

› LEVEL UP YOUR TEST GAME

Unlock your best test
performance

Tips for Test Takers



› **ARE YOU READY
TO TAKE YOUR
ENGLISH TO THE
NEXT LEVEL?**



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Set yourself up for success:

Key test insights

Preparing for an English test can feel overwhelming, but with the right strategies, you can **approach it with confidence and clarity**. This guide is designed to help you **master each part of the test**: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking—so you can perform at your best.

In this section, you'll get a **quick overview of the test, along with essential tips** that apply to all four skills. From managing your time effectively to staying calm under pressure, these insights will set you up for success before stepping into the test room.

At a glance

A multilevel test designed to assess your ability to **understand, use, and communicate** effectively in English within an **academic setting**, including understanding lectures, participating in discussions, reading and analysing academic texts, and writing research papers or essays.



Language focus

**Academic
English**



Test availability

Worldwide



Levels

B1-C2



Duration

**2 hours &
34 minutes**



Official results in

**5 working
days**

Test Structure

Written Component

Listening



4 parts - 30 questions
Multiple choice/note
taking Around 40 minutes
(all parts heard twice)

Reading



4 parts - 30 questions
Multiple choice/ gap
filling/ multiple matching
50 minutes

Writing



2 tasks
Extended responses
50 minutes

Spoken Component

Speaking



4 parts - live 1:1 with interlocutor
Questions/role-play/read
aloud/presentation
Around 14 minutes

Want to improve your English for the test?

Follow these simple but effective strategies to sharpen your listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Tips that work and help you organise yourself in a smart way before the test, as well as stay focused and calm during the exam.



Use our official preparation resources

Familiarise yourself with the test format using past papers and practice tests.



Practice under timed conditions

Practice under test conditions for time management. Locate key information for accurate answers.



Keep a vocabulary log with new words

Write down new words and practice using them in context.



Expose yourself to English daily

Listen to different accents through podcasts, YouTube, and TV.



Join a study group

Practice English conversations with others preparing for the test. Getting support for a common goal keeps your motivation high.



Connect with us

Follow us on social media to get your daily dose of English inspiration and study tips that actually speak your language!

Now let's take a closer look at the different parts of the test and how you can prepare for each one.



LISTENING TIPS

Listen to a variety of
English speakers.

Get used to different
accents and speech
patterns.

Listen to various
people speaking
in English on our
TikTok account
@languagecert



Listening is more than just hearing—it's about **understanding meaning, tone, various accents and context**. In this part of the test, you will hear each recording twice, giving you a chance to listen strategically. Use the first listening to get the main idea and locate key information and the second to double-check your answers. Answer all the questions even if you don't understand some words or are unsure about the answer.

Before the Listening

Use preparation time wisely

Read the questions carefully and predict what kind of information you need.

Look for keywords

Identify words in the questions that will help you focus on specific details.

First listening: Get the Key Information

Follow the order

The questions will always follow the same order as the conversations, so this will guide you as to which sections the answers can be found in.

Identify the speaker's tone

Does the speaker sound happy, frustrated, or uncertain? This can help you understand their intent.

Listen for the main idea

What's the overall purpose of the conversation or talk?

Second listening: Confirm & Complete

Fill in missing answers

Use this chance to complete anything you missed.

Double-check for accuracy

Reconfirm your answers by matching them to what you hear.

Clarify meaning

Listen for words that connect ideas and confirm relationships between details, such as 'but' and 'for instance'.

Tips for each part of the Listening Test

Part 1

In Part 1, you will listen to seven brief, incomplete conversations and select the most suitable responses to complete them. The conversations cover different scenarios, such as interactions between students, students and lecturers, and students and administrative officials. There is one multiple-choice question for each conversation.

Tips

Listen out for the two different voices so you know who is speaking at which point – there will always be two speakers in this part.

Listen for clues, such as keywords/phrases, tone, intonation and degree of formality, to help you identify where the conversation is taking place (for example, straight after a lecture), who is speaking (for example, two students) and the relationship between the two speakers.

Focus on the overall meaning of the conversation to help you understand any unknown words.

Practise role playing similar conversations with a friend to help improve your performance in the test.

Part 2

In Part 2, you will listen to five conversations and identify specific aspects (e.g. the speakers' main ideas, opinions, feelings, or attitudes). There are two multiple-choice questions for each conversation.

Tips

Listen out for the two different voices, so you know who is speaking at which point – there will always be two speakers in this part. Use the preparation time to read through the questions carefully.

Use the first listening to answer the first question and the second listening to answer the second question. Even if you answer both questions during the first listening, you should listen again carefully to check your answers.

Part 3

In Part 3, you will listen to a monologue (one speaker only) and extract key information to complete a set of notes. There are seven gaps to complete with between one and three words.

Tips

Use the preparation time to read through the notes and think about the kind of information that might fit in each gap. The notes without gaps give additional valuable information to help complete the task.

Write what you hear: the exact words for each gap will be in the listening, so there is no need to paraphrase.

Ensure your answers are no more than three words – there are no additional marks for extra words.

Check through your answers for spelling mistakes and typos – marks will not be awarded for incorrect spelling.

Part 4

In Part 4, you will listen to a conversation between three speakers and answer six multiple-choice questions.

Tips

Use the preparation time to read all the questions and multiple-choice options so you know what to listen out for.

Pay attention to linguistic markers (i.e. words/phrases used to connect, organise or manage what's being said, for example, 'all right', 'anyway') and expressions of agreement/disagreement that provide clues to the information you will need to answer the questions.



Remember: Stay calm, trust your preparation, and use both listenings effectively. Every second counts!



READING TIPS

Read a range of
academic materials

Power up your reading
skills with articles,
reports, reviews, books,
and magazines.

Practice reading
academic materials
with one of our
Practice Papers



The **Reading test evaluates your ability to understand and interpret texts**. You should skim for the main idea, scan for important details, and use context to make educated guesses. **Prioritise understanding the content as a whole** instead of focusing on individual words, and make sure to manage your time wisely to finish all tasks successfully.

Get the big picture first

Read the text once to understand the main idea before answering the questions.

Follow the question order

The questions appear in the same sequence as the text, helping you find the answers quicker.

Use your time wisely

You don't need to spend equal time on each part – aim to do the first two parts more quickly to allow enough time for Parts 3 and 4.

Don't stress over every word

If an unfamiliar word doesn't affect the main meaning, move on - many tasks test overall understanding.

Tips for each part of the Reading Exam

Part 1a

In Part 1a, you will read six sentences and replace one word (in bold) from that sentence with alternative words, without changing the meaning of the sentence. You will have four options to choose from for each sentence.

Tips

Read each sentence first to get a general understanding. You can look at the words either side of the word in bold to get its meaning.

Say each sentence in your head, replacing the word in bold with your chosen answer to see if it sounds correct. Some of the options will have a very similar meaning to the word in bold but will not be correct in the given context.

Part 1b

In Part 1b, you will be asked to read a short gapped text and choose the correct word to fill each gap. There are five gaps with a multiple choice answer for each.

Tips

Read the whole text, including the title, to get an overall sense of what it is about.

Think about possible phrasal verbs and collocations as this may help to complete the gaps e.g. 'show off' or 'take a break'.

Follow the context clues to predict the most suitable word for each gap.

Try to guess the meaning of any unknown words from the context and by using the words either side of each gap as clues.

Read the completed text when you've finished the task to check that it works logically and grammatically.

Part 2

In Part 2, you will read a longer gapped text and choose the correct sentence to fill each gap. There are eight sentences to choose from.

Tips

Read the whole text, including the title, to get an overall sense of what it is about. You should look out for key words, which can help to identify which sentence goes in each gap.

Analyse each gap and look for linking words or phrases that indicate how the sentences connect (for example, 'therefore', 'however', 'in addition'). Eliminate any incorrect options based on these cohesive devices.

When encountering unfamiliar words, try to guess their meaning from the context and other clues. For example, match the subject in the options with the subject mentioned in the sentence before the gap. If the subject is she, make sure it says ,she, in the preceding sentence. This strategy can help in ruling out wrong answers. Then, check the completed text for coherence and flow.

Part 3

In Part 3, you will read four short texts on a common theme and decide which text gives you the answer to the seven questions that follow.

Tips

Skim read all four texts first, paying attention to the key points that are made in each one. As you read, create a mental summary of each text, organising these key points and essential details. Then read the questions and scan the texts, looking for the specific information that addresses each question.

Identify cause-and-effect relationships, compare-and-contrast relationships, argumentation and the logical sequencing of the text.

Check your answers after answering all the questions.

Part 4

In Part 4, you will read a longer, more complex text and answer six multiple-choice questions about it.

Tips

Read the whole text, including the title, to get a general understanding of what it is about.

Focus on understanding the main idea and overall context of the text; don't stress about unfamiliar words. If you encounter unknown words, try to guess their meaning based on the surrounding context.

Quickly read through all six questions to understand what specific information you need to find in the text.

Be aware that the correct answers do not always include the exact words from the text, so look out for paraphrases and synonyms.



Remember: Use the tips for strategic reading and manage your time. You've got this!



WRITING TIPS

Practise writing within the test's requirements (time and word limits).

Use our
simulator
to write and
keep track of
your word count!



<https://examsimulation.languagecert.org/>



The **Writing test evaluates your ability to organise your thoughts, develop ideas, and express them clearly in writing.** To succeed, manage your time, follow instructions, and use suitable language and structure. A **well-prepared response with relevant examples** and diverse vocabulary will help you achieve a high score.

Manage your time wisely

Part 1, is worth 40% and Part 2, is worth 60% of the total marks. A good time allocation is: 20 minutes for Part 1, 25 minutes for Part 2, and 5 minutes for reviewing (2 minutes for planning, 3 minutes for final checks).

Follow instructions carefully

Identify the key points in the prompt and ensure you include all of them in your response.

Stay within the word limit

Write at least the minimum number of words required. Avoid exceeding the maximum, as extra words won't earn additional marks.

Support and expand ideas

Emphasise key points and provide examples, explanations, or data to strengthen your arguments.

Use accurate vocabulary

Replace generic words like 'good' and 'bad' with more descriptive alternatives such as 'exceptional', 'ineffective', 'outstanding', or 'problematic'.

Maintain formal writing style

Avoid contractions (e.g., 'don't', 'can't', 'won't') as they are not suitable for formal writing.

Ensure coherence and cohesion

Use linking words like 'however', 'in addition', 'furthermore', and 'therefore' to structure your response logically.

Always review before submitting

Read through your response, check for clarity, and make final improvements to grammar, structure, and word choice.



Tips for each part of the Writing Test

Part 1

In Part 1, you will produce a short text (150 to 200 words) such as a report, argument or article with an intended reader specified and covering the content points provided.

Tips

Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you start writing. Look at the infographic and make a note of any trends, key points or unusual data.

Use language for describing changes, trends and figures. It will help if you keep a record of this kind of language when revising for the test.

Provide a rationale for any trends and try to make predictions.

Use the language of cause and effect as well as tentative or hedging language (i.e. language a writer uses to express certainty or uncertainty) for making predictions.

Consider all the content points provided and write a well-structured report, argument or article of about 150 to 200 words that addresses them one by one in the order they appear.

Pay attention to the style of writing and who you are writing to and adjust the tone accordingly. Part 1, is a formal/neutral piece of writing that requires an objective tone.

Part 2

In Part 2, you will produce an essay (approximately 250 words) which will be a formal piece of discursive writing on an academic subject.

Tips

Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you start writing. Read the statement carefully and note down ideas for each side of the argument.

Aim for a well-structured piece of writing, of about 250 words, using clear paragraphs.

Compare and contrast both views, offering definitions, examples, evaluation, cause-and-effect reasoning.

Express your personal view in the conclusion.

Write your essay in a formal style, using an objective tone and the language of argument and persuasion.



Remember: Make a plan, write clearly, and always leave time to review.



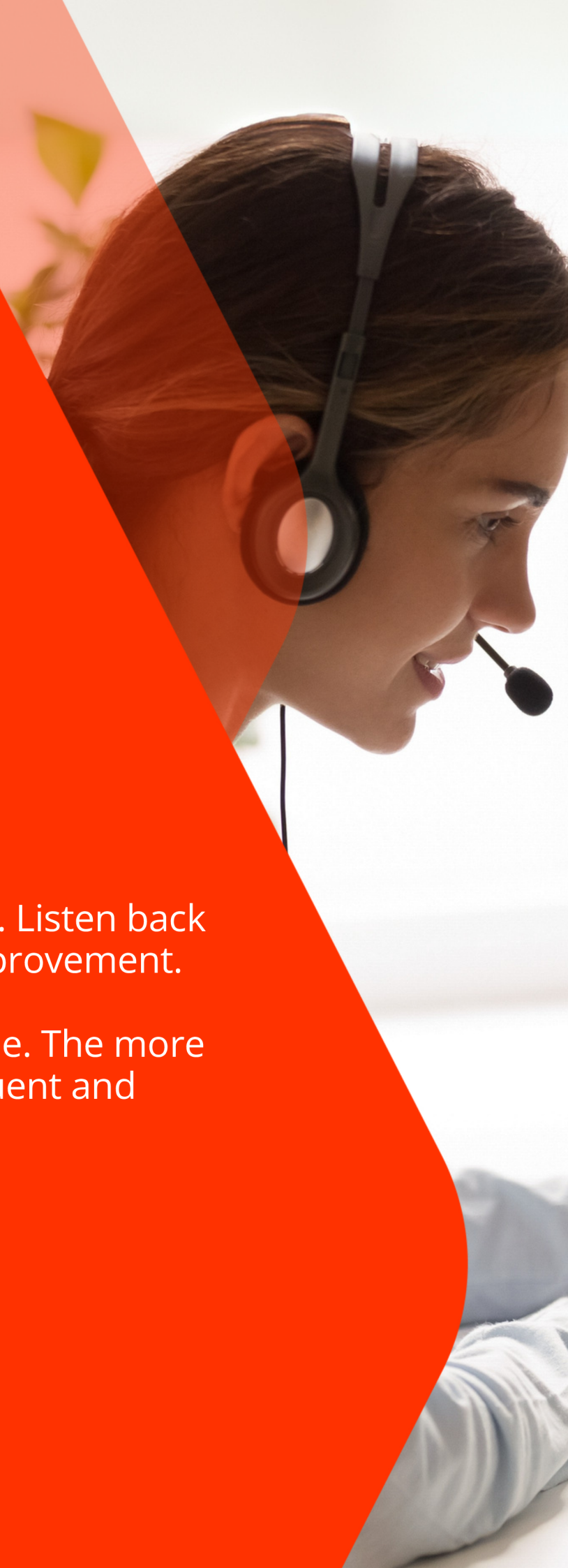


SPEAKING TIPS

Record yourself speaking. Listen back and identify areas for improvement.

Speak as much as possible. The more you practise, the more fluent and confident you'll become.

Watch
sample test
videos on
our YouTube
channel
@languagecert



The **Speaking test assesses your ability to express ideas, answer questions, and participate in discussions using clear language.** To showcase your skills, **provide comprehensive answers**, vary your vocabulary, and remain composed. Confidence and fluency matter as much as accuracy!

Give detailed, well-structured answers

In Parts 1, 2, and 3, take your time to provide detailed answers showcasing your language skills. Avoid being too brief. In Part 4, limit your response to two minutes.

Use your preparation time wisely

You will have 20 seconds to prepare for Part 3 and one minute to prepare for Part 4 after you are given a prompt. You will not need or be given preparation time for Parts 1 and 2.

Listen carefully and stay engaged

Listen carefully to the questions and use 'fillers' (for example, 'well ...', 'you know ...') if you need time to think.

Don't be afraid to ask for repetition

It's OK to ask the Marking Interlocutor to repeat a question – you will not be penalised for this. However, you cannot ask them to explain the meaning of the question or any of the words used.

Demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary

Try to use a wide range of vocabulary, including common English phrases and idioms. Remember that accuracy and appropriateness matter. Using informal and inappropriate vocabulary could negatively affect your score.

Correct yourself if needed

Don't be afraid to correct any mistakes you make – demonstrating that you have the language skills to do so will be viewed favourably by the Marking Interlocutor.

Focus on communication, not knowledge

Remember that you will be assessed on your communicative competence and language skills rather than your knowledge of the topics or your personal point of view. Focus on demonstrating your language proficiency, even if the topic is unfamiliar to you.

Tips for each part of the Speaking Test

Part 1

In Part 1, you will initially be asked to spell your name and give your country of origin. Then, you will be asked to answer a few questions on contemporary issues. the emphasis will be on a personal response.

Tips

Listen carefully to the task instructions and to the questions asked.

Avoid memorising your speech by heart.

Support your point of view with reasons and examples.

Expand on your responses and avoid one-word answers.

Think carefully about the tense you will need to use and your word choice.

Include examples from your own experiences to express preferences or points of view.

Part 2

In Part 2, you will participate in two or three situations that replicate real-life scenarios (e.g. giving advice, apologising, giving instructions).

Tips

Remember that the Interlocutor will initiate the first interaction and you must initiate the second one.

Adjust your language and tone based on the situation. The Interlocutor may pretend to be, for example, one of your classmates or a university accommodation officer, so interact formally or informally considering the context, like speaking to a classmate or university staff.

Part 3

In Part 3, you will read a short passage out loud and answer a few follow-up questions. You will be given 20 seconds to look at the passage before you read it out loud. Your text will remain on the screen while you answer the questions set.

Tips

Make good use of preparation time to skim read the text, focusing on overall meaning.

Use punctuation as a guide to aid fluency, for example, briefly pausing after a comma.

Aim for clarity and precision in your speech.

Make your best attempt at words you're not sure how to pronounce and move on quickly – it's important to keep the flow going.

Practise reading numbers, and acronyms, long noun phrases and long sentences.

Part 4

In Part 4, you will prepare and deliver a two-minute presentation on an academic-related subject in response to a stimulus given by the Interlocutor; you will have one minute to prepare and speak for up to two minutes and answer follow-up questions. You will be allowed to make some notes (you are allowed to use a blank piece of paper).

Tips

Practise before the test, talking for two minutes on familiar and unfamiliar topics. This will give you a good idea of how long you should speak for in the test.

Practise interpreting information from infographics.

Use the preparation time to interpret the infographic, think about your answer, make notes and organise your ideas.

Keep the content of your presentation focused on the topic given.

Use 'filler' phrases if you need time to think before answering a question, for example, 'that's an interesting question ...', 'let me see ...', 'give me a second to think about that ...'



Remember : Speak with clarity.

› PREPARE FOR THE TEST DAY





**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF
YOU'VE GOT THIS!**



Get a good night's
sleep before the test



Stay hydrated during
the test



Allow yourself plenty of
time to get to the Test
Centre or get ready for
the Online test





To find out more about LANGUAGECERT and
access online test preparation materials, visit:
www.languagecert.org

LANGUAGECERT is a business name of PeopleCert
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