

Subject field: Foreign languages

1. General principles

1.1. Subject Field Competence

The objective of teaching foreign languages in upper secondary school is to develop students' foreign language competence, i.e., ability to use foreign language at the level of an independent language user, that is at proficiency level B. It is expected that, through foreign language education, upper secondary school graduates will:

- 1) communicate purposefully, both orally and in writing, by following relevant cultural practices;
- 2) understand and interpret the content presented in foreign languages;
- 3) have acquired knowledge of different cultures, understand the similarities and differences between cultures and value them; and
- 4) have acquired the motivation and skills required for lifelong learning.

1.2. Subjects of the subject field

The 'Foreign languages' subject field comprises foreign languages, including Estonian learned as a second language in schools where the language of instruction is not Estonian.

In upper secondary school students learn, at proficiency level B, at least two foreign languages, which are chosen from the following: English, French, German, Russian or another language. There is one compulsory foreign language in upper secondary schools where Estonian is taught as a second language in accordance with the school's curriculum.

The foreign languages at B1 and B2 levels of proficiency are chosen by schools. In forming foreign language groups, the abilities and preferences of students and the school's resources are taken into account.

The foreign language at the B2 level of proficiency is a language in which the student has reached a higher level of proficiency during previous studies (e.g. B1 by graduating from basic school) and in which they aim to reach the B2 level of proficiency irrespective of whether the language to be learned was an A, B or C language in basic school or whether the student had studied the language outside of school.

The foreign language at B1 level of proficiency is a language which starts from a lower level of language proficiency (e.g. A2 by graduating from basic school). Students aim to reach at least the B1 level of proficiency irrespective of whether the language to be learned was an A, B or C language in basic school or whether the student had studied the language outside of school.

If the school's curriculum contains a third foreign language (e.g., at proficiency level A), it is advisable to teach French, German, Russian or another foreign language which corresponds to the students' preferences and the school's resources. The courses are divided into compulsory and optional courses.

The volumes of compulsory subject courses are as follows:

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|--|---|
| 1) Estonian as a second language | 9 |
| 2) Foreign language at B1 level of proficiency | 5 |
| 3) Foreign language at B2 level of proficiency | 5 |

The volumes of optional courses are as follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Foreign language at B1 level of proficiency | 4 |
| 2) Foreign language at B2 level of proficiency | 2 |

Depending on the learners' abilities and the initial level of language proficiency, the number of compulsory courses enables students to achieve satisfactory or good results at the target level of the foreign language they have selected. In order to refine and practise skills corresponding to the B1 or B2 levels of language proficiency and to move towards the next level of proficiency, schools offer their students optional and additional courses in line with the school's curriculum.

1.3. Description of the subject field

The aim concerning language policy is to achieve command of at least two foreign languages at the level of independent language user (Level B). Foreign language skills support the ability to understand and value the multicultural world and expand opportunities for self-expression through various linguistic and non-linguistic means. The study of foreign languages develops systematic thinking. The aim of language instruction is to broaden the individual's command of languages, since learning one foreign language facilitates acquiring another. Thus the range of languages should be broad so that students can develop their language competences in several languages.

The study of foreign languages is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the language proficiency levels set out therein. The learning outcomes for all foreign languages, incl. Estonian as the second language, have been specified on a uniform basis based on the framework document. The learning outcomes in constituent skills are specified at the end of the subject syllabus in Clause 2.3 of the table of language proficiency levels. Application of the principles of the framework document in education makes it possible to consider age-related and individual characteristics of students, establish feasible learning goals for students with different speeds of learning, and provide feedback on achievements to support learning motivation and development of independent learning skills.

Language studies are not limited to reaching a certain level of proficiency by a certain time. It is essential to support students' motivation, develop their skills, build up their confidence and practise the language outside the school, since this creates conditions for lifelong learning. Language learning is a continuous process and is only successful if it is consistent.

As a foreign language is primarily a means to obtain information and to transfer it in communication, the learning of languages focuses on content areas that facilitate development of communicative competence.

The content areas are shared in all foreign languages, with any differences arising from the targeted level of proficiency and duration of study. Communicative competence is shaped by developing four constituent language skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing – and, therefore, detailed learning outcomes are specified by constituent skills. Different constituent skills are taught in an integrated manner.

Integration of foreign languages, particularly Estonian as a second language, with other subjects and creation of a learning environment that facilitates learning support, in addition to acquisition of communicative competence, also the development of a worldview, self-esteem and value-based behaviour. Students are taught to compare their language and culture to other languages and cultures and understand and value their uniqueness, and are discouraged from developing biased attitudes towards anything foreign. Being familiar with other cultures helps students perceive the specifics of native culture and language more knowledgeably. “Plurilingualism has itself to be seen in the context of pluriculturalism. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations. The various cultures (national, regional, social) to which the person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact.”^[1] The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. They become plurilingual and develop intercultural awareness. The language and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by the knowledge of others and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how^[2].

Foreign language teaching requires an open and flexible methodological approach to adapt instruction according to students’ needs. The essential principles of learner-centred teaching of foreign languages are:

- 1) learners’ active participation in the study process, their knowledgeable and creative use of foreign languages and the formation of learning strategies;
- 2) accord between the content of the study materials used in language teaching and learners’ interests;
- 3) use of different forms of active learning (including pair and group work);
- 4) the changed role of teachers from intermediaries of knowledge to partners who guide students in the acquiring knowledge; and
- 5) versatile study materials, adjusted and revised, and based on the needs and goals of the learners.

1.4. Options for forming general competencies in the study of foreign languages

The following interrelated components are distinguished in the competences: knowledge, skills, value judgements and conduct. Teachers play a central role in teaching the four components, as their value judgements and assertive abilities build an appropriate learning environment and influence the value judgements and conduct of their students. The subject field of foreign languages comprises language competences, culture (value judgements and conduct) and learning skills. By teaching the foreign languages, all general competences (value, social, self-determination, learning, communication, mathematics and entrepreneurial competence) are developed by following the aims set and themes to be examined and by implementing different teaching methods and study activities.

Cultural and value competence is developed by guiding students to value human relations and actions from the perspective of generally applicable moral standards and ethics; to value the cultural heritage of their own country and other countries, current cultural events, human and cultural diversity; to value generally accepted human and social values, incl. tolerance and cooperation, thereby acknowledging their values.

Social and citizenship competence enables students to fulfil their ambitions in society. In order to cope in different everyday communication situations, it is essential to choose appropriate linguistic forms but also to know the cultural background and the consequent rules of conduct and social practices and diversity of the countries where the respective foreign language is spoken. Thus, social competence also relates to value competence. The formation of social competence is facilitated by using different forms of study (e.g. group work and project-based teaching) and active participation in cultural programmes related to the language learned.

Self-awareness competence is developed through content topics and activities used in foreign language study. The issues related to personality and human relations can be examined in foreign language lessons through discussions, role plays and other learning activities that contribute to the students' deeper self-understanding. The ability to assess one's strengths and weaknesses, to consider one's abilities and opportunities, to analyse one's behaviour in different situation is closely related to the development of learning competence.

Learning to learn competence is developed by guiding students to use different learning strategies, see the links between new and previously acquired knowledge and to apply the contents of learning in different situations, to analyse one's knowledge and skills (e.g., based on the principles of the European language portfolio), to plan one's studies and to follow the plan.

Communication competence plays a central role in foreign language studies. The objectives of foreign language teaching proceed directly from the components of communication competence and their content. Good text comprehension, self-expression and text creation skills are prerequisites of successful communication in foreign languages. Together with communication competences, students develop the skill to compare the similarities and differences between their own and foreign cultures and to understand and value the specific features of other cultures and languages, to be tolerant and avoid a prejudiced attitude towards the unfamiliar.

Mathematics, natural sciences and technology competence is associated with foreign language through communication competence. As the students' language proficiency increases, they learn to understand texts from different walks of life and activities, incl. information graphics or other types of visual information. Students are guided to see the importance and impact of natural sciences and technology on everyday life, nature and society; to perceive social changes associated with the use of digital tools; to adopt a critical approach to available information and to behave in a responsible manner when using interactive media. Students are guided to use digital tools in a creative, innovative and purposeful manner.

Entrepreneurial competence is associated primarily with the confidence and courage, which is provided by foreign language proficiency and the knowledge and skills obtained in various areas of life and activity through this proficiency. The ability to cope in a foreign-language environment creates the preconditions for cooperation with peers and other persons sharing the same views who speak the same foreign language; foreign language proficiency expands students' opportunities for implementing their ideas and achieving their goals, as well as for contributing to problem-solving by responding to changes in a creative, innovative and flexible manner.

1.5. Options for integrating subjects with other subject fields

The command of languages gives learners access to additional information sources (reference books, literature in foreign languages and the Internet) and thus supports the researching of materials for other subjects. The acquisition of foreign languages, incl. Estonian as a second language, should be combined

with the use of integrated language learning materials in cooperation with other subject fields, i.e., integrated subject and language learning (CLIL, language immersion). A student who speaks foreign languages has also access to additional information sources in foreign language (reference works, literature, the Internet, etc.), which facilitates the search for information in other subjects.

Language and literature. The field of foreign languages is most directly associated with language and literature, because both facilitate development of the skills to use language in different communication situation to achieve one's goals, taking into account the communication standards and language use conventions. Both fields contribute to the development of written and oral self-expression skills, creation of text and ability to comprehend them. This knowledge and all this skills are transferred to a new cultural context when learning a new language.

Mathematics. Development of mathematics competence is supported, in addition to knowledge of numbers and calculation skills, by development of the ability to understand, associate and communicate the information presented in symbols, charts, tables and diagrams in various source texts. Both fields contribute to the development of functional reading skills, the skill of logical reasoning and justification, the ability of clear and accurate self-expression.

Nature Sciences and Social studies. Integration is achieved through different content areas, the source texts and learning activities used. Foreign language education guides students, among other things, to value natural diversity and a responsible and sustainable lifestyle; to recognise distinctive cultural features and follow generally accepted rules of conduct; to acquire knowledge of civic rights and responsibilities; to develop personal opinions and act as active and responsible citizens.

Art subjects. A connection with art competence is created through development of cultural awareness by learning about cultural achievements of different countries through particular topics as well as through direct experiences of art (cinema, theatre, concerts, music, exhibitions, museums, etc.). Students are guided to notice and value different cultural traditions and the diversity of arts and cultural diversity of the world.

Physical education. Physical education competence is associated with foreign languages through appreciation of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity. Foreign language education (like physical education) requires a tolerant attitude towards one's peers, compliance with fair play rules and ability to cooperate.

1.6. Options for implementing cross curricular topics in the study of foreign languages

The learning objectives and themes of the foreign languages support the development of students' initiative and active thinking, and the acquisition of cross-curricular topics by using appropriate (authentic) source texts in foreign languages and working methods that develop different competences. These topics are first and foremost related to the following thematic areas:

- 1) **lifelong learning and career planning:** subject fields 'Education and Work' & 'The Individual and Society'. Different forms of study are used to develop students' independent learning skills and responsibility, which form the foundation of lifelong learning habits and attitudes, as well as communication and cooperation skills, which are also important for future employment. Foreign language learning helps to acquire the vocabulary required for self-presentation and presentation of one's knowledge and skills. Students can learn about different professions, occupations and further

education opportunities, and gain the ability to understand and prepare documents required for applying for further studies and employment;

- 2) **environment and sustainable development:** subject fields 'The Environment and Technology' & 'The Individual and Society'. Students train decision-making and assessment in environmental issues, taking into account the opportunities (and restrictions) of modern research and technology, as well as economic considerations. Students develop readiness for engaging with environmental protection issues as critical citizens at personal, social and global levels and for implementing nature-conserving and sustainable methods of action and management;
- 3) **civil initiative and entrepreneurship:** subject fields 'Estonia and the World', 'Education and Work' & 'The Individual and Society'. Students are guided to understand the functioning principles of society and the importance of civic initiative, the role of entrepreneurship in society and the related effects, and to develop personal opinions on related ethical issues. The main objective in upper secondary school is to develop necessary practical skills for making decisions at local and national level and participation in economic life;
- 4) **cultural identity:** subject fields 'Estonia and the World', 'Culture and Creation' & 'The Individual and Society'. Education continues to support appreciation of own culture, interest in other cultures and unprejudiced and conscious attitude towards the others. Students' knowledge of different cultures is expanded and synthesised in different subject lessons to form an integrated whole; the opportunities of literature, the Internet, media and direct experiences are used for learning more about different nations and cultures. Students are encouraged to think about the issues associated with living in another cultural sphere;
- 5) **information environment:** subject fields 'The Environment and Technology' & 'The Individual and Society'. Students are guided to make and justify their independent choices as media consumers, based on their interests and needs; to reflect on the rules of conduct in the public sphere; to understand the role of media industry in society and the impact of globalisation on the content of media and media usage patterns of the people.
- 6) **technology and innovation:** subject fields 'The Environment and Technology' & 'The Individual and Society'. Students are guided to understand the impact of technological innovation on work and lifestyle, the quality of life and the environment, thereby forming personal opinions on related ethical issues. The goal is to develop positive attitudes about technological innovation and the associated career opportunities, readiness to use information and communication technology for solving practical problems and for increasing the efficiency of studies and work;
- 7) **health and safety:** subject fields 'The Environment and Technology' & 'The Individual and Society'. The aim is students' development into mentally, emotionally, socially and physically healthy members of society who can observe a healthy lifestyle, behave in a safe manner and contribute to the development of a health-promoting and safe environment;
- 8) **values and morality:** all subject fields. Students are guided to reflect on personal values and ethical beliefs; to respect different viewpoints and to defend and justify their positions; to understand the value of diversity. Education focuses on development of critical thinking and argumentation skills, collection and generalisation of relevant information by highlighting links with different fields, previously acquired knowledge and experiences, and issues of value systems and worldviews.

1.7. Study activities

In planning and organising studies:

- 1) the basic values, general competences, subject objectives, learning content and expected learning outcomes are taken into consideration, and integration with other subjects and recurrent topics is supported;
- 2) it is observed that students' study load (including the volume of homework) is reasonable and distributed evenly throughout the school year and leaves sufficient time for rest and recreational activities;
- 3) it is ensured that students have the opportunity to study independently as well as with others (individual, group and pair work) in order to support them in becoming active and independent learners;
- 4) different tasks are used so that their content and level of difficulty facilitate an individualised approach and increase learning motivation;
- 5) learning environments, study materials and tools based on modern information and communication technology are used;
- 6) the learning environment is expanded by exposure to: museums, exhibitions, theatre performances, films, concerts, computer/multimedia classes, student exchange, meetings with native speakers of the foreign language, etc.; and
- 7) different teaching methods including active learning are used: role plays, discussions, project-based learning, etc.

The subject teacher selects the learning content with the aim to ensure achievement of specified learning outcomes, as well as general, subject field and subject competences.

1.8. Assessment

The aims of assessment of learning outcomes include support for students' development, motivation for purposeful learning, development of students' self-esteem, arouse interest in learning foreign languages to lay a foundation for a lifelong study of foreign languages. Assessment is based on the provisions of the general part of the national curriculum for upper secondary schools. Diverse forms of assessment should be used for measuring learning outcomes. Students' knowledge and skills are assessed on the basis of oral responses (presentations), written and/or practical work, taking into account the conformity of knowledge and skills with the required learning outcomes specified in subject syllabi. All aspects of language proficiency are assessed in upper secondary school. Teachers point out any weaknesses with a sense of tact, highlighting opportunities for overcoming them.

Students' knowledge and skills are assessed based on their oral answers (presentations) and written and/or practical work and practical activities by considering the concordance of their knowledge and skills with the learning outcomes of the subject syllabus.

In providing feedback (incl. on language learning outcomes), teacher's assessments are used alongside with self-assessment by students and peer assessment, which are used as the basis of proposals for further supportive activities. Students are guided to recognise their accomplishments and to use the achievements in further studies, to set their own goals for learning and to assess their knowledge and skills in the foreign language being studied.

Detailed assessment procedures are specified in the school curriculum.

1.9. Physical learning environment

The school organises:

- 1) if necessary teaching in groups.
- 2) teaching in classrooms designed so that they support achieving the goals set for language learning and are supplied with necessary study materials, furniture and technical devices.

2. Syllabuses

2.1. Estonian as a second language

2.1.1. Learning and educational objectives

Teaching Estonian as a second language develops subject competence, which includes language competence, values, attitudes and learning skills. By the end of upper secondary school, students:

- 1) acquire proficiency in Estonian at a level which enables them to act independently in Estonian society and the Estonian-language environment;
- 2) are able to continue their studies in Estonian and use Estonian in their workplace and in communicating with authorities;
- 3) understand and value the differences and similarities between their own and Estonian culture and follow Estonian cultural norms and practices in communication; and
- 4) analyse their knowledge and skills and strengths and weaknesses and have the motivation and acquire skills for lifelong learning.

2.1.2. Description of the subject

One of the essential aims of teaching Estonian is to develop a command of the language which allows students to cope independently in Estonian society and provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning. In accordance with the Development Strategy of the Estonian Language, the curriculum sets the goal of reaching the C1 language proficiency level by the end of upper secondary school.

Teaching Estonian supports students' ability to study other subjects in Estonian.

The general theme in upper secondary school is 'Me and the World'. The five thematic areas and their sub-themes are intertwined in everyday life and can also be dealt with in teaching languages. Through different themes, students can compare the cultural spaces of Estonia and their country of origin. In dealing with the themes, their topicality, students' interest and the language level of the course are to be taken into account. In building cultural awareness, students' attention is drawn to communication differences in their native language and Estonian and to cultural manifestations explaining these differences. Students are aware of their place in and their responsibility towards society and are able to adequately judge social customs and conventions.

Language lessons in upper secondary school are carried out in Estonian. Instruction follows the principles of communicative language learning. The emphasis is on interactive learning and practising the language studied. Pair and group work are continuously implemented, and the formation of communication and presentation skills in Estonian is supported through debates, reviews, research, computer-aided presentations, communication portals, blogs, etc. By using different activities, teachers provide students with the possibility to actively use Estonian outside of classes as well. Students' independence in seeking and using information in Estonian increases.

Knowledge of the language is not an aim in its own right, but a means for achieving better command of the language. The structure of the language is studied in context. As before, the development of learning skills which facilitate further language studies and lifelong learning is continuously important in teaching.

2.1.3 Learning outcomes, learning content and study activities in upper secondary school

2.1.3.1 Learning outcomes

Graduates of upper secondary school:

- 1) understand the essence of complex texts or discussions on abstract or concrete themes;
- 2) communicate with native Estonian speakers spontaneously and fluently;
- 3) create coherent and logical texts on different themes;
- 4) explain their viewpoints, assess their weaknesses and strengths and are able to generalise and summarise;
- 5) take into account Estonian cultural norms and practices;
- 6) are interested in Estonian social and cultural life, read literature and printed media in Estonian, watch films, TV programmes and theatre performances and listen to the radio;
- 7) use reference sources (e.g. dictionaries and the Internet) in Estonian to find necessary information on different topics;
- 8) have acquired a command of the language that enables them to make public presentations;
- 9) set learning goals and assess their achievement and are able to select and change their learning strategies if necessary; and
- 10) integrate the knowledge they have acquired with their knowledge in foreign languages and other spheres of life.

Levels of language proficiency by the end of upper secondary school:

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
satisfactory result	B2.1	B2.1	B2.1	B1.2
good result	B2.2	B2.2	B2.2	B2.1
very good result	B2.2 – C1	B2.2 – C1	B2.2 – C1	B2.2

The learning results in constituent skills are given in Clause 2.3.

A satisfactory result of an upper secondary school graduate in Estonian as a second language is B2.1. A student with a good result meets a part of and a student with a very good result meets all the requirements of proficiency level B2.2. A student with a very good result is also able to meet a part of the requirements set for the next (C1) level.

2.1.3.2. Learning content

1. Estonia and the world

Estonian state and people:

- 1) independent statehood, being a citizen and national defence;
- 2) geographical location and climate;
- 3) population: main nationality, other ethnic groups and new immigrants; and
- 4) multicultural society.

Estonian language and the Estonian way of thinking:

- 1) national identity;
- 2) cultural traditions; and

- 3) local lore.

Estonia and other countries:

- 1) Estonia as an EU Member State: EU Member States and the organisation of the EU; and
- 2) Estonia's place in the world: international cooperation.

2. Culture and creativity

Culture as a form of creativity :

- 1) creativity: literature, fine arts, music, architecture, applied arts and handicrafts, etc.;
- 2) historical cultural memory of people; and
- 3) development of creative thinking through experience.

Cultural traditions and customs:

- 1) folk tales, legends, fairytales, proverbs and sayings representative of folk wisdom; and
- 2) cultural traditions, customs and beliefs of different nations.

3. The environment and technology

Geographical environment:

- 1) relations between the environment and people, environmental awareness: balance in nature, untouched nature; industrial and cultural landscapes, reserves; sources of pollution;
- 2) dangers arising from imbalances in nature between the environment and people; climate and climate change; and
- 3) sustainable development of the environment.

Living environment:

- 1) living conditions in regions with different climate and population concentration;
- 2) social benefits and their availability (e.g. medical care, pensions, state benefits and funds, allowances and benefits for disabled persons);
- 3) sustainable way of life; and
- 4) social environment: multilingual and multicultural society or a society where one ethnic group is predominant ; closest neighbours.

Technology:

- 1) scientific and technological achievements and their implementation in everyday life;
- 2) information environment: information seeking and sharing;
- 3) application of linguistic technology in everyday life: electronic dictionaries, language learning materials, computer-based language learning, computer-assisted translation software, etc.; and
- 4) biotechnology in everyday life: household chemicals, cosmetics and the food industry, etc.

4. Education and work

Family and upbringing:

- 1) family; family relations, good relationships between children and parents and caring for one another; and
- 2) upbringing: rules of politeness and good conduct, formation of value judgements, tolerant attitudes, etc.

Education:

- 1) public and private educational institutions and further training;
- 2) compulsory education and self-teaching;
- 3) school environment and traditions; youth organisations;
- 4) opportunities for further education in Estonia and abroad; and
- 5) lifelong learning.

Work life:

- 1) knowledgeable self-realisation; career choices and career development;
- 2) getting a job: drafting a CV, employment contract, job interview;
- 3) jobs as a source of living; earning money (e.g. income and expenses and prices); unemployment;
- 4) responsible attitude to one's work; regard for oneself and others;
- 5) rights and liabilities of employees and employers, trade unions, probation period, full or part time job and rest time;
- 6) relations at work; pleasant and informal atmosphere, highly motivated employee;
- 7) prerequisites for coping with one's work; and
- 8) work for the disabled.

5. Individual and society

Human beings as part of nature:

- 1) cycle of life: birth, life and death;
- 2) balance between nature and mankind (e.g. green way of life and respect for nature); and
- 3) way of life or manner of existence (green and philanthropic and healthy).

Human beings as individuals:

- 1) nature and conduct of human beings and getting into conflict;
- 2) uniqueness of every individual;
- 3) value judgements and views on life and society;
- 4) human relations: personal, emotional and social; and
- 5) different people and nations (e.g. differences in culture and language, rules of conduct and moral norms).

Communication between people:

- 1) means of communication: natural language and body language (e.g. word choice, gestures and facial expressions); and
- 2) the media as a channel and means of communication.

Society as a complex of the manifestations of life:

- 1) economic life: rises and falls and the welfare state;
- 2) social sphere, living standard and charity; and
- 3) unhealthy ways of life and crime.

2.1.3.3. Study activities

All constituent skills are developed equally in upper secondary school, but separate courses may focus on different aspects. The language learned is actively used beyond Estonian lessons (e.g. other subject lessons, field trips, student exchanges, language camps and meetings with native speakers of Estonian). Students read authentic fiction and informative, consumer and media texts. Varied assignments facilitating a creative approach are used.

In order to acquire the vocabulary corresponding to the level of language proficiency and to use more complex linguistic constructions, students have to perform tasks which enable them to apply their communication skills by using different language registers (e.g. communication with administrative agencies, job interviews and in the everyday sphere). Teachers guide students to compare and analyse the similarities and differences of languages, note their connections and pay attention to their language use. To reach the target level of language proficiency, teachers plan their activities in cooperation with students.

Alongside independent working habits, students improve their skills in pair and team work.

Some examples of study activities are:

- 1) using media and authentic audiovisual materials;
- 2) independent reading and listening;
- 3) writing consumer texts (e.g. CVs, letters of explanation, applications and complaints);
- 4) creative writing (e.g. essays, articles, summaries and poems);
- 5) compiling and presenting reviews and/or research reports;
- 6) discussions and debates between language groups;
- 7) role plays and communication games;
- 8) project work (e.g. making films, putting on plays and designing websites);
- 9) tasks performed in the language environment (e.g. lessons in museums and interviews); and
- 10) seeking information from sources in Estonian (e.g. explanatory dictionaries and the Internet).

2.2. Foreign languages

2.2.1. Learning objectives

Teaching foreign languages develops subject competence, which includes language competence, values, attitudes and learning skills. By the end of upper secondary school, students:

- 1) have language ~~acquire language~~ proficiency at a level that enables them to act independently in an authentic foreign-language environment;
- 2) understand and value the similarities and differences of their own and other cultures;
- 3) communicate with the speakers of the target language by considering their cultural norms;
- 4) are able to continue their studies in a foreign language, take part in varied international projects and use foreign languages in an international working environment; and
- 5) analyse their knowledge and skills and strengths and weaknesses and have the motivation and acquire the skills necessary for lifelong learning.

2.2.2. Description of the subject

At the upper secondary school, foreign languages are studied based on levels.

Instruction follows the principles of communicative language learning and is based on active learning methods. The emphasis is on interactive learning and practising the language studied. Pair and group work are implemented; the formation of communication and presentation skills in a foreign language is supported through e.g. debates, reviews, research and presentations, including multimedia, communication portals, blogs et al. Students are encouraged to use the language outside of lessons.

The language of instruction in language lessons at upper secondary school is mainly the foreign language which the students are studying.

Thematic areas in foreign languages are the same for both the B1 and B2 levels of language proficiency.

The general theme in upper secondary school is 'Me and the World'.

The five thematic areas and their sub-themes are intertwined in everyday life and can also be dealt with in language teaching. Through different themes, students can compare the cultural spaces of Estonia and of the country or countries whose language they are learning. In dealing with the themes, the language level of the course, students' interest and the relevance of themes is to be taken into account.

Knowledge of the language is not an aim in its own right, but a means for achieving a better command of the language. The structure of the language is studied in context.

In building cultural awareness, students' attention is drawn to communication differences in their native language and in the foreign language being learned and to cultural manifestations explaining these

differences. Students should be aware of their place in and their responsibility towards society and be able to make adequate judgements.

As previously, the development of learning skills which facilitate further foreign language studies and lifelong learning is continuously important in teaching.

2.2.3. Learning outcomes, learning content and study activities in upper secondary school

2.2.3.1. Learning outcomes

Language with the B1 level of language proficiency

Graduates of upper secondary school:

- 1) understand everything that is important to them on familiar or interesting themes;
- 2) can generally manage in everyday communication with people speaking the language they are learning;
- 3) describe their experiences, events, dreams and goals, and explain and elaborate on their positions and plans in brief;
- 4) compile simple texts on familiar themes;
- 5) take into account the cultural norms of the country of the language they are learning. ;
- 6) are interested in the cultural life of the countries whose languages they are learning, read literature in foreign languages, watch films, TV programmes and theatre performances and listen to the radio;
- 7) use reference sources in foreign languages (e.g. translation dictionaries and the Internet) to seek necessary information in other areas as well;
- 8) set learning goals and assess their achievement and are able to select and change their learning strategies if necessary; and
- 9) integrate the knowledge they have acquired with their knowledge in foreign languages and other areas.

Levels of language proficiency by the end of upper secondary school:

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
satisfactory result	B1.1	B1.1	B1.1	B1.1
good and very good result	B1.2	B1.2	B1.2	B1.2

The learning results in constituent skills are given in Clause 2.3.

In the case of a language with the B1 level of proficiency, upper secondary school graduates have achieved satisfactory learning results if they have reached the level of B1.1; students whose results are good are able to meet the requirements of the B1.2 proficiency level in part, and students with very good results meet the requirements of the B1.2 proficiency level in full. Students with very good results are also able to partly meet the requirements set for the next (B2.1) level.

Language with the B2 level of language proficiency

Graduates of upper secondary school:

- 1) understand the essence of complex texts or discussions on abstract or concrete themes;
- 2) converse spontaneously and fluently with native speakers of the same language;
- 3) explain their viewpoints and consider the weaknesses and strengths of relevant standpoints;
- 4) create coherent and logical texts on different themes;
- 5) take into account the cultural norms of the countries of the language they are learning. ;

- 6) are interested in the cultural life of the countries where the foreign language is spoken, , read literature in foreign languages, watch films, TV programmes and theatre performances and listen to the radio;
- 7) use reference sources in foreign languages (e.g. explanatory dictionaries and the Internet) to seek necessary information in other areas as well;
- 8) set learning goals and assess their achievement and are able to select and change their learning strategies if necessary; and
- 9) integrate the knowledge they have acquired with their knowledge in foreign languages and other areas.

Levels of language proficiency by the end of upper secondary school:

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
satisfactory result	B2.1	B2.1	B2.1	B1.2
good and very good result	B2.2	B2.2	B2.2	B2.1 – B2.2

The learning results in constituent skills are given in Clause 2.3.

A satisfactory result of an upper secondary school graduate in a language studied at B2 proficiency level is B2.1. A student with a good result meets a part of and a student with a very good result meets all the requirements of proficiency level B2.2. A student with a very good result is also able to meet a part of the requirements set for the next (C1) level.

2.2.3.2. Learning content

1. Estonia and the world

Estonian state and people:

- 1) independent statehood, being a citizen and national defence;
- 1) geographical location and climate;
- 2) population: main nationality, other ethnic groups and new immigrants; and
- 3) multicultural society.

Estonian language and the Estonian way of thinking:

- 1) national identity;
- 2) cultural traditions; and
- 3) local lore.

Estonia and other countries:

- 1) Estonia as an EU Member State: EU Member States and organisation of the EU; and
- 2) place of Estonia in the world: international cooperation.

2. Culture and creation

Culture as a form of creativity:

- 1) creativity : literature, fine arts, music, architecture, applied arts and handicrafts, etc.;
- 2) historical cultural memory of people;
- 3) development of creative thinking through experience; and
- 4) factors facilitating or interfering with the creative process (e.g. surrounding circumstances, family, social order and traditions).

Cultural traditions and customs:

- 1) folk tales, legends, fairytales, proverbs and sayings as representing folk wisdom; and
- 2) some of the cultural traditions, customs and beliefs of different nations.

3. The environment and technology

Geographical environment:

- 1) relations between the environment and people, environmental awareness: balance in nature, untouched nature; industry and culture, reserves; sources of pollution;
- 2) dangers arising from imbalances in nature between the environment and people; climate and climate change; and
- 3) sustainable development of the environment.

Living environment:

- 1) living conditions in regions with different climate and population concentration;
- 2) social benefits and their availability (e.g. medical care, pensions, state benefits and funds, allowances and benefits for disabled persons);
- 3) sustainable way of life;
- 4) social environment: multilingual and multicultural society or a society where one nation dominates; closest neighbours.

Technology:

- 1) scientific and technological achievements and their implementation in everyday life;
- 2) information environment: information seeking and sharing;
- 3) applications of linguistic technology in everyday life: electronic dictionaries, language learning materials, computer-based language learning, computer-assisted translation software, etc.; and
- 4) biotechnology in everyday life: household chemicals, cosmetics and the food industry, etc.

4. Education and work

Family and upbringing:

- 1) family; family relations, good relationships between children and parents and caring for one another;
- 2) upbringing: rules of politeness and good conduct, formation of value judgements, tolerant attitudes, etc.

Education:

- 1) public and private educational institutions and further training;
- 2) compulsory education and self-teaching;
- 3) school environment and traditions; youth organisations;
- 4) opportunities for further education in Estonia and abroad; and
- 5) lifelong learning.

Work life:

- 1) knowledgeable self-realisation; career choices and career development;
- 2) getting a job: drafting a CV, employment contract and job interview;
- 3) jobs as a source of living; earning money (e.g. income and expenses, prices); unemployment;
- 4) responsible attitude to one's work; regard for oneself and others;
- 5) rights and liabilities of employees and employers, trade unions, probation period, full or part time job and rest time;
- 6) relations at work; pleasant and informal atmosphere, highly motivated employee;
- 7) prerequisites for coping with one's work; and
- 8) work for the disabled.

5. Individual and society

Human beings as part of nature:

- 1) cycle of life: birth, life and death;
- 2) balance between nature and mankind (e.g. green way of life and respect for nature); and
- 3) way of life or manner of existence (green and philanthropic and healthy).

Human beings as individuals:

- 1) nature and conduct of human beings and getting into conflict;
- 2) uniqueness of every individual;
- 3) value judgements and views on life and society;
- 4) human relations: personal, emotional and social; and
- 5) different people and nations (differences in culture and language, rules of conduct and moral norms).

Communication between people:

- 1) means of communication: natural language and body language (word choice, gestures and facial expressions); and
- 2) the media as a channel and means of communication.

Society as a composite of different aspects of life:

- 1) economic life: rises and falls and the welfare state;
- 2) social sphere, living standard and charity; and
- 3) unhealthy ways of life and crime.

2.2.3.3. Study activities

All constituent skills are developed equally in upper secondary school, but separate courses may focus on different aspects. The language learned is actively used in lessons and beyond (e.g. pen-friends, field trips, student exchanges and meetings with native speakers). Students read authentic fiction and informative, consumer and media texts. Versatile assignments facilitating a creative approach are used. In order to acquire the vocabulary corresponding to the level of language proficiency and to use more complex linguistic constructions, students are given tasks which enable them to apply their communication skills by using different language registers (e.g. communication with administrative agencies, job interviews and in the everyday sphere).

Teachers guide students to compare and analyse the similarities and differences of languages, note their connections and pay attention to their language use. To reach the target level of language proficiency, teachers plan their activities in cooperation with students. In addition to independent work habits, students improve their pair and team work skills.

Some examples of study activities are:

- 1) using media and authentic audiovisual materials;
- 2) independent reading and listening;
- 3) compiling consumer texts (e.g. CVs, letters of explanation, applications and complaints);
- 4) creative writing (e.g. essays, articles, reviews, summaries, poems, translations and blogs);
- 5) compiling and presenting reviews and/or research reports;
- 6) development of argumentative skills (e.g. debates and discussions);
- 7) role plays and communication games;
- 8) project work (e.g. making films, putting on plays and designing websites); and
- 9) finding information from varied reference sources in foreign languages (e.g. dictionaries and the Internet).

2.3. A1.1 – C1 levels of language proficiency

Learning results in constituent skills

	LISTENING	READING	SPEAKING	WRITING	GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS
A1.1	Recognise learned words and phrases in very slow and clear coherent speech; understand with the help of pictures. Respond adequately to being addressed (e.g. greetings and work instructions). Know internationally used words with similar pronunciation (e.g. hamburger, film, taxi and coffee).	Know the alphabet of the language learned. Recognise familiar names, words (incl. internationally used) and phrases in texts. Read words, phrases and sentences within the vocabulary acquired; understanding may be supported by pictures.	Can ask and answer very simple questions within the vocabulary and sentence patterns learned. Need help from a communication partner; may rely on native languages and gestures.	Know the alphabet of the language learned; have mastered writing; can copy phrases and sentences learned (copying). Can write personal information (e.g. on a copybook). Compose short sentences according to patterns learned.	Use single constructions and sentence patterns learned, but may make occasional mistakes in

A1.2	<p>Understand clearly pronounced phrases, sentences and short dialogues on familiar situations.</p> <p>Understand clear and slow instructions and forms of address.</p> <p>Require repeating, pointing out, illustrating, etc.</p>	<p>Read short simple texts (e.g. event programmes, postcards, e-mails, ads, labels, street signs, short forms and questionnaires and notes and messages) and find the necessary factual information in them.</p> <p>Can understand simple written work instructions.</p> <p>Reading pace is very slow, may need re-reading to understand the text. Know how to use the vocabulary in the textbook in order to understand the text.</p>	<p>Can briefly introduce themselves and their surroundings.</p> <p>Are able to engage in simple dialogues within the vocabulary and sentence patterns learned; need help from a communication partner.</p> <p>Mistakes in pronunciation may lead to misunderstandings.</p> <p>Speech is characterised by repetitions, interruptions and pauses.</p>	<p>Can briefly write about themselves and other people. Can fill in simple questionnaires.</p> <p>Know the orthography of words learned. Use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and correct punctuation marks at the end.</p>	them.
	LISTENING	READING	SPEAKING	WRITING	GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS

A2.1	<p>Understand simple conversations and the content of short stories, notices and messages if they are related to familiar themes or everyday activities and presented slowly and clearly. Require repeating and clear pronunciation.</p>	<p>Read short consumer texts with common vocabulary (e.g. personal correspondence ads, news and instructions); find information contained in text and understand its meaning. Reading pace is slow. Know how to use school dictionaries in order to understand the text.</p>	<p>Can briefly describe their surroundings, everyday activities and people. Make use of basic vocabulary and common expressions, simpler grammatical constructions and sentence patterns. Are able to start and end short conversations, but cannot direct them. Stumble in speech, make pronunciation mistakes.</p>	<p>Compile descriptions of surroundings and people within the vocabulary learned. Write simple notes on routine activities (e.g. postcard and invitation); compile short messages. Know how to use the conjunctions <i>and</i> , <i>also</i> , <i>etc.</i> Can compile short texts based on example and relying on textbook or school dictionaries.</p>	
A2.2	<p>Are able to follow conversations on familiar themes and recognise important information. Understand the content of communication on general themes in the service sphere (e.g. shop, bus, hotel and ticket office). Often need clarification on what they have heard.</p>	<p>Read simple consumer texts (e.g. ads, menus, schedules and warnings) on familiar themes and understand the information contained in them. Can sometimes grasp the meaning of words based on context.</p>	<p>Can talk about their interests and activities. Can communicate in daily life. Can express their attitudes and preferences. Can start, continue and end conversations on familiar themes, but may need help. In most cases use basic vocabulary and sentence patterns they have learned correctly; make mistakes in spontaneous speech. Speech is understandable, although they make pronunciation mistakes and search for right words.</p>	<p>Can write short descriptive stories about their experiences and surroundings. Compose simple personal letters. Know how to use the conjunctions <i>however</i> , <i>as that t</i>, etc. Implement orthography rules they have learned (e.g. orthography of initial letter, punctuation marks).</p>	<p>Use some simple constructions correctly, but make frequent mistakes in basic grammar rules (e.g. mix tense forms or make mistakes in the concordance of subject and predicate); still, in most cases it is clear what they want to say.</p>

	LISTENING	READING	SPEAKING	WRITING	GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS
B1.1	<p>Can understand the content of direct communication if conversation concerns familiar themes in daily life. Understand the content of TV and radio programmes and films if the theme is familiar and interesting to them and audio text is supported with pictures.</p> <p>Can understand speech uttered at normal pace if pronunciation is clear and familiar.</p>	<p>Read and understand fact-based texts on several pages with simple wording (e.g. letters, online texts, brochures and usage instructions).</p> <p>Understand the main idea in narrative text and can follow the plot .</p> <p>Can find necessary information in reference sources and online.</p> <p>Can use bilingual translation dictionaries.</p>	<p>Can talk about their experiences and intentions in simple coherent sentences.</p> <p>Can briefly explain their positions. Are able to join in a conversation and express their opinions if the theme is familiar to them. Use expressions and sentence patterns they have learned correctly; make mistakes in spontaneous speech.</p> <p>Pronunciation is clear and speech is fluent, but communication may be hindered by incorrect intonation.</p>	<p>Can write short narrative texts on the themes studied and express their feelings, ideas and opinions in them (e.g. personal letter, e-mail and blog).</p> <p>Compile different consumer texts (e.g. notice and ad).</p> <p>Communicate online (e.g. MSN).</p> <p>Can use limited techniques of linking text (conjunctions and pronominal repetition).</p>	<p>Can use typical linguistic forms and formation patterns fairly correctly.</p> <p>Use fairly correct grammatical language in familiar situations, although the impact of native language is noticeable.</p> <p>Some mistakes occur, but they do not interfere with</p>

B1.2	Understand what they have heard, grasp both the main message and the details if the subject concerns common issues (e.g. news, sports broadcasts, presentations and lectures) and speech is clear and generic.	Read and understand texts with a clear train of thought on different themes and on several pages (e.g. media texts meant for young people and, adaptations of fiction). Can find necessary information in longer discursive texts. Collect relevant information from several texts. Use varied reading strategies (e.g. general reading and optional reading). May not understand details and nuances in texts.	Can communicate the content of a film, performance etc. and describe their impressions. Can generally cope in less common communication situations. Use basic vocabulary and more common expressions correctly; make occasional mistakes in using more complex sentence structures. Can express themselves fairly freely, ask for help if necessary. Pronunciation is clear; mistakes in intonation and stress do not interfere with communication.	Can compile summaries based on information from different sources (e.g. short overviews of events or profiles of people). Can describe real or imaginary events. Can share their experiences or feelings or describe events in personal letters. Can write short compositions on themes studied by expressing their opinions. May make minor linguistic mistakes in expressing their ideas or opinions, but they do not interfere with understanding.	understanding.
	LISTENING	READING	SPEAKING	WRITING	GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS

B2.1	<p>Can understand both live spoken speech and sound recordings on concrete and abstract themes if the subject matter is generic and there are more than two people engaged in conversation. Can understand speech uttered at normal pace.</p>	<p>Read and understand texts on several pages (e.g. articles, overviews, instructions, reference texts and fiction) which contain factual information, opinions and attitudes. Read fluently, their reading vocabulary is broad but may experience difficulties in understanding idioms. Know how to use single-language explanatory dictionaries.</p>	<p>Present clear detailed descriptions on themes of common interest. Can explain and defend their positions. Can participate in discussions and make statements. Use diverse expressions and have wide vocabulary. Use more complex sentence structures but may make mistakes in them. Speech pace is quite stable even in longer speech passages; make few pauses in order to find words and choose morphological forms, which do not interfere with communication. Intonation is natural in most cases.</p>	<p>Write coherent texts on specific and general themes (e.g. letter of explanation, news and comment). Explain their viewpoints and objectives. Can write letters which concern their studies or work. Can differentiate between style in personal and formal letters. Can use varied expressions (e.g. synonyms) in order to avoid repetitions. May make minor mistakes in syntax if the theme is not familiar to them, but these do not interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Have mastered grammar fairly well. Do not make mistakes which cause misunderstanding. In most cases can correct occasional slips, accidental mistakes and lapses in syntax themselves.</p>
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B2.2	Are able to follow abstract discussions (e.g. conversation, lecture and report) and understand exchanges of ideas on complex issues (e.g. debate) in which speakers express different viewpoints. Understanding may be limited due to loud background noise, puns, idioms and complex linguistic constructions.	Are able to read long and complex texts, including abstract texts, find relevant information (optional reading) and, based on it, make generalisations on the idea of the text and author's opinion. Read independently by adjusting the manner and speed of reading depending on the text and reading purpose. May experience difficulties in understanding idioms and cultural allusions.	Express themselves clearly, can present longer monologues. Can talk on different subjects, lead conversation and give feedback. Are able to observe their language use, rephrase their utterances if necessary and correct most of their mistakes. Can select appropriate language register. The impact of native language is noticeable in speech rhythm and pace.	Can write essays: train of thought is logical, coherent and relevant. Can review information found in written sources or received orally. Use different language registers depending on the addressee (e.g. by differentiating between personal, half-formal and formal writing styles). Use punctuation marks in sentences mostly according to the rules.	
	LISTENING	READING	SPEAKING	WRITING	GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS
C1	Understand even unfamiliar content with ease (e.g. film, longer conversation and debate). Can critically judge the content of what they have heard and problems raised. Understanding may be hindered due to rare idioms, strange accent, slang or dialect.	Read long complex texts in different registers and styles. Read critically and can understand author's attitudes, positions and hidden meanings. May need external help (e.g. dictionaries and native language teacher's advice) in order to understand idioms and complex text details.	Express themselves fluently and spontaneously. Can express their ideas and opinions on different themes without difficulty and accurately. Use of language is flexible and creative. Can achieve communication goals. Vocabulary is wide, may make occasional mistakes in semantic connection of words, regimen structures and word order.	Can write comprehensive overviews base on information found in several written sources (e.g. review and opinion). Are able to edit written texts. Can write logically composed descriptive, narrative and discursive texts which provoke interest and are easy to read. May make incidental orthography and	Use grammatically correct language, mistakes are rare and hardly noticeable.

			punctuation mistakes.	
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^[1] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, p. 6

^[2] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, p. 43