Preliminary English Test

Handbook

Level B1

Common European Framework of Reference
# PET content and overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Test Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Paper 1** | Reading/Writing | 1 hour 30 minutes | **Reading**  
Five parts test a range of reading skills with a variety of texts, ranging from very short notices to longer continuous texts.  
**Writing**  
Three parts test a range of writing skills. | Assessment of candidates' ability to understand the meaning of written English at word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and whole text level.  
Assessment of candidates' ability to produce straightforward written English, ranging from producing variations on simple sentences to pieces of continuous text. |
| **Paper 2** | Listening     | 30 minutes (approx.) | Four parts ranging from short exchanges to longer dialogues and monologues. | Assessment of candidates' ability to understand dialogues and monologues in both informal and neutral settings on a range of everyday topics. |
| **Paper 3** | Speaking      | 10–12 minutes per pair of candidates | Four parts. In Part 1, candidates interact with an examiner. In Parts 2 and 4 they interact with another candidate. In Part 3, they have an extended individual long turn. | Assessment of candidates' ability to express themselves in order to carry out functions at Threshold level. To ask and to understand questions and make appropriate responses. To talk freely on matters of personal interest. |
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Paper format  The paper contains four parts.
Timing  10–12 minutes per pair of candidates.
Interaction pattern  The standard format is two candidates and two examiners. One examiner acts as both assessor and interlocutor and manages the interaction by asking questions and setting up the tasks. The other acts as assessor and does not join in the conversation.
Task types  Short exchanges with the interlocutor; a collaborative task involving both candidates; a 1-minute long turn and a follow up discussion.
Marks  Candidates are assessed on their performance throughout the test. There are a total of 25 marks for Paper 3, making 25% of the total score for the whole examination.

STRUCTURE AND TASKS

PART 1
Task type and format  Each candidate interacts with the interlocutor. The interlocutor asks the candidates questions in turn, using standardised questions.
Focus  Giving information of a factual, personal kind. The candidates respond to questions about present circumstances, past experiences and future plans.
Timing  2–3 minutes.

PART 2
Task type and format  Simulated situation. Candidates interact with each other. Visual stimulus is given to the candidates to aid the discussion task. The interlocutor sets up the activity using a standardised rubric.
Focus  Using functional language to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement.
Timing  2–3 minutes.

PART 3
Task type and format  Extended turn. A colour photograph is given to each candidate in turn and they are asked to talk about it for approximately a minute. Both photographs relate to the same topic.
Focus  Describing photographs and managing discourse, using appropriate vocabulary, in a longer turn.
Timing  3 minutes.

PART 4
Task type and format  General conversation. Candidates interact with each other. The topic of the conversation develops the theme established in Part 3. The interlocutor sets up the activity using a standardised rubric.
Focus  The candidates talk together about their opinions, likes/dislikes, preferences, experiences, habits, etc.
Timing  3 minutes.
Part 1

**Interlocutor**

**Candidate A/B**

---

**Phase 1**

Good morning, Interlocutor. Can I have your name, please?

---

Phase 2

**A/B**

Good morning, Interlocutor. Can I have your name, please?

---

**Back-up prompts**

- How do you write your family name?
- How do you spell it?
- Thank you.

---

Notice the following questions. Use candidate A’s name and see if candidate B has a similar name. (Candidate A)

---

Notice the following questions. Use candidate B’s name and see if candidate A has a similar name. (Candidate B)

---

Have you got a job? What subject do you study?

---

Do you have English lessons at school?

---

Where do you live? Come from?

---

About students

Do you work or are you a student in...?

---

Did you do anything yesterday evening/last weekend? What?

---

What is your name?

---

What will you be doing in your free time?

---

Thank you.

---

Note: All candidates have English at school.

---

Candidate A/B's name is...
Part 2

I'm going to describe a situation to you. A young man is on holiday in North America and wants to buy a present for his parents. Talk together about the different presents he could buy and say which would be best. Here's a picture with some ideas to help you.

Interlocutor: Say to both candidates.

A young man is on holiday in North America and wants to buy a present for his parents. Talk together about the different presents he could buy and say which would be best.

Pause

Interlocutor: I'll say that again.

A young man is on holiday in North America and wants to buy a present for his parents. Talk together about the different presents he could buy and say which would be best.

All right? Talk together.

Interlocutor: Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention.

Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet? Please?)

Retire Part 2 booklet.

About 2-3 minutes (excluding time to assimilate the information)
**Speaking Test 1 (People reading and writing)**

### Part 3 (3 minutes)

**Interclocutor**
Say to both candidates:

> Now, I’d like each of you to talk on your own about something. I’m going to give each of you a photograph of people reading and writing.

*Candidate A*, here is your photograph. *(Place Part 3 booklet, open at Task 1A, in front of Candidate A).* Please show it to Candidate B, but I’d like you to talk about it.

*Candidate B*, you just listen. I’ll give you your photograph in a moment.

*Candidate A*, please tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Candidate A)

**Approximately one minute**

*If there is a need to intervene, prompts rather than direct questions should be used.*

Thank you. *(Can I have the booklet please?)*

Retrieval: *Candidate A*

**Interclocutor**

Now, *Candidate B*, here is your photograph. It also shows people reading and writing. *(Place Part 3 booklet, open at Task 1B, in front of Candidate B).* Please show it to Candidate A and tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Candidate B)

**Approximately one minute**

Thank you. *(Can I have the booklet please?)*

Retrieval: *Candidate B*

### Part 4 (3 minutes)

**Interclocutor**
Say to both candidates:

> Your photographs showed people reading and writing. Now, I’d like you to talk together about the different kinds of reading and writing you did when you were younger, and the kinds you do now.

.Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you. That’s the end of the test.

*Parts 3 & 4 should take about 6 minutes together.*
Assessment

Throughout the test, candidates are assessed on their language skills, not their personality, intelligence or knowledge of the world. They must, however, be prepared to develop the conversation, where appropriate, and respond to the tasks set. Prepared speeches are not acceptable.

Candidates are assessed on their own individual performance and not in relation to each other. Both examiners assess the candidates according to criteria which are interpreted at PET level. The interlocutor awards a mark for global achievement, whilst the assessor awards marks according to four analytical criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication.

■ Grammar and Vocabulary

This scale refers to the accurate and appropriate use of grammatical forms and vocabulary. It also includes the range of both grammatical forms and vocabulary. Performance is viewed in terms of the overall effectiveness of the language used in dealing with the tasks.

■ Discourse Management

This scale refers to the extent, relevance, coherence and cohesion of each candidate’s individual contribution. On this scale the candidate’s ability to build and maintain a coherent flow of language without undue hesitation is assessed, either within a single utterance or over a string of utterances. Also assessed here is how relevant the contributions are to what has gone before.

■ Pronunciation

This scale refers to the candidate’s ability to produce comprehensible utterances to fulfil the task requirements. This includes intonation, stress and individual sounds. Examiners put themselves in the position of the non-language specialist and assess the overall intelligibility of the candidates’s pronunciation. Different varieties of English, e.g. British, North American, Australian etc., are acceptable, provided they are used consistently throughout the test.

■ Interactive Communication

This scale refers to the candidate’s ability to use language to achieve meaningful communication. This includes initiating and responding, the ability to use interactive strategies to maintain or repair communication, and sensitivity to the norms of turn-taking.

■ Global Achievement

This scale refers to the candidate’s overall effectiveness in dealing with the tasks in the four separate parts of the PET Speaking test. The global mark is an independent impression mark which reflects the assessment of the candidate’s performance from the interlocutor’s perspective. The interlocutor gives one global mark for each candidate’s performance across all parts of the test.

Marking

As mentioned above, assessment is based on performance in the whole test, and is not related to performance in particular parts of the test. The assessor awards marks for each of the four criteria listed above. The interlocutor awards each candidate one global mark.

In many countries, Oral Examiners are assigned to teams, each of which is led by a Team Leader who may be responsible for approximately 15 Oral Examiners. Team Leaders give advice and support to Oral Examiners, as required.

The Team Leaders are responsible to a Professional Support Leader who is the professional representative of Cambridge ESOL for the Speaking tests. Professional Support Leaders are appointed by Cambridge ESOL and attend an annual co-ordination and development session. Team Leaders are appointed by the Professional Support Leader in consultation with the local administration.

After initial training of examiners, standardisation of marking is maintained by both examiner co-ordination sessions and by monitoring visits to centres by Team Leaders. During co-ordination sessions, examiners watch and discuss sample Speaking tests recorded on DVD.

The sample tests on DVD are selected to demonstrate a range of nationalities and different levels of competence, and are pre-marked by a team of experienced assessors.