Maltese for Foreigners

Syllabus

Based on the

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Level A1

Beginners – Elementary

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Apart from the sections Grammar Objectives and Vocabulary Objectives, and bullet points marked with an asterisk, the statements written in English on pages 5-7 in this syllabus were reproduced from

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages,

which can be accessed from:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

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Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)

This syllabus is based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* The CEFR, which is not language-specific, was published by the Council of Europe to provide:

> "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. [Moreover] it provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and co-ordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible." (CEFR 2001, 1)

Metaphorically, the CEFR is a road map that presents different routes but does not denote which one to take, nor does it establish the length of the language-learning journey. The intention of this document is to specify what learners should be able to do at certain levels. In this way, teachers are guided by these levels in their teaching and in selecting their course books and resources (*Teacher's Guide to the CEFR*, 4). The abovementioned levels of proficiency are split into six levels, arranged in three bands: A denotes a basic user, B indicates an independent user and C represents a proficient user. Each of the six levels is accompanied by a corresponding descriptive term as shown in Table 1 (CEFR 2001, 23).

Table 1

The levels of proficiency		
A Basic user	A 1	Breakthrough
	A 2	Waystage
B Independent user	B 1	Threshold
	B 2	Vantage
C Proficient user	C 1	Effective operational proficiency
	C 2	Mastery

Although it is difficult to count or imagine the number of hours a learner needs to achieve a particular level, the *Association of Language Testers of Europe* provides guidelines on the number of teaching hours needed to achieve a particular level, as indicated by the list in Table 2 (*Teacher's Guide to the CEFR*, 7).

Table 2

Approximate teaching hours needed to achieve each level	
A 1	90–100 hours
A 2	180–200 hours
B 1	350–400 hours
B 2	500–600 hours
C 1	700–800 hours
C 2	1,000–1,200 hours

With this global scale, achievement and learning could be measured across languages, and this could help tutors, academics, researchers and course book writers "to decide on curriculum and syllabus content and to choose appropriate course books" (*Teacher's Guide to the CEFR*, 4).

References

Council of Europe (2001) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* Available from: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

Teacher's Guide to the Common European Framework. Available from: http://www.pearsonlongman.com/ae/cef/cefguide.pdf [Accessed 2nd August 2013].

COMMUNICATIVE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course you will be able to do the following:

Listening

I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

- I can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for me to assimilate meaning.
- I can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short, simple directions.
- I can recognise and understand common words and very basic phrases related to the themes listed in the vocabulary section.*

Reading

I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.

- I can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases and rereading as required.
- I can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in most everyday situations (ex. Police, Welcome, No Smoking, No Entry).
- I can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.
- I can understand short, simple messages on postcards.
- I can read and understand common words and very basic phrases related to the themes listed in the vocabulary section.*

Spoken interaction

I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

- I can use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.
- I can ask how people are and react to news.
- I can ask and answer questions about myself and also other people – where they live, people they know, things they have.
- I can ask people for things and give people things.
- I can handle numbers, quantities, costs and times.
- I can indicate time by such phrases as next week, last Friday, in November, three o'clock.

Spoken production

I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

- I can very simply describe myself, what I do and where I live.
- I can describe my family.
- I can give basic personal information (name, surname, address, telephone, mobile, nationality, age and sex).
- I can produce simple, mainly isolated phrases about people and places.
- I can produce common words and very basic phrases related to the themes listed in the vocabulary section.*

Writing

I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.

- I can write simple sentences about myself, where I live and what I do.
- I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

- I can complete a form or questionnaire with my personal details.

- I can write a short, simple postcard.

- I can write numbers and dates, own name, nationality, address, age, date of birth or arrival in the country, etc., such as on a hotel registration form.

- I can write common words and very basic phrases related to the themes listed in the vocabulary section. *

Sociolinguistic appropriateness

- I can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of greetings, farewells and introductions, and can use important phrases such as please, thank you, sorry, I don't understand, please repeat, etc.

- I know the basics about Maltese culture, including gestures and customs.*

GRAMMAR OBJECTIVES

To reach the communicative objectives of level A1, you need to know most of these language areas:

Grammar

✓ The Maltese alphabet

Consonants and vowels and their sound:

    i.   Sun consonants (*ċ, d, n, r, s, t, x, ż, z*).

    ii.   Moon consonants (all the other consonants of the Maltese alphabet).

✓ The definite article

(*l-* or *il-* also assimilation of *l-*) Reference to the fact that the euphonic vowel, *il-vokali tal-leħen*, is eliminated when a word starts with a vowel or the word before finishes with a vowel.

Ex. l-ors, l-art ☑ not *il-ors, il-art* ☒.

For this level do not elaborate more on the euphonic vowel.

✓ Particles

Ex. bi, fi, xi, ma', ta', sa, lil, għal, bħal

Particles linked to the article ex. *bil-, fil-, mal-, tal-, lill-, għall-, bħall-*

Reference to the fact that the particles *ma' ta' sa* are shortened to *m', s', t'*, in front of words starting with a vowel, għ or h.

Ex. m'ommi, s'Għawdex, t'Anna.

Also refer to:

a.   Adverbs:

    i.   Of time (most common ex. *għada, imbagħad, illum, ilu, meta, pitgħada, xħin, x'ħin? xi drabi,* etc.).

    ii.   Of place (most common ex. *barra, ġewwa, fuq, hawn, hemm, ħdejn, taħt,* etc.).

    iii.   Of quantity (most common ex. *aktar, anqas, biss, biżżejjed, iżjed, iżżejjed, kemm? Kemm-il darba*).

b. Conjunctions (most common ex. *biex, meta, imma, li, jew, u,* etc.).

c. Prepositions (most common ex. *bejn, fuq, isfel, quddiem, taħt,* etc.).

d. Interjections: (most common ex. *ajma, aħħ, jaqq,* etc.).

✓ Adjectives

Refer to the most common positive adjectives (ex. *sabiħ, ikrah, oħxon* i.e. *Grad Pożittiv* – <u>do not</u> refer to comparative and superlative).

✓ Gender of nouns and adjectives

Focus mainly on nouns and adjectives that form the feminine word by adding an a.

i. Nouns: ex. ħmar/*a*, kelb/*a*, avukat/*a*.

ii. Adjectives: *ex. sabiħ/a, nadif/a, irħis/a.*

✓ Singular and plural of nouns and adjectives

From word lists, observe that in Maltese certain plurals are formed by adding suffixes at the end of the word (ex. *platt/i, wejter/s,* ħaddiem/*a, tajbin,* ġellid*in*) and others by breaking up the internal structure of the word (ex. *borma-borom, bidwi-bdiewa, dar-djar*). <u>Do not</u> go into too much detail about sound and broken plurals. For the time being, refer to different patterns in their plural lists and to the existence of two types of plural: *Plural Sħiħ* and *Plural Miksur.*

✓ Pronouns

a. Personal:

i. Independent (*jien/a, int/i, hu/wa, hi/ja, aħna, intom, huma*).

ii. Pronominal suffixes (refer to the most common for this level; and refer to some of the variants also, but do not emphasize these too much, i.e., for nouns and prepositions *i/ija, ek/k/ok, u/h, ha, na, kom, hom*, for verbs *ni, ek/k, u/h, ha, na, kom, hom*).

b. Demonstrative (*dan, din, dawn, dak, dik, dawk*).

c. Interrogative (ex. *Min?, Xi/ x'?, Liema?*).

✓ Basic Verbs (see Common Actions in vocabulary section – <u>do not</u> refer to verb forms)

a. Imperative: refer to the formation by shifting the first vowel

Ex. ḥataf ➡ aḥtaf.

b. Present:

    i. It is very important to know/show the link between the imperative and the present. Ex. Imperative of *kiser* is *ikser* (singular) *iksru* (plural). To form the present, **generally**, one has to add the prefix:

    ii. n, t, j, t to the imperative singular to form the present.

    iii. n, t, j to the imperative plural to form the present.

    iv. Reference to the future (reference to particles *ser,* sa*, ħa* in front of present to form the future, ex*. ser niekol, se nixrob, ħa niġi*).

c. Past:

    i. Refer to the third person masculine singular and the roots of Semitic verbs (ex. ḥasel, kiser, wasal) and the stems of Romans (ex. poġġa) and English (ex. ipprintja) loan words (*mamma* and *għerq* or *zokk morfemiku*).

    ii. Show how common verbs like ħasel, kiteb, (refer to *Common Actions* in vocabulary section) conjugate.

d. Negative:

    i. Reference to the very basics of the negative, i.e. adding ma in front and x attached to the verb, ex. ma kielx, ma wasalx.

✓ Numbers

For the time being, emphasize the difference between ordinal and cardinal numbers and how to use them. Do not go into too much detail for this level.

a. Cardinal:

    i. From 1–20 (ex. *wieħed, tnejn, tlieta, erbgħa, ħamsa, sitta, sebgħa, tmienja, disgħa, għaxra, ħdax, tnax, tlettax, erbatax, ħmistax, sittax sbatax, tmintax, dsatax, għoxrin*).

    ii. The hyphenated –*il* (11–19 ex. *11-il kelb, 12-il pitazz*, etc.).

    iii. Reference to compound numbers from 21 to 99 (ex. *wieħed u għoxrin, tnejn u għoxrin, tlieta u għoxrin*, etc.).

b. Ordinal from 1–10:

    i. Ex. *l-ewwel, it-tieni, it-tielet, ir-raba', il-ħames, is-sitt, is-seba', it-tmien, id-disa', l-għaxar.*

    ii. Reference that the rest of the ordinal numbers are formed by

adding the definite article to the cardinal numbers.

Ex. Ġejt *il-wieħed u għoxrin* fl-eżami.

c. Time words (ex. *neqsin kwart, u kwart, u nofs, nofs siegħa, ħames minuti oħra, ta' filgħodu, ta' filgħaxija*).

VOCABULARY OBJECTIVES

To reach the communicative objectives of level A1 you need to familiarise yourself with these vocabulary topics:

Vocabulary

- ✓ Animals
- ✓ Clothes
- ✓ Colours
- ✓ Common actions
- ✓ Continents, countries and nationalities
- ✓ Days of the week, seasons, months
- ✓ Directions
- ✓ Food and drink
- ✓ Fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Home and furnishings
- ✓ In the countryside
- ✓ In the village/town
- ✓ My family and friends
- ✓ Numbers
- ✓ Opposites
- ✓ Personal information
- ✓ Public places
- ✓ Shops
- ✓ The body
- ✓ Time
- ✓ Towns and villages in Malta and Gozo
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Useful expressions

Feedback

Any comments or suggestions on this syllabus? Please send your feedback to:

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For additional resources to teach Maltese for Foreigners
(including higher-level syllabi), go to:

www.charlesdanielsaliba.com

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