroad in a different culture.
  - 3) Understanding the role of gender equality made a deep impression upon her.
- 3.4 Synthesize and summarize information and events
  - 1) In summary, the meeting discussed many of the issues outlined in this paper and reached conclusions that are relevant to our work.
  - 2) I'd like to run through the key points prior to addressing any more questions.
  - 3) To conclude, we will continue to investigate the incident based on all the evidence provided in this meeting.

### 3.5 Give instructions and advice

- 1) *If you would go to the first screen, you will see an icon that you click on. Then...*
- 2) *We would do better to / We'd better consult thoroughly about the content before asking for feedback on the tone of the report.*
- 3) *May I suggest that you request leave to deal with this personal matter?*

### 3.6 Make a presentation or speech

- 1) *Today, we are gathered to celebrate Native Language Day.*
- 2) *The purpose of this presentation is to improve the efficiency of workflows.*
- 3) *In today's presentation, let me start by addressing three main points.*

## 4. Express detailed feelings, attitudes and opinions

### 4.1 Respond to a difficult question

- 1) *That's an interesting question; I'm glad you asked me that.*
- 2) *Frankly speaking, what concerns me is that we have little budget.*

### 4.2 Use cautious and emphatic language for unconfirmed things

- 1) *Apparently, not many people were aware of this situation.*
- 2) *Never before has this country undergone such a crisis.*
- 3) *Am I right in thinking that what they found was the wreckage?*

### 4.3 Recognize others' feelings and demonstrate empathy

- 1) *I would feel just as upset if that happened to me.*
- 2) *If I were in the same situation, I would have reacted the same way.*
- 3) *I do empathize with you on this and what's more...*

### 4.4 Express approximation and purpose

- 1) *There are five-odd ways to walk to her office from here. Do you want the easy-ish one?*
- 2) *According to the survey, nearly 78 per cent of staff are satisfied with their jobs.*
- 3) *The Committee's mandate is to ensure a smooth and transparent procurement process.*

### 4.5 Express one's fears

- 1) *I abhor being in the spotlight.*
- 2) *My fear is not being able to breath.*
- 3) *I have severe anxiety when it comes to public speaking.*

### 4.6 Praise someone

- 1) *I must say you did a fantastic job on that project.*
- 2) *I was so proud of the way you defended your point of view.*
- 3) *Khalil was thoroughly impressed by your attention to detail.*

## 5. Speculate and hypothesize about situations and events

### 5.1 Speculate about situations

- 1) *He must have realized it was an important discovery.*
- 2) *She may have been in traffic and unable to respond in a timely manner.*
- 3) *There could have been another method for downloading the report.*

### 5.2 Hypothesize thoughts and ideas

- 1) *I wonder if that conclusion is supported by everyone else.*
- 2) *If the resolution passes, some Member States might be frustrated.*
- 3) *It can't have been easy to convince people of the idea.*

### 5.3 Express one's regrets

- 1) *I often wish I'd taken my friend's advice and left for the field.*
- 2) *Next time, I hope to arrive earlier for my departing flight.*
- 3) *I regretted taking the bus until reading about the minimal transportation options.*

### 5.4 Discuss one's future plans

- 1) *In ten years' time, I'll be retired and living somewhere in South America.*
- 2) *I plan to visit the national parks on my trip to New Zealand.*
- 3) *By this time next year, I expect to have all of my training completed.*

### 5.5 Show levels of certainty and likelihood

- 1) *He is reportedly unsure of the effect his tweets have on his followers.*
- 2) *Some staff might prefer a more flexible leave policy.*
- 3) *In the future, these missions are likely to take place in isolated areas.*

## 6. Control discourse competence, specifying logical connections and emphasizing

### 6.1 Engage one's audience

- 1) *We have all felt compassion and empathy at some point towards people in such a desperate situation.*
- 2) *I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that it's of paramount importance.*

### 6.2. Use rhetorical questions

- 1) *So, what does that tell us?*
- 2) *Can we stop climate change simply by eliminating the use of plastics?*
- 3) *Should we just pretend that human trafficking is not a real issue?*

### 6.3 Interrupt appropriately

- 1) *May I just add something?*
- 2) *Could I come in at this point?*
- 3) *I'm sorry to interrupt, but we must move on.*

### 6.4 Prevent interruptions

- 1) *- Sorry, can I just finish what I was saying?*  
*- OK, but could you make your point in a moment?*
- 2) *If I might just finish my point.*
- 3) *If you would allow me to continue.*

### 6.5. Express tentative opinions, hedging

- 1) *Some of us would rather we proceeded.*
- 2) *I'm afraid there might have been a misunderstanding of the agreement.*
- 3) *It's quite possible that we may have to take another route.*

### 6.6 Recognize and demonstrate shifts in perspective

- 1) *That's an excellent point; however, have you considered the perspective of...*
- 2) *Having considered things from the angle of X, she's now decided to advance in the direction of Y.*
- 3) *Although the message indicates a name and phone number, I'm not inclined to start a dialogue at this time.*

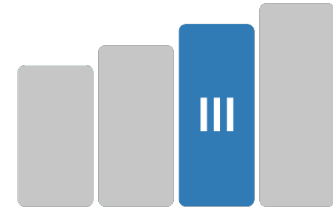
### 6.6 Give tactful negative feedback

- 1) *In all due respect, I can't really see things in that light because...*
- 2) *Take a moment to consider all of the options before coming to a conclusion.*
- 3) *After weighing both arguments, you may want to take some time to think about it.*

### 6.7 Use persuasive language

- 1) *It's high time that we took action.*
- 2) *Had I known this information beforehand, I'd have acted in an alternative manner.*
- 3) *This interface offers a truly innovative approach to video conferencing.*





## UN LEVEL III English

### LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Morphology and Syntax

#### 1. Word-building

1.1 Suffixes and prefixes:  
*kindness, neighbourhood, unsatisfactory, disinterested / uninterested, affordable*

1.2 Nominalizations:  
*to develop, the development of*

#### 2. Countable and uncountable nouns: verb agreement

*The news is surprising.  
The children are still in school now.  
Parliament is / are in session.*

#### 3. Quantifiers, comparative expressions

*The longer we stay, the more problems we will encounter.  
There were far / fewer people at the conference than expected.  
Hang-gliding is nowhere near as dangerous as it sounds.*

#### 4. Nuances

4.1 Qualifiers and hedging expressions (pretty, rather, quite, somewhat)  
*She's a pretty well-known writer.  
The report still seems somewhat biased.*

4.2 Rhetorical devices and hyperbolic usage  
*I'm freezing! / I'm starving!  
Aren't you cold?  
Isn't this a great party?*

4.3 Adverb and adjective collocations.  
*deadly serious, perfectly reasonable, simply unacceptable  
I agree with you completely.*

4.4 Intensifying adverbs  
*Their response to the crisis has been deeply concerning.*

4.5 Substitution  
*It was a brave action but not a sensible one.  
I want to have a holiday, but to do so means taking time off work.  
Not many people know about this region. Yes, I'm aware of that.*

4.6 Differences in standard usage.  
*The team is/are meeting tomorrow.  
Did you see John? / Have you seen John?  
None of the representatives agree(s).*

#### 5. Inversions or fronting

5.1 Negative adverbial expressions requiring inversion when in front position  
Not only ... but also, little, only, hardly, scarcely, never before, only when, not until  
*Never before have I seen such an interesting play.  
Little did he know that she was going to announce her resignation.  
Only when they got to the meeting did they realize they had left their notes at the office.*

5.2 Emphatic expressions  
*Hot though it may be, we will still go out.*

5.3 Cleft sentences  
*What strikes you is the design of the building; it's quite a remarkable model.*

5.4 Do, does, did  
*Although he talks a lot about deliverables, he does genuinely care about people and relationships.  
I know you haven't received it, but I did send you a reply.*

#### 6. The perfect aspect

6.1 Past perfect continuous: had + been + -ing  
*I was so tired last week, as I'd been working day and night to finalize the project.*

6.2 Future perfect continuous: will have + been + -ing  
*By this next year, we'll have been living in the same apartment for a decade.*

#### 7. The subjunctive mood

7.1 In formal UN style or in reports  
*The meeting recommended that the policy (should) include flexible working arrangements.*

7.2 Informal vs formal:  
*He suggested that she go/went to the doctor.  
Be that as it may...*

#### 8. Combining form and aspect to relay a sequence of events

8.1 Present continuous with annoying habits  
*He's always reminding me to turn off my computer before leaving. I wish he'd stop.*

8.2 Verb form combinations for anticipated events

8.2.1 Future perfect  
*I'll have finished in two hours.*

8.2.2 Future in the past  
*I was supposed to leave at 7 p.m. but the thunderstorm prevented me.*

8.3 Verb form and aspect in narrative style (present and past: simple- continuous- perfect)  
*She realized she had left her wallet in the taxi.  
We had been travelling for many hours when we realized we had forgotten to confirm our reservation.*

#### 9. Combining form, mood and aspect: degrees of certainty, probability, engagement

9.1 Conditional sentence patterns  
The present and past conditional: advice, regret, reproach  
*If I found myself in that situation, I would probably...  
Had we known, we could have told you.  
If you happen to find time, will you tell John about the meeting.*

### 9.2 Emphatic expressions with conditionals

*Should you have any further queries, please contact me.  
Were you to get a promotion, would you move into the field?  
But for the timely arrival of the ambulance, she would have died.  
Were we to have done more research, we could have proposed the solution ourselves.*

### 9.3 Unreal past

Wish, it's time, would rather, suppose, imagine, looks like  
*Imagine we'd had the project funding; what good we could have done.  
It's about/high time we left.  
I'd rather we stayed at home tonight.*

## 10. Passive voice: advanced uses

### 10.1 Use of passive voice with verbs of thinking, believing.

*He was believed to be abroad.  
They were understood to be attending the meeting, but they didn't come.*

### 10.2 Using passives for reporting

*Skateboarding is said to cause more injuries than badminton.  
A mistake has been made; a bomb was dropped.*

### 10.3 Using passives to avoid placing blame/responsibility

*He was alleged to be responsible for the assault.  
The insurgents were arrested and imprisoned.*

## 11. Verb patterns with infinitives and gerunds

### 11.1 Verb patterns following verbs of perception

*I heard him sing / singing.*

### 11.2 Verb + infinitive or gerund with a change in meaning.

*She tried to open / opening the door.  
I remembered to contact / contacting her.*

### 11.3 Perfect infinitive and perfect gerund

*I hope to have achieved my goal by this time next year.  
He denied having been selected for the role.*

### 11.4 'to' + gerund or infinitive of purpose

*The Organization is committed to completing the task on time.  
He objected to meeting to discuss the project details.*

## 12. Phrasal verbs: multiple meaning

Back up, take out, check out, cut off, give away, go out, make up, take off, bring up

*Thanks for backing me up at the meeting; I appreciate it.  
Who is backing you up while you are on vacation?*

## 13. Indirect or reported speech

### 13.1 Reporting discourse in the past and concordance of time

*Dina said she had finished working on this project the previous week.  
They informed the meeting that they would be reconvening in the near future.*

### 13.2 Reporting verb patterns

#### 13.2.1 Verb + to-infinitive

*He refused to answer my question*

#### 13.2.2 Verb + object + to-infinitive

*She warned me not to walk home alone in that duty station.*

#### 13.2.3 Verb + -ing form

*He admitted breaking the window*

### 13.2.4 Verb (+ object) + preposition + -ing form / noun

*She apologized (to us) for being late.  
She insisted on paying for the meal.  
We congratulated them on their promotions.*

### 13.2.4 Verb + that

*The Director pointed out that the meeting had already started.  
They promised that they would not be late.*

### 13.2.5 Verb + object + that clause

*She reminded me that I had a meeting that afternoon.*

### 13.2.6 Verb + that clause with (should) or plain infinitive

*We suggested that he (should) ask Mike to help him.*

## 14. Clause connectors / Linking devices

### 14.1 Concession or contrast

*despite, in spite of, much as, hard as, no matter*

### 14.2 Listing

*the former, the latter, the abovementioned*

### 14.3 Purpose

*with a view to, (in order) to, with the intention/hope of,*

### 14.4 Reason

*under the pretext of, owing to*

### 14.5 Conditional aspect

*providing, provided, on condition that, supposing*

## 15. Subordinate Clauses

### 15.1 Relative clauses

#### 15.1.1 Defining and non-defining "which vs that"

*She told the colleagues that had been at the meeting.  
She told her colleagues, who had been at the meeting.*

#### 15.1.2 US vs British style in defining clauses.

*The computer which / that my colleague bought last week is malfunctioning.*

### 15.2 Clauses of time, reason, result

Time clause + present / present perfect

Before, after, as soon as, until

*As soon as you finish / have finished, let us know.  
Before you leave, turn off the lights.*

### 15.3 Clauses of contrast and concession

However much / many, adjective + though / as + may

*However much it hurts, you ought to admit you were wrong.  
Hurtful though / as it may be, you ought to admit you were wrong.*

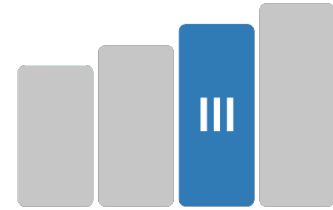
## 16. Participle clauses

### 16.1 Present and past participles

*Looking furious, she stormed out of the room.  
Given the circumstances, he withdrew his request.*

### 16.2 Gerund + clause

*Having vast experience in this field, I would like to request a transfer.  
Having forgotten to set my alarm, I was late for work.  
Before giving you an answer, may I ask my supervisor?*



## UN LEVEL III English LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE – Lexis

### 1. Talking about myself and others

#### 1.1 Fitness and nutrition

dietary restrictions, healthy eating habits  
*She became allergic to eggs as an adult.*

#### 1.2 Psychology and well-being

ways to relax, wellness  
*To unwind, I often dive into poetry.*

#### 1.3 Living arrangements

different types of accommodation, living conditions globally, family composition, high rise buildings, terraces, slums, inner city neighbourhoods, internally displaced persons, refugee camps  
*They have been settling into the new surroundings.*

#### 1.4 Identity and community

vegan, runner, amateur beekeeper, not a fan of  
*She is a 40-year-old transgender woman from Kyiv who fights for human rights.  
I'm not a fan of gangster movies; thanks anyway.  
She actually objected to our colleague calling himself a vegan.*

#### 1.5 Training and professional development

distance education, lifelong learning, community of practice, the changing world of education, meeting the needs of society today

### 2. Talking about my world

#### 2.1 Literature and the arts

modern literature, short stories, museums, art and design, creative arts

#### 2.2 Linguistic concepts and behaviours

pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, bilingualism, lingua franca, parts of speech: noun phrases, adjective clauses; formality, written register, slang, synonym  
*At her new duty station, the working language was English.  
Support for bilingual elementary education has improved the rates of additive multilingualism.*

#### 2.3 Health, safety and security

evacuation plan, fire drill, required equipment, traffic regulations

#### 2.4 The environment

sustainable energy, transport and future innovations, recycling and waste, potable water, natural disaster preparedness, ethical travel  
*Many communities are struggling to balance environmentally-friendly choices with hygiene and short-term public health concerns.*

the natural world, wildlife, farming, fishing, agriculture, natural reserves, forestry

#### 2.5 Society, economy, politics

crime, justice system, human rights, politics, war and peace

*An economy isn't just about money but about people and how they relate to each other, and the sort of society that they build together.*

### 2.6 Science and technology

social media, audio-visuals, press and freedom of expression  
*New, creative political uses of social media will continue to emerge, yet the fundamental need for citizens to discuss issues will remain.*

### 3. Talking about trends and dynamics

#### 3.1 Information and communication

digital, the media, newsletters, email, messaging

#### 3.3 News and current events

headline news, top stories, local news, op-ed, economic news, technological advancements  
*The Turkic-language minority lobbied to introduce English and the national language to pupils at the same time.*

#### 3.4 Marketing and consumer society

consumerism, rewards programmes, fair trade, sustainable development, Doer movement  
*Reduction of single-use plastics at the cafeterias was stepped up before the summit.  
The price of coffee here is utterly ridiculous*

#### 3.5 Idioms and expressions

*feel like death warmed up, as fit as a fiddle  
first and foremost, bits and pieces, by and large  
give something the green light  
[beauty] is in the eye of the beholder  
a eureka moment*

#### 3.6 Globalisation and culture

Working language in companies and institutions, multilingualism and plurilingualism  
Language change and variation

### 4. Talking about my professional life

#### 4.1 On-the-job tools

iSeek, Umoja, Inspira, teleconferencing tools

#### 4.2 On-the-job processes, protocols and procedures

*Standard procedure is to record your telecommuting days on UMOJA.*

#### 4.3 On-the-job documentation

mission reports, concept notes, briefing notes, talking points  
*They used to write classified code cables to be sent daily to HQ.*

#### 4.4 Work and employment

interviews, PHP building, letters of motivation  
*Being a people-person, I endeavour to adapt to differing personalities whilst maintaining my own.*

#### 4.5 Competencies, values in the workplace

Integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity:

skills, abilities, capacity development, resilience, accountability

*What is paramount in this promotion is to take ownership of your responsibilities and honour your commitments.*

teamwork, hierarchy, authority, career path

*In our Organization, one should place the team agenda before one's personal agenda.*

innovation, technology

*She likes to keep abreast of the latest technological trends.*

inclusion and tolerance, gender parity, inclusiveness, disability

*By treating all people with dignity and respect, he works effectively with people from all backgrounds.*

#### 4.6 Appraisals, work-models

telecommuting, sabbatical, missions

*The new flexible working arrangements is one way in which the Organization adopts the principles of New Work.*

performance, feedback, management, engagement

*Dina said she had finished working on this project the previous week.  
They informed the meeting that they would be reconvening in the near future.*

tasks, functions, underperformance

*Otherwise, I've noticed that the task in question could have been carried out better.*

complaints, legal processes, ombudsman, dispute tribunal, appeals tribunal

*As my complaint seemed to have fallen on deaf ears, I had no recourse but to seek advice from the Ombudsman.*

#### 5. Talking about the work of the United Nations / essential topics at the United Nations

5.1 Reduce poverty, hunger and inequalities

*Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.*

5.2 International law and justice, human rights

*That fundamental human right belongs to all women regardless of whether they are disabled or not disabled.*

5.3 Population, migration, refugees

*Because of large migration within the country, Aymara and Quechua speakers are also found throughout the major urban centres of Peru.*

5.4 Health, water, sanitation,

*Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in.*

5.5 Security and safety, peace, wellbeing

*Access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels is of the utmost importance.*

5.6 Discrimination, gender parity, inclusion

*To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.*

5.7 Development and social, environmental, economic sustainability

*There needs to be a future in which cities provide opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.*

5.8 Energy, environment, industry

*The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.*



## SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE

At every level of language competence, UN staff members are expected to function as social agents in a variety of multilingual and multicultural contexts and, as such, use existing plurilingual and pluricultural competences to further develop their linguistic and cultural repertoire(s), and to facilitate and promote successful communication and cooperation throughout the Organization.

Given the changing nature of the social and cultural contexts of the language, geographical location, language contact, history, values, etc., deciding on one list of minimum content for the Language-specific Curriculum would be inappropriate. This section presents a general approach on how to get acquainted with sociocultural elements when acquiring the language.

Sociocultural competence encompasses:

- the ability to produce and understand utterances appropriately
- rules of politeness
- sensitivity to register, dialect or variety
- norms of stylistic appropriateness
- sensitivity to "naturalness"
- knowledge of idioms and figurative language
- knowledge of culture, customs and institutions
- knowledge of cultural references
- uses of language through interactional skills to establish and maintain social relationships

Sociocultural competence allows the user to recognize and use social and cultural norms and conventions to communicate appropriately in a given context. According to the UN Language Model, this competency is composed of three main categories:

- o **Variation:** awareness of dialects, social and geographical varieties and their connotations
- o **Register:** awareness of the tone, style (communicative conventions), expression of (in)formality
- o **Intercultural competence:** awareness of individual's and other's culture (traditions, values, social conventions, etc.) and the UN culture (core values, inclusive communication, etc.)

Sociocultural competence can be developed while acquiring new language skills, through immersion in another culture, by individual choice of reflecting with oneself and others.

Among other factors, sociocultural competence takes into account the conjunction of language, cultural expression, expected expressions of human relations, reactions and attitudes. Therefore, sociocultural competence develops in an organic fashion rather than in a linear one, having no predefined order of acquisition.

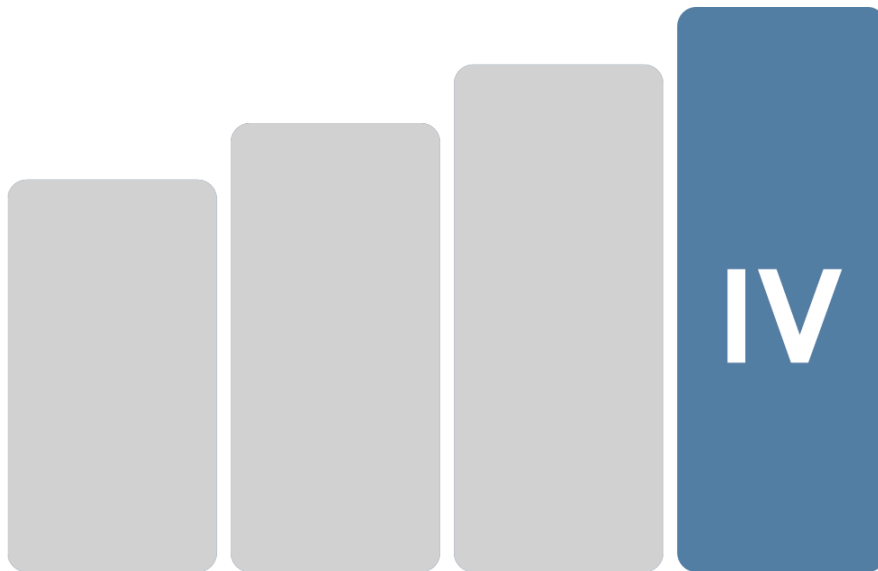
In addition to life experiences, individual factors -such as interest, curiosity and immersion or contact with the target culture(s)- play an essential role in developing sociocultural skills.

While developing sociocultural competence does not necessarily occur in parallel with the improvement of some linguistic aspects, for instance, memorizing vocabulary or mastering the target alphabet, acquiring a language necessarily requires developing sociocultural competence.

In the context of the United Nations, learning and assessing any language shall consistently emphasize sociocultural competence by, for example, selecting learning materials and topics that are socially and geographically representative of cultural realities.

The UN Language Framework principles not only underpin respect for diversity, but all dimensions of the inclusive use of language in multilingual communication.

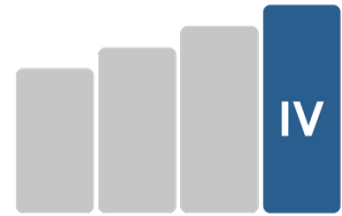
## UN LEVEL IV EXPERT LEVEL OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE



## UN LEVEL IV

As UN Level IV is the expert level of language competence, the learning objectives of the language user are highly specialized and will vary significantly depending on the given context, the field of expertise and the tasks required. Therefore, the Core Curriculum, which includes the sets of learning objectives, common to all languages, is solely developed for UN levels I to III.

Subsequently, the Language-specific Curriculum can only be created for UN levels I to III with no language-specific content existing for UN Level IV.





**United Nations Language Framework**  
**Language-specific Curriculum**

Language & Communication Programme (LCP) at UN Headquarters New York  
Language Training Programme (LTP) at UN Office in Geneva  
United Nations