

LEVEL TEST POLICY 2024 - BART DE PAU LANGUAGE COURSES

This document answers questions like:

- When should I do a level test?
- Which level test should I do?
- Why should I do a level test?
- What if I want to study (a lot) before starting the course?
- When is it not necessary to do a level test?
- What if I signed up for the wrong level?

1. Introduction

For a description of our levels and related course programmes: [click here](#).

A level test is mandatory before you book a course or right after you book a course (within the 14 days cooling off period you can still change the levels free of charge).

Level testing is important:

- our groups are usually fully booked long before the start of the course: switching levels at a later stage is not possible
- sometimes, we have multiple groups on the same level: with a level test, we group students based on common test results and background

It's strongly advised to do our best possible level assessment (as explained under 3). **If you do that, there is no real need to read the rest of this document.**

We get a lot of questions like:

- why it is necessary to do a test?
- is it really necessary?
- can i do the test at a later moment?
- i really know that I have b1 level, why should i do a test?
- i have done level 3 with you, should i do a test before booking level 4?
- if my certificate from a different school enough?

This document answers those questions.

2. Explanation: level prediction vs invested time

The more we test prior to signing up, the better chance that you sign up for the level that benefits you most. Signing up for the right level (not too high and not too low) is an important success factor for the results of the course. You will have the best result in a course of your level and in a group with students who have approximately the same level.

We measured the accuracy of our level tests by asking the teachers afterwards: did the level test beforehand predict the right level; would it have been better if the student had booked a different level? A single test has an accuracy of 95%. A complete assessment (see below) has an accuracy of 99%.

Why do we not force a total 1-hour assessment?

We would lose half our clients by forcing a 1-hour complete level assessment. The time investment and the related stress is simply too much for some people. It's not something that all students like to do when booking a course. So we try to balance time investment versus accuracy. We offer the maximum assessment for the people who want the best possible indication. And we offer minimum testing for people who want to quickly pass the test.

3. Best possible level assessment

For the best possible indication of the right level to book:

STEP 1: Do this [multiple choice test](#) (receptive skills) - approximately 30-45 minutes

STEP 2: Do this short [fill-the-gap](#) (productive skills) - 12 minutes

STEP 3: Call us for an oral intake / level consultation (speaking and listening skills) - 5-10 minutes

This will give a complete indication of several aspects of Dutch proficiency. This 1-hour time investment will determine how effective the main time investment (lessons + self study = 60-80 hours) will be.

When doing an oral intake after a level test, you will also find out what kind of preparation will boost your course results.

4. Minimum required level assessment

If you don't have enough time, you can just do the minimum required test (or no test as specified in 5).

- If you (plan to) book level 1, 2: do the multiple choice test
- If you (plan to) book level 3: do the multiple choice test AND the fill-the gap test
- If you (plan to) book level 4, 5, 6: do the fill-the-gap test AND the oral intake

Depending on the test result and if you want to book a different level than the test indicates: an oral intake/level consultation is in some cases mandatory. Only if needed.

Please note: if you choose the option to go for the minimum required testing: you automatically waive any complaints. So, please do not request at a later stage or even after the start of the course to change levels nor complain afterwards that it was too easy or too difficult. As said: with minimum testing the accuracy is 95%, not 100%.

5. When is it **not necessary to do a level test?**

- if you book level 1 (from 0 to A1) and you have no prior knowledge at all
- if you repeat a level at our school, for example: if you have completed level 3 at Bart de Pau, you can book the same level again without new test
- if you book a next level after you have completed a course with us AND your teacher has explicitly confirmed in writing to the course management that you are ready for the next level
- if you have done level 5, 6 or R with us in the past
- if you have passed a state exam (explained below)

We repeat that in all situations it is advised to do the level assessment (explained in 3). The above mentioned situations only indicate when it is not mandatory.

Good to know: level test results are stored for 1 year. So if you had a level test one year ago that suggested to book 'level 4', there is no need to do the level test again, unless you want to book a higher level.

6. How about a certificate?

6.1 A language school certificate

A certificate from a language school does not exempt you from doing the level test. Even a certificate from Bart de Pau Language Courses.

Why?

- Most language schools (like us) offer a certificate of attendance without exam. You get the certificate if you attend 80% of the lessons. Completing a course is something different than mastering the content.
- Even if there is an exam: a commercial language school has a strong incentive to have a satisfied customer at the end of the course. A document confirming a certain level boosts satisfaction. That means that it leads to some inflation. Only very few schools have a neutral test at the end.
- Each school has its own interpretation of CEFR (the classification A1, A2, etc). Our estimate is quite conservative. We see that what we call A2+ is sometimes called B1 by other schools.
- A certificate is a document that confirms a level at a certain moment. It's not guaranteed that a student has the same level at the moment of booking the course. If it's 2 years ago and someone did not study afterwards, the level is not going to be the same.

6.2 A state exam certificate

Yes, we do take into account certificates after a state exam - in case **you send us a scan**.

Inburgering A2 (ALL components!): we notice that not everybody who passed Inburgering A2 is ready for our level 3:

- you can sign up for level 2 without test
- but you need to do our level test to sign up for level 3.

CNaVT A2:

- you can sign up for level 3 without test

Staatsexamen programma I (B1) or CNaVT B1 level:

- you can sign up for level 4 without test

Staatsexamen programma II (B2) or CNaVT B2 level:

- you can sign up for level 5

We repeat that in all situations it is advised to do the level assessment (explained in 3). The above mentioned situations only indicate when it is not mandatory.

7. If you completed a previous level with us

After completing a course, not everybody is ready for the next level. To be more precise: most students are not ready for the next level immediately, as it requires some time to digest the content of a course and review the course materials after the last lesson. That is normal: any course in school would also require some time to study before passing an exam.

We strongly recommend to take a short break after to review the materials. You really need to master the content, before you can move on with the next level. Ideally, you book the next level only when the level test (or your teacher) confirms that you are ready for it.

- if you plan to book more than 1 level: book a pause in-between levels to review the materials
- if you plan to book the levels in a sequence without pause: that is only possible with an oral intake

8. If you plan to study a lot

Many students fear a bad result in the level placement test. And they think, that they first should prepare well before doing the test. Also, some students have ambitious plans regarding their preparation.

This is exactly the reason why we offer an oral intake / level consultation by phone.

Based on your current level and the preparation that you plan, we can discuss what is realistic.

9. What if you realised that you booked the wrong level?

Prior to the start of the course: contact us as soon as possible. The earlier you contact us, the better chance there is a solution (and availability on a different level).

It's not guaranteed that the same level will be available at the same date; in this case a switch of course dates is an option.

Please note that switching at **a later stage** (less than 4 weeks prior to the course) is never a guaranteed option. And our normal cancellation terms will apply.

If you haven't done the advised full level assessment (under 3) you waive all the complaints.

10. Level test with help

It is not allowed to do a level test with any help. For a teacher, it is pretty easy to spot a mismatch between the test result and the actual level. In case of such a mismatch we may require to do a similar level test under supervision. One should be able to reproduce approximately the same result. If we detect that a student made the test with help in order to be able to sign up for a higher level, this would be a serious violation of our agreement: by booking the course you have guaranteed to have the required entrance level. Not meeting this condition: the regular cancellation terms apply. Which is no refund in case you find out that you booked the wrong level after the start of the course.

11. A common **misconception**: I will learn more if I sign up for a higher level

Some people think that they will learn more if they sign up for a higher level. They fear to be in a group with weaker students. They think that if other people are better, that this will make them stronger.

This is not true for our courses. We have a high pace and our courses are very intensive. If you start with a gap, most likely you won't be able to close the gap. It makes no sense to learn exceptions to rules that you don't master. The teacher won't answer questions that belong on the previous level. And it might cause stress if you're clearly the weaker student in a group. You might feel pressure rather than encouragement.

In order to get the maximum out of our course on a certain level: you need to master the content of what we teach on the previous levels.

We understand that you don't want to be in a group with weaker students. But that also counts for the students at the higher level: they might not want to be in a group with you if you are weaker than them.

So once again: sign up for the **right level** (not higher, not lower).

If you doubt about your level: better to be on the conservative side, and most of all: do the full level assessment including oral intake (as mentioned in 3)!

12. Managing expectations

We have our level test policy to aim for the best possible groups. At the same time we understand that requiring a full level assessment from everybody is not realistic.

Additionally: every student has a unique range of skills and knowledge. Within a specific level, one student may be better in grammar, while the other student is better in speaking. It is good to realise that in group courses, there will be always differences between people. You won't be in a group with just clones of yourself. If you want a programme tailored to your individual needs, then an individual course might be something to consider. We only offer group courses at this moment.