competition as adolescents are generally more reliant on their peers and "see their friends as more trusted confidants compared to the adults in their lives" (Powell, 2010, p.114). Adolescents go through significant physical, cognitive, and emotional change and they are in pursuit of forming their own identities (Brown, 2000) as well as independence. Crawford (2007) also states that "young adolescents crave for exploration, peer interaction, and personal autonomy" (p.17). Therefore, fostering **learner autonomy** is an important principle adopted in the new 9th-12th grades English curriculum. As Powell (2010) points out "*alone* is not synonymous with *autonomous*" (p. 105). In the curriculum students of English are intended to get support and guidance from their teachers, peers, learning materials, and learning tasks so that there is a gradual increase in learner autonomy through collaboration, interaction, and communication in a safe learning environment. In addition, learners are encouraged to be reflective in their own learning by recognizing and assessing their own needs, strengths, weaknesses as effective managers of their own learning (Penaflorida, 2002). Another way to increase autonomy among learners is to include them in the decision making process, especially in providing supplementary language learning materials, which can also increase learner motivation in the classroom (McCrath, 2013). Throughout the 9th-12th grades English curriculum students are encouraged to be involved in **task- based**, collaborative, and **project-based** language activities that would empower learners by increasing their self-esteem, autonomy, and language skills (Stoller, 2002).

In order to sustain such a productive, communicative, and dynamic language learning environment, the assessment techniques used should also reflect the language teaching and learning methods. One of the significant causes of lack of communicative competence among most Turkish learners of English is that in general there has been a mismatch between the nature of language learning process and language assessment types and tools in English classes. In other words, even if we teach communicatively, this does not guarantee the development of communicative competence among learners because learners' output in language is not being assessed communicatively. Therefore, **authentic assessment** tools that give way to communicative assessment are included in the new 9th-12th grades English programs. Throughout the curriculum, in line with the alternative assessment principles, learners are asked to show what they can do and produce rather than what they are able to recall and reproduce (Huerta-Macias, 2002).

Considering the realities of language classes with overpopulated classrooms, some authentic assessment tasks can be impractical and/or too subjective to handle. However, another reality of the education is that assessment plays an important role in determining the success of learners that is mostly associated with getting high grades. Administrators, teachers, parents, and learners like in any field of study still consider high grades as great motivational tools. In other words, if a topic or skill is not assessed, it is unlikely to be given priority in the classroom to be improved. Overcoming this backwash effect of assessment is especially required in language classes in which traditional assessment techniques are no longer relevant to evaluate the communicative output of learners. Therefore, in the 9th-12th grades English curriculum authentic assessment techniques that reflect the tasks students will encounter outside schools are used (Marsh, 2009). To reflect the real-life experiences of learners, echo the multisensory nature of language learning, and increase the level of practicality as well as management of data in assessment, the use of instructional technology is extensively used throughout the grades and units in the curriculum.
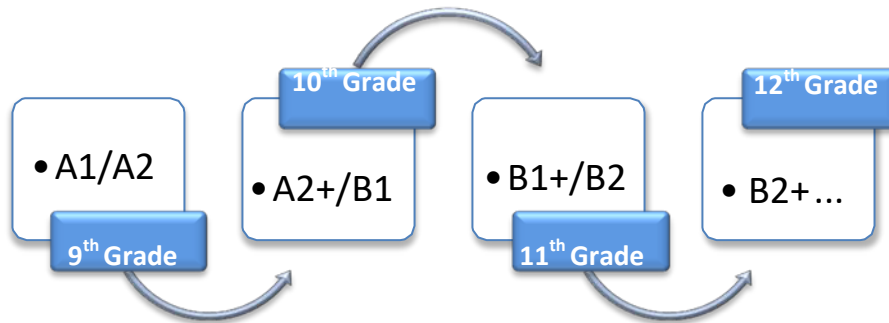
3. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AND SKILLS

3.1. Model English Language (9th – 12th Grades) Curriculum

Grades (CEFR*) Hours per Week	Learner Age	Skill/Grammar/Vocabulary/Pronunciation Focus	Main Activities (Can be used in all grades)
9 (A1/A2) 4	14-14.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice	Role-plays/Simulations Graphics/Charts Paragraph Reading and Writing
10 (A2+/B1) 4	15-15.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Limited focus on Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Information Gap Activities/Role-plays Paragraph Reading and Writing Skimming and Scanning
11 (B1+/B2) 4	16-16.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Limited focus on Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Surveys/Short Oral Presentations/Drama Short Reading Texts and Paragraph Writing
12 (B2+) 4	17-17.5	All four skills integrated with an emphasis on Listening and Speaking. Synthesis of Language Structures. Maximum seven new Vocabulary items per lesson. Limited Pronunciation practice.	Conversations/Oral Presentations/Projects/Task-based Activities Argumentative/Descriptive Text Writing

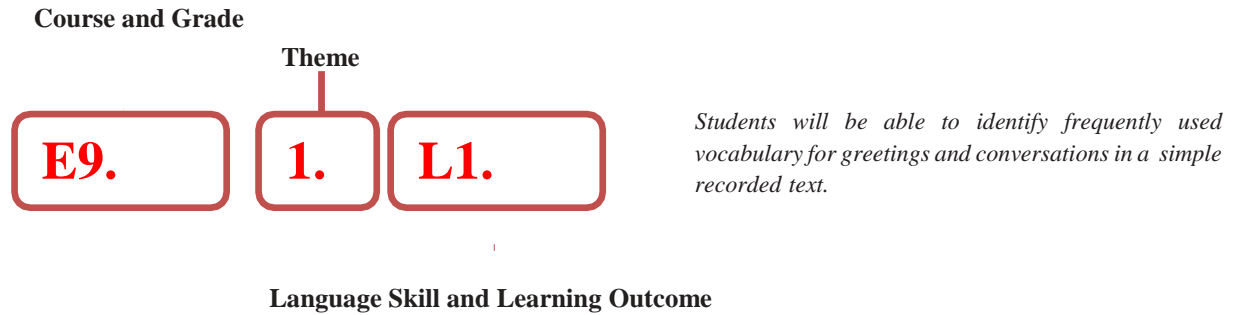***CEFR = The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**

The order of the CEFR levels (CoE, 2011) was adapted to meet the specific needs of high school learners in the new 9th-12th grades English curriculum in which it is intended for learners to start their high school English classes with a revision on CEFR A1 level and then gradually proceed through CEFR levels A2- B2. Finally, learners are expected to graduate from high school with a minimum CEFR B2+ and/or beyond level of English language proficiency depending on whether students had preparatory class English education or not. As learners progress through levels and grades, the complexity and formality of language used in the curriculum increases. Following chart illustrates the process learners will go through in their high school English classes:

The rationale behind starting the 9th Grade with A1/A2 levels is that even though students are expected to be at A2 level at the end of 8th Grade according to the 2nd -8th Grade English Curriculum, in practice there is often a need to revise and recycle the content presented in previous classes as students enter the 9th Grade English classrooms with different levels of capacities, English proficiencies, and individual learning differences. For students attending to 9th Grades with low proficiency of English language, teachers can give emphasis on revision and improvement of A1 level functions, vocabulary and structures. For students with higher English proficiency level; on the other hand, teachers can spend more instruction time on A2 level especially devoting more time on practising productive skills such as speaking and writing. Moreover, with the help of

revision of some of the functions presented in the previous program, teachers can carry out needs analysis to determine the learning needs of their students before students are presented with new functions in English. It is important to note that even though the similar functions are addressed, **9th Grade A1 level can be more advanced in terms of some vocabulary and structures compared to A1 level in 2nd- 8th Grade English Curriculum so that students can also receive new input while they are revising the functions that they might be familiar with.**

All of the foreign language skills [Reading (R), Listening (L), Speaking (S), and Writing (W)] were addressed throughout the new program for English language. The learning outcomes specified within the program were coded with regard to the course name, grade, theme number, language skill and the number of the learning outcomes. These codes were then assigned to each learning outcome, as follows:

Course and Grade

Theme

| **E9.** | **1.** | **L1.** |

Students will be able to identify frequently used vocabulary for greetings and conversations in a simple recorded text.

Language Skill and Learning Outcome

The functions and the useful language, language skills and learning outcomes as well as suggested materials and tasks were presented in three different consecutive columns in the syllabi. Below are provided definitions for each of those titles:

1. *Functions and Useful Language:* The functions refer to the communicative role(s) of a given form in a context of situation. The present syllabus is structured in terms of communicative functions and specific useful language units with which functions are associated to offer a linguistic repertoire throughout a continuum of a language proficiency depicted in and for each grade. Thereby, the functions and useful language units are built on one another and constructed in a cyclical way, which enables to ensure permanent learning.

2. *Language Skills and Learning Outcomes:* The second column comprises four basic language skills and learning outcomes, which are associated with the functions and useful language in terms of theme and task requirements. Hence, it is important to accentuate that each objective specified in learning outcomes can be fulfilled merely by addressing the language functions and their linguistic realizations. Additionally, some focus on explicit pronunciation is included in each theme.

3. *Suggested Materials and Tasks:* This column presents suggested materials and tasks to help students achieve a success in practicing the input and language skills in the preceding columns. It is highly recommended that teachers and material developers exploit those suggestions to provide students with a wide range of learning repertoire addressing different learning styles and strategies.

4. ETHICS AND VALUES EDUCATION

The 9th-12th Grades new curriculum has been prepared, based on the regulations set by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, which has been clearly defined in the offical website (www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.1739.pdf). As stated in the general objectives of Turkish National Education, the new curriculum aims to raise the awareness of universal, national, moral, humane and cultural values and ethics as well as the competence in both oral and written communication skills. Therefore, the objectives and sample usages have been integrated into the new curriculum in accordance with this goal. Stakeholders such as teachers and material designers should take learners' ages, physchological and sociological levels into consideration in selecting characters to be mentioned during the instruction process. The selection of these characters should comply with ethical values of our education system so that learners can have proper role-models. It is highly recommended to have this aim included in the materials to be designed.