CEFR B1 English Skills Guide

A practical can-do map for adult English learners

B1 at a glance	B1 is independent everyday communication - not effortless, native-like fluency. Learners can handle familiar and some less routine situations in clear standard speech, express opinions, explain problems, and connect ideas into a short story or explanation. The target is independent spoken performance, not only correct answers on a page.

Core B1 Can-Do Skills

Skill	Practical B1 outcome
Listening	Understand the main message and important details in clear standard speech about familiar everyday, study, work, and travel topics, including short narratives.
Reading	Read straightforward factual texts on familiar interests, study, and work; find key information, viewpoints, and clearly signalled conclusions, with time to reread when needed.
Spoken interaction	Enter unprepared conversations on familiar topics; exchange and check information, explain a problem, express an opinion, and manage most everyday or travel transactions.
Spoken production	Give a reasonably fluent, connected description, story, or short opinion about experiences and interests as a clear sequence of points.
Writing	Write connected messages, accounts, opinions, and short reports on familiar topics, with simple reasons, reactions, and advantages or disadvantages.
Conversation repair	Ask someone to clarify or elaborate, paraphrase a simple idea, restart after a misunderstanding, and help keep a familiar conversation moving.

Core Communicative Functions

- Discuss a familiar current issue and give an opinion with a reason.	- Tell a connected story about an experience, including feelings and what happened next.
- Make a complaint, explain a problem, or change a plan and seek a simple solution.	- Compare options, make suggestions, agree or disagree politely, and make a decision.
- Discuss a film, book, music, work, or travel experience and explain a preference.	- Ask follow-up and clarification questions; repeat information back to confirm understanding.

A B1 learner may still pause, make noticeable errors, and need time to plan. The key question is whether the learner can take part independently in a familiar, unscripted exchange.

Language Resources That Make B1 Possible

Build the resources around real-life communication tasks, not isolated grammar coverage.

Vocabulary	Cover everyday life, work, travel, interests, and familiar current events; use simple circumlocution when a word is missing.
Grammar for meaning	Use a growing repertoire in familiar contexts: tense contrast, questions, modals, common conditionals, relative clauses, and reported information - with reasonable overall accuracy.
Connected discourse	Link ideas into a linear sequence using because, so, although, however, first, then, and finally; begin using basic paragraphing.
Pronunciation and fluency	Remain generally intelligible while speaking independently; use pauses, clarification, and reformulation to keep communication going.

B1 Exit Evidence

These are practical teacher benchmarks rather than official CEFR time or word-count requirements.

1	Hold a 7 to 10 minute conversation on a familiar or current-interest topic, with follow-up questions and reasons for opinions.
2	Give a 2 to 3 minute connected story, description, or opinion without reading; explain what happened and why it mattered.
3	Complete a problem-solving role-play, such as making a complaint, changing travel plans, or explaining a workplace issue.
4	Listen to clear standard speech on a familiar topic and identify the main message, key details, and an appropriate response.
5	Write a connected message, account, or opinion with logical order, basic paragraphing, and a clear purpose.
6	Use clarification, paraphrase, or a restart proactively rather than returning to silent reading when stuck.

Digital Nutrients teaching rule	At B1, do not reward beautiful reading as proof of speaking. Require the learner to start, react, ask a follow-up, give a reason, and repair a misunderstanding without a script.

Source note: This guide paraphrases the Council of Europe CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and its B1 illustrative descriptors. Official resources: www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages and rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2020/16809ea0d4