

## 5 Interpretation of results: both versions

Table 1 shows how to interpret the results of each version of the test in terms of the ALTE levels from 0 to 5, and so to compare computer-based scores against paper and pen scores. You can then use Table 2 to see how the ALTE Levels correspond to the Council of Europe Levels, and the Cambridge Examinations.

5.1 Table 1 Look-up table for computer-based and paper and pen scores

ALTE Level	Paper and pen test score		Computer-based test score
	Part 1 Score out of 40	Parts 1 & 2 Score out of 60	
0 Beginner	0 – 15	0 – 17	0 – 39
1 Elementary	16 – 23	18 – 29	40 – 49
2 Lower Intermediate	24 – 30	30 – 39	50 – 59
3 Upper Intermediate	31 – 40	40 – 47	60 – 69
4 Advanced		48 – 54	70 – 79
5 Very Advanced		55 – 60	80 – 100

### 5.2 Understanding the scores

#### The paper and pen test

You should use only Part 1 of the paper and pen test if you think your students are mostly between ALTE levels 0 and 3 (inclusive).

You should use Part 1 and Part 2 (i.e. all 60 items) if:

- you are unsure of the level of your students,
- or students score more than 36 on Part 1 of the test,
- or you believe they are level 3 or above.

You will notice that Table 1 above has two columns for interpreting scores on the paper and pen tests. Column 2 shows the band scores for students taking Part 1, and therefore reports scores up to a maximum score of 40, covering ALTE Levels 0 to 3. Column 3 shows the band scores for students taking both parts of a paper and pen test, and therefore reports scores to a maximum of 60, covering the range of ALTE Levels from 0 to 5.

If students do take the second part of a paper and pen test, they will get 20 more items which are incrementally more difficult than those in Part 1. These extra items have an impact on the band score thresholds because, for example, even someone who has achieved ALTE Level 1 on the 40 item version might be able to guess at least 2 of the extra 20 items. This is allowed for by a slightly different score table for the complete 60 item version of the tests, and helps to ensure that whether a student takes Part 1 only, or both Parts 1 and 2, he / she will be awarded the same band score.

#### The computer-based test

Column 4 in Table 1 shows how the computer-based test scores relate to the ALTE levels. The scores, which for this test are out of 100, work on a different principle to the paper and pen test, i.e. they do not represent the number of questions answered correctly, but represent a measure of ability on the ALTE scale, according to the level of difficulty of the items within the test. So, for example, students can score up to 100, but they will still only get around 25 items to answer.

### 5.3 Error margin

Every test result has a margin of error (the standard error of measurement, or SEM). For the computer-based test the margin of error is  $\pm 4$  points on the 100-point scale; for the 60-item test it is  $\pm 4$  points, and for the 40 item test it is  $\pm 3$  points. This means that 68% of the time (or about 7 times out of 10) a student's score will be within plus or minus 3 or 4 points of their 'true score'.

If a student's score is at the very top or very bottom of an ALTE Level the margin of error means that they could in fact fall just within the Level immediately above or below. We would recommend in all instances that you use the QP alongside other forms of assessment, such as speaking and writing tests.

For more information on error measurement of test scores see *A Guide to Language Testing - Development, Evaluation, Research* by G. Henning (1987) Newbury House Publishers.

### 5.4 Table 2 Chart of Equivalent Levels

Table 2 shows how the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) scale maps onto the Council of Europe Levels, and the Cambridge Examinations.

ALTE Level	ALTE Level Description	Council of Europe Level	Cambridge Examinations
0	Beginner (Breakthrough)	A1	
1	Elementary (Waystage)	A2	KET
2	Lower Intermediate (Threshold)	B1	PET BEC Preliminary CELS Preliminary
3	Upper Intermediate (Independent User)	B2	FCE BEC Intermediate CELS Intermediate
4	Advanced (Competent User)	C1	CAE BEC Advanced CELS Higher
5	Very Advanced (Good user)	C2	CPE

### 5.5 ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe)

ALTE is an association of providers of European foreign language examinations, and includes some of the major international providers in the field of language testing. One of ALTE's main aims is to make clear how qualifications achieved in different languages correspond to each other and what they actually mean in practice. This will have the effect of making qualifications more usable and of increasing people's potential mobility.