

## WORKSHEET A

<b>Title</b> <b>Branching approach</b>	
<b>Objective(s)</b> To understand the advantages and limitations of the branching approach proposed by the CEFR	
<b>Keywords</b> Levels – distinction and specification of descriptors	
<b>Ref to the Guide</b>	<b>Ref to the CEFR</b>
IV. 9	3.4, 3.5, 3.6

### Task A ( † )

Try to represent the progression of a language learner visually, by using the most appropriate metaphor for you (examples: house, voyage, itinerary, string of pearls, etc.). Stick your posters on the classroom walls and use them as a starting point for group reflexion and exchange of ideas.

### Task B ( † ) then ( † † ) / ( † † † )

#### Step 1

#### Read this extract from the CEFR:

"Establishing cut-off points between levels is always a subjective procedure; some institutions prefer broad levels, others prefer narrow ones. The advantage of a branching approach is that a common set of levels and/or descriptors can be 'cut' into practical local levels at different points by different users to suit local needs and yet still relate back to a common system." (p. 32)

#### Look at the basic diagram in the branching approach:

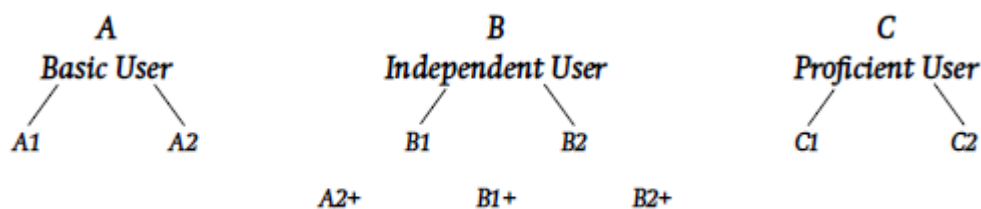


Figure 2

#### Consider the example of cut-off points given by CEF in Table 4:

"In the illustrative descriptors a distinction is made between the 'criterion levels' (e.g. A2 or A2.1) and the 'plus levels' (e.g. A2+ or A2.2). The latter are distinguished from the former by a horizontal line, as in this example for overall listening comprehension."

Table 4. Levels A2.1 and A2.2 (A2+): listening comprehension

	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
A2	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.

Finally analyse the two examples given (p. 32):

**Example 1:**

A primary to lower secondary school system, for example, or system for adult evening classes in which the provision of visible progress at low levels is felt necessary, could develop the *Basic User* stem to produce a set of perhaps six milestones with finer differentiation at A2 (*Waystage*) where large numbers of learners would be found.

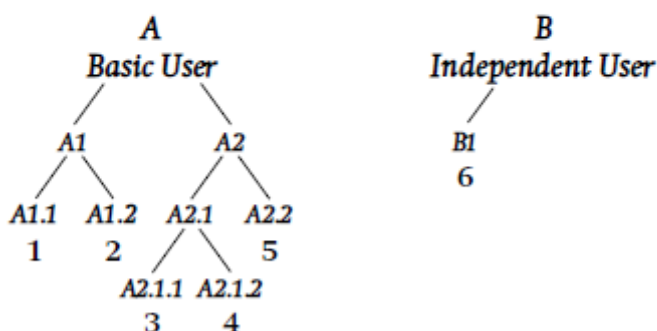


Figure 3

**Example 2:**

In an environment for learning the language in the area where it is spoken one might tend to develop the *Independence* branch, adding a further layer of delicacy by subdividing the levels in the middle of the scale:

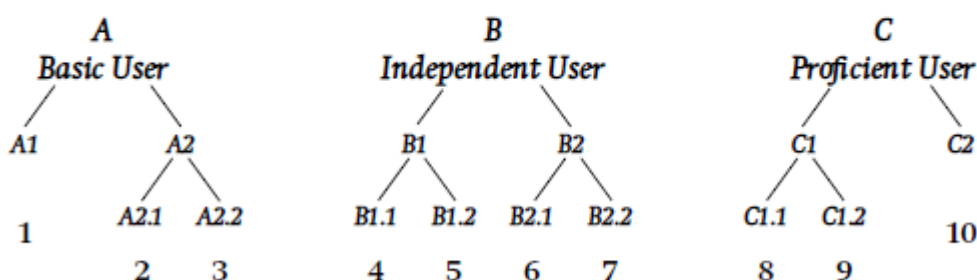


Figure 4

**Step 2**

Now think about the advantages and the limitations of a branching approach and complete the following grid. Consider both the teaching and the assessment perspective:

	Advantages of a branching approach	Limitations of a branching approach
Teaching		
Assessment		

Compare your tables in pairs and/or in small groups and then prepare a common grid.

### Step 3

Mention three cases (real or imaginary) in which you think it would be important to refine the levels by developing one or more of the branches in this approach. You can consider also the metacategories in the descriptive scheme (communicative activities, strategies, communicative language competences) separately. (see CEFR, p. 25)