

Contemporary Topics

21st Century Skills for Academic Success

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FOURTH EDITION

Alignment with the Global Scale of English and Common European Framework of Reference

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The **Contemporary Topics** series provides a comprehensive approach to developing 21st century academic skills and preparing students for participation in real-life academic and professional contexts. The overriding principle of language and skill development in the series is engagement. Authentic, stimulating content includes compelling lectures on a range of academic topics, and allows students to experience the value of exchanging ideas. Focused listening tasks, personalized discussions, challenging tests, and authentic presentation assignments enable students to explore each topic deeply. Activities in each unit are sequenced in a way that gives students increasing involvement and self-direction in mastering the skills they need to succeed—including listening, thinking, discussion, presentation, and study skills. *Contemporary Topics* bridges the gap between language-focused and content-focused instruction, based on an engaging nine-part methodology embedded in each unit:

Section 1: Connect to the Topic invites students to activate what they already know about the topic from personal experiences and beliefs.

Section 2: Build Your Vocabulary familiarizes students with some of the key content words and phrases used in the lecture. Each lecture targets 10–15 key words from the Academic Word List.

Section 3: Focus Your Attention provides specific coaching tips to help students direct their attention and gain more control of how they listen and how. Students learn strategies for listening actively and taking clear notes.

Section 4: Watch the Lecture allows for two full listening cycles, one to focus on “top-down listening” strategies (Listen for Main Ideas) and one to focus on “bottom-up listening” strategies (Listen for Details).

Section 5: Hear the Language provides “bottom-up” listening strategies and pronunciation guidance: students perform tasks to increase their listening skills.

Section 6: Talk About the Topic focuses on building discussion skills as an important part of academic success. Discussion strategies modeled and examined across the units include the following:

- Agreeing
- Asking for clarification or confirmation
- Asking for opinions or ideas
- Disagreeing
- Expressing an opinion
- Keeping a discussion on topic
- Offering a fact or example
- Trying to reach a consensus
- Paraphrasing

Section 7: Review Your Notes develops study skills related to using notes for review and discussion. Students are guided in reviewing the content of the unit, clarifying concepts, and preparing for the Unit Test.

Section 8: Take the Unit Test and Proficiency Assessment completes the study cycle of the unit: preparation for the lecture, listening to the lecture, review of the content, and assessment. Test taking skills include verbatim recall, paraphrasing, inferencing, and synthesizing information from different parts of the lecture.

Section 9: Express Your Ideas creates a natural extension of the unit topic to areas that are relevant. Students are guided through the process of preparing, practicing, and presenting on a topic of personal interest as well as on providing helpful feedback to other students’ presentations.

The Global Scale of English and The Common European Framework of Reference

The Global Scale of English is a standardized, granular scale from 10 to 90 which measures English language proficiency. It is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Unlike the CEFR, which describes proficiency in terms of broad levels, the Global Scale of English identifies what a learner can do at each point on a more granular scale—and within a CEFR level. The scale is designed to motivate learners by demonstrating incremental progress in their language ability. The Global Scale of English forms the backbone for Pearson English course material and assessment.

CEFR and the Global Scale of English both comprise a number of Can Do statements, or “learning objectives,” for each of the four language skills, describing what learners should be able to do at different levels of proficiency. The learning objectives are written to reflect what a student “Can Do” with language without regard to the context in which a language skill may surface. The GSE Learning Objectives have been aligned to the CEFR, and many additional statements created, rated for difficulty, and calibrated to the scale. This document provides an overview of the learning objectives that are covered in each unit of the course. As the learning objectives focus specifically on language skills, some learning objectives will be repeated multiple times, a reflection of the fact that skills are built through practice in multiple contexts. For each learning objective we indicate whether a statement is from the original CEFR or newly created by Pearson English:

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(N2000a) North (2000) descriptor, adapted or edited

(P) New Pearson English descriptor

[Note: If a value is in parentheses, it indicates the learning objective is still undergoing research and validation, and therefore the value is a provisional estimate.]

Visit English.com/gse to learn more about the Global Scale of English.

References

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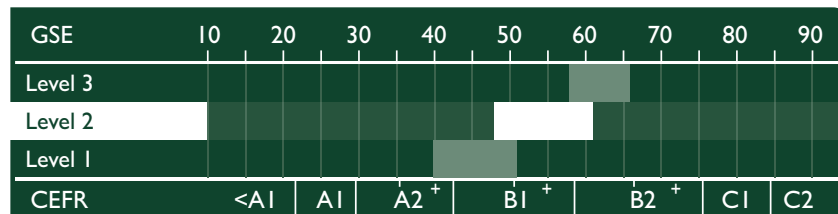
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Contemporary Topics is aligned with the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework of Reference. **It takes learners from CEFR B1 to B2 (48–61 on the Global Scale of English).** Each lesson guides students to a “Can Do” goal in line with the Global Scale of English and the Common European Framework “Can Do” statements.



Learn more about the Global Scale of English at english.com/gse

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UNIT 1 SOCIOLOGY – Names

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Main ideas

PRONUNCIATION – Syllable stress

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Asking for clarification or confirmation; Asking for opinions or ideas

PRESENTATION – Present on names, using an outline

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can understand the main points of narratives and conversations about familiar topics (e.g. work, leisure) delivered in clear standard speech.	47	B1 (43–50)	2
Listening	Can identify specific information in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	48	B1 (43–50)	7
Reading	Can derive the probable meaning of simple unknown words from short, familiar contexts.	46	B1 (43–50)	3
Speaking	Can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.	50	B1 (43–50)	9
Speaking	Can give an effective presentation about a familiar topic.	52	B1+ (51–58)	11
Writing	Can take notes on a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	50	B1 (43–50)	5; 10
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	6

UNIT 2 LINGUISTICS – Global English

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Comparisons

PRONUNCIATION – Stressing words to focus the listener

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Disagreeing; Agreeing

PRESENTATION – Present on varieties of English, using examples

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can understand the main points of narratives and conversations about familiar topics (e.g. work, leisure) delivered in clear standard speech.	47	B1 (43–50)	12
Listening	Can identify details that support a point of view in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	51	B1+ (51–58)	15
Listening	Can identify specific information in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	48	B1 (43–50)	16; 17
Reading	Can derive the probable meaning of simple unknown words from short, familiar contexts.	46	B1 (43–50)	13–14
Speaking	Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics (e.g. family, hobbies, work).	47	B1 (43–50)	12
Speaking	Can express belief, opinion, agreement and disagreement politely.	45	B1 (43–50)	19
Speaking	Can give an effective presentation about a familiar topic.	52	B1+ (51–58)	21
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	16
Writing	Can paraphrase information from a simple text, if guided by questions.	50	B1 (43–50)	20

UNIT 3 PSYCHOLOGY – Phobias

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Key words

PRONUNCIATION – Contractions

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Keeping a discussion on topic; Asking for clarification or confirmation; Offering a fact or example

PRESENTATION – Present on overcoming a fear, using descriptive sensory details

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can understand the main points of narratives and conversations about familiar topics (e.g. work, leisure) delivered in clear standard speech.	47	B1 (43–50)	22
Listening	Can extract the key details from a presentation if delivered slowly and clearly.	47	B1 (43–50)	25
Listening	Can identify specific information in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	48	B1 (43–50)	26; 27
Reading	Can derive the probable meaning of simple unknown words from short, familiar contexts.	46	B1 (43–50)	23–24
Speaking	Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.	49	B1 (43–50)	22
Speaking	Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.	46	B1 (43–50)	29
Speaking	Can give an effective presentation about a familiar topic.	52	B1+ (51–58)	31
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	27
Writing	Can take notes on a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	50	B1 (43–50)	30

UNIT 4 BUSINESS – Success in the Global Economy

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Topics and subtopics

PRONUNCIATION – Reduced vowels

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Trying to reach a consensus; Asking for clarification or confirmation; Paraphrasing

PRESENTATION – Present on a formula for success after developing an introduction

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can identify specific information in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	48	B1 (43–50)	32; 37
Listening	Can follow the main points of short talks on familiar topics if delivered in clear standard speech.	45	B1 (43–50)	35
Reading	Can derive the probable meaning of simple unknown words from short, familiar contexts.	46	B1 (43–50)	33–34
Speaking	Can discuss product features in a business setting using simple language.	49	B1 (43–50)	32
Speaking	Can give simple reasons to justify a viewpoint on a familiar topic.	50	B1 (43–50)	39
Speaking	Can give an effective presentation about a familiar topic.	52	B1+ (51–58)	41
Writing	Can take notes on a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	50	B1 (43–50)	35; 40
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	36

UNIT 5 EDUCATION – How We Each Learn Best

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Numbered lists

PRONUNCIATION – Final *-s* and *-ed* sounds

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Expressing an opinion; Asking for clarification or confirmation; Offering a fact or example

PRESENTATION – Present on learning strengths, using transitions

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can infer speakers' opinions in conversations on familiar everyday topics.	51	B1+ (51–58)	42
Listening	Can extract the meaning of unknown words from context if the topic discussed is familiar.	57	B1+ (51–58)	43
Listening	Can infer opinions in a simple presentation or lecture.	54	B1+ (51–58)	46
Listening	Can identify specific information in a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	48	B1 (43–50)	47
Speaking	Can express opinions and attitudes using a range of basic expressions and sentences.	52	B1+ (51–58)	42
Speaking	Can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.	50	B1 (43–50)	49
Speaking	Can give an effective presentation about a familiar topic.	52	B1+ (51–58)	51
Writing	Can take notes on a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	50	B1 (43–50)	45
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	46; 50

UNIT 6 HISTORY – The Silk Road

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Dates and numbers

PRONUNCIATION – Thought groups

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Paraphrasing; Asking for opinions or ideas; Offering a fact or example

PRESENTATION – Present on an impactful person, using a conclusion

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can understand scripted speech delivered quickly, if the accent is familiar.	61	B2 (59–66)	52
Listening	Can extract the meaning of unknown words from context if the topic discussed is familiar.	57	B1+ (51–58)	53
Listening	Can distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in a simple presentation or lecture.	53	B1+ (51–58)	56; 57
Speaking	Can paraphrase in simpler terms what someone else has said.	60	B2 (59–66)	59
Speaking	Can make an effective summary and conclusion to a presentation.	65	B2 (59–66)	61
Writing	Can take notes on a simple presentation or lecture aimed at a general audience.	50	B1 (43–50)	55
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	56; 60

UNIT 7 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY – Sports Fans

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Enumerating

PRONUNCIATION – Linked sounds

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Agreeing; Asking for clarification or confirmation; Asking for opinions or ideas

PRESENTATION – Present on a special passion, using an attention-getting opener

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can recognize inferred meaning in a simple presentation or lecture.	59	B2 (59–66)	62; 67
Listening	Can extract the meaning of unknown words from context if the topic discussed is familiar.	57	B1+ (51–58)	63
Speaking	Can express support in a manner that shows they were actively listening to the other person.	58	B1+ (51–58)	69
Speaking	Can make an effective introduction and opening to a presentation.	60	B2 (59–66)	71
Writing	Can support ideas with relevant examples.	59	B2 (59–66)	65
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	66
Writing	Can summarize information from a presentation or lecture in their field of specialization.	65	B2 (59–66)	70

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UNIT 8 ARCHITECTURE – Frank Gehry

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Emphasis

PRONUNCIATION – Intonation

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Acknowledging a point; Asking for opinions or ideas; Disagreeing

PRESENTATION – Present on a beautiful building, using visual aids

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can extract the meaning of unknown words from context if the topic discussed is familiar.	57	B1+ (51–58)	73
Listening	Can recognize emphasis through intonation and stress.	61	B2 (59–66)	75
Listening	Can recognize inferred meaning in a simple presentation or lecture.	59	B2 (59–66)	77
Speaking	Can summarize and give opinions on issues and stories and answer questions in detail.	56	B1+ (51–58)	72
Speaking	Can express disagreement in a manner that shows they were actively listening to the other person.	58	B1+ (51–58)	79
Speaking	Can use appropriate linking expressions to signal transitions within a presentation.	58	B1+ (51–58)	81
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	76; 80

UNIT 9 PUBLIC HEALTH – Global Epidemic

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Symbols and abbreviations

PRONUNCIATION – Emphasized words

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Offering a fact or example; Asking for opinions or ideas; Paraphrasing

PRESENTATION – Present on healthy changes, using nonverbal communication

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can recognize inferred meaning in a simple presentation or lecture.	59	B2 (59–66)	82
Listening	Can extract the meaning of unknown words from context if the topic discussed is familiar.	57	B1+ (51–58)	83
Listening	Can recognize the speaker’s point of view in a structured presentation.	63	B2 (59–66)	87
Speaking	Can summarize and give opinions on issues and stories and answer questions in detail.	56	B1+ (51–58)	82
Speaking	Can develop a clear argument with supporting subsidiary points and relevant examples.	66	B2 (59–66)	89
Speaking	Can use appropriate linking expressions to signal transitions within a presentation.	58	B1+ (51–58)	91
Writing	Can employ simple time-saving strategies when taking notes (leaving out words, abbreviations etc.).	63	B2 (59–66)	85
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	86; 90

UNIT 10 URBAN PLANNING – 21st Century Cities

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Connected ideas

PRONUNCIATION – Reduced and contracted words

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Focusing on a topic; Asking for clarification or confirmation; Expressing an opinion

PRESENTATION – Present on a great place to live while persuading the audience

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can recognize inferred meaning in a simple presentation or lecture.	59	B2 (59–66)	92
Listening	Can recognize the speaker’s point of view in a structured presentation.	63	B2 (59–66)	97
Speaking	Can summarize and give opinions on issues and stories and answer questions in detail.	56	B1+ (51–58)	92
Speaking	Can ask for clarification during an academic discussion, using simple language.	54	B1+ (51–58)	99
Speaking	Can justify and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.	60	B2 (59–66)	101
Writing	Can signal cause and effect relationships when writing an academic text by using discourse markers.	65	B2 (59–66)	95
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	96
Writing	Can support a main idea with examples and reasons.	57	B1+ (51–58)	100

UNIT 11 BIOLOGY – DNA Testing

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Graphic organizers

PRONUNCIATION – Stressing words to make ideas clear

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Getting a discussion started; Disagreeing; Expressing an opinion

PRESENTATION – Present on a scientific advance, using quotations

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can recognize inferred meaning in a simple presentation or lecture.	59	B2 (59–66)	102
Listening	Can understand main points and check comprehension by using contextual clues.	64	B2 (59–66)	107
Speaking	Can manage discussion on familiar topics confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	65	B2 (59–66)	109
Speaking	Can develop a clear argument with supporting subsidiary points and relevant examples.	66	B2 (59–66)	111
Writing	Can describe the sequence in a process when writing a simple text, using common discourse markers.	47	B1 (43–50)	105
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	106
Writing	Can write a detailed description of a simple process.	58	B1+ (51–58)	110

UNIT 12 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – Risk Management

NOTE-TAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS – Questions

PRONUNCIATION – Key words in thought groups

DISCUSSION STRATEGY – Asking for opinions or ideas; Agreeing; Offering a fact or example

PRESENTATION – Present on a survivor’s story and answer audience questions

Skill	GSE Learning Objective	GSE	CEFR	Page
Listening	Can understand main points and check comprehension by using contextual clues.	64	B2 (59–66)	116–117
Speaking	Can speculate about causes, consequences, and hypothetical situations.	64	B2 (59–66)	112
Speaking	Can manage discussion on familiar topics confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	65	B2 (59–66)	119
Speaking	Can develop a clear argument with supporting subsidiary points and relevant examples.	66	B2 (59–66)	121
Writing	Can take notes of key points during a talk on a familiar topic, if delivered clearly.	55	B1+ (51–58)	115
Writing	Can write bullet points to summarize key points in an academic text.	66	B2 (59–66)	120