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**There are 17 'steps' or grades on the Ladder, divided into six stages:**

- Breakthrough (Grades 1-3) is the 'beginner' stage.
- The Preliminary stage (Grades 4-6) is at the same level as the lower grades at GCSE.
- The Intermediate stage (Grades 7-9) is at the same level as the higher grades at GCSE.
- The Advanced stage (Grades 10-12) is at the same level as the AS and A levels.
- The Proficiency stage (Grades 13-15) reflects the skills of an undergraduate studying languages.
- The Mastery stage (Grades 16 and 17) reflects the skills of a postgraduate languages student or a native speaker.

**Just as with other qualifications, each stage covers a range of ability levels. For example, a learner at Grade 6 on the Ladder would have a qualification at a level equivalent to a D at GCSE, whereas a learner at Grade 9 would be closer to an A.**

**The Languages Ladder – Steps to Success**

We want to encourage people to recognise the value of the language skills they already have and to inspire them to think of their future language learning in a new way. That is why we have developed a national recognition scheme – the Languages Ladder.

**The Languages Ladder differs from existing approaches to assessment in languages in two important ways:**

- There are separate Languages Ladder qualifications in each language for reading, writing, listening and speaking. There is no need for a learner to take tests in all four areas if they prefer to concentrate on their speaking skills, for example.
- The Languages Ladder can be used by learners of any age and at any level – from the beginner to the practically bilingual.

**It is designed to be as flexible as possible:**

- Learners can use a set of 'I can...' statements to estimate where their current language skills sit on the Ladder and monitor their progress in a new language.
- Teachers can use the Languages Ladder in the classroom and will be able to award certificates to learners who are working at a particular grade on the Languages Ladder.
- Learners can work towards a nationally-recognised Languages Ladder qualification, which will be recognised by employers and count towards schools' performance table scores.

UCLES will offer these qualifications through the 'Asset Languages' scheme. Asset Languages qualifications will be introduced over a five-year period, starting in September 2005, and will include:

**Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh and Yoruba.**

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# A boost for modern foreign languages

How the National Languages Strategy is transforming the languages capability of the nation



Languages are crucial for the future of our young people, our society and our economy.

That is why this Government has a National Languages Strategy to transform the languages capability of the nation.

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*Delivering an entitlement to language learning for 7-11 year olds is the centre piece of our strategy.*

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We all have a role to play in transforming our country's national capability in languages - as learners, teachers, employers, local and central government and language speakers within our communities.

The Strategy sets out an ambitious and radical programme to boost the number of people learning languages and increase the value which we place on language skills. We will introduce languages into primary classrooms, and ensure that pupils have the opportunity to build on these foundations throughout secondary school and beyond.

**By 2010,**

- We want all 7-11 year-olds to learn a language in school.
- These children will enter secondary school with language learning skills on which they can build, and will be motivated to continue.
- We will deliver a national training programme for teachers and other adults in primary schools.
- We will establish a network of advice and resources centres to support language teaching and learning.
- We will recognise and celebrate learners' achievements in a wide range of languages through a new national recognition scheme – the Languages Ladder.

**Here is how we will do it**

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### So far...

- Since we launched the Strategy in 2002, we have invested £22m in modern foreign languages education in England.
- Over 1000 primary schools in 19 local 'Pathfinder' authorities have been trialling approaches to teaching languages.
- Over 1200 new primary teacher trainees have trained with an additional specialism in languages teaching.
- We have trained more than 700 existing primary teachers and have developed a training course for teaching assistants with language skills.
- We have developed a vision for language teaching for 7-11 year olds, which will be available for teachers from September 2005.
- We have funded CILT, the National Centre for Languages, to run a National Advisory Centre ([www.nacell.org.uk](http://www.nacell.org.uk)) for primary language learning and to co-ordinate

a network of regional Comenius Centres which provide advice and resources for teachers.

- We have reached our initial target of 200 Specialist Language Colleges.
- Over 11,000 pupils and teachers participated in British Council-administered educational exchanges in 2003-4, with countries including Russia and China.
- Ofsted has found that a new national approach to language teaching at 11-14 (through the Key Stage 3 Strategy) is having a positive impact on pupil attitudes – particularly boys'.
- We have made vocational courses with languages a real alternative to GCSEs by expanding the list of qualifications that go towards performance table scores to include more language qualifications.
- We have produced 'Languages Work': career guidance materials for teenagers which highlight how useful language skills can be in getting a job.

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*Since we launched the Strategy in 2002, we have invested £22m in modern foreign languages education in England.*

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*The Global Gateway was launched in February 2004. It enables schools across the world to work together:*  
[www.globalgateway.org](http://www.globalgateway.org)  
<<http://www.globalgateway.org>>

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*In the knowledge society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen.*

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### We are continuing to invest...

Over the next three years, we will be spending a further £115m:

#### **£60m**

to provide funding for initial teacher training, support for foreign language assistants and in-service training for teachers and teaching assistants and to build local and regional advisory and training networks (within LEAs).

#### **£14m**

to support new approaches to teaching and learning for 11-18 year olds, including vocational languages options.

#### **£30m**

to extend the role language colleges play in supporting local primary and secondary schools, including a £30k additional grant available to every school with either an initial or second specialism in languages.

#### **£5m**

to introduce the Languages Ladder – the National Recognition Scheme for Languages.

#### **£6m**

to encourage international links and carry out research.

### By 2008, the Government will have invested £137 million in languages teaching.

This investment will enable us to make great strides forward in implementing the Strategy.

#### **By 2010,**

- All 7-11 year olds will have the opportunity to learn a language in their primary schools.
- We will have funded 6000 trainees to follow a primary teacher training course which also develops their language teaching skills.
- We will have provided access to training for 18,000 existing primary teachers.
- We will have provided funding for training for 9000 teaching assistants with language skills.
- 400 Specialist Languages Colleges (including schools with a dual or second specialism with languages)

will be working with other local schools.

- Regional and local learning networks will support languages across the country.
- Schools will be providing new and innovative languages courses which will encourage pupils to continue with their language studies.
- A national recognition scheme – the Languages Ladder – will be well-established, allowing all learners to have their achievements in a wide range of languages recognised and celebrated.

We want to enable our young people to realise their potential by giving them the skills to succeed in a global society. That process starts now.