



IO3.2 Development of the explanatory sheet

Intro

- 1. Pedagogical part**
- 2. Technical part**

Intro

The purpose of IO3 is the creation of e-books that will be used in a second language acquisition. These e-books will be a development of e-worksheets, created in IO2. This explanatory sheet has a purpose to help teachers in creating their e-books that they will use during lessons with their students.

Pedagogical part

- 1) Why e-books? Functionalities and innovativeness of e-books as a learning tool.
- 2) How to distinguish and define the language levels & how to evaluate your students' knowledge and adapt the language level appropriately

3) How to accentuate the diversity and show other countries' cultures by exploring the worksheets and the e-books

Why e-books? Functionalities and innovativeness of e-books as a learning tool.

The e-book market is growing exponentially and is expected to show 4,2% annual growth by 2024. This is in large part thanks to many features that make users' lives and the experience of reading easier, interactive and engaging. Printed books can hardly compete with the vast choice that e-books offer. Many of these features can be used in education.

The most interesting feature of e-books is, without a doubt, their interactivity. Interactive elements add another dimension to the written content and encourage the reader to actively participate in the lecture process. Interactive elements are the ones that we surely cannot find in paper books. We can enumerate resources like:

- audio
- videos
- animations
- quizzes
- widgets
- interactive questions
- polls

You can also enrich your e-book by providing links to other content by embedding the links. Not only will this help you give your readers a broader view of the problem you're talking about, but it will also help you avoid cluttering your e-book. Providing external links will present your e-book as a viable resource and your research as extensive and thorough.

To make your e-book functional, remember to make sure your creation is reflowable. This will help you reach the readers on various devices and will guarantee that your content will look good on all of them.

The innovativeness of e-books lies in their simple design and easy-to-use layout. We can list functionalities such as “recently viewed”, “universal search”, “bookmark” or “notes” among others.

- The “recently viewed” function will help readers keep track of their actions and revisit the previously read content.
- The “universal search” function enables users to search for any fragment of the e-book by tapping the keyword in the search bar.
- The “bookmark” function will let them mark the fragments that are most important for them.
- The “notes” function will let them add notes regarding the content.

The functionalities, as well as the interactive elements result in an e-book that is visually appealing and easy to use. That is why it can be used by educators, but also by students themselves. It is also the reason why we’ve chosen e-books as our predominant tool of this output. We hope they will become a resource that the participants of the POEME project will be able to reuse again in the future.

How to distinguish and define the language levels & how to evaluate your students’ knowledge and adapt the language level appropriately

For your students to be able to benefit from the e-books, it is essential to evaluate their second language level correctly. That way, you can adapt the content of your e-book to your students’ linguistic possibilities, while also giving them the opportunity to improve their expression and comprehension skills. The distinction between A1 and A2 or A2 and B1 is sometimes difficult and vague, and it is important to do it correctly: while challenging your students is the key to their progress, too big of a challenge can rapidly discourage them from learning a second language and give them the false impression that this process is painful and exhausting.

CEFR, or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is the main reference while defining the language level of your students. Below, we present the CEFR table of common reference levels.

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

Depending on their general language skills, the students' levels may vary. Please note: this table is used as a point of reference and shouldn't be treated as an international standard or as a set of ready-made answers.

Before trying to estimate and evaluate their language level, it can also be interesting to give your students a self-assessment grid, also prepared by CEFR. While not always realistic, the results can also tell you something more about your students' self-esteem and their self-image. This can help you choose the right strategy to approach your students. You have to also think about the fact that sometimes students under- or overestimate their language possibilities.

The self-assessment can also be useful afterwards, enabling you to see if the language level used is appropriate for your students. If this is not the case, you can think about adapting your lessons' level by either making your exercises easier or more difficult. If you don't want to modify your exercises, you can think about adding some elements that may help your students fully benefit from your lessons, like oral exercises for higher-level students, grammar and vocabulary exercises for lower-level students.

How to accentuate the diversity and show other countries' cultures by exploring the worksheets and the e-books

The e-worksheets and e-books target students who want to learn a second language by exploring other countries' cultures. Each creation was conceived by a partner organisation that is also a representative of the culture presented therein. This way we have ensured that each worksheet is a real-life depiction of each culture and events. The e-worksheets provide additional local resources that can be used outside of the classroom and without the e-worksheets.

While creating the worksheets, partners presented their national contexts' customs and habits, traditional food, important buildings, all of which covering four types of heritage: tangible, intangible, digital and natural.

The POEME project involves six European partners:

- Citizens in Power (CIP) from Nicosia, Cyprus
- SCS Logopsycom from Mons, Belgium
- Les Apprimeurs from Paris, France
- Society for the Promotion of School Establishments (SPEL) from Espinho, Portugal
- Directorate of Secondary Education Piera (DISEPI) from Katerini, Greece
- IASIS from Athens, Greece

The project's partners have created 18 e-worksheets in English that have then been translated to partners' national languages, i.e., Greek, French and Portuguese. The content of each worksheet is targeted towards learners with a different language level, ranging from A1 to B2. The topics and authors of the e-worksheets are listed below.

Lake of the Seven Cities in Portugal (created by SPEL)

Codfish – a Portuguese staple food (created by SPEL)

Belgian chocolate (created by Logopsycom)

Greek food...for thought (created by DISEPI)

Écrins National Park: the home for animals and plants (created by Les Apprimeurs)

French gastronomic meal (created by Les Apprimeurs)

Meteora, Greece (created by IASIS)

Troodos Mountains / Mount Olympus (created by CIP)

The castle of Guimaraes. Birthplace of the Portuguese nation (created by SPEL)

BE MODERN – Exploring Abstract Art (created by Logopsycom)

Ancient Greek World (created by DISEPI)

Petra tou Romiou – Aphrodite's birthplace (created by CIP)

Discovering Paris with Paris Musées (created by Les Apprimeurs)

The mountain of Gods (created by DISEPI)

Major Town houses of Victor Horta (created by Logopsycom)

Commandaria (created by CIP)

Digital museum of Acropolis (created by IASIS)

The Medieval City of Rhodes (created by IASIS)

POEME project presents a somewhat unusual approach to second language acquisition, as it is primarily concentrated on the exploration of other countries' cultures. Thanks to this, students will be pushed out of their comfort zone – linguistically and geographically – and will better understand the cultural reality in which their local peers function. We believe that this way of approaching second language acquisition can be a lot more beneficial than more traditional ways of learning. Although language and culture appear, on the surface, to be two distinct fields, they have an intertwined relationship and affect each other.

Gleason (1961) and Kim (2020) state that languages are not only products of cultures but are also symbols of them. The development of a language frequently affects its associated culture, and cultural patterns of cognition and custom are often explicitly coded in language. Learning a new language will also involve the notion of culture in relation to language.

Students cannot truly master a new language until they have mastered the cultural context in which the new language occurs. This means that understanding a new culture is an important element in achieving success in second language acquisition.

In fact, the learning of a language and the learning of a culture can be compared with a child's first experiences with the family into which he/she is born, the community to which he/she belongs, and the environment in which he/she lives (Lu, 1998).

Additionally, the perception that teachers may have of a student's culture may have a positive or negative effect in the learning process of a second language (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Cultural perception and intercultural training are very important for the teacher of a second language. If children are given cultural knowledge, are immersed in a culturally rich environment, and are also exposed to culturally-basic material, they may learn a second language with more ease because their background knowledge regarding the host country's culture will make comprehension less difficult.

Source: "Cultural elements in second language teaching",

<https://poemeproject.eu/2021/12/22/cultural-elements-in-second-language-teaching/?lang=fr>

Technical part

1. E-books – where to find them and how to read them?
2. How to create text content and what software to use
3. What multimedia you can add (images, video, audio – is it interesting to add these multimedia)
4. How to record audio materials
5. Inclusiveness of the content and the layout

E-books – where to find them and how to read them?

Nowadays, e-books are a full-fledged alternative to traditional, paper books. The moment of purchase is also a moment of choice between the digital screen of the reading device and the paper pages of a characteristic scent. E-book formats present a range of possibilities of display and therefore different types of devices. We distinguish different types of formats, listed below:

- ePub – electronic publication

This format is a standard one, conceived to facilitate the display on different kinds of devices and adapting to their screen width. ePub format can be read on all devices, Mac and PC, or smartphones and tablets, with a use of a special software but can also, and primarily, be viewed and read on Kobo readers, as well as on digital

note-taking devices that are compatible with e-ink and WACOM screens. Without any doubt, ePub is THE format of e-book. Epub format offers two different layouts. The most common is the Reflowable one, which allows the reader to change the reading parameters according to its preferences (size of the font, font family, line spacing...). This format is widely adopted and used for contents with a lot of text, or where the text is the most important content. The second format is the Fixed Layout format, in this case the layout is “fixed” and the reader can’t change anything in the layout. This format is used to offer more interactive content such as videos, exercises, drag and drop options... This format is usually reserved for books for educational purposes or books where multimedia content and layout (illustrated books, interactive books) are the most important.

- PDF – Portable Document Format

This format doesn’t adjust to the device, it conserves the initial form of your text document. It is compatible with e-readers, but the visibility is poor, therefore reading PDF documents on your e-reader is not recommended.

- others:

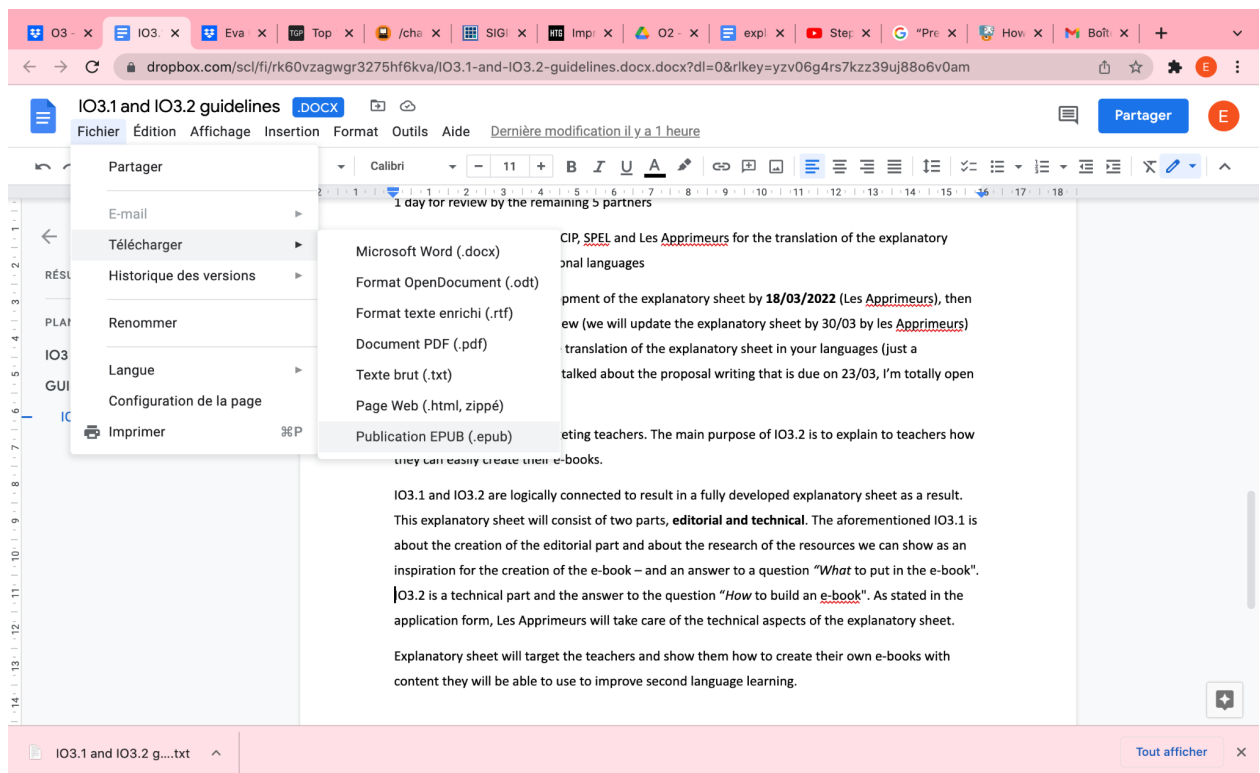
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_e-book_formats

Nowadays, many publishing sector specialists prefer the e-book format over the paper one. The reason for this is the lower cost of production of an e-book and a probable broader reach of a finished product, as well as the possibility of enriching it with multimedia content like videos, images and links, all of which have been mentioned in the pedagogical part of this document. The presence of multimedia and audio-visual content gives the readers the possibility to improve their reading and learning experience by simply clicking the “play” button or the link. Thanks to the different settings of the reading devices, users can adjust the brightness of the screen, its shade ranging from white to beige imitating the more traditional colour of the paper books, or its mode ranging from day to night. Electronic devices used to read e-books also give you the possibility of changing the size of the letters, which is a considerable simplification for the older users or users experiencing some vision problems. As an e-book creator, you can also opt for a dyslexia-friendly font like Open Dys, that provides the optimal letter spacing and size and that can thus completely change their reading experience.

How to create text content and what software to use

- For reflowable EPUB (Text first)

There are a couple of ways to create your text content and make an e-book out of it. First, you can simply download your Google Docs document as an ePub file.



But there are also more professional (and a bit more complicated) ways to do that. As a software, we recommend using **Sigil**. It is a **free** application for Windows, OS X, and Linux that lets you create and edit ePub files that you can then upload to most distributors.

First, download Sigil software on your computer. The official download link and page are [here](#).

As we've already prepared a Sigil tutorial for our previous project, DIMPA (dimpaproject.eu), we allow ourselves to direct you to the project resources and consult the Sigil explanatory sheet available [here](#).

- For Fixed Layout EPUB

Most of the software available is **paid**.

Book creator (<https://bookcreator.com/>) is a solution dedicated to teachers that's been used for 10 years now, and that is full of possibilities of integration. It offers different options to make your e-book more interesting for young readers, such as interactive, audiovisual elements like video, audio and images.

During our participation in the DIMPA project, we've had the opportunity to produce an explanatory sheet on how to use Book Creator. You can find it [here](#).

PubCoder (<https://www.pubcoder.com/>) is a more professional solution for the publishing industry. This tool allows embedding really nice contents and layout, with a wide range of interactive possibilities. You can find our explanatory sheet on PubCoder [here](#).

Kotobee (<https://www.kotobee.com/>) allows you to create interactive e-books, export them in multiple formats, and deliver them securely to your users. It is a paid software that offers solutions for every sector: K12 education, university, corporate training or book publishing. Kotobee lets you create interactive content adapted to the needs of your audience.

What multimedia you can add (images, video, audio – is it interesting to add these multimedia)

As an e-book creator, but also as a teacher, you might be asking yourself a question: “Why should I add images and other visual content to my e-book?”

- Photos, images and other visual content can considerably enrich your e-book's content, as well as help your readers better understand the ideas you are trying to convey. A well-chosen image can explain some concepts a lot better than a couple paragraphs of text. A video can do it even better!

- Audio and visual content can help your readers memorise the content of *your* e-book; therefore, improving your viability and future productions
- Remember that the use of photos and other multimedia content in your e-book should be justified, not only used as a decoration. This way, you can make your message more powerful while keeping your content serious and professional. This is particularly important taking into the consideration the fact that some e-book creation software does not guarantee a perfect rendition of the images in the e-books, making it cluttered with images
- Decide if your images are essential for your e-book. If this is the case, decide if you are using your photos as a chapter opening or as a reference to an exact place in your text and describe your photos appropriately by either providing a caption to each of them or an appendix at the end of the text.
- Benefit from the fact that you are creating an e-book and don't have to worry about the price of the print and ink. That way, you can insert colourful, high-resolution images that will elevate the quality of your document and enhance your users' reading experience
- However, if you are envisaging publishing and *selling* your book, you should remember that an excess of images can make your e-book heavy. What's more, most e-book readers do it on e-ink devices like Kobo readers which may display the image as grainy. Big quantity of images also takes more time to render and a lot of space to store. When publishing an e-book with an intent to sell it, you will try to reach the biggest number of readers. Therefore, you will operate on the most basic of the specifications.

How to record audio materials

Recording your voice is not an easy part of the e-book creation process. Practice makes perfect, and perfect needs some preparation. To improve the quality of your creation, try not to record in the morning, just after waking up, start your session by a vocal warm-up or a speaking exercise, and hydrate regularly. The recording conditions are crucial – try to do it in a quiet environment where you will not be distracted by any external factors.

Before you start recording, read your text thoroughly and out loud a couple of times. Try to identify the complicated parts and focus on them. Pay attention to your diction and do not forget about the pauses between words and phrases! Remember, the recorder audio needs to be easily comprehensible not only for you, but also for your users.

Equipment & technique

To record your voice, you will need a microphone and a recorder. Nowadays, these functionalities are incorporated in smartphones and computers. Therefore, you do not need any additional equipment.

You will probably use a microphone integrated in your computer, your webcam microphone or an external microphone. If you're recording with a smartphone, you can either use your earphones or the standard microphone used for voice calls. When recording, place the microphone on the level of your mouth and talk over, not to your microphone. Keep it around 10 – 15 centimetres from your mouth to get the best quality sound and to avoid saturation and mouth noises. While recording, avoid moving your head, as this will also change the sound.

Software

Computers and mobile phones come with built-in recorder apps. You can also use a dedicated software such as Audacity, that can also be used for editing. If you cannot or do not want to install any software, you can use the online tools such as Audiomass or Sodaphonic.

During our participation in the “Bibliodos” European project, we've had a chance to prepare a couple of articles on how to prepare a voice recording. You can find a full Audacity tutorial [here](#) and [here](#).

How to create inclusive content: choose the right font, font size and colours for your readers

According to substantiated scientific estimates, the group of European citizens with dyslexia and specific learning disorders (SLDs) encompasses between 5 and 12

percent of the population, navigating through life in a largely non-'dys' friendly world. To make the lives of people with learning disorders easier, think about adapting your text and your e-book content format to their needs. Find how to do it below.

- Use a sans serif font like Arial, Open Sans, Century Gothic, OpenDys or Luciole
- Keep your font size between 12 and 14 points
- Use a line spacing of 1,5
- Don't justify your text. Instead align it to the left
- Do not use italics, underlining and capitals. Instead, put your text in **bold** to highlight it.
- Break down your text into small paragraphs and short sentences to make it easier to understand
- Use titles and subtitles to give your content a clear structure
- Present the important items with bullet points
- Remember about the importance of the white space to let your content "breathe"
- Use page numbers
- Use off-white or pastel colour background whenever possible and make sure the contrast of your e-book is good enough for the content to be readable.
- Use simple language and write facts. Avoid language decorations and be consistent in the use of language and writing style.

We want to thank **SCS Logopsycom** for their help and for sharing their materials regarding the creation of the inclusive texts and visuals.

Source:

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/tags/accessibility/>

<https://www.dimpaproject.eu/oer-open-education-resources/>

<https://bibliodos.eu/practicesheet/>