

# › TIPS FOR LANGUAGECERT ESOL FOR SCHOOLS

A2 Level



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

## **> CONTENTS**

Exam Overview .....	4
Listening .....	5
Reading .....	8
Writing .....	11
Speaking .....	14
LANGUAGECERT for Teachers .....	17

# 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

A2 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

9 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 A2 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.

*Check task type example on the right side.*

1. a) Yes, better than yesterday.  
b) I didn't do that.  
c) Thank you.
2. a) No, I'm waiting for a bus.  
b) I don't think that's true.  
c) Mum hasn't decided yet.
3. a) I'd love a sandwich.  
b) It's something like that.  
c) That's not bad at all.

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

1. What does the girl want to do next in her life?
- a) travel a lot
  - b) work in science
  - c) go to university

### Conversation 2

2. What is the boy planning to do at the shopping center?
- a) buy something
  - b) meet friends
  - c) look in the shops

### Conversation 3

3. The boy agrees that the girl should spend the holiday
- a) earning some money.
  - b) doing some extra study.
  - c) relaxing at home.

For this part, you'll need to expose learners to a variety of short conversations (e.g. between friends, interviewer/interviewee, shop assistant/customer, teacher/student), 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 word(s) in the audio helped them.

## Part 4: Form-filling

Learners will hear a short message. They complete the missing information under six headings.

*Check task type example on the right side.*

The form is titled "School Sports Day" and has six numbered sections for filling in information:

1. Day: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of races: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Time Sports Day ends: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Place in school: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What my teacher will give me: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Thing I don't need to take: \_\_\_\_\_

For this part, you'll need to expose learners to a variety of short messages (e.g. recorded phone messages, public announcements), and set questions about them that are similar to those in the task.

Advise learners to listen for gist the first time they hear the audio, and for detail the second time they hear it.

Remind learners they will hear only one person speaking, and their answers should be between 1–3 words. They won't be awarded extra marks for longer responses.

# 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.*

Geography

This term, we will study these countries:

- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- .....
- Uruguay

- a) Denmark
- b) Peru
- c) Venezuela

Provide learners with a variety of short texts similar to those they'll encounter in the task, e.g. messages, notes, diary entries, short emails/letters, instructions. 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.

To help with comprehension, draw learner's attention to the linking words in each text (e.g. 'and', 'but', 'or') and to think about their function.

## Part 2: Gap-fill

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

Dear Sarah,

I've just got back from an amazing trip with my parents! We went to a village by the sea (1) ..... that I'd love to go back. All the food we ate (2) ..... in the restaurant next to our hotel. The sea was very warm and full of all kinds of fish. We were swimming one day and (3) .....

You must visit the area one day with your parents, (4) ..... . When you next come round, (5) ..... I can also give you a cool present which (6) .....

Can't wait to tell you more!  
Emily

*Check task type example on the right side.*

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.



# Writing

## At a glance

**Number of parts:** 2

**Tasks:** Respond informally to a given text (e.g. to a message from a friend), write a neutral or formal text for an intended audience (e.g. an email to a summer school)

**Duration (Reading & Writing):** 1 hr 20 mins



## Writing

### 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 **Explain to learners** that they will lose marks if they write fewer than 30 words. But they won't be awarded extra marks if they write more than 50 words. Note that in the task, they're not required to write the number of words in their answers.
- 4 **Remind learners of the correct way to start** and end each of the text types and encourage them to memorise a few set phrases/expressions they could include in their answer, such as 'Thank you for ...', 'Say hello to ...', 'Give my regards to ...'
- 5 **When practising their writing**, encourage learners to use linking words – such as 'and', 'but' and 'or' – to clearly mark the relationship between their ideas.
- 6 **Tell learners to use short sentences** – complex sentences are more likely to be inaccurate – and to ensure their writing follows the order of the points given / questions asked in the task.
- 7 **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.
- 8 **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 a response to a short text. They should write between 30–50 words.

*Check task type example below.*

Read the message from your friend, Sam. Write a message in reply. Write between 30-50 words.

Hi,  
Yes, I can go swimming this Saturday. Shall we go to the pool or the beach? Tell me what time you want to meet me and what you think we should have for lunch.

To help them prepare for the task, provide learners with plenty of similar text types (e.g. letters, messages, emails, greetings cards, postcards) and have them practise writing responses to them. Remind them to focus on their grammar (e.g. thinking about which tense they should use and why).

Tell learners to read the text carefully and to underline key words and phrases to make sure they answer all the questions in their response.

## Part 2

Learners write a short text. They should write between 30–50 words.

*Check task type example below.*

The headteacher at your school has asked the students to suggest some ways of using a part of the school playing field which is not used for sport. Write an email to the headteacher.

- Suggest a way of using it.
- Explain why you think it is a good idea.
- Say how you can help with the idea.

Write between 30-50 words.

To help them prepare for the task, provide learners with plenty of similar text types (e.g. letters, messages, notes) and have them practise writing their own. Remind them to focus on their grammar (e.g. thinking about which tense they should use and why).

Tell learners to read the question carefully and to underline key words to ensure they are clear about what they have to do. This is important because they must address all the points in the rubric or they will lose marks.

# 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:** 9 minutes

## 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.

## Part 1

### Learners will be asked up to five questions about themselves.

Check task type example on the right side.

**Topics**

**Travel**

- How do you get to school each day?
- How long does your journey to school take?
- How often do you use buses or trains at the weekend? (Why?/ Why not?)
- When did you last travel a long way? (How far?/ Why?)

**Home**

- Do you usually spend a lot of time at home?
- Who do you live with at home?
- Did you grow up in the same house you live in now?
- What is your favourite room in your house? (Why?)

**Sports**

- Tell me about a sport you like.
- Where can you play sport in your local area?
- Do you think sports are important for staying healthy? (Why?)
- What sports do you do at school?

**Daily Life**

- What time do you wake up?
- Do you ever feel tired during a school day? (Why?)
- How do you help around the house?
- Tell me about something you eat often.

*(continued)*

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.  
*What would you like to do on Sunday?*
- We're strangers. We're travelling on the same bus. I start.  
*How long does this bus take to get to the city centre?*
- I'm working at an ice cream shop, and you're a customer. I start.  
*I'm sorry, but our ice cream machine isn't working right now.*
- I'm a tourist in your town. I start.  
*Can you tell me how to get to the railway station?*

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 one minute, and answer follow-up questions. They will be given 30 seconds to prepare.

*Check task type example on the right side.*

### Topics

- A A place where you'd like to go on holiday
- B A festival in your country
- C How to do well in a school project

Learners should 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. They'll be given a pen/pencil and a piece of paper to write notes before they speak.

Explain that the Interlocutor may interrupt them, for example, if they have said enough and don't need to provide any further information.

Remind learners that the Interlocutor will ask them a few follow-up questions after they have finished speaking.

When practising for the test, start by allowing learners to speak for less than a minute. Gradually increase their speaking time as they become more confident.

**LANGUAGECERT**  
**F♥R TEACHERS**

# › **SUPPORTING TEACHING, BEYOND TESTING**

Empowering  
teacher voices

Teacher training  
webinars

A wealth of teaching  
resources

Join our  
community  
of passionate  
educators!



 **LANGUAGECERT®**

by PeopleCert

To find out more about LANGUAGECERT and access  
online exam preparation materials, visit:  
**[www.languagecert.org](http://www.languagecert.org)**

LANGUAGECERT is a business name of PeopleCert  
Qualifications Ltd, UK company number 09620926

✉ [info@languagecert.org](mailto:info@languagecert.org)

 [/LanguageCert.org](https://www.facebook.com/LanguageCert.org)