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# The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

# Emotional Development

Introductory Guide  
for Teachers &  
Educational  
Managers

Better  
Learning



# Emotional Development

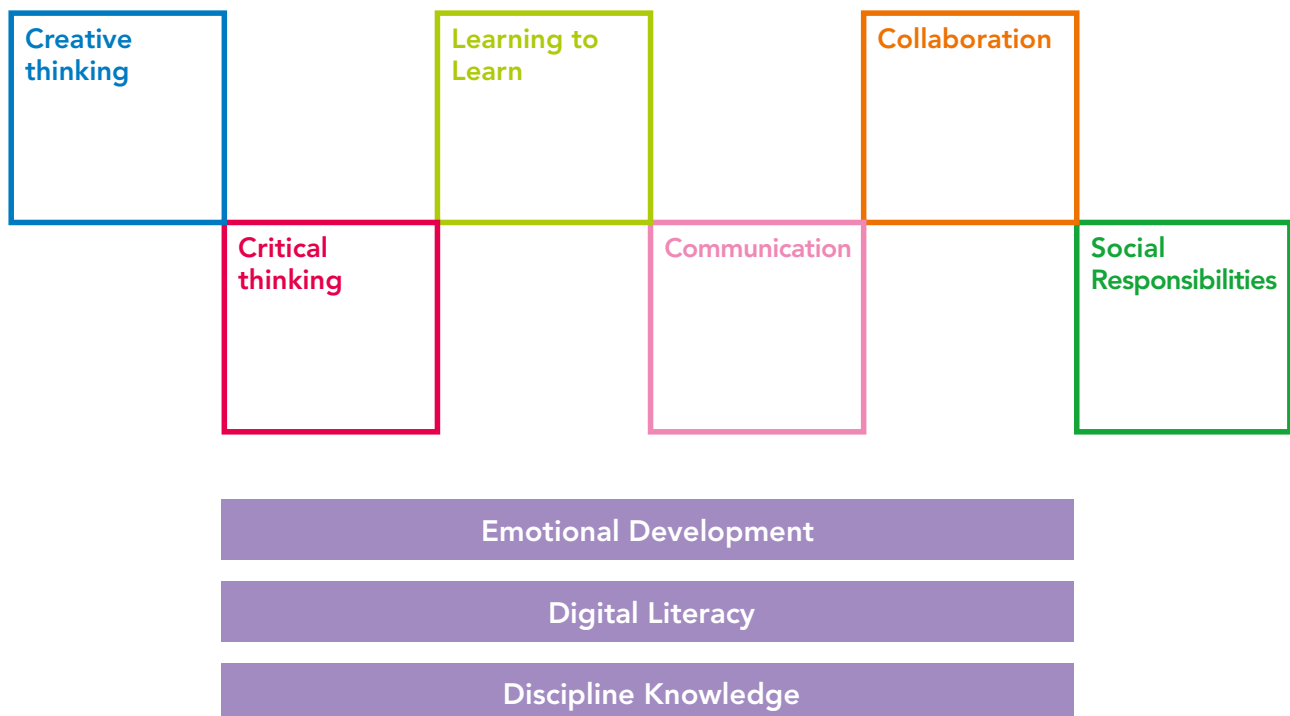
## Introduction to The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

There have been many initiatives to address the skills and competencies our learners need for the 21st century – each relating to different contexts. At Cambridge, we are responding to educators that have asked for a way to understand how all these different approaches to life competencies relate to English language programmes.

We have set out to analyse what the basic components of these competencies are. This is to help us create an underlying framework to interpret different initiatives.

We have grouped the different competencies into six main Areas of Competency, and linked this to three foundation layers of the Framework.

### THE CAMBRIDGE LIFE COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK



# The Learning Journey

We have also started work on examining the different stages of the learning journey, and how these competencies vary across each stage.



Pre-Primary



Primary



Secondary



Higher Education



At Work

Then we are developing Skills Descriptors (see page 6) to describe what can be expected of a learner at each stage of learning for each competency. The Skills Descriptors are phrased as what a learner should be able to do by the end of that stage of learning. We have started to develop Skills Descriptors as descriptions of observable behaviour.

The Framework provides different levels of detail – from the broad Areas of Competency to the specific Skills Descriptor.

Area of  
competency

Competency

Skill  
Descriptor

# Defining the Emotional Development

Emotional development is an important foundation for success at all ages. It affects our learning and our ability to carry out tasks effectively at work or in education. It is distinct from the other areas of competency in that the approach to supporting and evaluating emotional development is in most cases less explicit or teacher-directed. Generally, the recommended approach is to support emotional development by creating activities around other learning objectives that also give learners the opportunity to develop their emotional skills.

Emotional development impacts on academic and social success over and above the effect of cognitive ability (Izard, 2002; Qualter et al, 2011). Emotional skills underpin and support both the social and cognitive development in learners.

Emotional development consists of a set of abilities that emerge over time as a person develops in a social and educational context. These abilities are needed to understand and manage one's own emotions, understand other people's emotions, and form meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Emotional competence involves acquiring knowledge about a wide range of emotions and developing the ability to apply this knowledge in emotional situations and to employ a coping strategy for self and in relation to others.

We have identified three key abilities within the area of Emotional Development:

- **Identifying and understanding emotions** refers to learners' capacity to become aware of, and express, how they feel in different situations and contexts, on their own or in relation to other people. This could be achieved through reflection and self-appraisals of their strengths and weaknesses, thinking about their emotions and verbalising them, and identifying and describing their beliefs, values and actions.
- **Managing own emotions** relates to the ability to utilise emotions once they have been identified in order to deploy coping mechanisms in emotional situations, to minimise negative emotions and to enhance positive ones. Learners are able to adapt to aversive or distressing emotions by using self-regulatory strategies that lead to emotional resilience.
- **Empathy and relationship skills** involve learners' capacity to discern others' emotions based on expressive and situational cues. Learners are able to become involved in others' emotional experiences by displaying empathetic and sympathetic capacity. These skills involve caring for other people, understanding their perspectives and using that understanding for shared emotional response and relevant action. Learners are able to build and maintain relationships, participate in social interactions, and handle interpersonal problems such as conflict with respect and care.



# Emotional Development behaviours

Because of the less explicit, more inductive approach to emotional development (in contrast with the six areas of competency), we are not providing Skills Descriptors for Emotional Development. Instead, we are developing behaviours that give an indication of what to expect at each stage of development for different components of Emotional Development.

STAGE OF LEARNING	ABILITIES	BEHAVIOURS
PRE-PRIMARY	Identifying and understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying core emotional states (i.e. happy, sad, excited, bored, angry, scared, hurt).</li> <li>Naming things that make them feel good (things they are good at, things they like to do).</li> <li>Naming what makes them feel happy or sad.</li> <li>Ability to associate when prompted emotional states with people, events, situations, objects, items, etc.</li> </ul>
	Managing own emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeling of pride in accomplishment.</li> <li>Attempting to control upset or stress through various strategies.</li> <li>Controlling impulses and handling delayed gratification.</li> <li>Verbalising to their parent/carer about own emotions.</li> </ul>
	Empathy and relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising common emotions in peers (happiness, anger).</li> <li>Showing awareness of how others feel.</li> <li>Beginning to show understanding of interactions that are hurtful or unfair to others (e.g. lying, ignoring, teasing, hitting, excluding).</li> <li>Consoling others by hugging them, offering them something (e.g. a toy).</li> <li>Starting to create friendships.</li> </ul>
PRIMARY	Identifying and understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describing different emotions.</li> <li>Describing what makes them feel happy, sad or upset.</li> <li>Understanding that they can have more than one emotion for the same situation/event but that these emotions are related/similar (e.g. upset and anger).</li> <li>Articulating specific emotions and comparing them with those of others.</li> </ul>
	Managing own emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using strategies of controlling emotions when upset or stressed.</li> <li>Controlling level of excitement in class.</li> <li>Beginning to understand the extent to which it is important to manage own emotions.</li> <li>Engaging in self-talk.</li> </ul>
	Empathy and relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being aware of feelings of others, helping and comforting.</li> <li>Showing remorse after wrongdoing, especially when it has hurt or upset others.</li> <li>Showing concern and compassion for other children when they are hurt or upset.</li> <li>Identifying ways of making friends and being a good friend (sharing, listening, helping, respecting other people's feelings and belongings, noticing when someone feels unhappy, unwell or left out).</li> </ul>
SECONDARY	Identifying and understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describing a wider range of different emotions.</li> <li>Discussing what makes them feel different emotions.</li> <li>Describing strategies for dealing with difficult situations.</li> <li>Understanding how their own character weaknesses trigger specific emotions.</li> </ul>

STAGE OF LEARNING	ABILITIES	BEHAVIOURS
SECONDARY (CONTINUED)	Managing own emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with praise, setbacks and criticism.</li> <li>• Managing stress by employing strategies.</li> <li>• Managing emotions by re-evaluating and changing the situation.</li> <li>• Discussing own emotions mainly with friends and choosing the best coping strategy.</li> </ul>
	Empathy and relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing understanding of other people's perspectives and feelings.</li> <li>• Stating opposing opinions in a respectful way.</li> <li>• Negotiating conflict constructively.</li> <li>• Attending to maintaining relationships and feeling a sense of belonging.</li> </ul>
HE STUDENT	Identifying and understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulating what creates stress or difficult emotions.</li> <li>• Distinguishing between different emotions, even those that are similar (e.g. happiness and joy).</li> <li>• Foreseeing pleasant/challenging moments and intentionally seeking them out or avoiding them.</li> <li>• Understanding how emotions about other aspects of their lives can influence learning-related emotions.</li> </ul>
	Managing own emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using strategies for circumventing areas that create stress, frustration or anger.</li> <li>• Demonstrating tenacity to persevere despite hurdles and setbacks, with limited support from others.</li> <li>• Demonstrating resilience, drawing on past experiences and concentrating mainly on the task and not on negative emotions.</li> <li>• Keeping an emotion diary and reflecting on own experience of emotions and emotion management.</li> </ul>
	Empathy and relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing emotional support to others who are struggling.</li> <li>• Providing permissible practical support for others who are struggling.</li> <li>• Maintaining appropriate social relations with peers, instructors.</li> <li>• Refraining from saying things that might cause a disagreement to build into an argument.</li> </ul>
AT WORK	Identifying and understanding emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describing own emotions in an appropriate way for the workplace.</li> <li>• Demonstrating awareness of when emotions should be expressed.</li> <li>• Being fully aware of own character weaknesses and what action should be taken to overcome them.</li> <li>• Recognising when their emotions might influence work-related decisions.</li> </ul>
	Managing own emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using strategies for managing negative emotions resulting from interactions with colleagues or manager.</li> <li>• Using strategies for managing stress from workload or from customer/ supplier behaviour.</li> <li>• Repressing emotions to adhere to feeling rules of their workplace.</li> </ul>
	Empathy and relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying emotional issues among colleagues.</li> <li>• Providing appropriate support for colleagues with emotional issues.</li> <li>• Maintaining appropriate social relations with colleagues, managers, clients.</li> <li>• Being an attentive listener for colleagues' problems.</li> </ul>

# Practical Guidelines for teaching Emotional Development

## Introduction

Language classrooms are not just academic spaces where learners acquire a new language. Learners can also acquire the skills to grow in their self-knowledge and to connect with the people around them, impacting their overall wellbeing. Because of such potential, the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework includes an Emotional Development area with the purpose of interweaving language instruction with wellbeing objectives.

Before considering the benefits of emotional development and possible ways to integrate it into language teaching, it is important to establish whether such skills can actually be taught. Are people born with the ability to identify, understand and manage their emotions and empathize and relate to others, or is this something a person can learn? The answer likely lies in between.

While some individuals are naturally predisposed with effective emotional management skills, others need to cultivate theirs overtly. For those whose skills need cultivation, however, they must be personally motivated, persistently practise what they acquire, receive and act on feedback, and hone their new life skills.

The benefits of teaching emotional development include improved social effectiveness and better social relations. In terms of classroom behaviour, heightened emotional development results in:

- Higher test scores and grades;
- Minimal disruptive behaviour and confrontation;
- Maximized on-task behaviour;
- Increased social skills.





## Suggestions for classroom practice

### STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Using an individualised approach to developing emotional development** – Emotion is a feeling. It is the personal, subjective experience most often associated with emotion, such as the tension or worry that accompanies anxiety. As teachers coach learners in understanding and managing emotion and fostering effective relationships with others, they must acknowledge that all learners experience emotion in different ways, making a one-size-fits-all strategy training scheme ineffective. For a strategy to be effective, it must fit the individual learner and the specific context. Such individualization is also necessary in teachers' approach to incorporating emotional development strategies—no matter the age of the learner.

**Focus on minimising your students' anxiety in class** – Emotion can cause a physical reaction, like when one's heart races during an anxious situation. This reactive feature makes managing emotion complicated and challenging. For example, an anxious language learner during a role-play may feel their heart racing, awareness of which likely exacerbates their language anxiety. Even though emotional responses are often involuntary, teachers can influence learners' emotion in at least two ways: by creating the conditions to provoke a positive reaction, and to work with the cognition that changes the emotional state through reappraisal.

Cognitive reappraisal is an emotion management strategy that allows learners to reinterpret an emotion. In other words, a learner's racing heart – a completely normal reaction to an intimidating classroom exercise – can be cognitively reappraised as something other than an anxiety response. For example, teachers might explicitly coach learners in changing their appraisal from, "I am so anxious my heart is racing", to the following reinterpretation: "I am so enthusiastic about doing this role-play that my heart is beating fast!" In this way, a learner re-directs nervous energy into enthusiasm.

**Support your students to become aware of how their emotions affect them in class** – One common belief is that there are "good" or "bad" emotions. Although an emotion can feel pleasant or unpleasant, all emotion serves a purpose – even, for example, anxiety and jealousy. When a person feels anxious, a threat is perceived, and the aim or purpose is to remove it.

In reference to language learning, positive emotion enhances the building up of resources. It broadens a learner's perspective and opens him/her up to acquire language. Alternatively, negative emotion yields the reverse. It narrows a learner's focus and restricts the range of potential language input. It is therefore important for teachers to influence learners' emotions in a positive way, and show how recognition of negative emotions can lead them to turning it around and making it positive.

**Allow your students to express their emotions and help them understand them** – Emotions are expressive; they are the social and communicative dimension – what the outside world sees. Emotion is primarily communicated through nonverbal behaviour (which includes the use of the voice). In understanding others' emotions, recipients' interpretations will overwhelmingly be guided by how, rather than what, was said.

For language teachers attempting to help learners understand and manage emotion and build healthy relationships, their first and probably most daunting challenge is awareness raising. Across all age groups, whether learners are sensing or sharing the feelings of others, or reacting to or expressing their own feelings, they need a set of interrelated skills and processes, but it all begins with becoming mindful.



## EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- **“Name it to tame it”**

Simply put, naming feelings helps to get a hold on them (and develop an “emotion vocabulary”). If learners can see their emotion, they do not have to give in to it – they can consciously be aware of their bodies and minds and disengage from the emotion. To do this, teachers could invite learners to say silently or aloud, or write down, the negative emotion they are experiencing – as they are experiencing it – in order to gain distance.

- **“Know it to grow it”**

To put a positive spin on “name it to tame it”, teachers could use the idea of labelling emotions as a means of building mindfulness toward the emotions in play during interactions with other learners. Empathetic teachers and learners understand and share the feelings of others, which first necessitates that they can identify the emotion. Simply silently naming the emotion being felt by the other brings it to consciousness and provides information necessary to respond more empathetically. For example, upon entering into an interaction with a learner, the teacher can experiment with challenging him/herself to first stop and think, “what is this person feeling right now?” before even saying a word and in this way become more aware of the other’s state of mind.

- **“Finding the silver lining”**

Learners in this activity pay particular attention to problems – big and small – that arise in their classes or lives outside of school. The aim is to engage in finding the bright side of a negative situation and creating a habit of considering the positive consequences that the situation may have. Rather than denying the negative sides of situations, this activity provides a realistic, learner-generated blend of negative and positive interpretations in circumstances that otherwise might be seen as uniformly negative.

Learners can use their language skills to verbalize their “silver linings” of any situation to teachers and classmates or document each episode in writing. Teachers need simply to challenge learners: every time they come up against something problematic, they try to find at least one thing good about it. This could be done using the following template:

Situation:	
What is negative about this?	What is a positive consequence of this?

- **Three good things**

Invite learners to write down three events that went well during the day and briefly describe the reason (the “reason” step is critical, as it requires more genuine thought than merely writing down events). This can help to boost happiness and reduce negative emotions. The following template can be used:

Three good things that happened today	Reasons:

- **Savouring**

Savouring refers to being mindful of pleasant experiences and intentionally reminiscing, living them in detail and making them last. Savourers concentrate attentively on a particular experience, event, or achievement to become totally immersed in the pleasure of the moment. To develop savouring skills, teachers could invite learners to stop and notice something enjoyable and use their language skills to share it with others. They could then be encouraged to take something from the event, like a photo or memento to reminisce over and remember the positive emotions they associate with the event. For example, teachers can take learners on a nature walk and ask them to find three things that they would not have noticed before. Learners could touch it, smell it, and carefully observe it so that when they get back to the classroom, they can share their savoured experience. Teachers could challenge learners to make this a daily habit.



# Example of activities developing Emotional Development

## PRIMARY

Power Up Level 4, page 65,  
ISBN 9781108414661

**Ability:** Empathy and relationship skills

**Behaviour:** Showing remorse after wrongdoing, especially when it has hurt or upset others.



When Tomás came back he was surprised to find that El Viejo wasn't there. 'Where is he?' he said. 'Oh, he walked away down the hill,' Valentín answered. 'I don't know where he was going.' Tomás started crying. 'No!' he said. 'He can't! El Viejo! Come back!' Before Valentín could stop him, Tomás ran back to the house shouting, 'Mummy! Daddy! El Viejo has gone!'

5

When Valentín got home, he found his brother sitting at the kitchen table. His mother and father looked at him in that special way, the one they used when they weren't pleased with him. Valentín said, 'I'm sorry, Tomás,' and then he asked his brother to go back to the hill. 'We'll make another El Viejo,' he said, 'lots of them.' 'Can we?' Tomás asked. 'Can we, Valentín?' And that was what the brothers did for the rest of the day. They filled the hillside with snowmen. Valentín was happy that his brother was excited and he thought to himself, 'Well, there's always tomorrow – I'll go snowboarding then.'



### 2 Role play a conversation with a partner. Imagine you are Tomás and Valentín.

- A** You are Tomás. You're very sad about El Viejo. You were very excited when you made him and you were very sad when you saw that El Viejo wasn't there. Tell Valentín how you feel.

I'm very sad, Valentín. I liked the snowman so much!

- B** You are Valentín. You're sorry that you made Tomás sad. You only wanted to go snowboarding. Say sorry to Tomás, tell him what happened and talk about the new snowmen you can make together.

I'm very sorry, Tomás. I didn't want you to be sad. Let's make lots more snowmen. They'll be bigger and better than El Viejo.

Social and emotional skill: Showing remorse

65

## SECONDARY

Collaborate Level 4, page 87,  
ISBN 9788490366028


**Ability:** Identifying and understanding emotions

**Behaviour:** Discussing what makes them feel different emotions.


### VOCABULARY

#### Feelings

1 Read the leaflet about happiness. Do you recognise the feelings it describes?

 2 Match the words in **bold** in the leaflet with the words and phrases 1–13. Then listen, check and repeat.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 happy <i>glad</i> | 8 quiet and calm                       |
| 2 angry             | 9 in emotional pain                    |
| 3 unhappy           | 10 extremely happy                     |
| 4 very silly        | 11 finding something funny             |
| 5 feeling thanks    | 12 positive about the future           |
| 6 not confident     | 13 pleased you have achieved something |
| 7 enthusiastic      |  |

 3 Listen to the conversations. Complete the sentences with a word from the leaflet.

- Sally feels absolutely ...
- The boy feels ...
- Mark felt absolutely ...
- The girl feels really ...
- Monica is feeling a bit ...


### LEARN TO LEARN

#### Remembering adjectives

Writing a sentence about your personal experiences with new adjectives will help you remember them.


4 Do Part 1 in the Stay happy! leaflet. Write a sentence for each adjective.

*I feel amused when I watch comedy films.*

5  **COLLABORATE** Work in pairs. Read out your sentences. Do you have similar or different ideas?

*I feel satisfied when I score a goal in football.*

*Really? Well, I like art so I feel really satisfied when I've drawn a good picture.*

6  **Use it!** Now do Part 2 of the leaflet. Tell your partner your plans. Do they think you will really do them?

## Stay happy!

Adolescence can be an emotional rollercoaster. Sometimes you're absolutely **thrilled** to be alive, then suddenly you feel **down** for no reason. You often feel **insecure** about who you are, and **annoyed** with every adult on the planet. You can feel **ridiculous** when you don't know something all your friends seem to know, and **hurt** that nobody seems to care about what you're feeling. Of course, people do care, which is why we've created this exercise for developing positive emotions.

**Part 1** For each word below (**amused**, etc.), think of an activity or situation that helps you feel that emotion.

**Part 2** Choose two positive emotions you want to practise. Using your ideas, do something which will increase those emotions every day for a week. We've given you some examples.


I feel ...	This week I will ...
<b>amused</b> when my best friend tells me jokes.	ask him to tell me some every day.
<b>hopeful</b> when I make a wish.	make three wishes about ...
<b>peaceful</b> when I walk on the beach.	...
<b>grateful</b> when my brother helps me with my homework.	...
<b>eager</b> when I start a new art project.	...
<b>satisfied</b> when I've tidied my room.	...
<b>glad</b> when my friends are happy.	...

### Explore it!

**Guess the correct answer.**

Complete the expression *Laughter is the best ...*

**a** communication **b** exercise **c** medicine

 **Find out a fact about smiling and write a question for your partner to answer.**

# ADULT

Empower Level B2, page 123,  
ISBN 9781107468757

**Ability:** Identifying and understanding emotions

**Behaviour:** Distinguishing different emotions, even those that are similar (e.g. happiness and joy).

## UNIT 10

### 4 USEFUL LANGUAGE

#### Describing how you felt

- a 3.64 Complete what Tessa says with the words in the box. Then listen and check.

get believe can't surprised so over couldn't

I \_\_\_\_\_ it. I was \_\_\_\_\_. First prize! I still \_\_\_\_\_ it.

- b Discuss the questions.

- How does Tessa say she felt?  
a) happy    b) disappointed    c) surprised
- Which word has the main stress in each sentence?  
Practise saying the sentences.

- c Here are some more ways to describe how you felt.

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 I wasn't expecting it. | 3 I was really pleased. |
| 2 It was quite a blow.   | 4 I was expecting it.   |

Which mean ... ?

- I was surprised.
- I wasn't surprised.
- I was happy.
- I was shocked or disappointed.

- d Choose one of the situations below. Make notes to describe how you felt and why, but don't mention what happened! Use expressions in 4a and 4c.

- Your boss called you into his office and said that you were fired.
- You have won £10,000 on the lottery.
- You didn't prepare for the exam and you failed it.
- Your best friend told you he/she is getting married.
- Someone stole your wallet.
- You were promoted.

- e Read out your sentences. Can other students guess the situation?

I really wasn't expecting it.

I was so surprised because I only bought one ticket.

I still can't believe it.

### 5 CONVERSATION SKILLS

#### Interrupting and announcing news

- a 3.65 Watch or listen to Part 3 again. Complete the remarks.

- Hold \_\_\_\_\_.
- There's something \_\_\_\_\_ we have to celebrate.
- Hang \_\_\_\_\_ a minute.
- I know you won't \_\_\_\_\_ this ...
- Just a \_\_\_\_\_.
- One more \_\_\_\_\_.

- b Which remarks ... ?

- are ways to stop people ending a conversation
- are ways to show you are about to say something important

- c Answer these questions.

- At the end of each remark, does the voice ... ?  
a stay high  
b go down
- Does this show the other person ... ?  
a that you've finished speaking  
b that you haven't finished speaking

- d Practise saying the remarks.

### 6 SPEAKING

- a Work in groups of four (A, B, C and D). You're in a restaurant. You each have an important piece of news to tell your group.

Student A: You've just been offered a new job.

Student B: You've won a free trip to Paris for two weeks.

Student C: You're getting married.

Student D: You've won a prize in a poetry competition.

Work alone and decide:

- what details you will give
- which expressions you will use in 4a, 4c and 5a.

- b Have a conversation. Take it in turns to announce your news. Then continue talking until the next person interrupts.

### Unit Progress Test

#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

You can now do the Unit Progress Test.

# Further reading

Here are a number of books or articles that you could also look at:

Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Jaeger, A. J. (2003). Job competencies and the curriculum: An inquiry into emotional intelligence in graduate professional education. *Research in higher education*, 44(6), 615-639.

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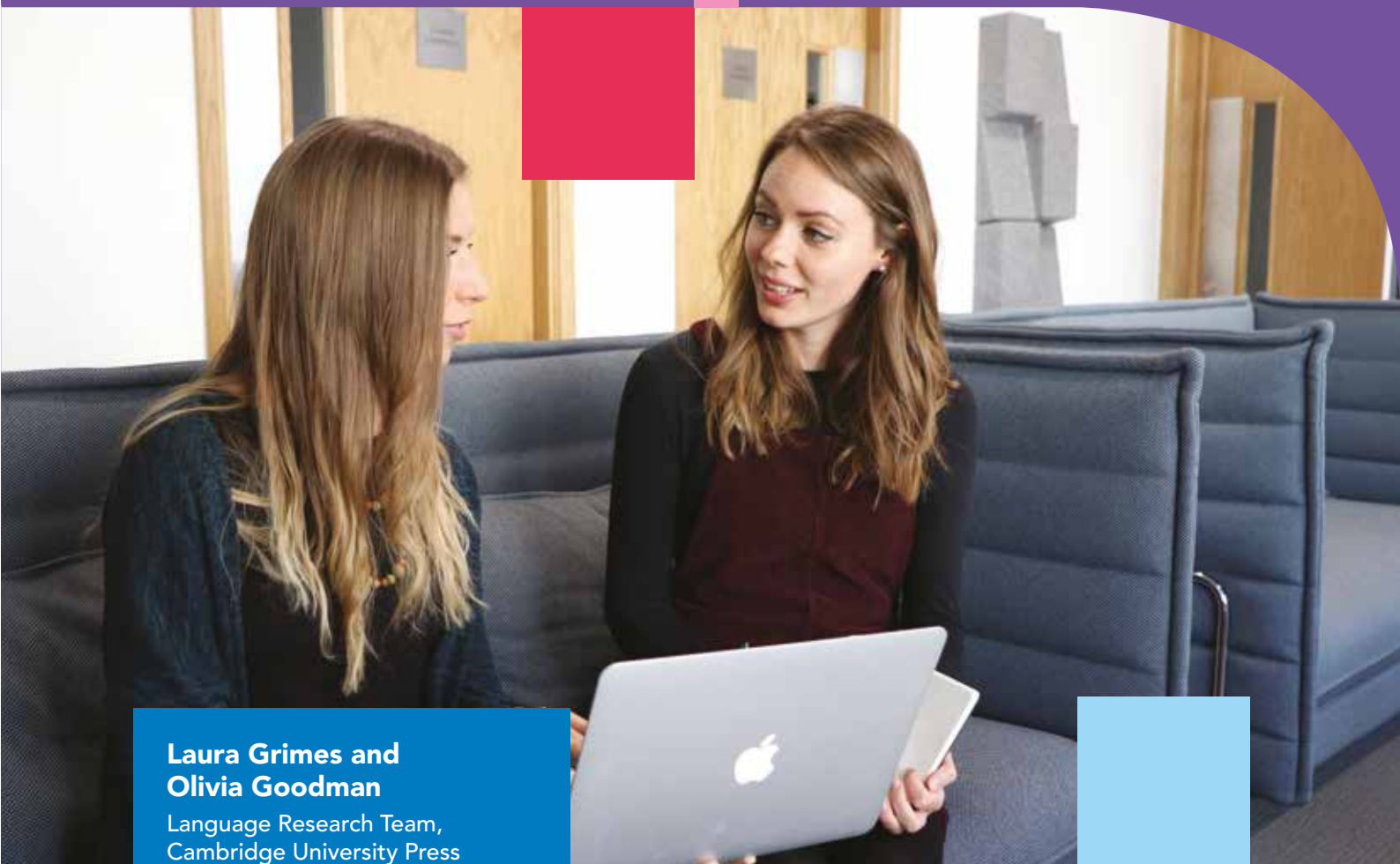
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Cambridge University Press



You can find information about the other competencies in The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://cambridge.org/clcf)

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Creative Thinking
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Emotional Development
- ✓ Learning to Learn
- ✓ Social Responsibilities

