

PTE GENERAL

Guide to Pearson Test of English General

Level 4 (Advanced)

July 2018

Ofqual Accreditation

Pearson Test of English General (PTE General) tests are accredited as 'ESOL International' qualifications by the regulators of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Ofqual, the Welsh Assembly Government and CEA respectively).

ESOL International qualifications are designed for candidates who are not native speakers of English and who wish to achieve a high quality, internationally recognized qualification in English that is available and recognized world-wide and, at the highest level (NQF level 3 / CEF C2), candidates who are preparing for entry to higher education or professional employment in the UK or elsewhere.

ESOL International qualifications are designed to reference the descriptions of language proficiency in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). The levels in the CEF have been mapped to the levels in the National Qualifications Framework for England Wales and Northern Ireland (see, *Pathways to Proficiency: the alignment of language proficiency scales for assessing competence in English Language*, DFES / QCA, 2003).

In the process of accreditation the six levels of PTE General have been allocated to levels of the National Qualifications Framework. PTE General tests are accredited under the following titles in the UK:

PTE General level	Accredited title	Accreditation number
PTE General A1	Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1)	500/1903/X
PTE General 1	Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2)	500/1962/4
PTE General 2	Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3)	500/1961/2
PTE General 3	Edexcel Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International	500/1926/0
PTE General 4	Edexcel Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International	500/1964/8
PTE General 5	Edexcel Level 3 Certificate in ESOL International	500/1963/6

Contents

	Page
Introduction to the guide	1
Who is it for?	
What is in the guide?	
1. Introduction to Pearson Test of English General	2
Overview	
Key features	
2. Preparation	5
What resources can I use to prepare test takers for PTE General?	
Other resources	
3. Scoring	7
Overview of scoring	
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	
4. Test format	10
Overview	
5. Description of item types	12
Written test	
Spoken test	
Contact us	

Introduction to the guide

Who is it for?

The *Guide to Pearson Test of English General* is designed for anyone preparing students for the test or who wants to learn more about it.

What is in the guide?

This guide contains five key parts:

An introduction to Pearson Test of English General including what it is, how it has been developed, who takes it and the skills tested. Key features of the test are outlined, including realistic themes, authentic sources and integrated skills. Information about test delivery and test results is also given.

The second part gives an outline of preparation resources that will be made available.

The third part provides general information about scoring within the test and the relationship between PTE General and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEF) (Council of Europe, 2001).

In the fourth part an overview is provided of the formats of the spoken and written tests.

The final part of the guide gives an explanation of each section within the written and spoken tests at Level 4. This includes a description of the item types, skills assessed, tasks, objectives, timings and stimulus information. In addition, details about scoring and the marking criteria are presented.

1. Introduction to Pearson Test of English General

Overview

What is Pearson Test of English General?

PTE General is an assessment solution at six different levels (A1, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) designed to assess and accredit general English language proficiency. These tests are provided in partnership with Edexcel Limited, the largest UK awarding body for academic and vocational qualifications. Edexcel Limited is the official awarding body for PTE General.

The tests are recognized globally and are accepted by universities, employers and national education authorities in many countries as evidence of a required standard of English.

Development of PTE General

PTE General is the revised suite of tests formerly known as the London Tests of English. The changes to the tests were based on extensive consultation with test centers, teachers and test takers in a number of countries. The revision process was monitored at every stage by an independent Technical Advisory Group (TAG) made up of some of the world's leading language testing experts (further information about the TAG is available within the research area of www.pearsonpte.com/pte-general).

During the revision process, the descriptors within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) (Council of Europe, 2001) were used to guide the writing of the specification for each item type in the test and to describe the required performance of test takers at each CEF level (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2). In relating the test scores to the CEF, Pearson follows the procedures as recommended in the Council of Europe manual *Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*, available at http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Manuel1_EN.asp.

Who takes PTE General?

PTE General is intended for learners of English who are speakers of other languages (ESOL). At the different levels the test items do not require any prior knowledge of the world beyond what people may need at a comparable level in their own language to function in their social, academic or professional life.

Children younger than 14 may prefer to sit tests from the suite of Pearson Test of English Young Learners, information for which is available at www.pearsonpte.com/pte-young-learners.

What skills are tested?

PTE General assesses the four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Test takers are required to successfully complete real life tasks, such as writing messages, understanding talks and presentations, understanding newspaper articles or participating in conversations.

The skills are tested at the six levels matched to the descriptors in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, A1 to C2 (see part 3 Scoring, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Key features

Realistic themes, authentic sources and tasks

The item types in each PTE General test are grouped together around topics referred to as themes. These are used in item types across language skills, for example listening and reading or reading and writing. Themes in levels A1-2 tend to relate to familiar and routine matters, such as home and shopping. At levels 3-5 they can be more abstract, such as global issues like pollution and conservation. The written component of the test contains three themes and the spoken part two. Sections 7 and 8 in the written part are thematically linked. Sections 12 and 13 in the spoken part are related by theme.

Most of the texts used to assess reading and listening, particularly at levels 3-5, are authentic. They are sourced, for example, from books, magazines, newspapers, websites, radio broadcasts, recorded messages and podcasts. Hence PTE General is a measure of real, practical English.

Test takers are asked to listen once to the recordings in Section 1 of the test. In sections 2 and 3 candidates listen twice.

Integrated skills

PTE General incorporates integrated skills. This is important because when communicating in English, students are often required to combine several language skills to perform a task, for example listening to information and writing about what is heard.

Test delivery

There are 6 test sessions scheduled per year.

PTE General consists of a written paper-based test and a spoken test that are delivered through a number of registered centers in over 30 territories globally.

Registered test centers delivering PTE General are typically schools, language schools and colleges. Each prospective center is required to provide evidence to ensure that the tests will be conducted according to the regulations as part of registering to become a test center. In some territories there are locally based agents or representatives.

Information about test session dates, test center locations, registering to take PTE General or registering to become a test center is available at www.pearsonpte.com/pte-general.

Test results

Test results are made available five to eight weeks after the date that the test was taken. Test centers can view results of test takers they have registered via Edexcel Online, our secure online results service. This service is made available to most test centers upon approval to deliver PTE General. Alternatively, results can be delivered by secure post if required. Two to three weeks after receipt of results, test centers will receive test certificates.

Test structure

PTE General consists of a written and a spoken test.

The written test is made up of nine sections at all levels and assesses listening, reading and writing.

Written test (all levels)	
Sections	Skills
1	Listening
2	Listening and writing
3	Listening
4-7	Reading
8-9	Writing

The spoken test consists of three sections at levels A1 and 1, and four sections at levels 2-5. It assesses speaking.

Spoken test (A1-1)	
Sections	Skills
10	Speaking
11	Not featured at these levels
12	Speaking
13	Speaking

Spoken test (2-5)	
Sections	Skills
10	Speaking
11	Speaking
12	Speaking
13	Speaking

2. Preparation

What resources can I use to prepare test takers for PTE General?

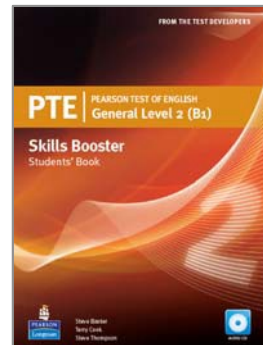
Tutorial

The *PTE General Tutorial* provides an interactive tour of the test to give you a detailed overview of the tasks and skills assessed at each of the six levels.



Skills Booster

The *PTE General Skills Boosters* offer guided practice of tasks within the test, grammar and vocabulary activities, a writing guide and five practice tests. They can be purchased at levels 2–5 and consist of a Teachers' Book, Students' Book and audio CD.



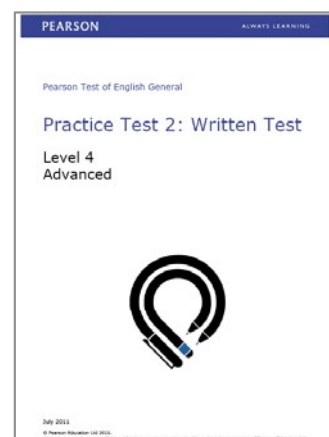
Skills Pod

The *PTE General Skills Pod* recommends over 100 published general ELT courses that provide material for teachers to use with test takers to develop skills assessed within the test.



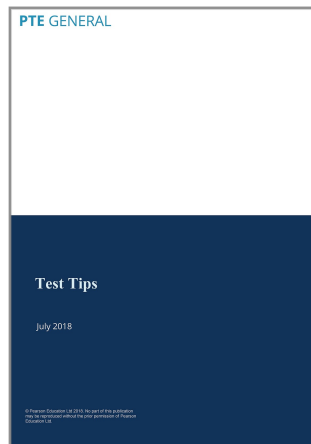
Practice Tests

Three practice tests at most levels with audio, transcripts and answer keys are available to download for free.



Test Tips

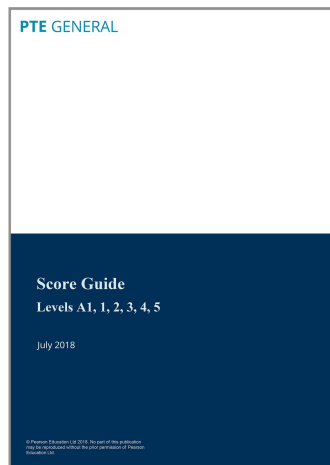
Over 50 test tips are provided for teachers preparing test takers for PTE General at all levels.



Other resources

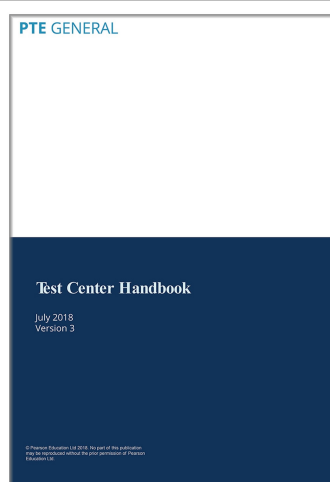
Score Guide

The *Score Guide* gives detailed information about how sections of PTE General are scored and provides written and spoken samples of test taker performance with commentary for selected tasks.



Test Center Handbook

The *Test Center Handbook* guides test centers through the process of registering for and administering the test.



All resources listed and others are available from the Pearson Tests of English website at www.pearsonpte.com/pte-general.

3. Scoring

Overview of scoring

The PTE General written test is scored out of 75 and the spoken test out of 25.

Figure 1 shows the sections, skills tested and the maximum number of score points that can be achieved for the written paper at levels A1-5.

Sections	Skills	Score points
1	Listening	10
2	Listening and writing	10 (5 listening, 5 writing)
3	Listening	10
4	Reading	5
5	Reading	5
6	Reading	8
7	Reading	7
8	Writing	10
9	Writing	10
Total		75

Figure 1. Distribution of score points: written test (all levels)

Figure 2, on the next page, shows the sections, skills tested and the maximum number of score points that can be achieved for the spoken test at levels A1 and 1, and levels 2-5.

Detailed information about scoring is available within the *Score Guide* at www.pearsonpte.com/pte-general.

Sections	Skills	Score points
Levels A1 - 1		
10	Speaking	25 score points in total; distributed across the marking criteria
12	Speaking	
13	Speaking	
Total		25
Levels 2-5		
10	Speaking	25 score points in total; distributed across the marking criteria
11	Speaking	
12	Speaking	
13	Speaking	
Total		25

Figure 2. Distribution of score points: spoken test (A1-1; 2-5)

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The six levels of PTE General have been designed to be aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), a widely recognized benchmark for language ability. The CEF includes a set of language levels defined by descriptors of language competencies. The alignment process as described in the manual (Council of Europe, 2009) distinguishes a number of activities (specification, familiarization, standardization training/benchmarking, standard setting and validation). Although Pearson has gone through these activities, continual validation work is carried out using the most recent administrations of the test.

The framework was developed by the Council of Europe (2001) to enable language learners, teachers, universities and potential employers to compare and relate language qualifications gained in different educational contexts.

The CEF describes language proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing on a six-level scale, grouped into three bands: A1–A2 (Basic User), B1–B2 (Independent User), C1–C2 (Proficient User). Figure 3 overleaf indicates what students should be able to do at different CEF levels relevant to PTE General.

Students at this level:	Council of Europe levels	PTE General
Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize 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.	Proficient User C2	Level 5 Proficient
Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize 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 organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User C1	Level 4 Advanced
Can understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. 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.	Vantage Independent User B2	Level 3 Upper Intermediate
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 while 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 and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	Threshold Independent User B1	Level 2 Intermediate
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.	Waystage Basic User A2	Level 1 Elementary
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.	Breakthrough Basic User A1	Level A1 Foundation

Figure 3. CEF Descriptors relevant to PTE General
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4. Test format

Overview

The overall timing for the written test at Level 4 is **2 hours and 30 minutes**. The information in Figure 4 indicates for sections of the written test at Level 4: the skills assessed, item types, the objectives and the maximum number of score points awarded.

Written test

Sections	Skills	Item types	Objectives	Score points
1	Listening	3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the main detail in short spoken utterances	10
2	Listening and writing	Dictation	To assess ability to understand an extended utterance by transcribing a spoken text	5 listening 5 writing
3	Listening	Text, note completion	To assess ability to extract specific information from extended spoken texts	10
4	Reading	Gap fill 3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the purpose, structure and main idea of short written texts	5
5	Reading	3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the main ideas in an extended written text	5
6	Reading	Open-ended question	To assess ability to understand the main points of short and extended written texts	8
7	Reading	Text, note completion	To assess ability to extract specific information from an extended written text	7
8	Writing	Write correspondence	To assess ability to write a piece of correspondence (120–150 words)	10
9	Writing	Write text	To assess ability to write a short text from own experience, knowledge or imagination (200–250 words)	10
Total				75

Figure 4. Level 4 (Advanced) written test

The overall timing for the speaking test at Level 4 is **8 minutes**. The information in Figure 5 indicates for sections of the spoken test at Level 4: the skills assessed, item types, objectives, timing, and the maximum number of score points awarded.

Spoken test

Sections	Skills	Item types	Objectives	Timing	Score points
10	Speaking	Sustained monologue	To assess ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest	2 minutes	25 score points in total; distributed across the marking criteria
11	Speaking	Discussion	To assess ability to discuss a concrete or abstract issue	2 minutes	
12	Speaking	Describe picture	To assess ability to speak continuously on a topic related to two pictures	2 minutes	
13	Speaking	Role play	To assess ability to perform and respond to language functions appropriately	2 minutes	
Total				8 minutes	25

Figure 5. Level 4 (Advanced) spoken test

5. Description of item types

Written test

This part of the guide presents a description of the item type within each section of the written test. This includes what it tests, what test takers have to do, the item type objective, stimulus information and details on scoring.

Section 1

Listening

3-option multiple choice

Section 1 comprises a *3-option multiple choice* item type. It assesses listening skills. It tests ability to understand the main detail in short spoken utterances.

This is the Pearson Test of English General Level 4. This test takes 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Section 1

You will have 10 seconds to read each question and the corresponding options. Then listen to the recording. After the recording you will have 10 seconds to choose the correct option. Put a cross (☒) in the box next to the correct answer, as in the example.

Example: This is an extract from

- A an announcement.
- B an advertisement.
- C a message.

1. The speaker says that a university education should be valued as

- A a means of personal fulfilment.
- B an opportunity for employment.
- C a useful contribution to society.

2. The speaker says many of his school lessons were

- A boring.
- B entertaining.
- C funny.

3. How does the boy feel?

- A shocked
- B furious
- C disappointed

4. Who are the speakers?

- A father and mother
- B brother and sister
- C husband and wife

5. What is the woman's attitude to the loss of traditions?
- A regretful
 - B realistic
 - C pessimistic
6. Which word best describes the speaker's attitude?
- A appreciative
 - B narrow-minded
 - C critical
7. Who is the speaker addressing?
- A a group of actors
 - B a group of business people
 - C a group of students
8. How does the woman feel about helping at the wedding?
- A bored
 - B reluctant
 - C stressed
9. What disadvantage of the Indymedia website does the speaker mention?
- A the style of the writing
 - B the quality of information
 - C the advertising
10. What is the speaker describing?
- A emotional problems that teenagers experience
 - B poor relationships between family and teenagers
 - C reasons why youngsters spend time with friends

(Total 10 marks)

Task

Test takers listen once to ten short recordings, either monologues or dialogues, and answer a single 3-option multiple choice question (or complete a sentence) for each. There are ten questions to answer (or sentences to complete); one per recording.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
<p>To assess ability to understand the main detail in short spoken utterances by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- identifying the situation- identifying the speaker's role- identifying the speakers' relationship- identifying the topic- recognizing function- understanding implied meaning- understanding idiomatic expression- understanding expression of feeling- understanding expression of attitude	<p>Short authentic recordings, one or two speakers</p> <p>Including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- transactional conversations- social conversations- public announcements <p>Including the following language functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- request for goods or services- request for action- request for information- factual information- expression of feelings- offer- invitation- apology/excuse- criticism/expression of dissatisfaction- suggestion- persuasion

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correct answer has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of ten score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Task

Test takers listen to one person speaking and write exactly what is heard with correct spellings. The extract is played twice, the second time with pauses, giving time to write down word-for-word what is heard. There is one dictation to complete and one recording.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to understand an extended utterance by transcribing a spoken text	Instructions, news bulletins, announcements, broadcast features and factual information. The extracts are simulated authentic, descriptive and contain relatively formal language

Scores

This item type has a weighting of ten score points. A maximum of five points for listening and five for writing can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 3

Listening

Text, note completion

Section 3 comprises a *Text, note completion* item type. It assesses listening skills. It tests ability to extract specific information from extended spoken texts.

Section 3

12-16 You will hear an interview. First, read the notes below then listen and complete the notes with information from the interview. You will hear the recording twice.

Example: The World Today is a political magazine

12. Increase in magazine sales over the past 12 months:

13. The man does not regard the new online magazine as a

14. The content of the online magazine is more than *The World Today's*.

15. The man doesn't think relying on sales is a

16. The Internet magazine is funded through

17-21 You will hear a talk. First, read the notes below then listen and complete the notes with information from the talk. You will hear the recording twice.

Example: Speaker's occupation: (a) musician

17. He feels envious of people who learn an instrument but haven't had any

18. He finds it difficult to listen to music without it.

19. He also wishes he could more freely.

20. One vital necessity for success:

21. Main aim: to reach a point where you don't have to think about

(Total 10 marks)

That is the end of the listening section of the test. Now go on to the other sections of the test.

Task

Test takers listen twice to two recordings, either a monologue or dialogue, and complete a text or notes for each using the information heard. There are ten gaps to complete; five per task.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to extract specific information from extended spoken texts	Authentic recordings of one or two speakers giving or exchanging information. The items replicate real life situations which require accurate comprehension and transcription of key information, (e.g., taking messages or notes) Including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- transactional conversations- public announcements- recorded messages

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correctly completed gap has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of ten score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 4

Reading

Gap fill 3-option multiple choice

Section 4 comprises a *Gap fill 3-option multiple choice* item type. It assesses reading skills. It tests ability to understand the purpose, structure and main idea of short written texts.

Section 4

Read each text and put a cross (☒) by the missing word or phrase, as in the example.

Example:

The value of older books is determined by many of the same criteria as modern books - condition, content, and edition. Many people think that just because a book is old, it is valuable, but a book has no collectible value by.....:

- A age alone
- B normal standards
- C today's collectors

22.

A tradition can be defined as a belief, ritual or custom that has been passed down from one generation to the next, frequently, though not....., by oral means rather than in written form.

- A completely
- B necessarily
- C extensively

23.

People often automatically presume that traditions are long-standing, unchanging and hold the secrets of ancient wisdom....., they are often introduced later and are less "natural" than people might think.

- A In fact
- B In effect
- C In contrast

24. What are employers looking for in a media studies graduate? Well, the fact that they will expect you to have a wide critical understanding of the media and mass communication.....:

A is usually the case

B may not apply

C goes without saying

25. Our in-house training is : we listen to what you want to achieve and will then either adapt one of our existing courses or come up with a completely new one to meet your needs.

A customised

B varied

C established

26. When teaching any child to read, it is vital to recognise that learning styles differ. The teacher or parent, or whoever is doing the instructing, needs to be aware of the preferred way that the child masters a new activity,..... the age of the learner.

A depending on

B relevant to

C regardless of

(Total 5 marks)

Task

Test takers read five short texts, each containing a gap, and choose which of three answer options is the missing word or phrase. There are five gaps to complete; one per text.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to understand the purpose, structure and main idea of short written texts	Authentic text types include: labels, instructions, signs, notices, menus, advertisements and announcements

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correctly completed gap has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of five score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 5

Reading

3-option multiple choice

Section 5 comprises a *3-option multiple choice* item type. It assesses reading skills. It tests ability to understand the main ideas in an extended written text.

Section 5

Read the review and answer the questions below. Put a cross (☒) in the box next to the correct answer, as in the example.

Review of *The Invention of Tradition*

This is a scholarly but accessible collection of essays that will provide fascinating and instructive reading for anyone who is interested in history and society. The basic premise underlying each of the contributions by recognised experts in their fields is that, far from being immutable and long established, many so-called traditions have been invented (or in some cases adapted) relatively recently, usually for ideological reasons.

While this in itself may not come as a huge surprise to you - many people are after all aware of this phenomenon in a general sense - some of the specific examples might be a revelation. In Hugh Trevor-Roper's essay on Scottish "traditions", for example, you will discover that the kilts (never call them skirts!) so proudly worn by nationalistic Scots were actually invented by an Englishman. Not only that, but the distinctive tartan patterns of kilts that are supposed to signify a Scot's long-held loyalties to a particular clan did not even exist before the nineteenth century.

Moving on to the English themselves, another contribution lists the various aspects of ceremony surrounding the monarchy that are generally assumed to be ancient and venerable but were in fact created little more than a century ago. Another essay details how British Empire authorities adapted or invented "native" traditions in places like India and Africa to maintain their own power (a practice carried on, by the way, by numerous post-colonial leaders).

All in all then, this is an illuminating read, brought (almost) up-to-date by the final essay, in which Eric Hobsbawm himself surveys the process by which mass "traditions" in areas such as festivals, sport, education and monuments were developed during the 20th century. The lesson to be drawn is: when it comes to traditions, assume nothing.

Example: Why is this book likely to have a wide appeal?

- A It is written by acknowledged experts.
- B It is about society and history.
- C It is academic yet easy to read.

27. The underlying idea of the book is that traditions are

- A normally used by governments to promote ideology.
- B often not as old as they are assumed to be.
- C surprisingly effective in forming people's attitudes.

28. The revelation about Scottish kilts is presented as being
- A ironic.
 - B typical.
 - C nationalistic.
29. What do many people assume about rituals involving British royalty?
- A They date back to ancient times.
 - B They are less than 100 years old.
 - C They have ceremonial purposes.
30. According to the writer, the use of artificial traditions to impose authority
- A was particularly common in the British Empire.
 - B continued even after the British Empire ended.
 - C is a phenomenon found mostly in India and Africa.
31. The reviewer believes the book should teach us to be more
- A inquisitive.
 - B knowledgeable.
 - C skeptical.

(Total 5 marks)

Task

Test takers read a text and answer five questions (or complete five sentences) from a choice of three answer options. There are five answers to choose and one text.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to understand the main ideas in an extended written text: Including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opinions - attitudes - implied meanings 	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, leaflets, brochures. Questions address content, style, connotation, implication and inference

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correct answer has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of five score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 6

Reading

Open-ended question

Section 6 comprises an *Open-ended question* item type. It assesses reading skills. It tests ability to understand the main points of short and extended written texts.

Section 6

Read the article below and answer the questions.

Degrees in Media Studies have become an easy target for those, especially in the popular press, whose agenda is to belittle current standards in Higher Education, and Media Studies graduates often find themselves having to vigorously defend their chosen degree.

As an academic subject, it is still relatively new and is often regarded as a soft option. That might come as a surprise to someone who has had to get to grips with postmodernist or semiotic theory in order to obtain a degree.

In fact, the content of Media Studies courses can vary dramatically: some tend to be theoretical while others are more vocational, so career opportunities depend on exactly what you studied. We're often told that traditional print media are on their way out, but journalistic talent and production skills in fields like radio and video are still in demand by new-media operators, who are keen to use these skills and adapt them to the challenges of capturing Internet audiences.

Example: Where are Media Studies courses often criticised?

..... (the) popular press

32. What do Media Studies graduates frequently need to do?

.....

33. Which phrase suggests that some people think Media Studies is not a demanding subject?

.....

34. Why is it hard to generalise about career opportunities for Media Studies graduates?

.....

35. Which sector of this field is said to be declining?

.....

Read the web article below and answer the questions.

There is a long-standing debate between users of "new media" and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) about so-called "net neutrality" (the idea that no-one should control the Internet). Both sides claim to uphold what they call "Internet freedom," but it appears they have diverging views of exactly what is meant by freedom in this context.

For supporters of neutrality, Internet freedom means equal, affordable access to whatever online applications and content they choose. In contrast, the ISPs say a free Internet means that the industry should be unimpeded by government oversight and that high-speed connections should be available for anyone who can afford them.

The debate so far is overgrown with so much technical jargon that it hasn't attracted widespread attention, but what's at stake is nothing less than the future of the Internet. The issue, essentially, is whether financial corporations become gatekeepers of online content and traffic, or whether small independent organizations can access the new technology without restrictions. Whichever way it goes, the outcome is likely to change the whole of popular culture.

Example: What principle is supported by both sides in this argument but interpreted differently?

.....
Internet freedom
.....

36. What two aspects of Internet access do supporters of net neutrality believe are needed?

.....

37. When Service Providers talk about "freedom", what do they mean they should be free from?

.....

38. What has prevented people from taking notice of this dispute?

.....

39. If supporters of net neutrality lose the political battle, who will control access to the Internet?

.....

(Total 8 marks)

Task

Test takers read two texts and answer eight questions about them using single words or short answers. There are eight questions to answer; four per text.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to understand the main points of short and extended written texts	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, leaflets, brochures and website articles. Questions address content, style, connotation, implication and inference

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correct answer has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of eight score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 7

Reading

Text, note completion

Section 7 comprises a *Text, note completion* item type. It assesses reading skills. It tests ability to extract specific information from an extended written text.

Section 7

Read the web article and complete the notes. Write no more than three words from the article in each gap.

What is Social Learning Theory?

The social learning theory known as observational learning proposed by Albert Bandura has become perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning. His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. Also known as modeling, this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors.

Basic Social Learning Concepts

1. *People can learn through observation.*

In his famous "Bobo doll" studies, Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a Bobo doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the Bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had observed.

2. *Mental states are important to learning.*

Bandura noted that external, environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment.

3. *Learning does not necessarily lead to a change in behavior.*

Not all observed behaviors are effectively learned. Factors involving both the model and the learner can play a role in whether social learning is successful. Certain requirements and steps must also be followed.

Attention

In order to learn, you need to be paying attention. Anything that distracts your attention will have a negative effect on observational learning. If the model is interesting or there is a novel aspect to the situation, you are more likely to dedicate your full attention to learning.

Retention

The ability to store information is an important part of the learning process. Retention can be affected by a number of factors, but the ability to pull up information later and act on it is vital to observational learning.

Reproduction

Once you have paid attention to the model and retained the information, it is time to actually perform the behavior you observed. Further practice of the learned behavior leads to improvement and skill advancement.

Motivation

Finally, in order for observational learning to be successful, you have to be motivated to imitate the behavior that has been modeled. Reward and punishment play an important role in motivation. While experiencing these motivators can be highly effective, so can observing others experience some type of reinforcement or punishment. For example, if you see another student rewarded for getting to class on time, you might start to show up a few minutes early.

Example: Albert Bandura's theory of social learning has been extremely.....**influential**.....:

40. There are some types of learning that cannot be completely explained by.....:

41. Alternative term for observational learning:

42. In the studies, children tended to copy adults behaving.....
towards the "Bobo doll".

43. The feeling of achievement is an example of.....:

44. Observational learning will be less successful if something.....:

45. Repeated performance of learnt behavior will result in.....:

46. Directly or indirectly, learners are motivated by two factors:

(Total 7 marks)

Task

Test takers read a text and use information from it to fill seven gaps in a second incomplete text or notes. There are seven gaps to complete, one source text and a second incomplete text or notes.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to extract specific information from an extended written text	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, website articles or textbooks

Scores

This item type is marked as either correct or incorrect. Each correctly completed gap has a weighting of one score point. A maximum of seven score points can be achieved in this section of the test.

Section 8

Writing

Write correspondence

Section 8 comprises a *Write correspondence* item type. It assesses writing skills. It tests ability to write a piece of correspondence.

Section 8

Use the information in **Section 7** to help you write your answer.

47. You have read the article on Social Learning Theory. Now write an email to a friend who is considering a career in teaching children. Write **120 to 150 words** and include the following information:

- why you are attaching the article
- a brief summary of the main ideas
- your opinion of the theory

Use your own words.

[The writing area contains multiple horizontal dotted lines for text entry.]

[The writing area contains multiple horizontal dotted lines for text entry.]

.....
(Total 10 marks)

Task

Test takers write an email, formal or informal letter or response in another format based on information given in Section 7. There is one text to write (120–150 words). There is a 'tolerated' word limit of 96-165 words for Section 8. If the response is below or over this, test takers will automatically score 0 for the section.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to write a piece of correspondence	Instructions which include the purpose of the text, the intended content of the message and the recipient. The task gives the test taker the opportunity to use language flexibly and effectively, to persuade, convince, amuse, impress or otherwise move the reader

Scores

This item type has a weighting of ten score points.

Written responses (sections 8 and 9) are scored according to **how well** test takers perform against the following criteria:

Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical and lexical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot
Coherence and cohesion	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured text, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices
Orthographic control	Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful Spelling is accurate apart from occasional slips

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Written interaction	Can express him/herself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively
---------------------	--

Section 9

Writing

Write text

Section 9 comprises a *Write text* item type. It assesses writing skills. It tests ability to write a short text from own experience, knowledge or imagination.

Section 9

48. Choose **one** of the topics below and write your answer in **200-250 words**.

Either:

A You see this notice in a magazine:

Every family has certain traditions, things they always do together on particular occasions. Write and tell us about one of your family traditions, and how you feel about it. The best articles will be published in the next edition.

Or:

B Write an essay discussing the following question:

It is often said that new media like the Internet will soon cause the death of old media like television and newspapers. How far do you agree?

Put a cross (☒) in the box next to the task you have chosen.

A ☐ B ☐

Write 200-250 words.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(Total 10 marks)

THAT IS THE END OF THE TEST

Task

Test takers write a piece of free writing from a choice of two given topics. The form of the response may be:

- factual: leaflet, blog entry or article
- critical: review or report
- analytical: essay

There is one text to write (200–250 words). There is a 'tolerated' word limit of 120-275 words for Section 9. If the response is below or over this, test takers will automatically score 0 for the section.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to write a short text from own experience, knowledge or imagination	A choice of two topics providing the test taker with the opportunity to give their point of view, expand supporting points, give reasons and relevant examples

Scores

This item type has a weighting of ten score points.

Written responses (sections 8 and 9) are scored according to **how well** test takers perform against the following criteria:

Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical and lexical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot
Coherence	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured text, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices
Orthographic control	Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful Spelling is accurate apart from occasional slips

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Written production	Can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples
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Summary: written test item type information

Sections	Item types	Objectives	Tasks	Stimulus
Section 1: Listening	3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the main detail in short spoken utterances by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying the situation - identifying the speaker's role - identifying the speakers' relationship - identifying the topic - recognizing function - understanding implied meaning - understanding idiomatic expression - understanding expression of feeling - understanding expression of attitude 	Listen once to ten short recordings, either monologues or dialogues, and answer a single 3-option multiple choice question or complete a sentence for each. Ten items	Short authentic recordings, one or two speakers Including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transactional conversations - social conversations - public announcements Including the following language functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - request for goods or services - request for action - request for information - factual information - expression of feelings - offer - invitation - apology/excuse - criticism/expression of dissatisfaction - suggestion - persuasion
Section 2: Listening and writing	Dictation	To assess ability to understand an extended utterance by transcribing a spoken text	Listen to one person speaking and write exactly what is heard with correct spellings. The extract is played twice, the second time with pauses, giving time to write down word-for-word what is heard. One dictation	Instructions, news bulletins, announcements, broadcast features, and factual information. The extracts are simulated authentic, descriptive and contain relatively formal language
Section 3: Listening	Text, note completion	To assess ability to extract specific information from extended spoken texts	Listen twice to two recordings, either a monologue or dialogue, and complete a text or notes for each using the information heard. Ten gaps	Authentic recordings of one or two speakers giving or exchanging information. The items replicate real life situations which require accurate comprehension and transcription of key information, (e.g., taking messages or notes) Including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transactional conversations - public announcements - recorded messages
Section 4: Reading	Gap fill 3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the purpose, structure and main idea of short written texts	Read five short texts, each containing a gap, and choose which of three answer options is the missing word or phrase. Five gaps	Authentic text types include: labels, instructions, signs, notices, menus, advertisements and announcements
Section 5: Reading	3-option multiple choice	To assess ability to understand the main ideas in an extended written text. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opinions - attitudes - implied meanings 	Read a text and answer five questions or complete five sentences from a choice of three answer options. Five questions or gaps	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, leaflets, brochures. Questions address content, style, connotation, implication and inference

Section 6: Reading	Open-ended question	To assess ability to understand the main points of short and extended written texts	Read two texts and answer eight questions about them using single words or short answers. Eight questions	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, leaflets, brochures and website articles. Questions address content, style, connotation, implication and
Section 7: Reading	Text, note completion	To assess ability to extract specific information from an extended written text	Read a text and use information from it to fill seven gaps in a second incomplete text or notes. Seven gaps	Authentic text types include: newspaper articles, magazine articles, website articles or textbooks
Section 8: Writing	Write correspondence	To assess ability to write a piece of correspondence	Write an email, formal or informal letter or response in another format based on given information given in Section 7. One text (120–150 words)	Instructions which include the purpose of the text, the intended content of the message and the recipient. The task gives the test taker the opportunity to use language flexibly and effectively, to persuade, convince, amuse, impress or otherwise move the reader
Section 9: Writing	Write text	To assess ability to write a short text from own experience, knowledge or imagination	Write a piece of free writing from choice of two given topics. The form of the response may be: - factual: leaflet, blog entry, article, - critical: review, report - analytical: essay (200–250 words)	A choice of two topics providing the test taker with the opportunity to give their point of view, expand supporting points, give reasons and relevant examples

Figure 6. Level 4 (Advanced) written test item type information

Spoken test

This part of the guide presents a detailed description of the item type within each section of the spoken test. This includes what it tests, what test takers have to do, timing, the item type objective, stimulus information and details on scoring.

Section 10

Speaking

Sustained monologue

Section 10 comprises a *Sustained monologue* item type. It assesses speaking skills. It tests ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest.

PTE General Speaking Test: Level 4

SECTION 10: PERSONAL INFORMATION (2 MINUTES)

Now I'd like you to speak on your own for about one and a half minutes.

Main prompt 1:

- How important is music for you?

Follow-up prompts:

- What type of music do you like and why?
- What do you think you need to do to become a successful musician?
- How is music used in celebrations in your country?
- Do different types of music influence how you feel? Why / Why not?

Main prompt 2:

- How important do you think it is to do sport at school?

Follow-up prompts:

- Do you prefer to watch or play sport? Why?
- If you could play a new sport, what would you choose and why?
- How important do you think sport is for society?
- Would you be prepared to try a risky sport like parachuting? Why / Why not?

Main prompt 3:

- How do you usually celebrate your birthday?

Follow-up prompts:

- What are important ages to celebrate in your country and why?
- Describe what you did on a birthday when you celebrated an important age.
- How important is it for you to recognise birthdays?
- Do you think birthdays have become too commercialised? Why / Why not?

Main prompt 4:

- What is the most important technological invention that you use and why?

Follow-up prompts:

- In what ways does technology help you in your daily life?
- How would your life be different if you didn't have technology?
- Is there any technology that you avoid using? Why / Why not?
- How do you think technology will develop in the future?

Image displaying interlocutor script and instructions.

Task

Test takers speak without interruption in response to a main prompt posed by the interlocutor (up to 1.5 minutes). Follow-up questions are asked to encourage the test taker to continue talking. Prompts focus on present circumstances, past experience, tastes, preferences and future plans. This section of the test is **2 minutes**.

Objective, stimulus

Task Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest	Questions may require the test taker to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- choose between two alternatives- explain in detail reasons for an opinion or preference- speculate or respond to a hypothetical question- highlight or comment on a particular aspect of a topic- speak in a way that is particularly vivid or persuasive

Scores

The score points for speaking are aggregated and contribute up to 25 marks towards the total score over the written and spoken tests of 100 marks.

The test taker is scored on **how well** they perform over the four speaking sections against the following criteria:

Fluency	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural smooth flow of language
Interaction	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks in order to get or keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers
Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot and generally corrected when they occur
Phonological control	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Sustained monologue	Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects
---------------------	---

Section 11

Speaking

Discussion

Section 11 comprises a *Discussion* item type. It assesses speaking skills. It tests ability to discuss a concrete or abstract issue.

SECTION 11: DISCUSSION (2 MINUTES)

*Now, we are going to discuss something together. The question is: "Are neighbours more important than friends?"
What do you think?*

(Use the following arguments as appropriate to take an opposing view to that of the test taker)

For neighbours

- Neighbours are important because you see them all the time.
- Neighbours are close by when there is an emergency.
- Neighbours can help (e.g. watch your house if you go away).
- Good relationships with neighbours improve community spirit.

For friends

- Neighbours can be unfriendly and difficult.
- Some people don't see their neighbours much.
- Friends are people you choose, neighbours aren't.
- Friends are your age and share your interests.

Image displaying interlocutor script and instructions.

Task

Test takers give and support opinions on a topic in response to prompts put by the interlocutor. This section of the test is **2 minutes**.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to discuss a concrete or abstract issue	A discussion prompt on a topic about which it is feasible to have equally valid opposing opinions, feelings or ideas. The topic may be a concrete or abstract issue. The test taker will be invited to speculate or respond to a hypothesis

Scores

The score points for speaking are aggregated and contribute up to 25 marks towards the total score over the written and spoken tests of 100 marks.

The test taker is scored on **how well** they perform over the four speaking sections against the following criteria:

Fluency	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural smooth flow of language
Interaction	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks in order to get or keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skillfully to those of other speakers
Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot and generally corrected when they occur
Phonological control	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Turn taking	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks appropriately in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor whilst thinking
-------------	---

Section 12

Speaking

Describe picture

Section 12 comprises a *Describe picture item* type. It assesses speaking skills. It tests ability to speak continuously on a topic related to two pictures.

SECTION 12: PICTURE (2 MINUTES)

Now, here are two pictures showing different communities. These pictures are being considered for a book called "Different Communities". Please talk about the pictures and tell me how you think these communities have different lifestyles.

(Hand the pictures to the test taker)



(Allow the test taker to speak for about one minute, then ask this secondary prompt)

Which of these pictures would you choose for the cover of the book called "Different Communities" and why?

(Retrieve the pictures)

Image displaying interlocutor script and instructions, and example pictures given to test takers.

Task

Test takers speak without interruption about two related pictures in response to a prompt posed by the interlocutor (1 minute). This is followed by a second instruction to interpret some aspect of the pictures. The visuals are designed to elicit language of comparison and contrast as well as expression of ideas, opinions and feelings. This section of the test is **2 minutes**.

Objectives, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to speak continuously on a topic related to two pictures	Two related pictures and two questions. The first prompt focuses on the pictures; "Please talk about the pictures" or "Please tell me what you can see in the pictures" in relation to a topic or imagined purpose, such as their inclusion in a publication. The second prompt is an instruction to the test taker to interpret some aspect of the pictures or to express a personal reaction to them. The pictures may include some unusual element that invites comment or explanation. They could illustrate two alternative options and may allude to a topical issue

Scores

The score points for speaking are aggregated and contribute up to 25 marks towards the total score over the written and spoken tests of 100 marks.

The test taker is scored on **how well** they perform over the four speaking sections against the following criteria:

Fluency	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural smooth flow of language
Interaction	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks in order to get or keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skillfully to those of other speakers
Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot and generally corrected when they occur
Phonological control	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Thematic development	Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion
----------------------	--

Section 13

Speaking

Role play

Section 13 comprises a *Role play* item type. It assesses speaking skills. It tests ability to perform and respond to language functions appropriately.

SECTION 13: ROLE PLAY (2 MINUTES)

Now we are going to take part in a role play. Here is a card with the situation on it.
(Hand the card to the test taker. Allow up to 15 seconds to study the card)

Test taker's card

You are with your friend. The examiner is your friend. You want your friend to join a local community club with you.

Your goal: Persuade your friend to join the community club with you.

Interlocutor's script

I am your friend. You want me to join a local community club with you. Tell me why you think it is a good idea to join the club.

Ready? I'll start.

Are you still planning on joining that new community group?

Suggested prompts:

- *Maybe I won't like the activities they do there.*
- *I don't think I'll enjoy it, I'm quite shy.*
- *I haven't got a lot of free time at the moment.*
- *I don't know if my parents will let me go.*
(Agree to try it)

(Retrieve the card)

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

Image displaying interlocutor script and instructions, and example role card given to test takers.

Task

Test takers take part in a role play with the interlocutor using a role card with information and instructions. The situation may involve some difference of status or social distance between participants (necessitating adjustment of register). It may require test takers to state a problem which then needs to be solved jointly, explain or justify a course of action or speculate about the possible consequences of future action. This section of the test is **2 minutes**.

Objective, stimulus

Objective	Stimulus
To assess ability to perform and respond to language functions appropriately Language functions: There is no limit to the range of language functions that may be expected at this level	The interlocutor gives the test taker up to 15 seconds to read a role card with: - an explanation of the situation - a specification of the roles to be taken by the test taker and the interlocutor - a specification of the test taker's goal (e.g., to reach an agreement, complete a transaction, etc.) - if necessary and appropriate, instructions as to the tone or mood that the test taker should adopt - visual support where appropriate

Scores

The score points for speaking are aggregated and contribute up to 25 marks towards the total score over the two papers of a 100 marks.

The test taker is scored on **how well** they perform over the four speaking sections against the following criteria:

Fluency	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural smooth flow of language
Interaction	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his/her remarks in order to get or keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skillfully to those of other speakers
Range	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say
Accuracy	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot and generally corrected when they occur
Phonological control	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning

In addition, performance in this section is scored according to **what** the test taker can do against the following criteria:

Sociolinguistic appropriateness	Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage
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Summary: spoken test item type information

Sections	Item types	Objectives	Tasks	Stimulus
Section 10: Speaking	Sustained monologue	To assess ability to speak continuously about matters of personal information and interest	(2 minutes) Speak without interruption in response to a main prompt posed by the interlocutor (up to 1.5 minutes). Follow-up questions are asked to encourage the test taker to continue talking. Prompts focus on present circumstances, past experience, tastes, preferences and future plans	Questions may require the test taker to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - choose between two alternatives - explain in detail reasons for an opinion or preference - speculate or respond to a hypothetical question - highlight or comment on a particular aspect of a topic - speak in a way that is particularly vivid or persuasive
Section 11: Speaking	Discussion	To assess ability to discuss a concrete or abstract issue	(2 minutes) Give and support opinions on a topic in response to prompts put by the interlocutor	A discussion on a topic about which it is feasible to have equally valid opposing opinions, feelings or ideas. The topic may be a concrete or abstract issue. The test taker will be invited to speculate or respond to a hypothesis
Section 12: Speaking	Describe picture	To assess ability to speak continuously on a topic related to two pictures	(2 minutes) Speak without interruption about two related pictures in response to a prompt posed by the interlocutor (1 minute). This is followed by a second instruction to interpret some aspect of the pictures. The visuals are designed to elicit language of comparison and contrast as well as expression of ideas, opinions and feelings	Two related pictures and two questions. The first prompt focuses on the pictures; "Please talk about the pictures" or "Please tell me what you can see in the pictures" in relation to a topic or imagined purpose, such as their inclusion in a publication. The second prompt is an instruction to the test taker to interpret some aspect of the pictures or to express a personal reaction to them The pictures may include some unusual element that invites comment or explanation. They could illustrate two alternative options and may allude to a topical issue
Section 13: Speaking	Role play Language functions: There is no limit to the range of language functions that may be expected at this level	To assess ability to perform and respond to language functions appropriately	(2 minutes) Take part in a role play with the interlocutor using a role card with information and instructions. The situation may involve some difference of status or social distance between participants (necessitating adjustment of register). It may require test takers to state a problem which then needs to be solved jointly, explain or justify a course of action or speculate about the possible consequences of future action	The interlocutor gives the test taker up to 15 seconds to read a role card with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an explanation of the situation - a specification of the roles to be taken by the test taker and the interlocutor - a specification of the test taker's goal (e.g., to reach an agreement, complete a transaction, etc.) - if necessary and appropriate, instructions as to the tone or mood that the test taker should adopt - visual support where appropriate

Figure 7. Level 4 (Advanced) spoken test task information

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