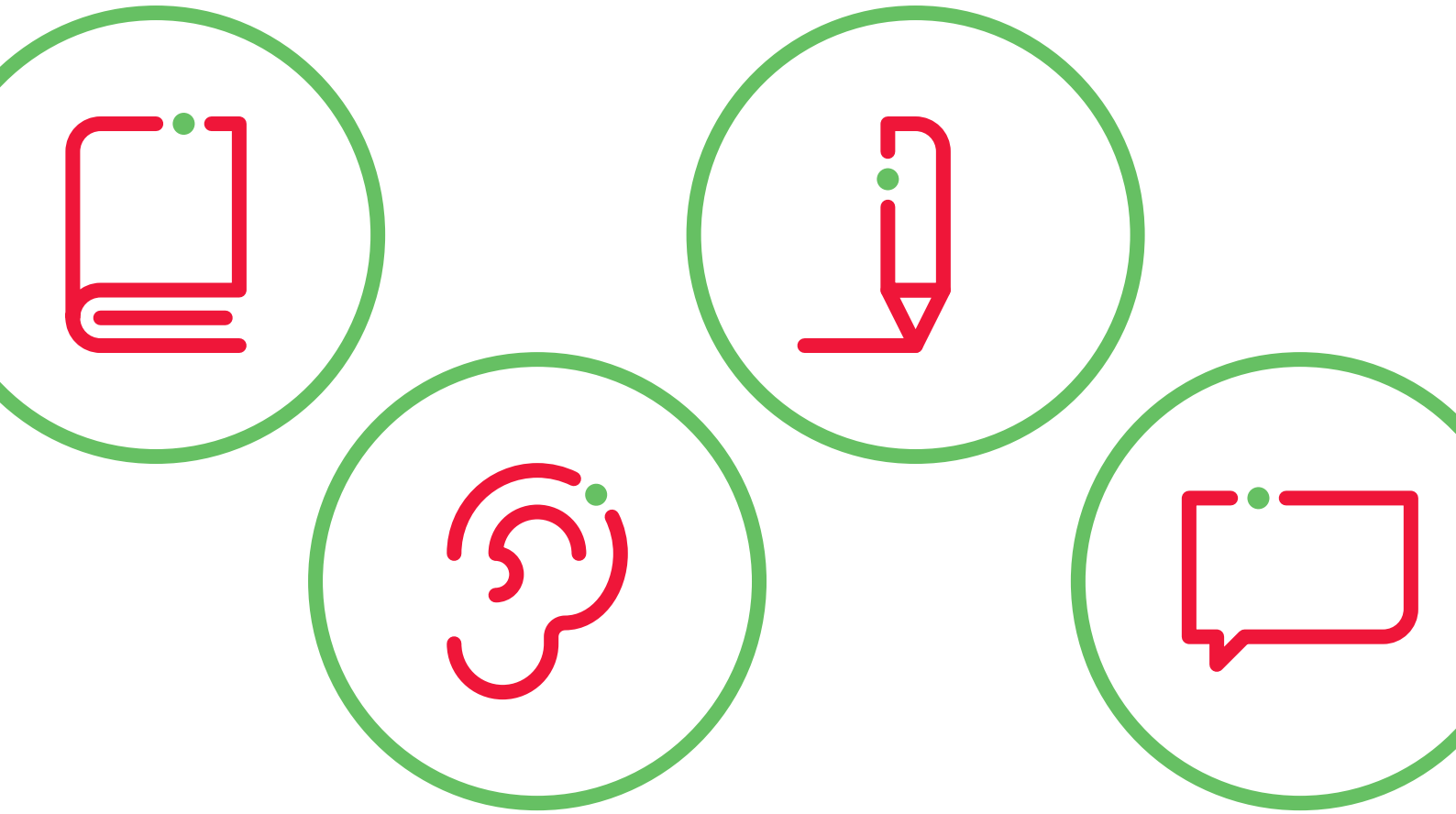
BRITISH COUNCIL

Aptis ESOL
General

Guide for Teachers

2025



www.britishcouncil.org/aptis

Introducing the Aptis ESOL test

Aptis ESOL is an innovative English testing system from the British Council. It is a suite of assessments for adults and young adults, which can be used to assess English language ability in all four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Aptis ESOL tests include a range of questions, which are designed to allow candidates to show their best ability. The test results are reported on a numerical scale (0–50) and as a level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

There are four variants of Aptis ESOL tests.

1. Aptis ESOL General
tests from A1 to B2 on the CEFR and is suitable for most test-takers. Candidates demonstrating a level above B2 are awarded a C1.

2. Aptis ESOL Advanced
tests English language ability from B1 to C2 on the CEFR and is for higher level test-takers.

3. Aptis ESOL for Teachers
tests from A1 to B2 on the CEFR and is designed for teachers. Candidates demonstrating a level above B2 are awarded a C1.

4. Aptis ESOL for Teens
is four-skills variant which is designed specifically for 13 to 15-year-old learners and tests from A1 to B2 on the CEFR. Candidates demonstrating a level above B2 are awarded a C1.

Aptis ESOL tests are taken on a computer.

Accommodations can be made for special educational needs. Information is provided in the ‘Aptis ESOL for all’ section at the end of this guide.

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare your students for the Aptis ESOL General tests. An overview of each component is provided followed by detailed descriptions and advice on how your students can best prepare. You will also find tips on how your students can practise for the test and information on how the test is marked.

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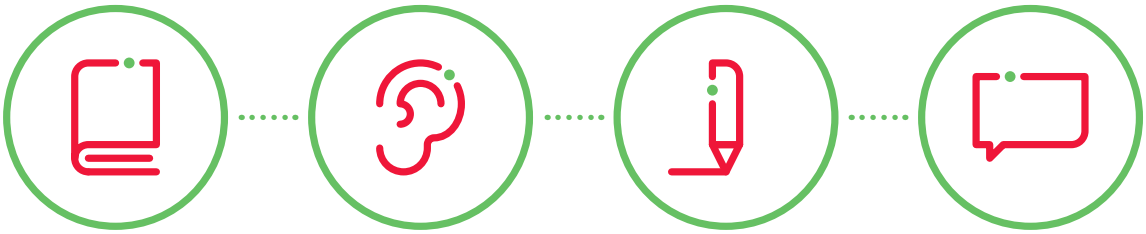
Test structure

Aptis ESOL General consists of five components: core (grammar and vocabulary), reading, listening, writing and speaking.

Your students will be taking all four skill components (reading, listening, writing, speaking).



It is a good idea for them to take a practice test so that they become familiar with what they need to do.

Aptis ESOL General test structure

Test	Test design		Activity	Format
Core 25 minutes	Part 1	Grammar	Sentence completion.	Three-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Vocabulary	Word matching (similar meaning). Match words to definitions. Sentence completion. Word pairs or word combinations (words commonly used together).	Sets of five target words with ten options
Reading 35 minutes	Part 1	Sentence comprehension	Choose words to complete sentences.	Three-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Text cohesion	Put sentences into the correct order.	Two tasks: six sentences jumbled up in each task
	Part 3	Opinion matching	Match people's opinions to statements.	Seven statements matched to four people's opinions
	Part 4	Long text comprehension	Match headings to paragraphs.	Seven paragraphs and eight headings
Listening 40 minutes	Part 1	Information recognition	Listen to a short monologue or dialogue to identify specific information.	Three-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Information matching	Match people's monologues to information.	Six pieces of information four monologues
	Parts 3 and 4	Inference	Listen to monologues and dialogues and identify the attitude, opinion or intention.	Three-option multiple choice

Test	Test design		Activity	Format
Writing 50 minutes	Part 1	Word-level writing	Respond to messages using individual words.	From one to five words for each question
	Part 2	Short text writing	Write personal information.	20–30 words
	Part 3	Three written responses to questions	Respond to written questions on a social network-type website.	30–40 words for each question
	Part 4	Formal and informal writing	Write an informal email to a friend and a formal email to an unknown person.	40–50 words for the informal email 120–150 words for the formal email
Speaking 12 minutes	Part 1	Personal information	Respond to three personal information questions.	30 seconds for each response
	Part 2	Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanations	Describe a picture and answer two additional questions of increasing difficulty.	45 seconds for each response
	Part 3	Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations	Describe two contrasting pictures and answer two additional questions of increasing difficulty.	45 seconds for each response
	Part 4	Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic	Answer three questions on an abstract topic.	One minute to prepare Two minutes response time

Aptis ESOL General core test (grammar and vocabulary)

The core test consists of two parts. The first part assesses the candidates' knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses their knowledge of English vocabulary.

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 1 Grammar	In this part of the test, candidates will answer 25 questions. Most of the questions test formal written English. A small number of questions test spoken English, such as knowing the appropriate grammar to use in a particular situation (formal or informal situations, for example). All 25 questions are in the format of a three-option multiple choice. Candidates complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.	To know which parts of grammar are tested, see the British Council / EAQUALS core inventory. This is free and available online at: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-eaquals-core-inventory-general-english One great way to help candidates prepare for the grammar test is to show them the British Council's LearnEnglish website: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar
Part 2 Vocabulary	There are 25 questions in this part of the test. There are a number of question types: **Word matching:** candidates find a word with a meaning similar to the target word. **Word definition:** candidates match a definition to the correct word. **Word usage:** candidates complete a sentence by choosing the correct word. **Word pairs or word combinations:** candidates select the most common combinations of words. They are given a target word and a list of words which may or may not be commonly used in combination with the target word, e.g. where card is the target word, birthday + card is a common combination but blue + card is not.	To help your students prepare for this part of the test, the LearnEnglish website has games and activities to help them improve their vocabulary: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary Another useful tip is to encourage them to take note of interesting words or word combinations when they read English texts.

Sample grammar questions

There are two question types. The first focuses on written English grammar, and the second focuses on the use of English grammar when speaking.

Here are some examples:

1. Written grammar

He_____me that the machine was broken.
- told
- spoke
- said

My boss says that I _____ to finish the report by Friday.
- must
- have
- should

My new computer works _____ faster than my old one.
- many
- more
- much

I have worked for this company _____ I left university.
- since
- after
- from

2. Spoken grammar

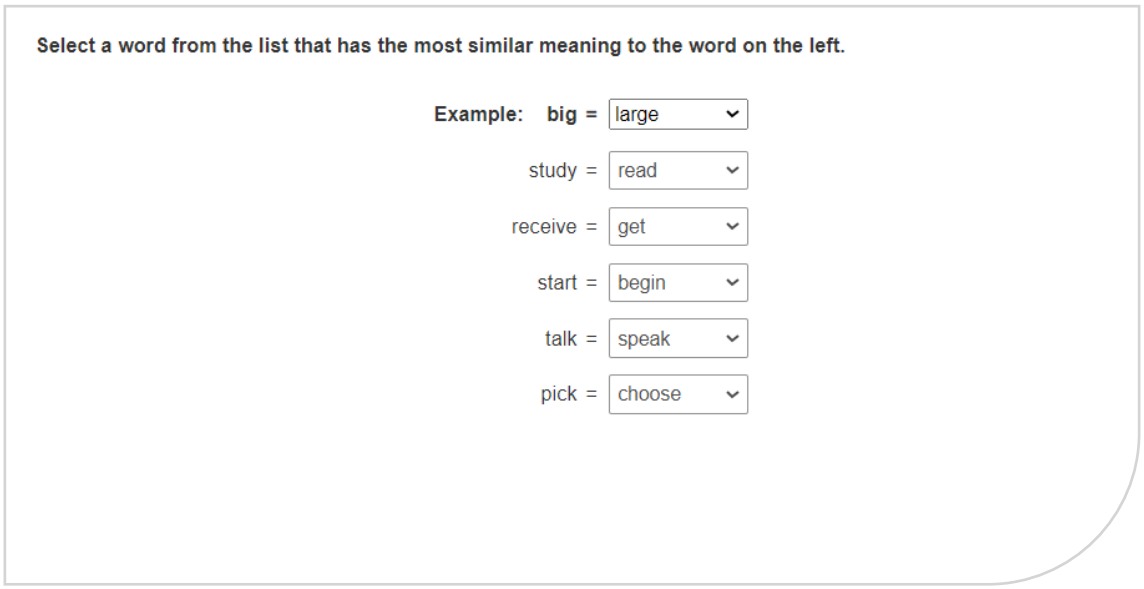
John: She's French, isn't she?
Ahmed: No, she's _____ from Belgium.
- exactly
- actually
- anyway

Zeynep: I really don't feel like going to see that movie tonight.
Peter: Ok. _____ we can go next week instead.
- Maybe
- However
- Nevertheless

Sample vocabulary questions

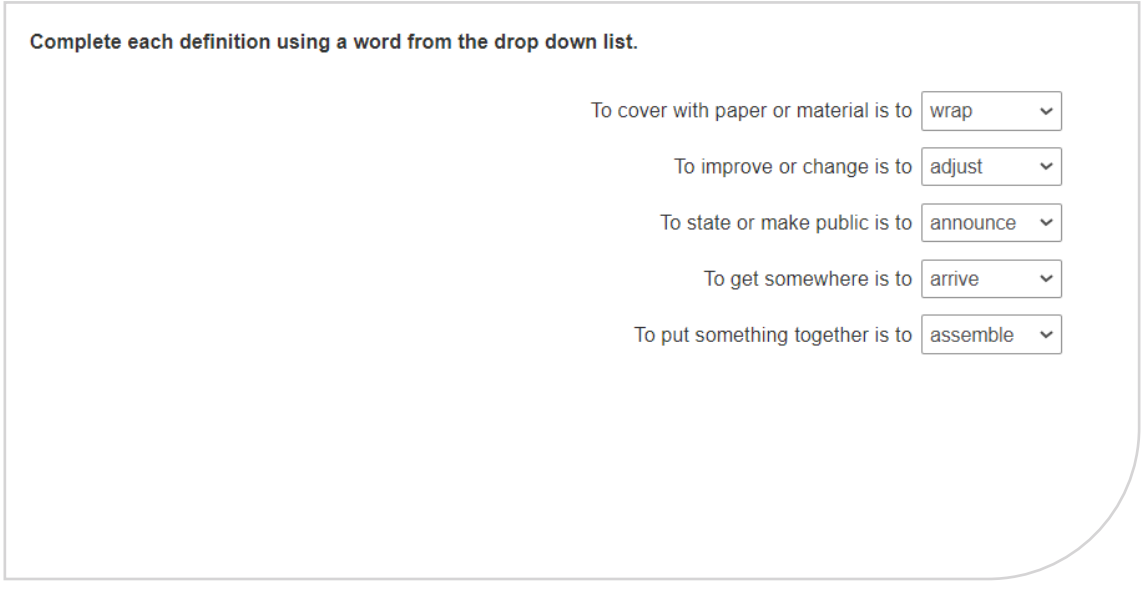
In the first question type, candidates need to match words with similar meanings from a list of options. To do this, they click on the arrows and choose the similar word.

Here is an example:

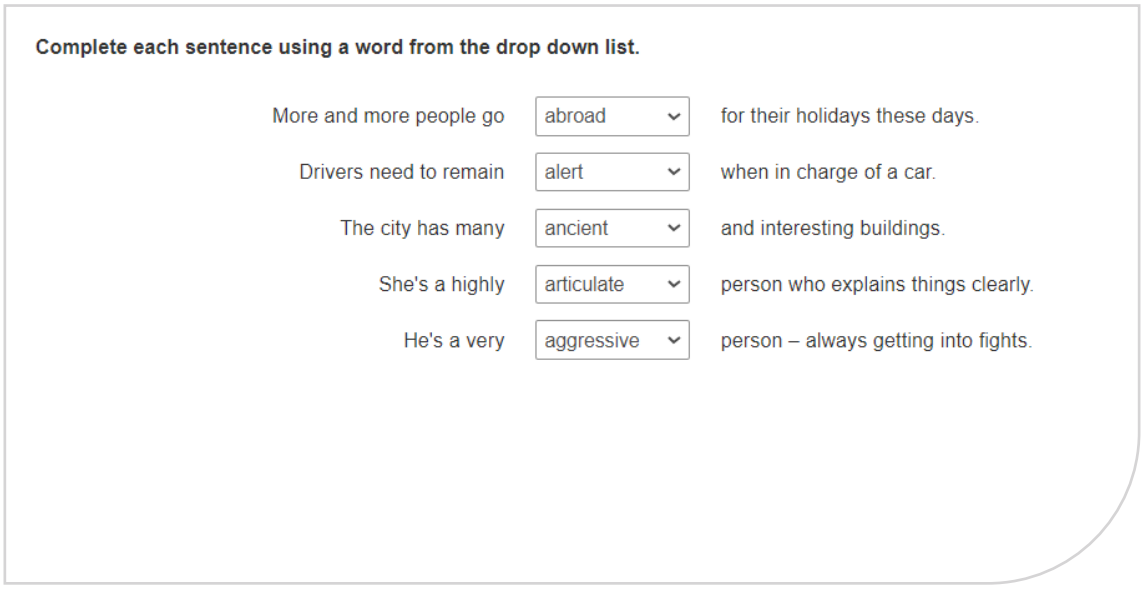


For the next question type, candidates need to match a definition to a word. They click on the arrow and choose the word that matches the definition.

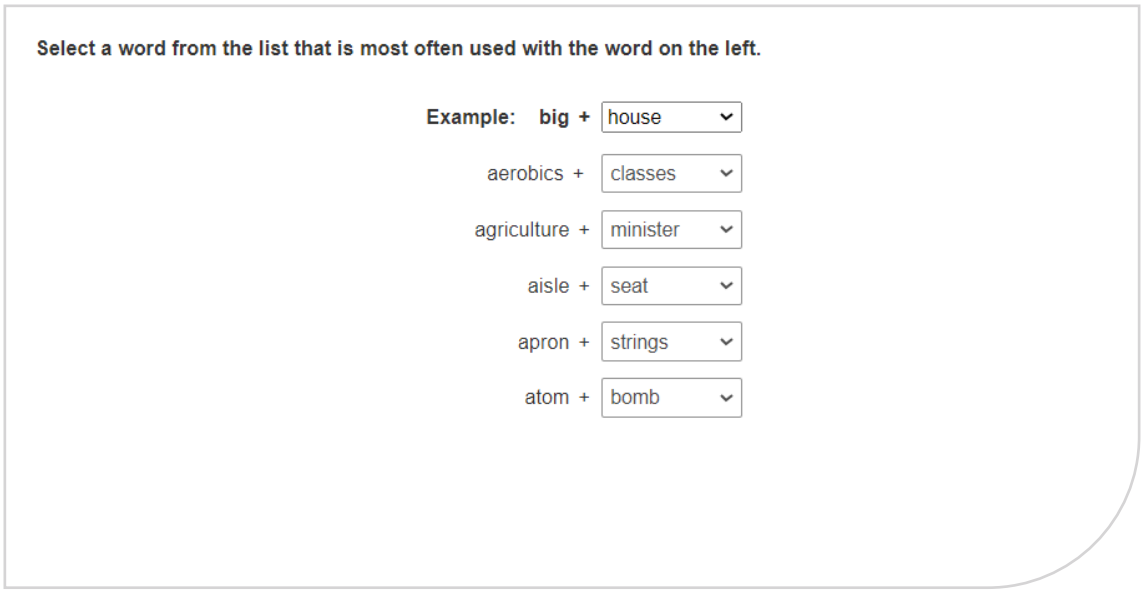
Here is an example:



The next question type asks candidates to complete a sentence using a word from a list.



The final question type asks candidates to identify a word from a list that is commonly used with the given word.



To take a full Aptis ESOL Grammar and Vocabulary practice test, please visit our **website**.

Aptis ESOL General Reading test

The Reading test assesses candidates' reading ability. The tasks become more difficult as the test progresses.

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 1 Sentence comprehension	In this part, candidates need to choose a word (choice of three) to complete a sentence. There are five sentences to complete. This part assesses candidates' ability to read a sentence and to complete it with an appropriate word.	Candidates should read each sentence and all of the possible correct words carefully before trying to complete this task. The best way to become a better reader is to practise. Easy books written especially for English language learners might help.
Part 2 Text cohesion	In this part, there are two tasks. Both have six sentences that make a whole text. They have been put into the wrong order and the candidates need to put them in the correct order. There is only one correct way to organise the text. The task is to click on each sentence and then move them so each one is in the correct position.	This part assesses candidates' knowledge of the cohesion of a text. They need to look for clues in each sentence that show how it links to the sentences around it. Candidates should read all the sentences carefully first. Then, they decide on the correct order (the first sentence is identified for them).

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 3 Opinion matching	In this part, candidates will match people's opinions to statements. They will read four opinions on the same topic and seven statements. Then they need to decide how the sentences should be matched. This part tests candidates' ability to read and understand short texts.	Candidates should read all four opinions before attempting the questions.
Part 4 Long text compre-hension	In this part, candidates will read a long text (about 750 words). They will also read eight headings. The task is to match seven of the headings to paragraphs in the text. There is always an extra heading that does not fit with any paragraph. This part is designed to test candidates' ability to read and understand a long text. To get the correct answers they need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the headings reflect the paragraphs in different ways (sometimes using similar words, sometimes similar ideas, or by sharing a topic).	Candidates should read the whole text quickly and then carefully read the headings. It is best for them to do this before starting the task. They should look for clues to connect the headings to the paragraphs; these might be similar words, ideas or topics.

Sample reading questions

Reading part 1: Sentence comprehension

In this part, candidates must select the appropriate word from a drop-down list.

Read the email from Janice to her friend. Choose one word from the list for each gap. The first one is done for you.

Dear Sally,

Tim and I are on holiday in Greece. We have a nice [view] of the sea from our hotel.

The weather is [great] and it's really hot.

Yesterday we went on a [boat] on the lake and caught some fish.

We had lunch and then we visited an old [town.]

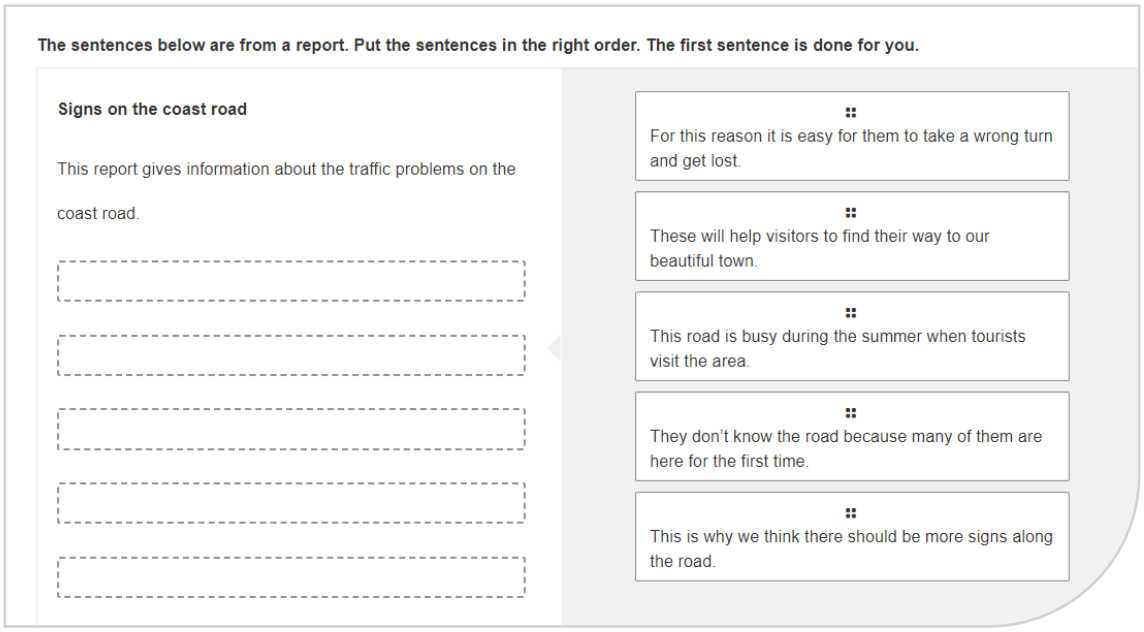
Tomorrow we are going to take a car and [drive] around.

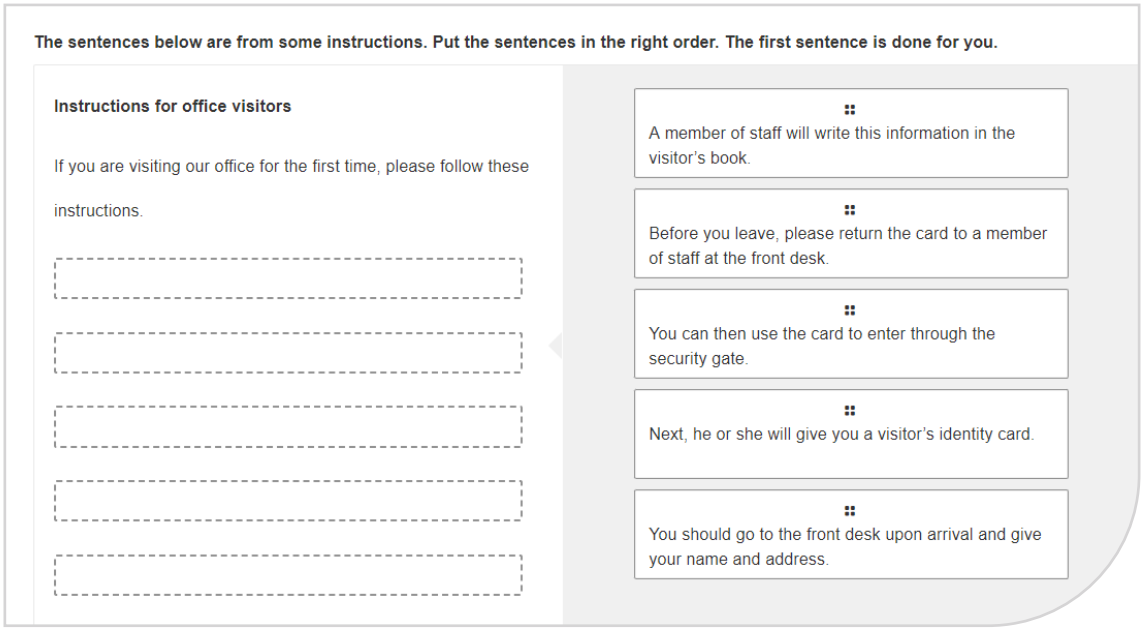
We are going to visit some [shops] and buy clothes.

Reading part 2: Text cohesion

In the second part, candidates must sort the sentences into the correct order so that the text makes sense. They do this by clicking on a sentence and dragging it to its correct position.

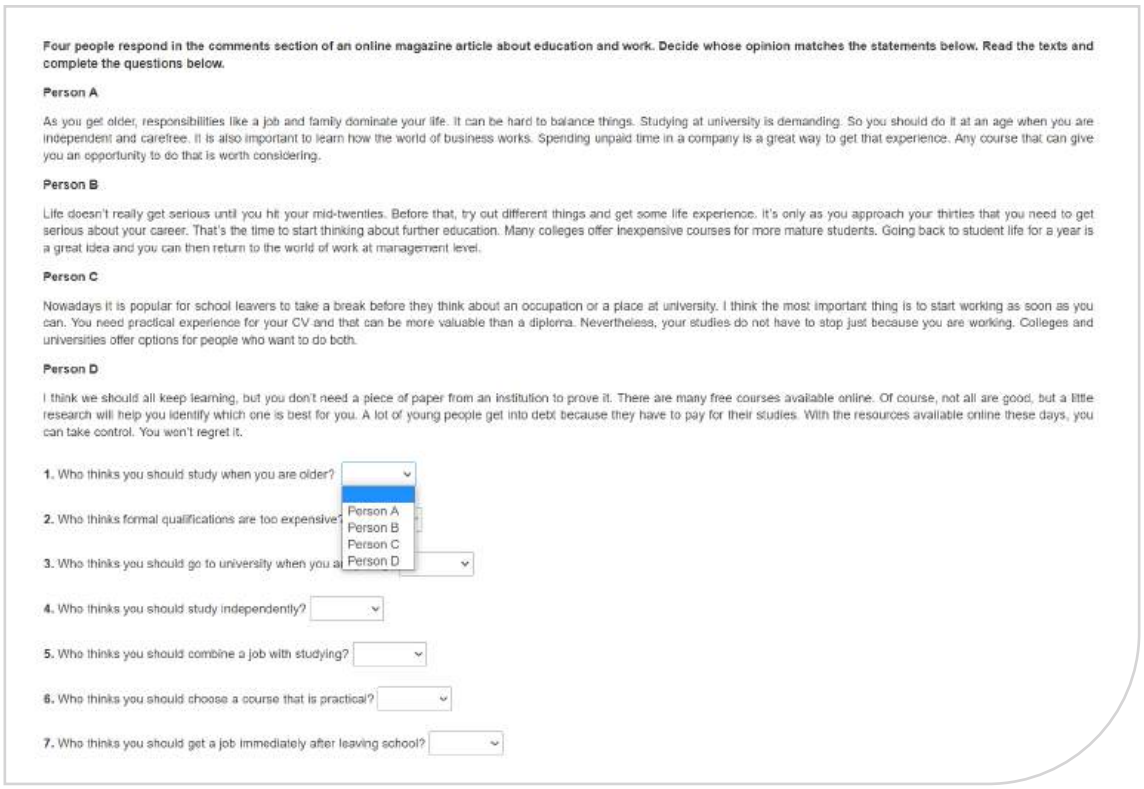
There are two of these tasks in this part.





Reading part 3: Opinion matching

In the third part, candidates match four people's opinions to seven statements by selecting the correct person from the drop-down list.



Four people respond in the comments section of an online magazine article about education and work. Decide whose opinion matches the statements below. Read the texts and complete the questions below.

Person A

As you get older, responsibilities like a job and family dominate your life. It can be hard to balance things. Studying at university is demanding. So you should do it at an age when you are independent and carefree. It is also important to learn how the world of business works. Spending unpaid time in a company is a great way to get that experience. Any course that can give you an opportunity to do that is worth considering.

Person B

Life doesn't really get serious until you hit your mid-twenties. Before that, try out different things and get some life experience. It's only as you approach your thirties that you need to get serious about your career. That's the time to start thinking about further education. Many colleges offer inexpensive courses for more mature students. Going back to student life for a year is a great idea and you can then return to the world of work at management level.

Person C

Nowadays it is popular for school leavers to take a break before they think about an occupation or a place at university. I think the most important thing is to start working as soon as you can. You need practical experience for your CV and that can be more valuable than a diploma. Nevertheless, your studies do not have to stop just because you are working. Colleges and universities offer options for people who want to do both.

Person D

I think we should all keep learning, but you don't need a piece of paper from an institution to prove it. There are many free courses available online. Of course, not all are good, but a little research will help you identify which one is best for you. A lot of young people get into debt because they have to pay for their studies. With the resources available online these days, you can take control. You won't regret it.

1. Who thinks you should study when you are older?
2. Who thinks formal qualifications are too expensive?
3. Who thinks you should go to university when you a
4. Who thinks you should study independently?
5. Who thinks you should combine a job with studying?
6. Who thinks you should choose a course that is practical?
7. Who thinks you should get a job immediately after leaving school?

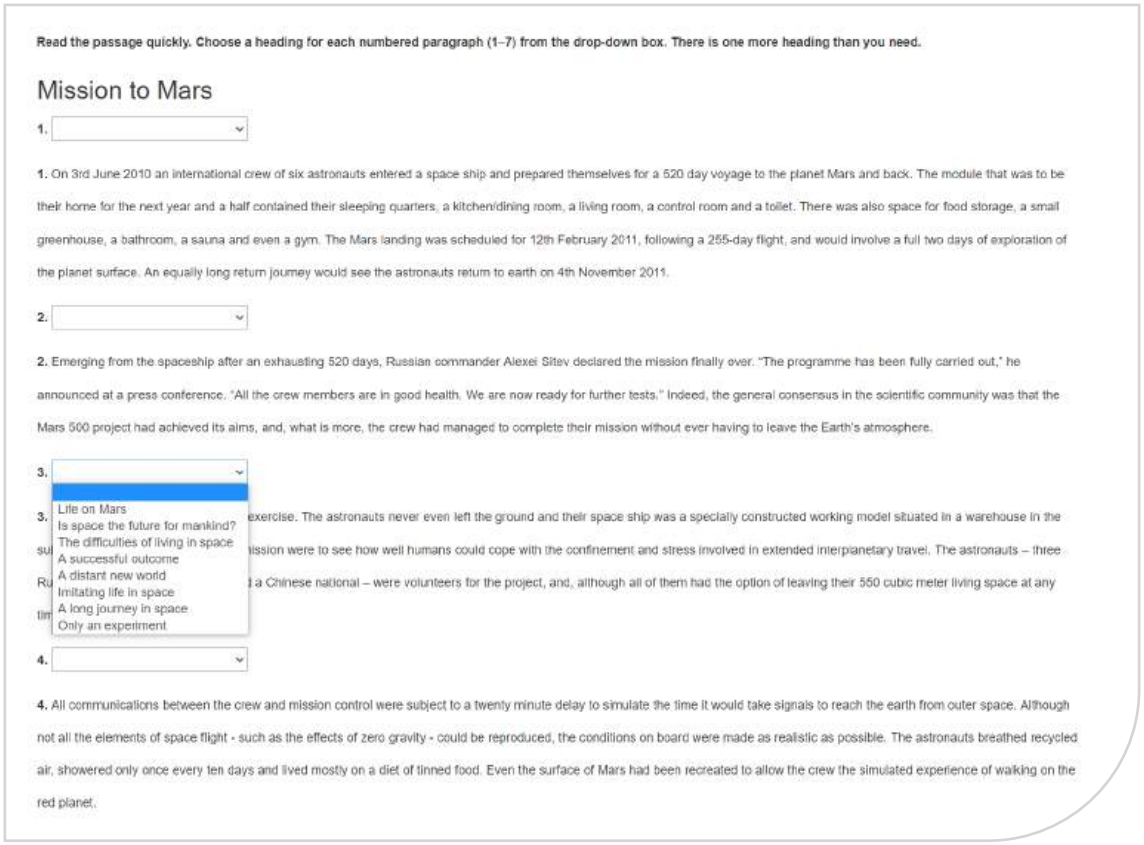
Person A
Person B
Person C
Person D

Reading part 4: Long text comprehension

For the final part, candidates must scroll through the reading text to see all of it. They can do this by clicking on the side bar and moving the bar up and down.

To complete the task, candidates need to match seven headings to the correct paragraphs in the text.

They select the appropriate heading from the drop-down list on the left-hand side.



To take a full Aptis ESOL Reading practice test, please visit our **website**.

Aptis ESOL General Listening test

The Listening test has four task types. Candidates can choose to listen to the text once or twice.

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 1 Information recognition	In this part, candidates will listen to a short phone message or a short monologue or dialogue, and they need to identify specific information such as a phone number, a time or a place.	Candidates can visit the British Council's LearnEnglish website for lots of very useful activities, tips, apps and podcasts: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/ The elementary podcasts are useful preparation for these questions.
Part 2 Information matching	In this part, candidates will listen to four people's monologues and match the person to information. There are six pieces of information to match to the monologues.	There are quite a few useful practice videos and podcasts on the LearnEnglish website, so that's a very good starting point. In addition, candidates should try to listen to as much English as possible (e.g. films, television or podcasts).
Part 3 Opinion matching	In this task, candidates listen to a dialogue between a man and a woman and then decide who expresses which opinion. There are four questions. Their task is to decide if the man, woman or both the man and woman have expressed the opinion.	Listening to authentic speech, such as interviews, podcasts or films, is a good way for candidates to prepare for this task.
Part 4 Monologue compre-hension	In these tasks, candidates listen to a monologue and answer two questions. The focus here is not on understanding the meaning of what the speaker is saying, but on identifying clues in their language or tone to help identify the attitude of the speaker, their intention or opinion.	There are a number of higher-level podcasts on the LearnEnglish website. Candidates can also try the BBC World Service radio station.

Sample listening questions

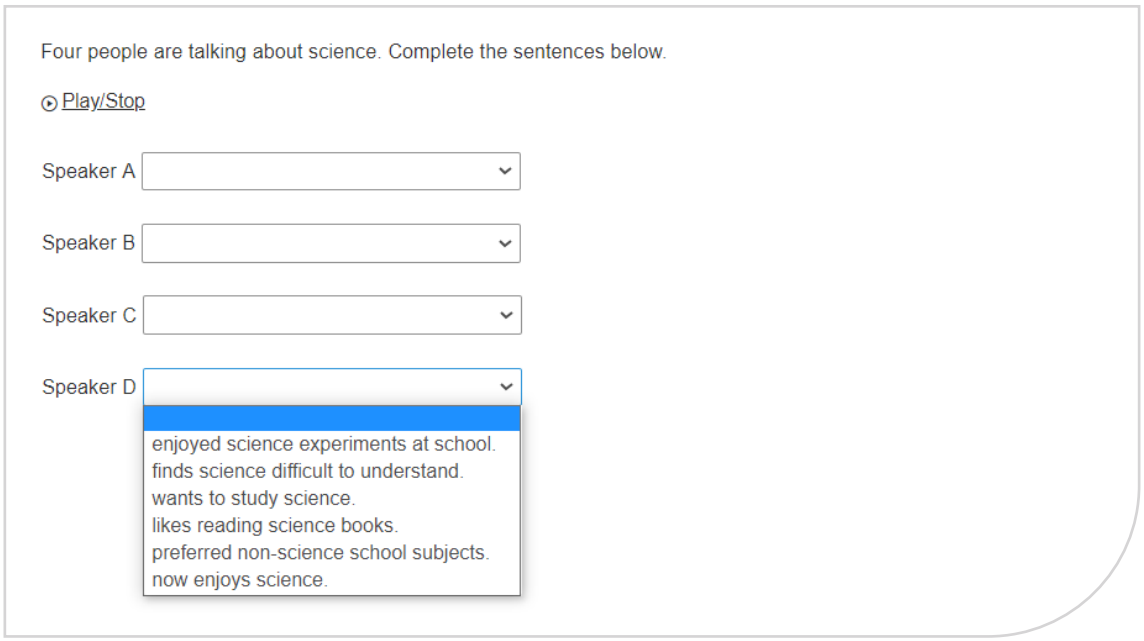
If candidates would like to hear a question for a second time, they can just click on the Play button (▶). The system will not allow them to listen more than twice.

Listening part 1: Information recognition

Candidates listen to a short monologue or dialogue and identify specific information such as a phone number, a time or a place.

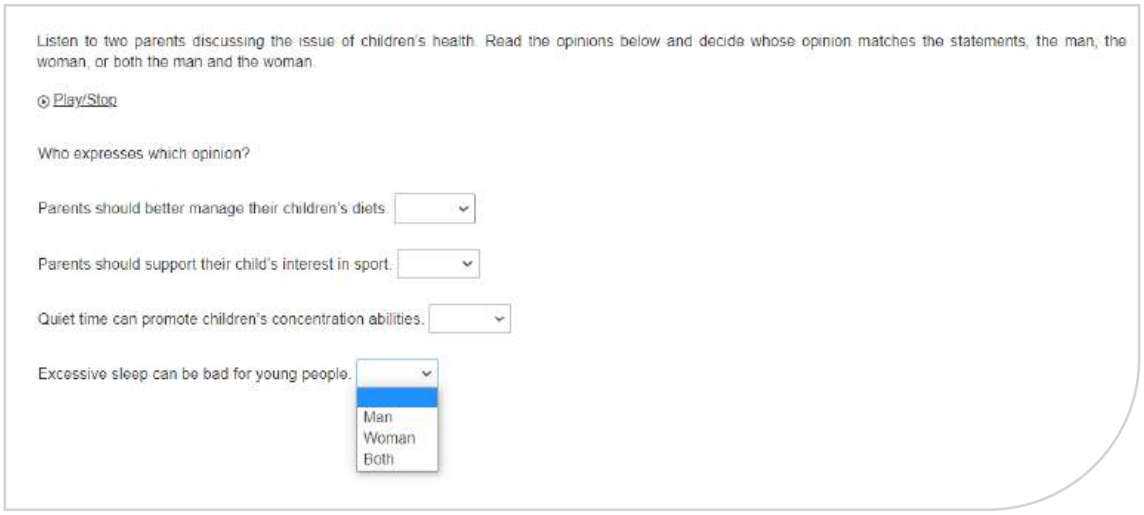
Listening part 2: Information matching

Candidates listen to four different people and match the person to the information.



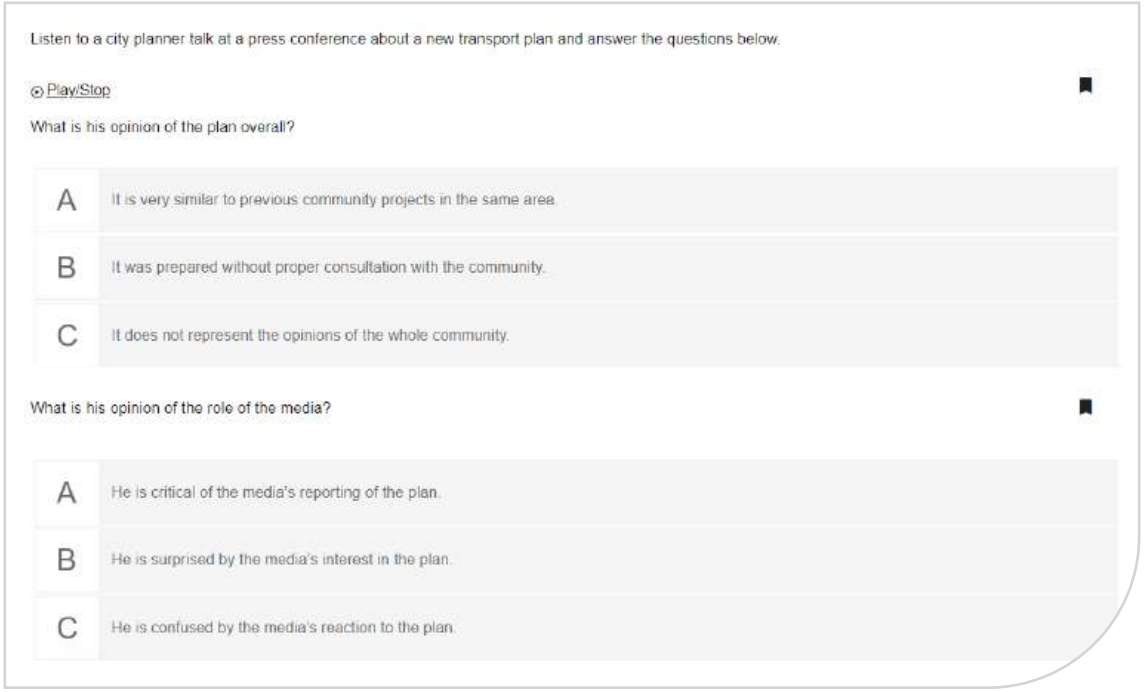
Listening part 3: Opinion matching

Candidates listen to short conversations with two speakers to identify their opinions and then match the speaker with the opinion they expressed.



Listening part 4: Monologue comprehension

Candidates listen to a monologue to identify the attitude of the speaker, their intention or opinion.



To take a full Aptis ESOL Listening practice test, please visit our **website**.

Aptis ESOL General Writing test

There are four parts to the Writing test. Candidates will interact in a social media-type written conversation and write emails. All writing tasks are marked by human examiners.

Candidates should make sure they fully understand the questions. They should plan what they are going to write and then edit their text before clicking to the next question.

The most common mistakes include:

- not answering the questions (going off-topic)
  - candidates should read the question and understand what they need to do
- writing too much but with poor grammar, spelling and punctuation
  - candidates should keep to the word count and focus on accuracy
- not using a variety of sentence structures
- not writing in sentences or paragraphs
- using SMS spelling.

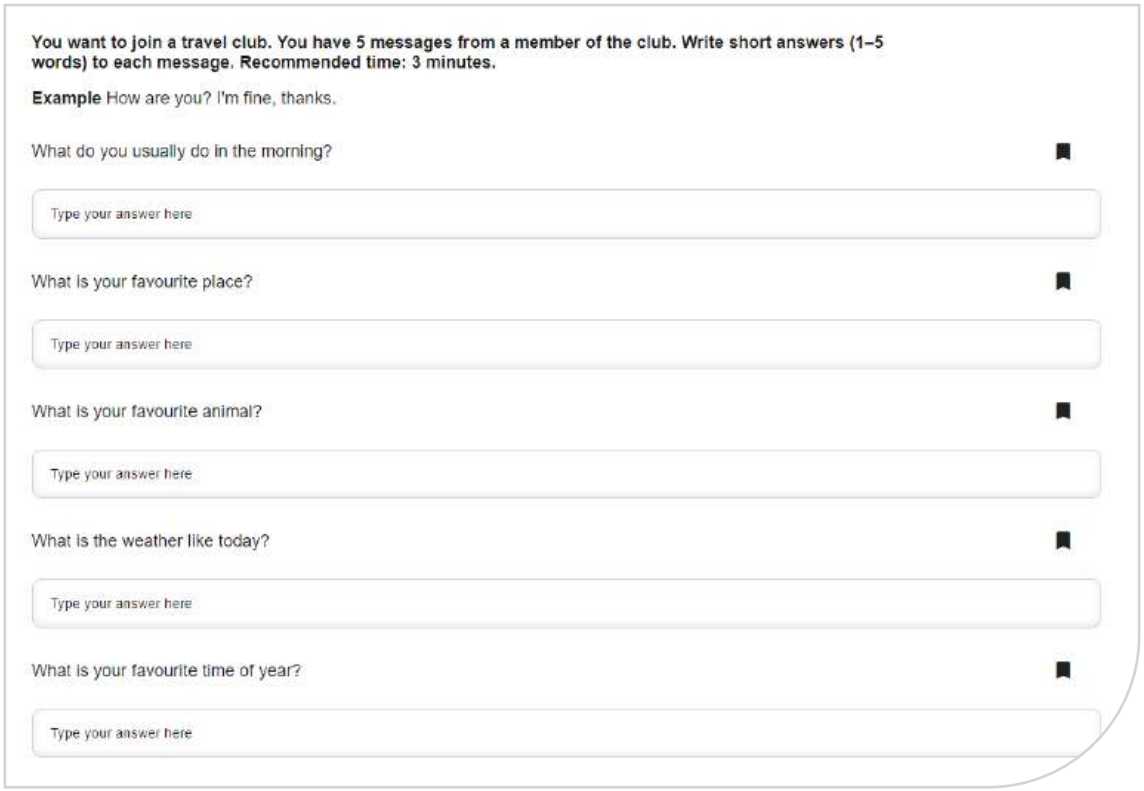
Part	Description	Preparation
Part 1 Word-level writing	In the first part, candidates have joined a club, course or activity and must answer a series of five text messages from other members. There is no sentence writing in this part, candidates are required to answer in individual words only. If candidates are targeting a high score, they should spend no more than three minutes on this part.	The focus is on communication (this means spelling, capitalisation and grammar will not be considered by the markers).
Part 2 Short text writing	In this part, candidates are asked to write 20-30 words. The focus is on writing sentences that are on-topic and have accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. If candidates are targeting a high score, they should spend no more than seven minutes on this part.	A common error for candidates is to write more than 30 words, and as a result, make a lot of mistakes. They should keep to the word limit and focus on accuracy.
Part 3 Three written responses to questions	In this part, candidates will have a social network-type interaction. They will receive three questions and need to respond. If candidates are targeting a high score, they should spend no more than ten minutes on this part.	Candidates should answer all three questions and not go off-topic. They should focus on accurate spelling and punctuation and write sentences that link together and make sense. A good tip is to keep to the word count of 30–40 words per answer.

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 4 Formal and informal writing	This part requires that candidates write two emails: 1) an informal email to a friend; and 2) a more formal email to an unknown person. Both emails are in reaction to information about a change. Candidates should spend all of their remaining time on this part (around 30 minutes).	Candidates should keep to the word count of 40–50 words for the first email and 120–150 words for the second email. You can advise the candidates to make sure their emails are written for different people. The first email should clearly be an informal email to a friend or close family member, while the second should clearly be a formal email to a company. Candidates are also assessed on how accurately they write and their use of English language, so they should check writing and use a wide range of vocabulary, grammar and cohesive devices.

Sample writing questions

Writing part 1: Word-level writing

Candidates need to write five pieces of information. This part is not worth many marks so they shouldn't spend too much time on it.



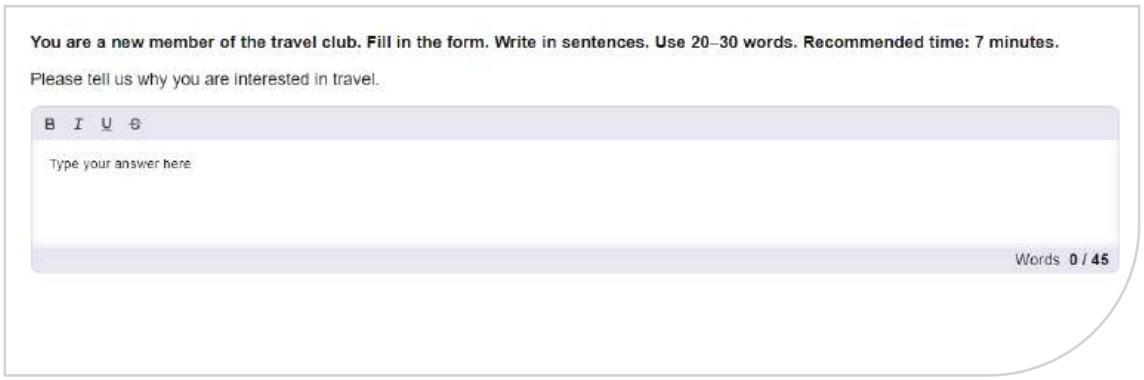
Here is the marking scale:

Areas assessed: Task fulfilment and communicative competence

3. (above A1)	Fully intelligible responses for all five questions. Test-taker completely achieves the task.
2. A1.2	Three or four of the responses are intelligible. Errors impede understanding in one or two responses.
1. A1.1	One or two of the responses are intelligible. Errors impede understanding in two or three responses.
0. A0	No intelligible responses.

Writing part 2: Short text writing

There may be one or two questions. The areas assessed are how completely and relevantly candidates have answered the question, grammatical range and accuracy, punctuation, vocabulary range and accuracy, and cohesion.



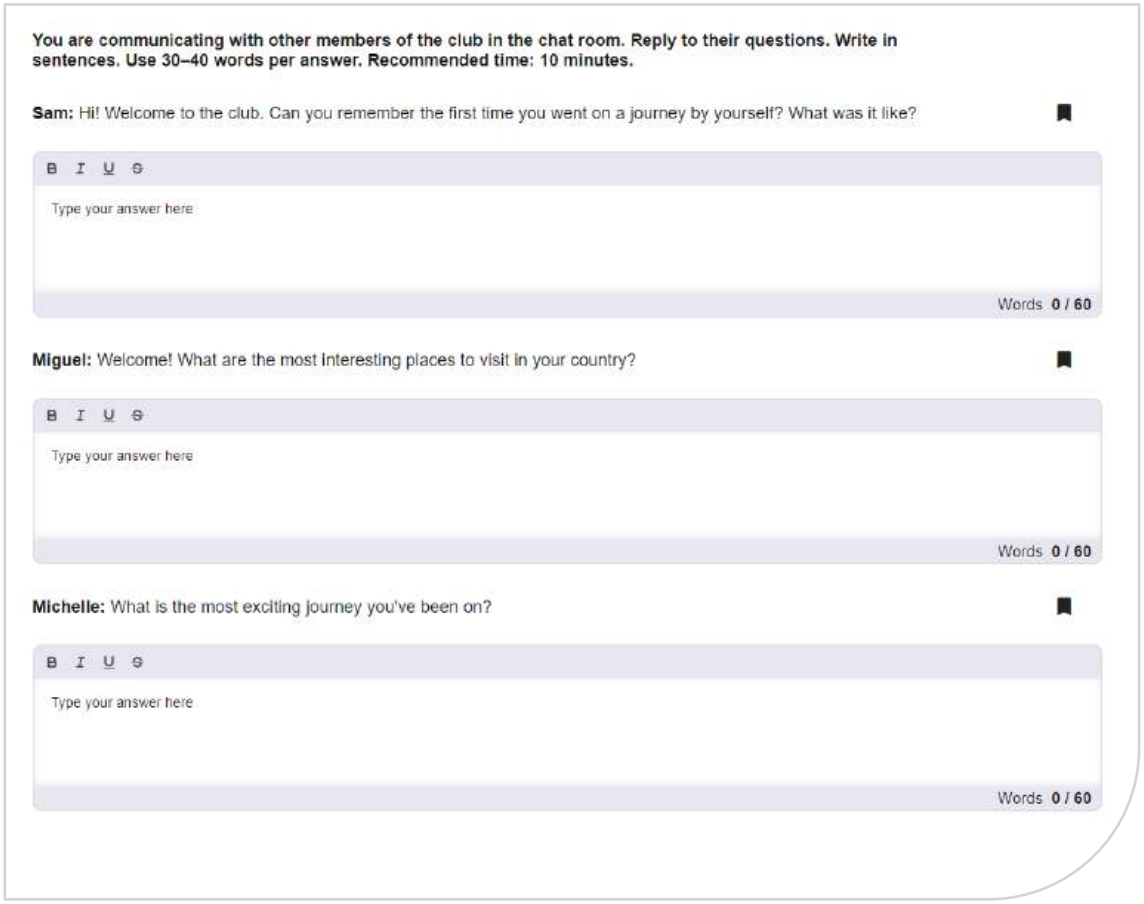
Here is the marking scale:

Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, punctuation, vocabulary range and accuracy, cohesion.

5. B1 (or above)	Likely to be above A2 level.
4. A2.2	• On topic. • Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with basic structures common. Errors do not impede understanding of the response. • Mostly accurate punctuation and spelling. • Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the question(s). • Some attempts at using simple connectors and cohesive devices to link sentences.
3. A2.1	• On topic. • Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with basic structures common. Errors impede understanding in parts of the response. • Punctuation and spelling mistakes are noticeable. • Vocabulary is mostly sufficient to respond to the question(s) but inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable. • Response is a list of sentences with no use of connectors or cohesive devices to link sentences.
2. A1.2	• Not fully on topic. • Grammatical structure is limited to words and phrases. Errors in basic patterns and simple grammar structures impede understanding. • Little or no use of accurate punctuation. Spelling mistakes common. • Vocabulary is limited to very basic words related to personal information and is not sufficient to respond to the question(s). • No use of cohesion.
1. A1.1	• Response limited to a few words or phrases. • Grammar and vocabulary errors so serious and frequent that meaning is unintelligible.
0. A0	No meaningful language or all responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

Writing part 3: Three written responses to questions

In part 3, candidates will answer three social media-type questions.



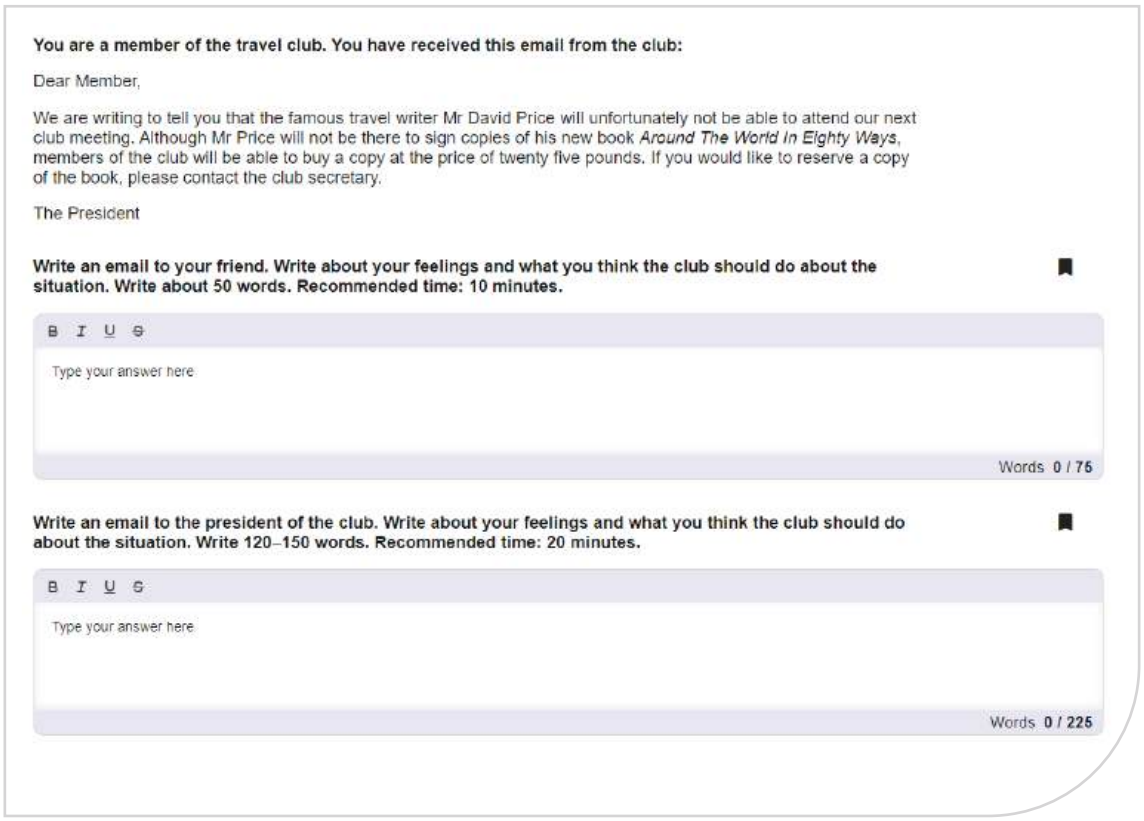
Here is the marking scale:

Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, punctuation, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, cohesion.

5. B2 (or above)	Likely to be above the B1 level.
4. B1.2	Responses to all three questions are on topic and show the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Punctuation and spelling mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding. • Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions. • Uses simple cohesive devices to organise responses as a linear sequence of sentences.
3. B1.1	Responses to two questions are on topic and show the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Punctuation and spelling mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding. • Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions. • Uses simple cohesive devices to organise responses as a linear sequence of sentences.
2. A2.2	Responses to at least two questions are on topic and show the following features: • Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with simple structures common and sometimes impede understanding. • Punctuation and spelling mistakes are noticeable. • Vocabulary is not sufficient to respond to the question(s). Inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable and sometimes impede understanding. • Responses are lists of sentences and not organised as cohesive texts.
1. A2.1	Response to one question is on topic and shows the following features: • Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with simple structures common and sometimes impede understanding. • Punctuation and spelling mistakes are noticeable. • Vocabulary is not sufficient to respond to the question(s). Inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable and sometimes impede understanding. • Responses are lists of sentences and not organised as cohesive texts.
0	Performance below A2, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

Writing part 4: Formal and informal writing

The areas assessed are task fulfilment and register, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, and cohesion.



Register

'Register' means the different ways language is used in different situations, depending on the relationships between the speaker and listener, or the author and the intended reader. As this is an important part of language use, your students should, for example, make different language choices when they are writing to a new business partner and when they are writing to a friend.

To be successful in part 4, candidates need to show that they can write in both casual and formal registers. The first section of part 4 asks them to write in an intimate or casual register (one used among family members and close friends). The second part asks them to write in a formal register (one used between strangers or in a business setting).

Here is the marking scale:

Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, punctuation, fluency and cohesion.

6. C2	Likely to be above C1 level.
5. C1	Response shows the following features: • Response on topic and task fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register. Two clearly different registers. • Range of complex grammar constructions used accurately. Some minor errors occur but do not impede understanding. • Range of vocabulary used to discuss the topics required by the task. Some awkward usage or slightly inappropriate lexical choices. • A range of cohesive devices is used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.
4. B2.2	Response on topic and task fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register: appropriate register used consistently in both responses. Response shows the following features: • Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding. • Minor errors in punctuation and spelling occur but do not impede understanding. • Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding. • A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.
3. B2.1	Response partially on topic and task partially fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register: appropriate register used consistently in one response. Response shows the following features: • Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding. • Minor errors in punctuation and spelling occur but do not impede understanding. • Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding. • A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

2. B1.2	Response partially on topic and task not fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register: appropriate register not used consistently in either response. Response shows the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Punctuation and spelling is mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding. • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in parts of the text. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
1. B1.1	Response not on topic and task not fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register. No evidence of awareness of register. Response shows the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Punctuation and spelling is mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding. • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in most of the text. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
0. A1/A2	Performance below B1, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

To take a full Aptis ESOL Writing practice test, please visit our **website**.

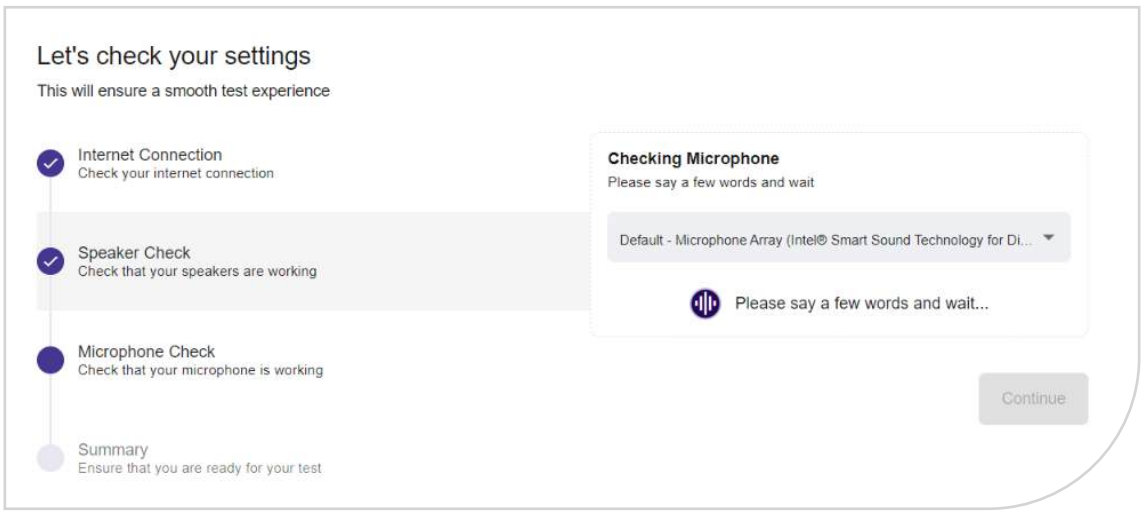
Aptis ESOL General Speaking test

For each question, candidates are given a maximum amount of time to speak, but they can end the recording early by clicking on the **'finish recording'** button. Candidates must make sure they fully respond to the question before they stop the recording.

The most common reasons people receive lower scores than they expect include:

- not doing a proper sound check (details on how to do this are shown below)
- not speaking clearly
- not answering the questions
- giving under-length answers – not using the full amount of time to speak
- overusing words such as 'and' and 'so'
- speaking in simple sentence lists
- not using a variety of sentence structures.

Before the Speaking test begins, candidates will be asked to check their microphone.



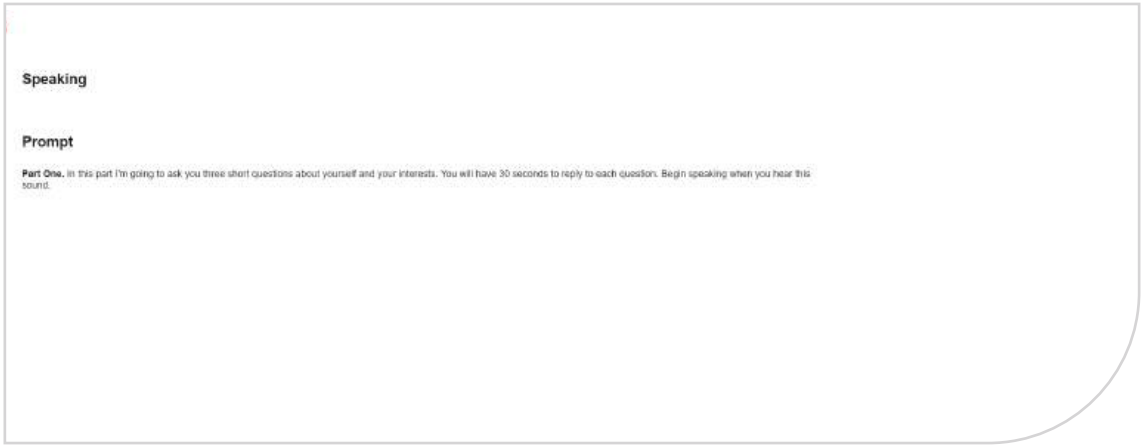
Part	Description	Preparation
Part 1 Personal information	In this part, candidates are asked to answer three questions on personal topics. They are expected to talk for 30 seconds per question.	It's a good idea for candidates to practice introducing themselves and talking about their personal experiences. They can think about how they can talk about familiar topics (e.g. holidays, weekend activities, sports) and practise giving general information about those topics.
Part 2 Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanations	In this part, candidates are asked to describe a photograph and then answer two questions related to the topic illustrated in the photo. The three questions increase in complexity (from description to opinion). Candidates are expected to talk for 45 seconds per question.	Candidates should try to be fluent and spontaneous, showing little sign of effort. They should make sure they answer all three questions.
Part 3 Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations	In this part, candidates are asked to compare two pictures and then answer two questions related to the topic. The three questions increase in complexity (from description to speculation). Candidates are expected to talk for 45 seconds for each question.	To prepare for this task, candidates should practise comparing two different things (e.g. two cities or two houses). They should focus on describing their advantages and disadvantages. To achieve a high score in this part, it's important for candidates to make sure they are using correct grammatical structures when they speculate.

Part	Description	Preparation
Part 4 Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic	In the final part, candidates will see a picture and be asked three questions about an abstract topic. They are given one minute to prepare an answer and in this time, they can take notes. They are expected to talk for two minutes.	A common error is to describe the photo. Candidates will not receive a high score if they describe the photo. The questions are more abstract (e.g. how you feel about something). Another common error is to go off-topic. Candidates should focus on answering each question in clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech. To prepare for this part, it is a good idea for candidates to practise speaking for two minutes on an abstract topic (e.g. How do you feel about_____?). They should make sure they practise using their planning time to structure what they are going to say.

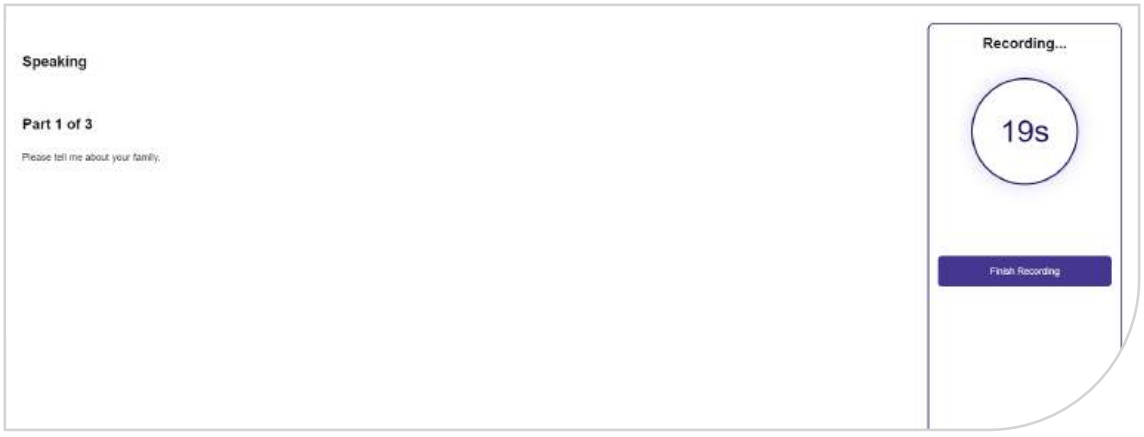
Speaking part 1: Personal information

In this part, candidates answer some questions about themselves. They listen to the instructions and speak clearly into their microphone when they hear the signal.

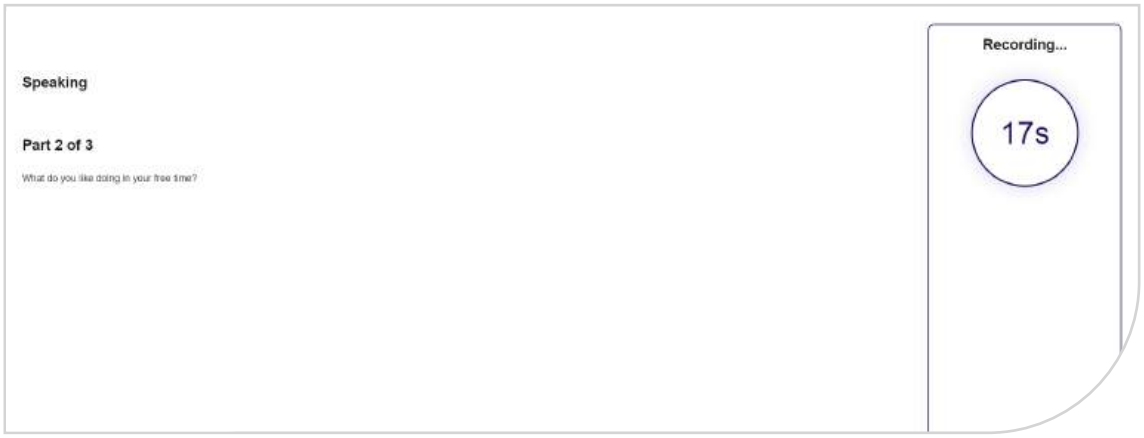
Each part of the test will appear automatically. Candidates can stop recording their response before the timer runs out by tapping on the "**Finish Recording"** button, but we recommend that they try to speak for the full time available to maximise their score.

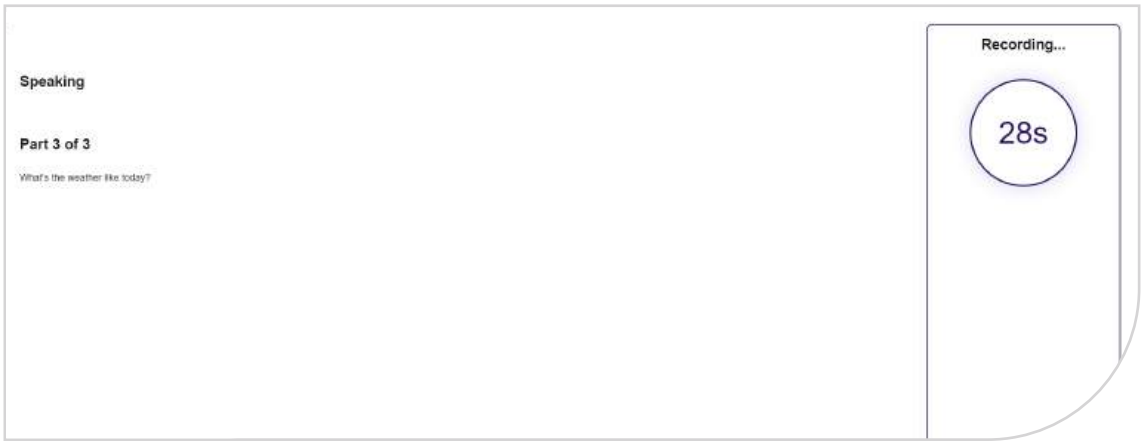


When the time to record comes, the timer begins. This tells the candidates the amount of time they have left (in the screen shot below, the time shows that 19 seconds remain). Candidates can also finish their recording early by clicking "**Finish Recording"**.



As each new question appears, the same procedure is followed.





The areas assessed in this part of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly candidates have answered the question, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation and fluency.

Here is the marking scale:

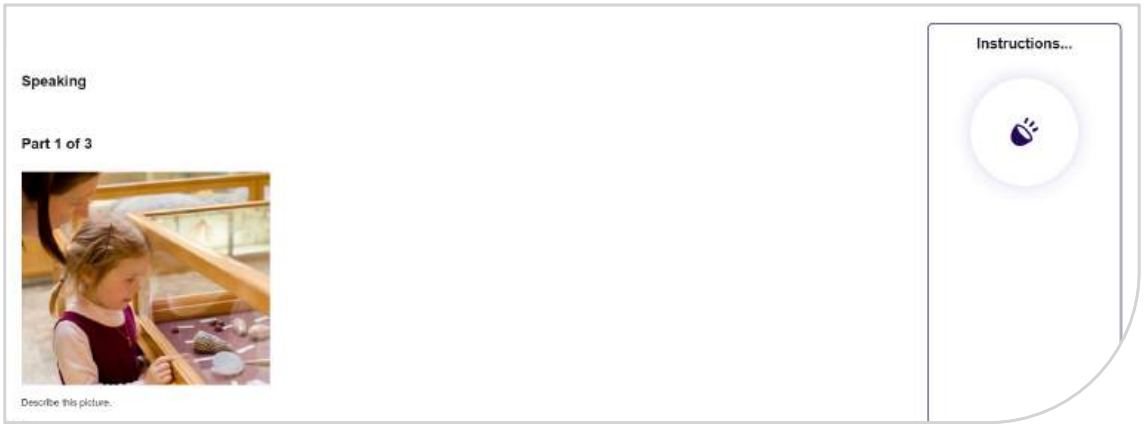
Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency.

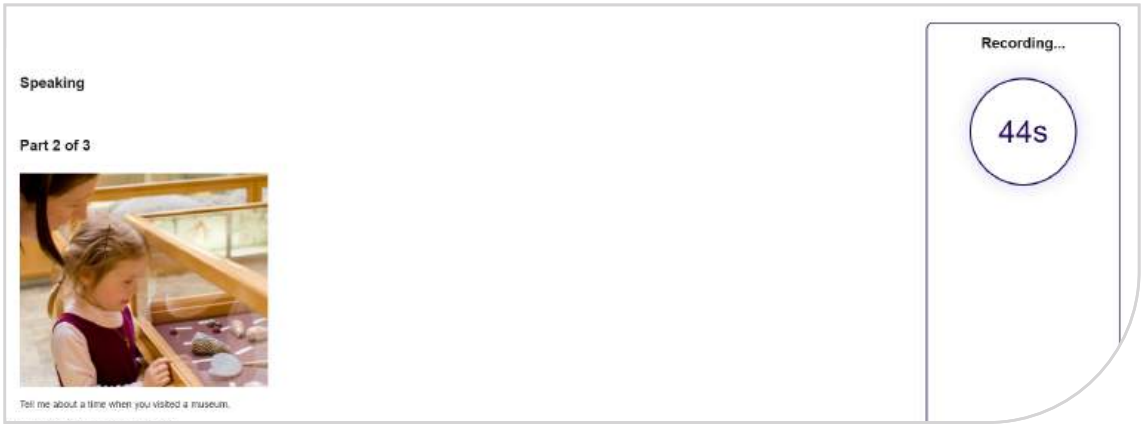
5. B1 (or above)	Likely to be above A2 level.
4. A2.2	Responses to all **three** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Some simple grammatical structures used correctly but basic mistakes systematically occur. • Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions, although inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable. • Mispronunciations are noticeable and frequently place a strain on the listener. • Frequent pausing, false starts and reformulations but meaning is still clear.
3. A2.1	Responses to **two** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Some simple grammatical structures used correctly but basic mistakes systematically occur. • Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions, although inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable. • Mispronunciations are noticeable and frequently place a strain on the listener. • Frequent pausing, false starts and reformulations but meaning is still clear.
2. A1.2	Responses to at least **two** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Grammatical structure is limited to words and phrases. Errors in basic patterns and simple grammar structures impede understanding. • Vocabulary is limited to very basic words related to personal information. • Pronunciation is mostly unintelligible except for isolated words. • Frequent pausing, false starts and reformulations impede understanding.

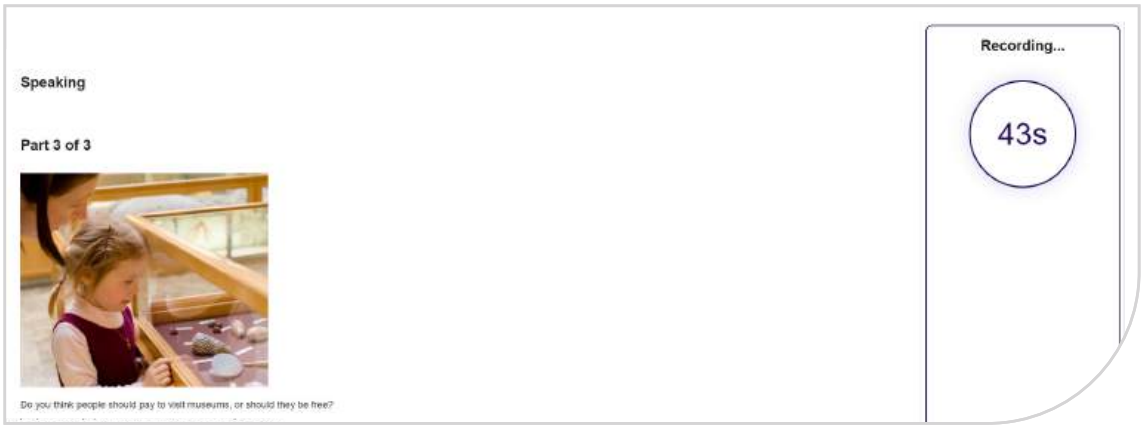
1. A1.1	Response to **one** question is on topic and shows the following features: • Grammatical structure is limited to words and phrases. Errors in basic patterns and simple grammar structures impede understanding. • Vocabulary is limited to very basic words related to personal information. • Pronunciation is mostly unintelligible except for isolated words. • Frequent pausing, false starts and reformulations impede understanding.
0. A0	No meaningful language or all responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

Speaking part 2: Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanation

In this part, candidates will see a photo and answer three questions. They have 45 seconds to respond to each question.

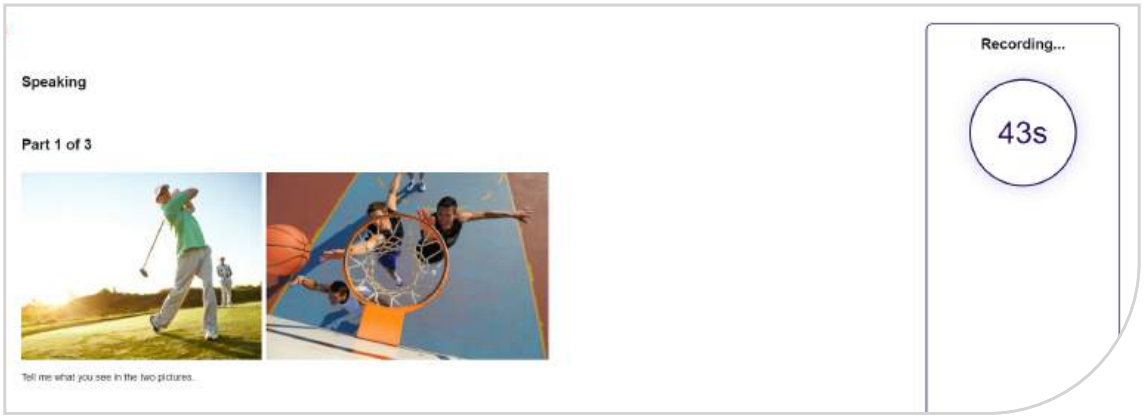


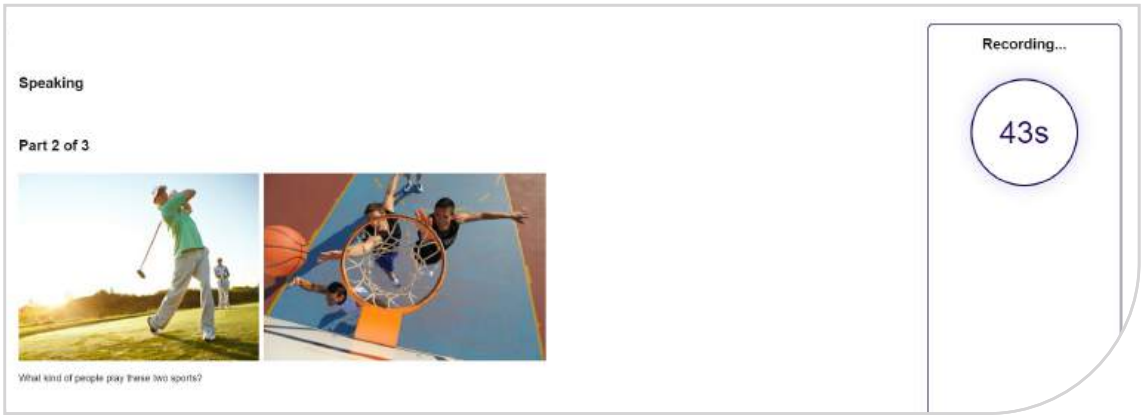


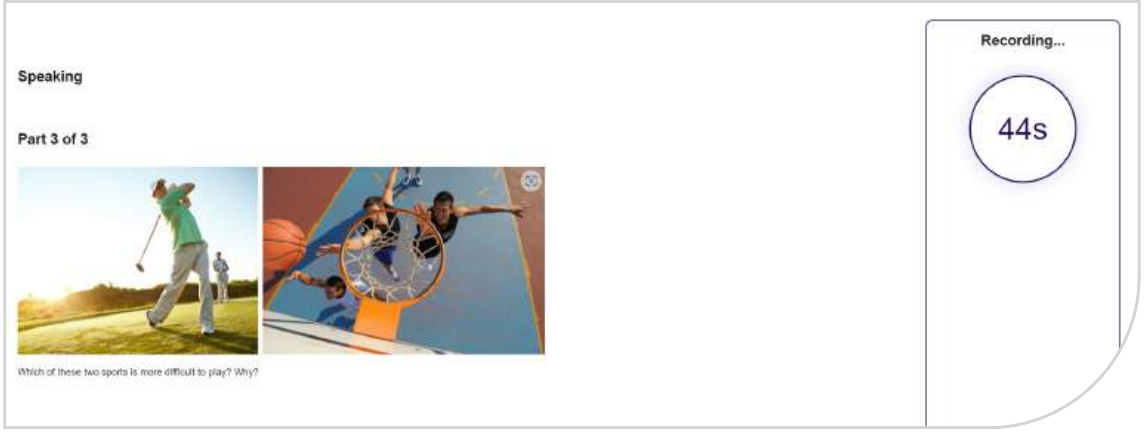


Speaking part 3: Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations

In this part, candidates will see two photos and answer three questions.







The areas assessed in parts 2 and 3 of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly candidates responded to the question, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

The marking scale is the same for parts 2 and 3.

Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

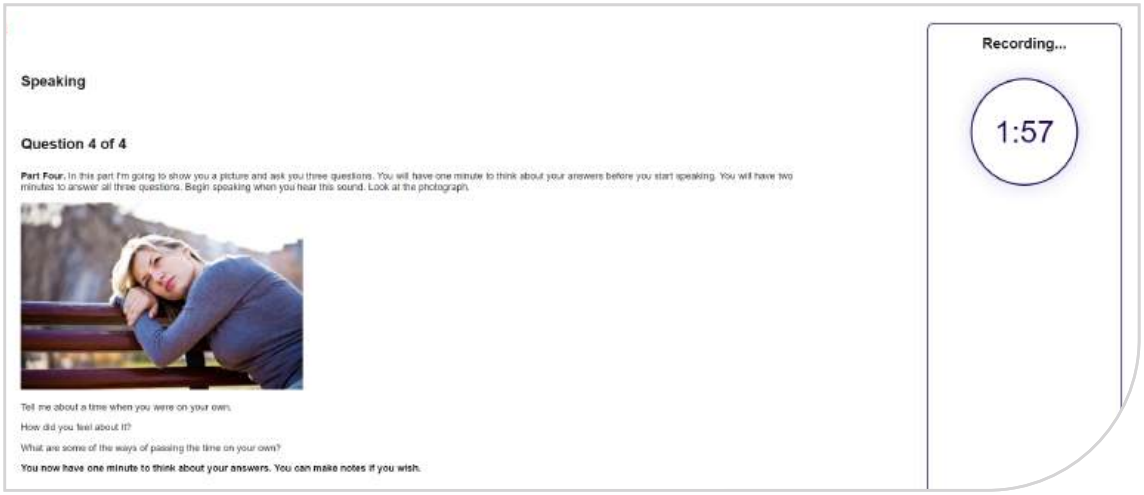
5. B2 (or above)	Likely to be above the B1 level.
4. B1.2	Responses to all **three** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Sufficient range and control of vocabulary for the task. Errors occur when expressing complex thoughts. • Pronunciation is intelligible but inappropriate mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener. • Some pausing, false starts and reformulations. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
3. B1.1	Responses to **two** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Sufficient range and control of vocabulary for the task. Errors occur when expressing complex thoughts. • Pronunciation is intelligible but inappropriate mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener. • Some pausing, false starts and reformulations. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
2. A1.2	Responses to at least two questions are on topic and show the following features: • Uses some simple grammatical structures correctly but systematically makes basic mistakes. • Vocabulary will be limited to concrete topics and descriptions. Inappropriate lexical choices for the task are noticeable. • Mispronunciations are noticeable and put a strain on the listener. • Noticeable pausing, false starts and reformulations. • Cohesion between ideas is limited. Responses tend to be a list of points.

1. A2.1	Response to one question is on topic and shows the following features: • Uses some simple grammatical structures correctly but systematically makes basic mistakes. • Vocabulary will be limited to concrete topics and descriptions. Inappropriate lexical choices for the task are noticeable. • Mispronunciations are noticeable and put a strain on the listener. • Noticeable pausing, false starts and reformulations. • Cohesion between ideas is limited. Responses tend to be a list of points.
0	Performance below A2, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

Speaking part 4: Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic

In this part, candidates again need to answer three questions but this time they answer them all in one response.

They have one minute to prepare a structured response. A timer on the screen will show how long they have left. When the preparation time is over, you will hear 'You now have two minutes to talk'. Candidates should speak until the recording automatically stops after two minutes.



During the preparation time, it is important for candidates to take notes, as these will help them organise and remember what they want to speak about. Rather than writing out exactly what they want to say, they should make brief notes and use these to structure their speech.

Here is the marking scale:

Areas assessed: task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

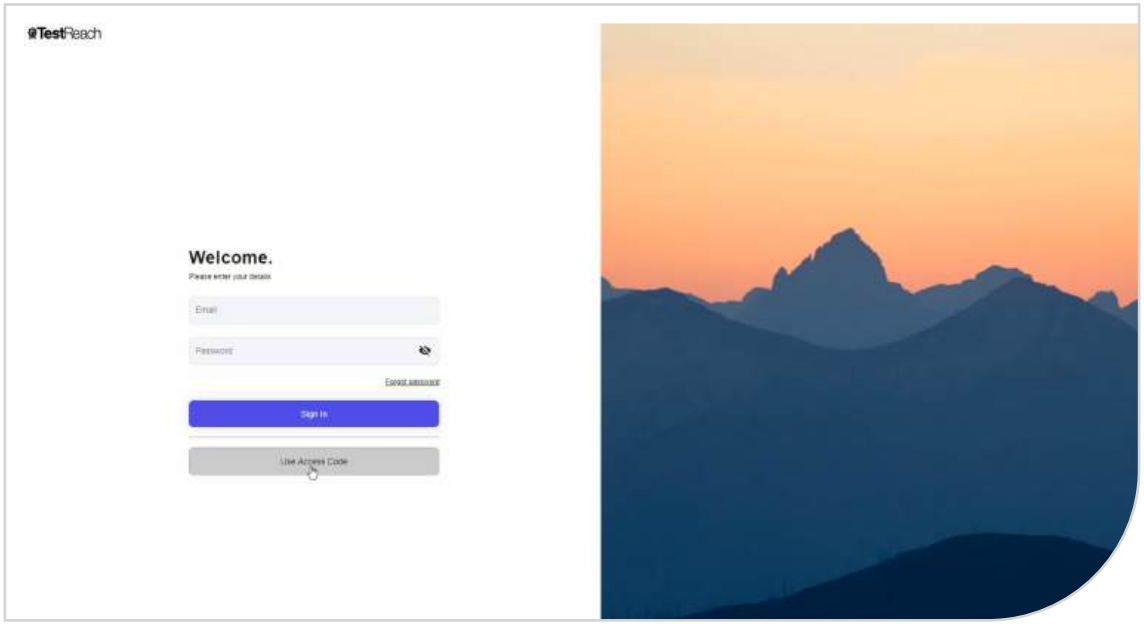
6. C2	Likely to be above C1 level.
5. C1	Response addresses all **three** questions and is well-structured. • Uses a range of complex grammar constructions accurately. Some minor errors occur but do not impede understanding. • Uses a range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Some awkward usage or slightly inappropriate lexical choices. • Pronunciation is clearly intelligible. • Backtracking and reformulations do not fully interrupt the flow of speech. • A range of cohesive devices are used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.
4. B2.2	Responses to all **three** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding. • Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding. • Pronunciation is intelligible. Mispronunciations do not put a strain on the listener or lead to misunderstanding. • Some pausing while searching for vocabulary but this does not put a strain on the listener. • A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.
3. B2.1	Responses to **two** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding. • Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding. • Pronunciation is intelligible. Mispronunciations do not put a strain on the listener or lead to misunderstanding. • Some pausing while searching for vocabulary but this does not put a strain on the listener. • A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

2. B1.2	Responses to at least **two** questions are on topic and show the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. • Pronunciation is intelligible but occasional mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener. • Noticeable pausing, false starts, reformulations and repetition. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
1. B1.1	Response to **one** question is on topic and shows the following features: • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures. • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. • Pronunciation is intelligible but occasional mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener. • Noticeable pausing, false starts, reformulations and repetition. • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.
0. A1/A2	Performance below B1, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).

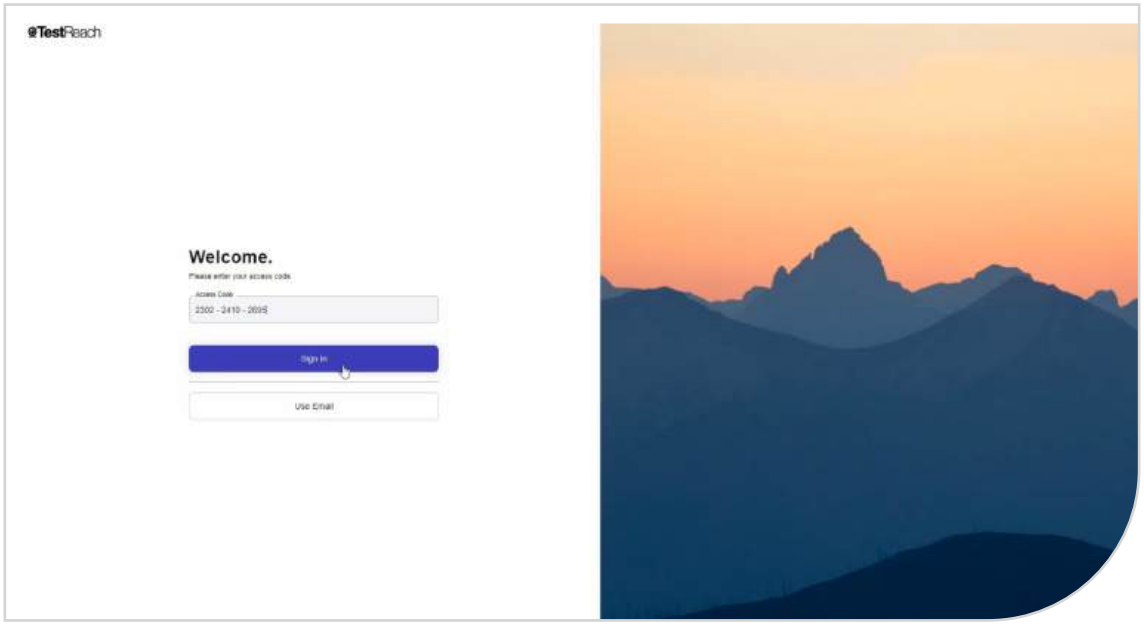
To take a full Aptis ESOL Speaking practice test, please visit our **website**.

How to take the test on a computer

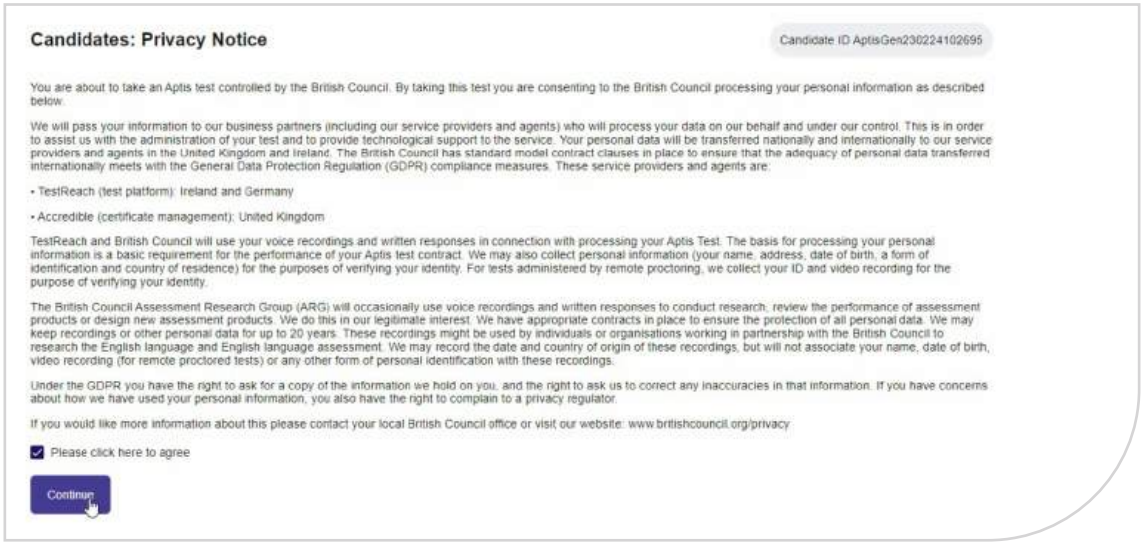
The introductory screen for every Aptis ESOL test looks like this. Candidates will need to click "**Use Access Code**".



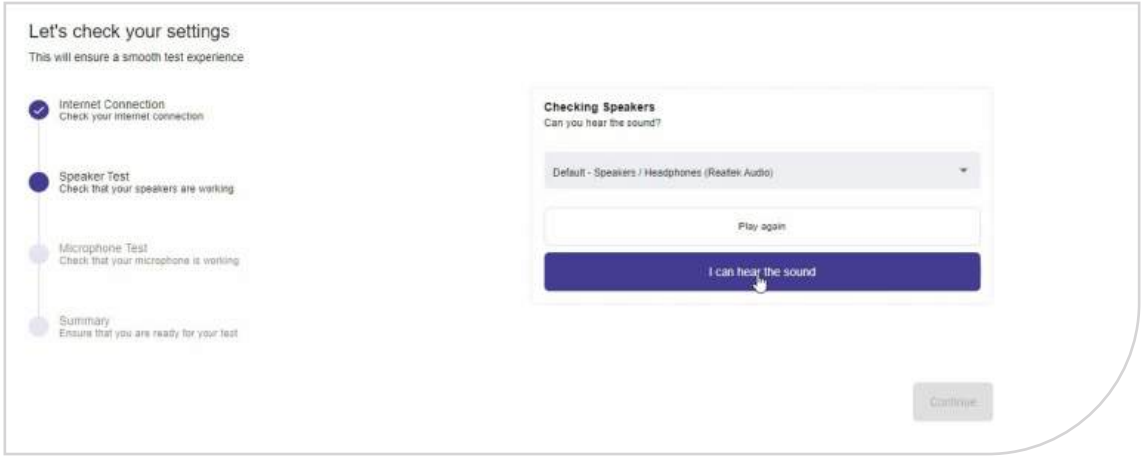
Candidates then enter their personal access code and click "**Sign in**".



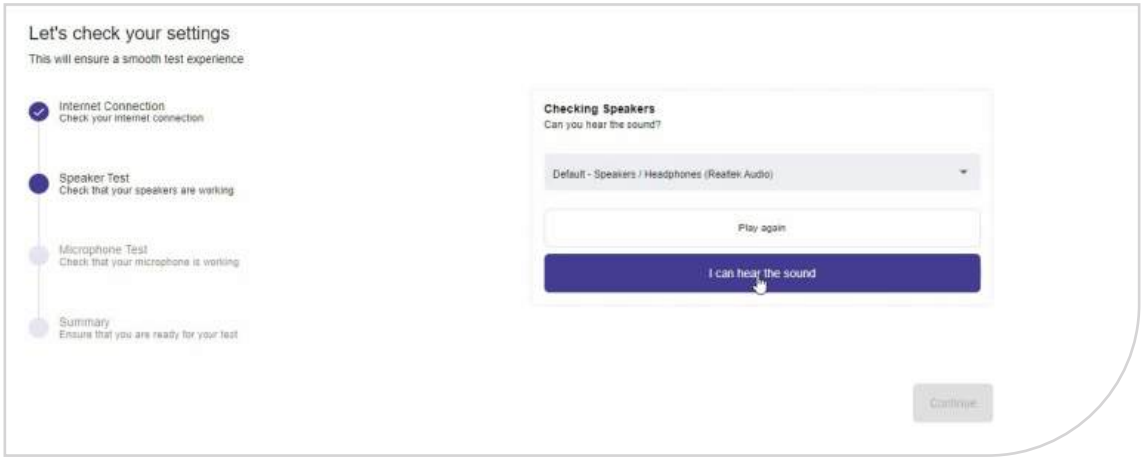
After clicking "**Sign in**", candidates will be prompted to read a privacy notice. To continue with the test, candidates must accept the terms and click "**Continue**".

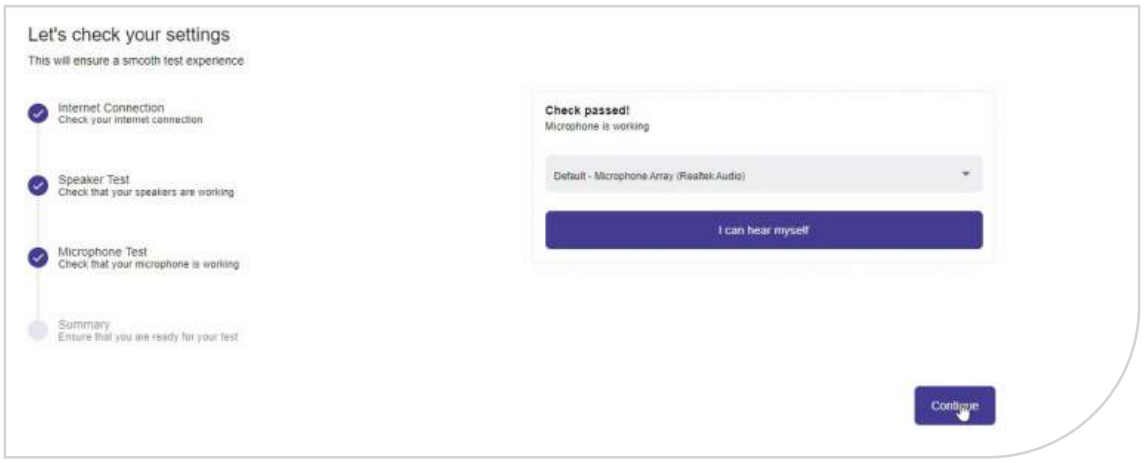


Candidates will then be asked to complete a system check. First they will need to check their internet connection.

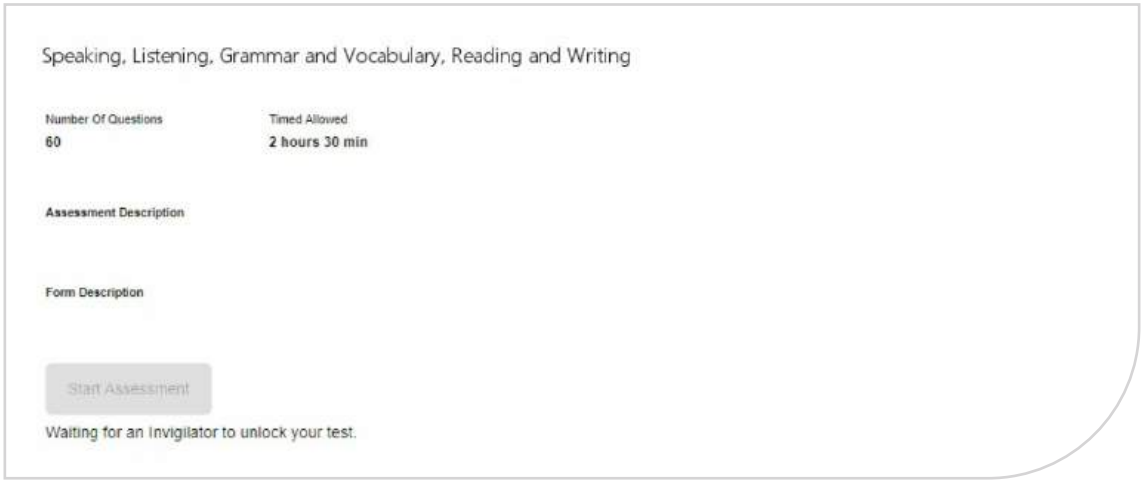


Once the internet connection is checked, candidates will need to check their speakers and microphone. Once that is completed, they will be able to continue with the test.

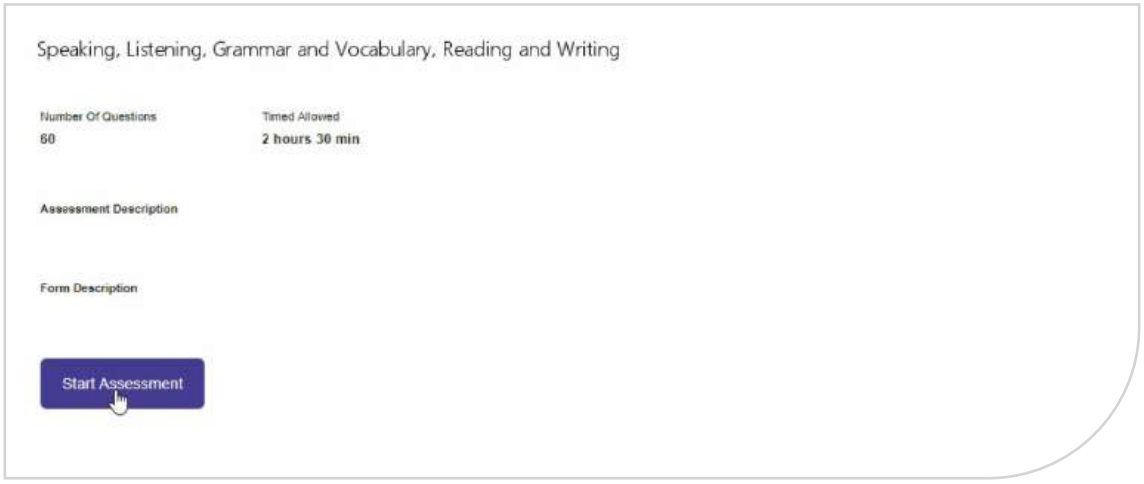




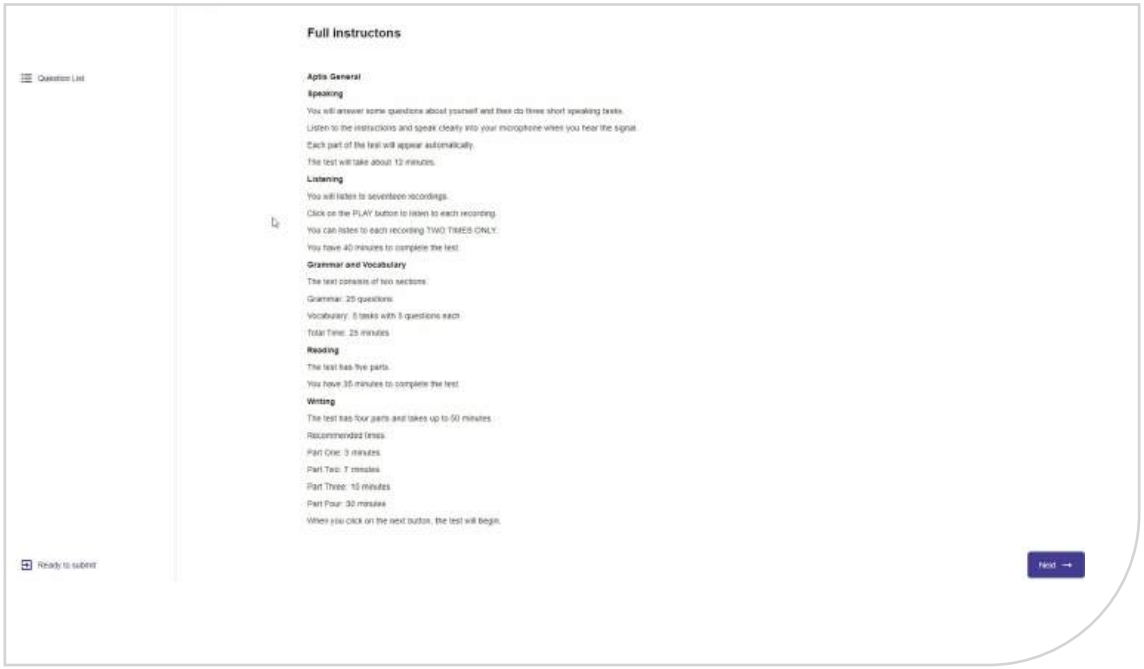
Candidates will then land on the introduction page. From here, they will need to wait for the test day invigilator to admit them into the test.



Once the invigilator grants them access, they will be able to click "**Start Assessment**".



Test day instructions will be shown on the screen. Candidates should read the instructions and then click "**Next**".



They will then be able to start the speaking test, and the rest of their Aptis ESOL test.

Aptis ESOL for all

The British Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in English language testing. We believe that the Aptis ESOL tests should be accessible and fair to anyone who wants to take them. We also believe that each person should have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability on the Aptis ESOL tests.

If your student(s) have a disability and believe that Aptis ESOL is not accessible to them, or believe that the form of the test will not allow them to show their true level of English, please advise them to contact their test centre to talk about the ways in which the test can be modified for their needs. We can make adjustments such as providing pen and paper tests, face-to-face tests, Braille and large font tests, adjusting timing, and a range of other modifications.

Final checklist

We hope these notes will help your students prepare for their Aptis ESOL test. Here's a checklist they can refer to make sure they're fully prepared.

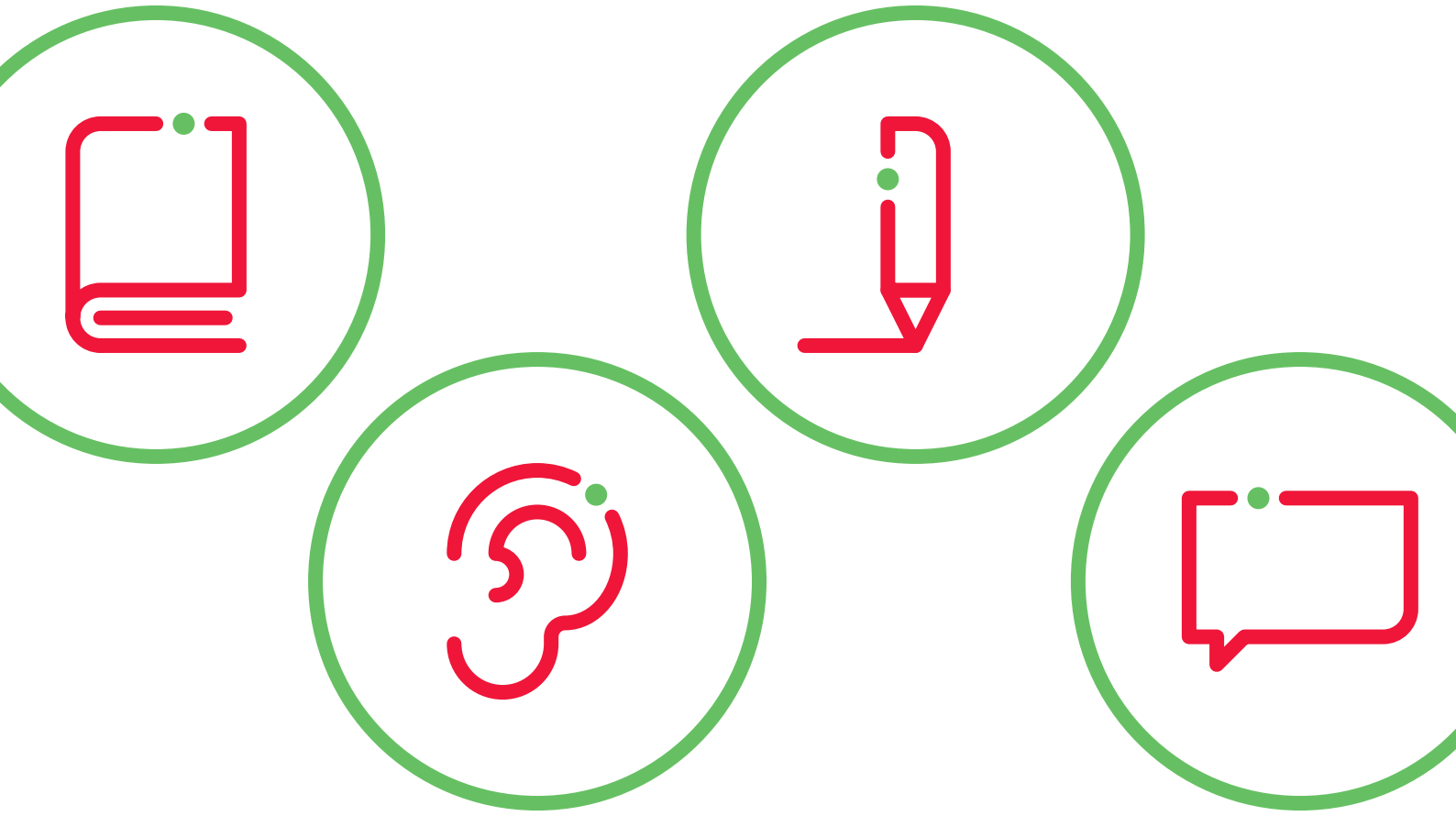
- **Visit the official British Council preparation page and take a full practice test:** https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/practice-materials
- **Visit the LearnEnglish website:** http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en
- **Practise your English skills at every opportunity:** Listen to English radio, watch English-language television and films and read the graded readers (e.g. Cambridge, Penguin, Macmillan and Headway).
- **Read the tips in this booklet on how to prepare for each test.**

Useful web resources

- **British Council | EAQUALS Core Inventory for General English:** http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/cpd-teacher-trainers/british-council-eaquals-core-inventory-general-english
- **British Council | TeachingEnglish:** https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/
- **British Council | LearnEnglish:** https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/

More information

- www.britishcouncil.org/aptis
- www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/aptis-esol-english-test



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