

› TIPS FOR LANGUAGECERT ESOL FOR SCHOOLS

A1 Level



› PAVING THE WAY
TO ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY
FOR SCHOOL-AGE
LEARNERS

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Exam Overview: From the classroom to the real world

LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools is a suite of single-level English tests for secondary school learners aged 12 to 16. The test is **Ofqual-regulated**; it assesses all 4 skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) and reports at A1-B2 levels of the CEFR.

Designed to assess English use at school and in everyday situations, this test helps your students feel confident and proud of their skills!

Why LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools?

Tailored to secondary school students: Age-appropriate content designed to engage test takers aged between 12 and 16.

Flexible and friendly test experience: Test takers can choose between paper-based or computer-based tests through their local Test Centre.

Communicative approach and straightforward exam format: Teachers can concentrate on teaching English for the real world, with a minimum of exam preparation.

Growing range of preparation resources: Access to practice papers, lesson plans, and preparation tips.

Quick results: Results within 5 working days for computer-based exams and 10 working days for paper-based exams.

Exam Structure

A1 Level

Written Exam

Listening



4 parts - 26 questions

Audio played twice

20 minutes

Reading & Writing



R: 4 parts - 26 questions

W: 2 tasks

1 hour & 20 minutes

Spoken Exam

Speaking



4 parts

1 to 1 with an interlocutor

6 minutes

Listening

At a glance

Number of parts: 4

Number of items: 26

Question types: multiple-choice (3 options), short answer

Audio recordings: all played twice

Overall duration: 20 mins

Listening Tips

1

Before you play the audio, give learners time to look at the task. Elicit the key vocabulary and ask them to predict what they will hear.

2

After you've played the audio, use the listening script to help learners identify any unknown words, and teach new vocabulary as needed.

3

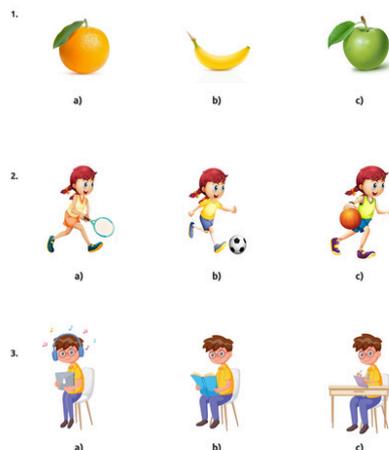
If learners are struggling to choose the correct answer (e.g. for multiple-choice tasks), they can try to eliminate the two wrong answers instead.

4

Remind learners that they will hear each audio recording twice.

Part 1: Multiple choice

Learners will hear seven short statements. They choose the correct word(s) and/or picture for each one.



Check task type example on the right side.

For this part, you'll need to review common vocabulary and make sure you've covered all the A1 topics in the Qualification Handbook.

Give learners time to look at all the pictures/word(s) before you play the audio. Then elicit the key vocabulary and ask them to think about what they might hear.

Remind learners that they will hear short statements, not dialogues, and that the statements are not related to each other. They should focus on the key information in each statement, not details.

As follow-up practice, you could create two new statements for each of the distractors. Read out your statements and ask learners to choose the correct answer for each one.

Part 2: Multiple choice

Learners will hear seven short sentences. They choose the best response for each one.

- a) Yes, he is.
b) Yes, he does.
c) Yes, he has.
- a) No, I can't.
b) No, I'm not.
c) No, thank you.
- a) It's Tuesday.
b) It's half past three.
c) Not really.
- a) I do, too.
b) Yes, I would.
c) What can you see?
- a) Hi. How are you?
b) I don't know.
c) OK. See you.
- a) When is it?
b) What is it?
c) Who is it?
- a) Yes, you are.
b) That's OK.
c) I'm sorry.

Check task type example on the right side.

For this part, you'll need to review functional language.

Practise using the audio only. Play each sentence and ask learners to give their own responses. Then show them the task so that they can check their answers.

Before they do the task, remind learners that they should choose the most appropriate response to the sentence they hear.

For extra practice, challenge learners to produce their own sentences to match the other two responses. Alternatively, you could create sentences that mirror the question types in the test and ask learners to respond appropriately.

Part 3: Multiple choice

Learners will hear six short conversations. They choose the correct answer for each one.

Check task type example on the right side.

Conversation 1
Where are the boy and girl?
a) at home
b) in a café
c) in a shop

Conversation 2
The girl wants to go to
a) the pool.
b) the lake.
c) the beach.

Conversation 3
The boy is
a) sad.
b) excited.
c) hungry.

Conversation 4
The girl is in
a) the kitchen.
b) the bathroom.
c) the living room.

For this part, you'll need to expose learners to a variety of short conversations (e.g. between friends, family members, and teachers and students), and ask questions about them that are similar to those in the task.

Before they do the task, play the audio, stopping after each conversation to ask learners questions about the topic of the conversation, its purpose and the speakers. These are some of the elements that are tested in Part 3.

After they've done the task, ask learners to share what led them to the right answers and which words in the audio helped them.

Part 4: Multiple choice

Learners will hear a short conversation. They complete a form by choosing the correct options for six questions.

Check task type example on the right side.

Students' School Clubs
Answers from: Michael

1. Clubs:	film <input type="checkbox"/>	football <input type="checkbox"/>	music <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Day(s):	Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/>	Thursday <input type="checkbox"/>	Tuesday and Thursday <input type="checkbox"/>
3. What student plays:	piano <input type="checkbox"/>	guitar <input type="checkbox"/>	piano and guitar <input type="checkbox"/>
4. How good student is:	bad <input type="checkbox"/>	good <input type="checkbox"/>	very good <input type="checkbox"/>
5. How student gets home:	bus <input type="checkbox"/>	car <input type="checkbox"/>	walk <input type="checkbox"/>
6. What club student would like:	painting <input type="checkbox"/>	reading <input type="checkbox"/>	dance <input type="checkbox"/>

For this part, learners will need to practise listening to short conversations, focusing on the correct form, pronunciation and spellings of names, numbers, times, days, months, and other A1 vocabulary related to personal information.

Before hearing the audio, learners will have a few seconds to read the form and the options, so that they can prepare for the task.

Remind learners that they will hear a conversation between two speakers, and that they should only tick one box for each question.

Reading

At a glance

Number of parts: 4

Number of items: 26

Question types: multiple-choice (3 options), multiple matching

Duration (Reading & Writing): 1 hr 20 mins

Reading Tips

1

If there are words learners don't know, encourage them to guess their meaning from the context. This will improve their overall comprehension and help them to feel more confident.

2

If learners are struggling to choose the correct answer (e.g. for multiple-choice tasks), they can try to eliminate the wrong answers instead.

3

Remind learners that once they've finished the Reading test, they should go back and check all their answers.

Part 1: Multiple choice

Learners will be given six short texts, each with a gap. They choose the correct answers to complete the texts.

Check task type example on the right side.

Names of Students in B4
in alphabetical order

- Andrews, Harry
- Brown, Gordon
-
- Miller, Eleanor
- White, Claire

- a) Stephens, Richard
- b) Green, Trevor
- c) Taylor, Da

Provide learners with a variety of short texts similar to those they'll encounter in the task, e.g. postcards, menus, messages, notes, single-step instructions, directions and short emails. This will help to familiarise them with the language commonly used in these types of texts.

Tell learners to read each text carefully and to look at the key words and phrases either side of the gap. This should give them clues to the correct answers.

Part 2: Gap-fill

Learners will be given a text with five gaps. They choose the correct answer from the six options to complete the text. There is one option that isn't needed.

Check task type example on the right side.

George lives in a very nice flat. It's in the centre (1)
He lives with his mother and father and (2) The flat has
got a kitchen, two bathrooms and a big (3) There are three
(4) George likes his room (5)

- A bedrooms
- B his little brother
- C a garden
- D living room
- E of the city
- F very much

Tell learners to read the text carefully and to look at the key words and phrases either side of the gaps. This should give them clues to the correct answers.

Explain that one option will not be used (acting as a distractor).

When they have answered all the questions, advise them to read the completed text to ensure it makes sense.

Part 3: Multiple matching

Learners will be given four short texts with a linked theme but different purpose. They choose a text for each of the seven questions.

A.

Football match this weekend!
Our next football game is this weekend against Leeds United.
Sunday - 3 pm at Palmer Park.

[Clean white T-shirt and shorts, please!
You can get them at the shopping centre.]
Don't be late!

B.

New message
To: Zoe, Alice, Emma, Charlotte
Subject: Football on Sunday

Can you play for The Whites this Sunday? I know we lost our last match 5-0 but we can win this time. We can practise on Saturday at Weston Sports Centre.

Daisy

C.

Sports 4 All
Come in to get everything for every sport!

All sizes, all colours!
T-shirts from £5.00
Shorts from £10.00
Boots from £20.00

and much, much more!

D.

Weston Sports Centre
Saturday practice times

Time	Team
10.00	The Blues
11.00	Weston Boys
12.00	North Street Girls
13.00	The Whites
14.00	The Reds
15.00	East Way Girls
16.00	Free!

Check task type example on the right side.

To familiarise learners with the task, provide them with sets of four short texts with a common theme but different purpose, similar to those they'll encounter in the test.

Have them practise answering questions about the texts, as in the task.

Before attempting the task, learners should skim-read all four texts. This will help them to establish the topic, type and purpose of each text, before reading again more carefully with the task in mind.

Tell learners to underline the words in the texts that provide clues to the correct answers. They could share these clues in class.

You could ask learners to work in pairs and then compare their answers with the rest of the class before you give the right answers.

Part 4: Multiple matching

Learners will be given nine pictures and eight statements. They match each picture to the correct statement. There is one picture that isn't needed.

A)  PLANE NOISE

B)  FOUR EVERY HOUR

C)  TOILET

D)  8-9 and 3-4
Mon - Fri

E)  no talking in the
study room

F)  Look left!
Look right!

Check task type example on the right side.

1. Boys and girls can use this bathroom.

To prepare learners for this task, provide them with plenty of similar pictures, e.g. traffic signs, weather symbols, notices, labels, warning signs, posters, stickers and computer icons, and ask them to think about their meaning.

You could ask learners to work in pairs and then compare their answers with the rest of the class before you give the right answers.

Writing

At a glance

Number of parts: 2

Tasks: Write sentences on a given topic, write a letter/email/card/postcard/message

Duration (Reading & Writing): 1 hr 20 mins

Writing Tips

1

Ensure learners are aware that both parts of the Writing test are mandatory and that they will need to answer both.

2

If doing the paper-based test, learners should make sure their writing is legible – they could lose marks if the Examiner can't understand what they've written.

3

Tell learners to aim to finish early, allowing time for them to review their work. A piece of writing can always be improved!

Part 1

Learners write four sentences to communicate ideas or basic information about themselves or daily life. They should write about 30 words.

Check task type example below.

Write four sentences about your school. Write about 30 words.

Ask learners to write some sentences about any of these topics: their family, their home, their neighbourhood, their town, their favourite activities/interests. (For the complete list of A1 topics, refer to the Qualification Handbook.)

Check they know how to form simple sentences with the correct word order and using the correct pronouns, possessives, tenses (e.g. present continuous, present simple) and conjunctions.

Remind learners that they must write complete sentences, and that no extra marks will be awarded for more than four sentences.

Part 2

Learners write a short, simple text. They should write between 20–30 words.

Check task type example below.

Your friend wants to know about your favourite book or film. Write an email to your friend. Say:

- what the book or film is called
- why you like it.

Write between 20-30 words.

To help them prepare for the task, provide learners with plenty of similar text types (e.g. letters, cards, postcards, messages) and have them practise writing their own.

Ensure they know the correct way to start and end each of these text types, and encourage them to memorise a few set phrases/expressions they could include in their answer, such as 'Thank you for ...' and 'Say hello to ...'

As part of their practice, learners could write a draft of their text, but they won't have time to do this in the test.

Tell learners they must address all the points included in the rubric – they will lose marks for any that are not covered in their answer.

Remind learners that they will lose marks if they write fewer than 25 words. But they won't be awarded extra marks if they write more than 30 words.

Speaking

At a glance

Number of parts: 4

Tasks: Communicating personal information, communicating appropriately in social situations, exchanging information to complete a simple task, presenting a topic and answering follow-up questions

Duration: 6 minutes



Speaking

Speaking Tips

- 1 Explain to learners** the role of the Interlocutor and what is expected of them well before they take their test.
- 2 Remind them to always listen carefully** to the Interlocutor's prompts to ensure they provide an appropriate response.
- 3 Reassure learners** that they will not be penalised for asking the Interlocutor to repeat a question or prompt, but make it clear that they cannot ask the Interlocutor to paraphrase or translate a question.
- 4 When they're practising for the test,** encourage learners to make their responses interesting and engaging, and to avoid one-word answers.
- 5 Reassure learners** that there are no right or wrong answers, and that they will only be marked on the language they use, and not their opinions.
- 6 Divide your class into pairs** and get them to practise both asking and responding to similar questions with their partner.
- 7 Foster a supportive atmosphere in class** where learners feel comfortable speaking.

Part 1

Learners will be asked up to five questions about themselves.

Check task type example on the right side.

Questions

- What do you do at the weekend?
- How many brothers or sisters have you got?
- Where do you live?
- Tell me about your town or city.
- How do you get to school?
- What's your favourite school subject?
- How often do you go to the cinema?
- Can you play the guitar?
- What's your favourite animal?
- What jobs do your parent do?

Learners should listen carefully to the questions the Interlocutor asks to make sure they respond appropriately.

Ensure they know how to introduce themselves, spell their name and answer questions about personal details (e.g. age, where they're from, where they live, their family, their home).

Explain that each question will be about a different topic, but they will all ask for personal information.

Get learners to role play with a partner, asking and answering simple questions about themselves. You could create question cards for them to use.

Teach and practise simple language for expressing likes, dislikes and preferences.

Part 2

Learners will be asked to take part in two or three role plays in different situations.

Check task type example on the right side.

A

- We're friends. I start.
Would you like to go to the beach on Sunday?
- I'm your classmate. I start.
Can you help me with this homework?
- We're strangers in the street. I start.
Excuse me. Where's the train station?
- I work in a clothes shop. I start.
Can I help you?

To familiarise learners with the task, put them in pairs and ask them to role play dialogues, with one of them acting as the Interlocutor and the other acting as the candidate.

Tell learners that the first role play will be initiated by the Interlocutor and that they'll be asked to initiate the second role play. If there's time, there may be a third role play, which will be initiated by either the Interlocutor or the learner. Both the Interlocutor and the learner will be expected to produce two short turns for each role play.

Before learners practise role playing, ask them to review the language they will need to use. You could also provide them with a model response to guide them.

Part 3

Learners will be asked to identify similarities and differences between two pictures of familiar situations.

Check task type example on the right side.



Review the language and functions learners will need for this task, e.g. how to ask for information and how to express agreement.

Practise the task using pairs of pictures with clear differences and similarities, eliciting from learners the key vocabulary items in each picture.

Part 4

Learners will be asked to speak about a topic selected by the Interlocutor for half a minute, and answer follow-up questions. They will be given 30 seconds to prepare.

Check task type example on the right side.

Topics

- A Your favourite food
- B What you do on holiday
- C A sport you like

Tell learners that they will be given a pen/pencil and a piece of paper to write notes during the preparation time.

Advise learners to make good use of their preparation time to plan what they're going to say and to ensure they're able to maintain a steady flow as they answer.

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