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How to Calculate CBE Assessment Scores in Kenya: A Step-by-Step Guide

CBE Assessment · 11 Nov 2026

Convert learner marks into CBE performance levels (EE, ME, AE, BE) the right way — performance-level bands, KNEC weighting, worked examples and a ready checklist for Kenyan schools.

Under Kenya's Competency-Based Education (CBE) system, you do not calculate one final score and rank learners the way we did under 8-4-4. Instead, you convert each learner's marks in a learning area into a **performance level** — Exceeding Expectation (EE), Meeting Expectation (ME), Approaching Expectation (AE) or Below Expectation (BE). For national assessments such as KJSEA, KNEC reports results on an eight-point scale (EE1 down to BE2) built from 20% KPSEA, 20% school-based assessment in Grades 7 and 8, and 60% the Grade 9 summative assessment. This guide walks through both processes step by step.

Who this guide is for

This is written for class teachers, subject teachers, assessment coordinators and headteachers in Kenyan primary and junior schools who need to record marks, compute CBE performance levels and prepare end-of-term or end-of-year learner reports. It assumes you are already familiar with your learning areas and have assessment records on paper, in a spreadsheet or in a school management system.

Step 1: Understand what you are calculating

CBE describes *what a learner can do* against the expectations for their grade — not where they rank against classmates. Every assessment produces a mark (for example, 34 out of 40), and that mark converts to a performance level:

Level

Code

Meaning in plain language

Exceeding Expectation

EE

The learner can do more than the grade expects, often applying skills in new situations.

Meeting Expectation

ME

The learner can do what the grade expects, consistently.

Approaching Expectation

AE

The learner can do part of it but needs more practice or support.

Below Expectation

BE

The learner has not yet grasped most of the expected skills and needs targeted help.

Important: AE and BE are **not fail grades**. KNEC has stated publicly that the levels describe where a learner is, not whether they have failed. Avoid calling any learner a "failure" on a CBE report.

Step 2: Convert raw marks to a percentage

For school assessments (opening, mid-term, end-of-term or project scores), start with the percentage:

Percentage = (learner's mark ÷ total marks) × 100

Example: a learner scores 34 out of 50 in an Integrated Science test. That is 34 ÷ 50 × 100 = **68%**.

If you combine several assessments into one term mark, agree on the weighting first as a school — for example, 30% for the mid-term assessment and 70% for the end-of-term assessment is a common practical choice, but it is a *school policy decision*, not a national rule:

Term score = (mid-term × 0.3) + (end-term × 0.7)

Step 3: Map the percentage to a performance level

Map the percentage to EE, ME, AE or BE using your school's approved bands. This matters: the Ministry of Education has not published a single mandatory percentage-to-level conversion table for everyday school assessments, so schools use agreed cut-offs. Two widely used band sets are:

Level

Common band set A

Common band set B

EE — Exceeding Expectation

80–100%

75–100%

ME — Meeting Expectation

60–79%

50–74%

AE — Approaching Expectation

40–59%

30–49%

BE — Below Expectation

0–39%

0–29%

Whichever set you adopt, write it into your school assessment policy, tell teachers and parents, and apply it consistently. A learner at 68% is ME under set A and still ME under set B — but a learner at 74% is ME in one school and could be reported differently next door if schools use different bands. Consistency inside your school is what matters.

Step 4: Record the level, not just the mark

On the learner's report, record the performance level per learning area, ideally alongside the descriptor in plain words. Keep the raw marks in your mark book or system too — they are the evidence behind the level, and you will need them for school-based assessment uploads and moderation.

How the national KJSEA calculation works

For Grade 9, the final result that feeds senior school placement is different from a class test. Per the Ministry of Education's KJSEA release, the assessment of learners at Grade 9 comprises:

- **20%** from the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA), taken in Grade 6;
- **20%** from school-based assessments in Grades 7 and 8; and
- **60%** from the summative KJSEA evaluation at Grade 9.

KNEC reports each learning area on an **eight-point scale**, splitting each of the four levels into two:

Level

Sub-level

Points

Reported mark range*

Exceeding Expectation

EE1

8

90–100%

EE2

7

75–89%

Meeting Expectation

ME1

6

58–74%

ME2

5

41–57%

Approaching Expectation

AE1

4

31–40%

AE2

3

21–30%

Below Expectation

BE1

2

11–20%

BE2

1

0–10%

*The levels and point values come from KNEC's circular on the issuance of KJSEA results. The mark ranges have been reported by Kenyan media (e.g. Daily Nation) but have not appeared in a published KNEC document — treat them as a guide, not an official table.

With nine learning areas assessed, the maximum cumulative score is 72 points (9 × 8). KNEC does not release percentage marks or ranks to candidates — results are reported as performance levels only, specifically to move schools away from the ranking culture of 8-4-4.

A worked example

Suppose Grade 7 learner Amina sits three assessments in English during Term 2:

Assessment

Score

Percentage

School weight

Opening assessment

36/50

72%

20%

Mid-term assessment

41/60

68.3%

30%

End-of-term assessment

58/80

72.5%

50%

Weighted term percentage = (72 × 0.2) + (68.3 × 0.3) + (72.5 × 0.5) = 14.4 + 20.5 + 36.25 = **71.2%**. Under band set A, Amina's English performance level for the term is **Meeting Expectation (ME)**.

Common mistakes to avoid

- **Ranking learners by total score.** CBE deliberately dropped ranking. Report the level per learning area; do not publish a position in class.
- **Using unofficial bands without telling parents.** Parents read "ME" as roughly "average". If your cut-offs differ from neighbouring schools, say so in the report or at the parents' meeting.
- **Averaging levels instead of marks.** Work out the combined percentage from the raw marks first, then convert to a level. Averaging letter codes produces nonsense.
- **Treating AE or BE as failure.** These levels flag where support is needed — they do not mean a learner has failed, and KNEC says an Approaching Expectation grade is sufficient for progression to senior school pathways requiring basic competencies.
- **Losing the evidence.** Keep marked scripts, rubrics and mark books. School-based assessment scores that feed KJSEA must be defensible if queried.
- **Rounding twice.** Keep one decimal place until the final percentage, then round once. Double rounding can push a borderline learner across a band boundary.

Quick checklist for every reporting period

- Confirm the band set in your school assessment policy.
- Convert every raw mark to a percentage before combining assessments.
- Apply the agreed weighting in writing — same formula for every learner in the grade.
- Map to EE/ME/AE/BE and record the level per learning area.

- Keep raw marks and scripts filed as evidence.
- Review borderline cases (within 2% of a band boundary) before finalising.
- Brief parents on what the levels mean when reports go home.

Where Mwalimu Ease fits in

Doing this in a spreadsheet is workable for one stream, but it gets error-prone across a whole school — wrong weightings, lost mark books and inconsistent bands are the usual failure points. Mwalimu Ease is a Kenyan school management system whose assessment module lets teachers enter marks per learning area, then automatically maps scores to the four CBE levels and produces class analytics — mean, median, per-level counts and item-level analysis for each paper. Marks flow into learner report cards, so the end-of-term report no longer needs to be rebuilt by hand. If your school is still running CBE records on paper or scattered Excel files, it is worth a look.

Frequently asked questions

Is there an official KNEC percentage table for school assessments?

KNEC has published the eight-point level scale (EE1–BE2) for KJSEA reporting, but has not published a mandatory percentage-to-level table for everyday school assessments. Schools set their own bands by policy — the commonly reported KJSEA ranges (EE1 90–100% down to BE2 0–10%) come from media reporting, not a KNEC document.

Do CBE reports show class positions?

No. CBE reporting deliberately moved away from ranking. Each learner is reported against the expected standard per learning area, not against classmates.

What happens if a learner gets BE in a learning area?

BE means the learner needs targeted support in that learning area — it is not a fail grade, and it does not by itself block progression. Use it to plan remediation and flag the learner for follow-up next term.

How is the Grade 9 KJSEA score calculated?

The Grade 9 assessment combines 20% from KPSEA (Grade 6), 20% from school-based assessments in Grades 7 and 8, and 60% from the summative KJSEA papers. Results are reported as performance levels on the eight-point scale, not as percentages or ranks.

Can different schools have different CBE cut-offs?

Yes — for school-level assessments. Because there is no single published national percentage table for school assessments, schools adopt their own bands. What matters is consistency inside your school and transparency with parents.

Sources: Kenya National Examinations Council circular on issuance of KJSEA results (via Teachers Arena); Ministry of Education release of the 2025 KJSEA results (Nation transcript); Nairobi Leo on KNEC's CBC grading clarification; KNEC and Ministry of Education websites. Last reviewed 11 November 2026.

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