

**Aptis ESOL**  
General

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# Candidate Guide

**April 2023**



# Introducing Aptis ESOL

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Aptis ESOL is a four-skills, computer-based English test, developed by the British Council, and regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

Aptis ESOL tests across the full range of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) from A1 to C2. It includes 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), as a level on the CEFR for each skill tested and as an overall CEFR level.

## Aptis ESOL is available in three variants:

### 1. Aptis ESOL General

A general English proficiency test, assessing levels from A1 to B2 on the CEFR. Candidates demonstrating a level above B2 are awarded a C level.

### 2. Aptis ESOL Advanced

Tests language proficiency from B1 to C2. Tasks are more complex and designed to distinguish between C1 and C2 level candidates.

### 3. Aptis ESOL for Teachers

A general English proficiency test, adapted for the educational context. The test content relates to teachers and the scenarios they come across every day. It has the same format as Aptis ESOL General and tests levels from A1 to B2.

Aptis ESOL tests are taken on a computer in supervised face-to-face sessions.

Accommodations can be made for special 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 for the Aptis ESOL General test. An overview of each component is provided followed by detailed descriptions and advice on how to best prepare. You will also find tips on how to practise for the test and information on how the test is marked.



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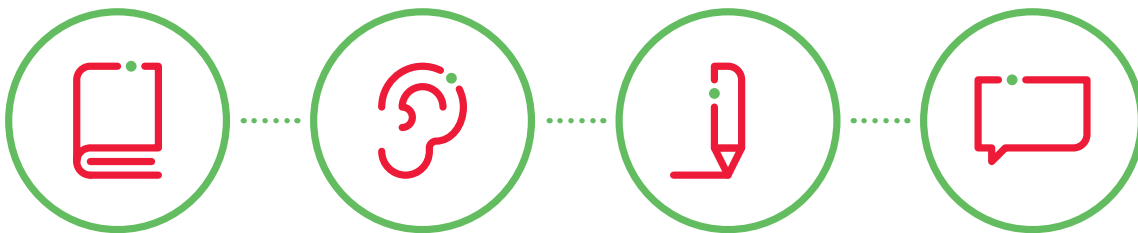
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## Test structure

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



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

## Aptis ESOL General test structure

Test	Test design		Activity	Format
<b>Core</b> 25 minutes	Part 1	Grammar	Sentence completion.	3-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Vocabulary	Word matching (similar meaning). Match words to definitions.	Sets of 5 target words with 10 options
			Sentence completion.	
			Word pairs or word combinations (words commonly used together).	
<b>Reading</b> 35 minutes	Part 1	Sentence comprehension	Choose words to complete sentences.	3-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Text cohesion	Put sentences into the correct order.	2 tasks: 6 sentences jumbled up in each task
	Part 3	Opinion matching	Match people's opinions to statements.	7 statements matched to 4 people's opinions
	Part 4	Long text comprehension	Match headings to paragraphs.	7 paragraphs and 8 headings
<b>Listening</b> 40 minutes	Part 1	Information recognition	Listen to a short monologue or dialogue to identify specific information.	3-option multiple choice
	Part 2	Information matching	Match people's monologues to information.	6 pieces of information 4 monologues
	Parts 3+4	Inference	Listen to monologues and dialogues and identify the attitude, opinion or intention.	3-option multiple choice

Test	Test design		Activity	Format
<b>Writing</b> 50 minutes	Part 1	Word-level writing	Respond to messages using individual words.	1–5 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
<b>Speaking</b> 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.	1 minute to prepare 2 minutes response time

# Aptis ESOL General core test (grammar and vocabulary)

The core test consists of two parts. The first part assesses your knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses your knowledge of English vocabulary.

Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Grammar</b> Part 1	<p>In this part of the test, you will answer 25 questions.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>All 25 questions are in the format of a 3-option multiple choice.</p> <p>Complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</p>	<p>To know which parts of grammar are tested, see the British Council / EAQUALS core inventory. This is free and available online at:  <a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-eaquals-core-inventory-general-english">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-eaquals-core-inventory-general-english</a></p> <p>One great way to prepare for the grammar test is to use the British Council's LearnEnglish website:  <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar</a></p>
<b>Vocabulary</b> Part 2	<p>There are 25 questions in this part of the test.</p> <p>There are a number of question types:</p> <p><b>Word matching:</b> find a word with a meaning similar to the target word.</p> <p><b>Word definition:</b> match a definition to the correct word.</p> <p><b>Word usage:</b> complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</p> <p><b>Word pairs or word combinations:</b> select the most common combinations of words. You 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).</p>	<p>To help you prepare for this part of the test, the LearnEnglish website has games and activities to help you improve your vocabulary.  <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary</a></p> <p>Another useful tip is to take note of interesting words or word combinations when you read English texts.</p>



## 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, you need to match words with similar meanings from a list of options. To do this, click on the arrows and choose the similar word.

Here is an example:

Select a word from the list that has the most similar meaning to the word on the left.

Example: big =	large ▼
study =	read ▼
receive =	get ▼
start =	begin ▼
talk =	speak ▲
pick =	choose ▲

For the next question type, you need to match a definition to a word. Click on the arrow and choose the word that matches the definition.

Here is an example:

Complete each definition using a word from the drop down list.

To cover with paper or material is to	wrap ▼
To improve or change is to	adjust ▼
To state or make public is to	announce ▼
To get somewhere is to	arrive ▼
To put something together is to	assemble ▲

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

Complete each sentence using a word from the drop down list.

More and more people go  for their holidays these days.

Drivers need to remain  when in charge of a car.

The city has many  and interesting buildings.

She's a highly  person who explains things clearly.

He's a very  person – always getting into fights.

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

Select a word from the list that is most often used with the word on the left.

Example: big +	<input type="text" value="house"/>
aerobics +	<input type="text" value="classes"/>
agriculture +	<input type="text" value="minister"/>
aisle +	<input type="text" value="seat"/>
apron +	<input type="text" value="strings"/>
atom +	<input type="text" value="bomb"/>

# Aptis ESOL General reading test

The test assesses your reading ability. The tasks become more difficult as the test progresses.

Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Sentence comprehension</b> Part 1	<p>In this part, you need to choose a word (choice of three) to complete a sentence. There are five sentences to complete. You do not need to understand all of the sentences to complete each individual sentence.</p> <p>This part assesses your ability to read a sentence and to complete the sentence with an appropriate word.</p>	<p>Make sure you read each sentence and all of the possible answer words carefully before trying to answer this question.</p> <p>The best way to become a better reader is to practise. Easy books written especially for English language learners might help. For example, try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Bookworms Starter / Stage 1</li> <li>• Cambridge Readers – Level 1</li> <li>• Penguin Readers – Level 1</li> <li>• Macmillan Readers – Starter / Beginner</li> <li>• Headway Skills series.</li> </ul>
<b>Text cohesion</b> Part 2	<p>In this part, there are two tasks. Both have six sentences that make a whole text. The sentences have been put into the wrong order and you need to put them in the correct order. There is only one correct way to organise the sentences. Your task is to click on each sentence and then move them so each one is in the correct position.</p> <p>This part assesses your knowledge of the cohesion of a text. You need to look for clues in each sentence that show how it links to the sentences around it.</p>	<p>Read all the sentences carefully first. Then, decide on the correct order (the first sentence is identified for you).</p> <p>Appropriate readers for preparation of this level are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Bookworms Stage 1 and 2</li> <li>• Cambridge Readers – Level 2</li> <li>• Penguin Readers – Level 3</li> <li>• Macmillan Readers – Elementary.</li> </ul>



Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Opinion matching</b> Part 3	<p>In this part, you will match people's opinions to statements. You will read four people's opinions on the same topic. Then you need to read seven statements and decide which person's opinion matches each statement.</p> <p>This part tests your ability to read and understand short texts.</p>	<p>Read over all four opinions before attempting the questions.</p> <p>Appropriate readers for this level are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Bookworms Stage 2 and 3</li> <li>• Cambridge Readers – Level 3, 4 and 5</li> <li>• Penguin Readers – Level 4</li> <li>• Macmillan Readers –Pre Intermediate.</li> </ul>
<b>Long text comprehension</b> Part 4	<p>In this part, you will read a long text (about 750 words). You 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.</p> <p>This part is designed to test your ability to read and understand a long text. To get the correct answers you 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).</p>	<p>Read the whole text quickly. Then carefully read the headings. Do all this before starting the task. Look for clues to connect the headings to the paragraphs; these might be similar words, ideas or topics.</p> <p>Appropriate readers for this level are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Bookworms Stage 4, 5 and 6</li> <li>• Cambridge Readers – Level 4, 5 and 6</li> <li>• Penguin Readers – Level 5 and 6</li> <li>• Macmillan Readers – Intermediate and Upper Intermediate.</li> </ul>



## Sample reading questions

### Reading part 1: Sentence comprehension

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

Choose one word from the list for each gap. The first one is done for you.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Hello from sunny Brighton! Pete and I are here on holiday for two weeks and  a great time.

There's a lot to do and eat here - the fish are .

We went to see a film and  some of the local food.

Pete hadn't been feeling very well, so it's been good for him to  a real break.

He wants to get some exercise  we're on holiday.

As you , he loves quiet places and I hope it's not too hot!

Love,

Helen



**Reading part 2: Text cohesion**

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

There are two of these tasks in this part.

The sentences below are from a report. Put the sentences in the right order. The first sentence is done for you.

This report gives information about the traffic problems on the coast road.

For this reason it is easy for them to take a wrong turn and get lost.

These will help visitors to find their way to our beautiful town.

This road is busy during the summer when tourists visit the area.

They don't know the road because many of them are here for the first time.

This is why we think there should be more signs along the road.

The sentences below are from some instructions. Put the sentences in the right order. The first sentence is done for you.

If you are visiting our office for the first time, please follow these instructions.

A member of staff will write this information in the visitor's book.

Before you leave, please return the card to a member of staff at the front desk.

You can then use the card to enter through the security gate.

Next, he or she will give you a visitor's identity card.

You should go to the front desk upon arrival and give your name and address.



### Reading part 3: Opinion matching

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

#### Education and Work

##### 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.

Four people respond in the comments section of an online magazine article about education and work. Read their comments and answer the questions below.

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 are young?

4. Who thinks you should study independently?

5. Who thinks you should combine a job with studying?

6. Who think you should choose a course that is practical?

7. Who thinks you should get a job immediately after leaving school?





### Reading part 4: Long text comprehension

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

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

Select the appropriate heading from the drop-down list on the right-hand side.

#### Mission To Mars

1. On 3rd June 2010 an international crew of six astronauts entered a space ship and prepared themselves for a 520 day voyage to the planet Mars and back. The module that was to be their home for the next year and a half contained their sleeping quarters, a kitchen/dining room, a living room, a control room and a toilet. There was also space for food storage, a small greenhouse, a bathroom, a sauna and even a gym. The Mars landing was scheduled for 12th February 2011, following a 255-day flight, and would involve a full two days of exploration of the planet surface. An equally long return journey would see the astronauts return to earth on 4th November 2011.

2. Emerging from the spaceship after an exhausting 520 days, Russian commander Alexei Sitev declared the mission finally over. "The programme has been fully carried out," he announced at a press conference. "All the crew members are in good health. We are now ready for further tests." Indeed, the general consensus in the scientific community was that the Mars 500 project had achieved its aims, and, what is more, the crew had managed to complete their mission without ever having to leave the Earth's atmosphere.

3. Mars 500 was, in fact, a simulation exercise. The astronauts never even left the ground and their space ship was a specially constructed working model situated in a warehouse in

**Read the passage quickly. Choose a heading for each numbered paragraph (1-7) from the drop-down box. There is one more heading than you need.**

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.



# Aptis ESOL General listening test

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

Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Information recognition</b> Part 1	In this part, you will listen to a short phone message or a short monologue or dialogue, and you need to identify specific information such as a phone number, a time or a place.	Visit the British Council's LearnEnglish website for lots of very useful activities, tips, apps and podcasts: <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/</a>  The elementary podcasts are useful preparation for these questions.
<b>Information matching</b> Part 2	In this part, you 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, try to listen to as much English as possible (e.g. films, television or radio).
<b>Opinion matching</b> Part 3	In this task, you listen to a dialogue between a man and a woman and then decide who expresses an opinion.  There are four questions. Your task is to decide if the man, woman or both the man and woman have expressed the opinion.	Listening to authentic speech, such as television drama programs or films, is a good way to prepare for this task.
<b>Monologue comprehension</b> Part 4	In these tasks, you 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. Also try the BBC World Service radio station.



## Sample listening questions

Remember that if you'd like to hear a question for a second time, just click on the Play button (▶). The system will not allow you to listen more than twice.

### Listening part 1: Information recognition

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



Sumatah tells her friend about an art club. When does the club meet?

☐

Tuesday.

☐

Thursday.

☐

Saturday.



**Listening part 2: Information matching**

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

▶ 🔊

Four people are describing their plans for the future. Complete the sentences below.

Speaker A wants to

Speaker B wants to

Speaker C wants to

Speaker D wants to

go to college
work in a different country
start a business
have children
write a book
travel the world



**Listening part 3: Opinion matching**

You listen to short conversations with two speakers to identify the attitude of the speaker, their intention or opinion.

Listen to two parents discussing the issue of children's health. Read the statements below and decide who expresses which opinion, the man, the woman, or both the man and the woman. You can listen to the discussion twice.

1. Parents should better manage their children's diets.
2. Parents should support their child's interest in sport.
3. Quiet time can promote children's concentration abilities.
4. Excessive sleep can be bad for young people.

Man

Woman

Both

**Listening part 4: Monologue comprehension**

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



Listen to a city planner talk at a press conference about a new transport plan and answer the questions below.

What is his opinion of the plan overall?

- ☐ It is very similar to previous community projects in the same area.
- ☐ It was prepared without proper consultation with the community.
- ☐ It does not represent the opinions of the whole community.

What is his opinion of the role of the media?

- ☐ He is critical of the media's reporting of the plan.
- ☐ He is surprised by the media's interest in the plan.
- ☐ He is confused by the media's reaction to the plan.



# Aptis ESOL General writing test

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There are four parts to the writing test. You will interact in a social media-type written conversation and write emails. All writing tasks are marked by an examiner.

Make sure you fully understand the questions. Plan what you are going to write and then edit your writing before clicking to the next question.

The most common mistakes include:

- not answering the questions (going off-topic)
  - read the question and understand what you need to do
- writing too much but with poor grammar, spelling and punctuation
  - 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.

The total time allowed for the writing test is 50 minutes. The timings for each section below are recommendations only.



Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Word-level writing</b> Part 1	<p>In the first part you have joined a club, course or activity and must answer a series of five text messages from other members of the club, course or activity. There is no extended writing in this part (no sentence writing), just individual words.</p> <p>If you are targeting a very high score, you should spend no more than three (3) minutes on this part.</p>	<p>The focus is on communication (this means spelling, capitalisation and grammar will not be considered by the markers).</p>
<b>Short text writing</b> Part 2	<p>This part is about form filling. In this part, you need to write in sentences.</p> <p>If you are targeting a very high score, you should spend no more than seven (7) minutes on this part.</p>	<p>You are asked to write 20–30 words. The focus is on writing sentences that are on-topic and have accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p> <p>A common error is to write more than 30 words and as a result, make a lot of mistakes. Keep to the word limit and focus on accuracy.</p>
<b>Three written parts of text, all of which require responses</b> Part 3	<p>In this part you will have a social network-type interaction. You will receive three questions and need to respond.</p> <p>If you are targeting a very high score, you should spend no more than ten (10) minutes on this part.</p>	<p>Answer all three questions and don't go off-topic.</p> <p>Focus on accurate spelling and punctuation and write sentences that link together and make sense.</p> <p>Keep to the word count of 30–40 words per answer.</p>



Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Formal and informal writing</b> Part 4	<p>This part requires that you write two emails:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) an informal email to a friend; and</li><li>2) a more formal email to an unknown person.</li></ol> <p>Both emails are in reaction to information about a change.</p> <p>You should spend all of your remaining time on this part (around 30 minutes).</p>	<p>Keep to the word count of 40–50 words for the first email and 120–150 words for the second email.</p> <p>Make sure your 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.</p> <p>You are also assessed on how accurately you write and your flexibility with English language, so check your writing and use a wide range of vocabulary, grammar and cohesive devices.</p>





## Sample writing questions

### Writing part 1: Word-level writing

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

You want to join a travel club. You have 5 messages from a member of the club.  
Write short answers (1-5 words) to each message.

<b>Example</b>	How are you?	I'm fine, thanks.
	What do you usually do in the morning?	<input type="text"/>
	What is your favourite place?	<input type="text"/>
	What is your favourite animal?	<input type="text"/>
	What is the weather like today?	<input type="text"/>
	What is your favourite time of year?	<input type="text"/>

Here is the marking scale:

#### Areas assessed: Task fulfilment and communicative competence

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



**Writing part 2: Short text writing**

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

You are a new member of a travel club. Fill in the form. Write in sentences.

Use 20-30 words. You have 7 minutes in total.

**Aptis Travel Club**

Please tell us why you are interested in travel.

0 words



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 parts of text, all of which require responses**

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

You are a member of a travel club. You are talking to three other members in the travel club chat room. Talk to them using sentences.

Use 30 to 40 words per answer. You have 10 minutes in total. Answer all three questions.

**Sam:** Hi! Welcome to the club. Can you remember the first time you went on a journey by yourself? What was it like?

0 words

**Miguel:** Welcome! What are the most interesting places to visit in your country?

0 words

**Michelle:** What is the most exciting journey you've been on?

0 words



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.

You are a member of a travel club. You received this e-mail from the club.

Dear Member,

We are writing to tell you that the famous travel writer Mr David Price will unfortunately not be able to attend our next club meeting. Although Mr Price will not be there to sign copies of his new book *Around The World In Eighty Ways*, members of the club will be able to buy a copy at the price of twenty five pounds. If you would like to reserve a copy of the book, please contact the club secretary.

Write an e-mail to your friend. Write about your feelings and what you think the club should do about the situation.

Write about 50 words. You have 10 minutes.

0 words

Write an e-mail to the president of the club. Write about your feelings and what you think the club should do about the situation.

Write 120-150 words. You have 20 minutes.

0 words

### 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. This is an important part of language use. For example, your language choices will be different when you're writing to a new business partner and when you're writing to a friend.

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





# Aptis ESOL General speaking test

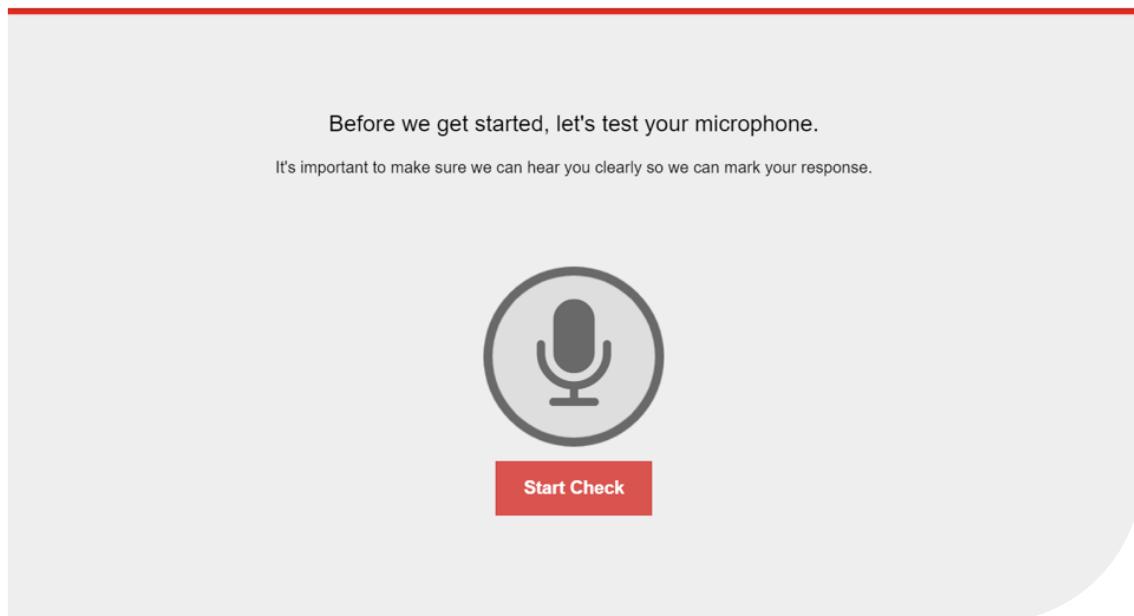
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For each question, you are given a maximum amount of time to speak, but you can end the recording early by clicking on a stop button. Please make sure you fully respond to the question before you stop the recording.

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, you'll be asked to check your microphone.



Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Personal information</b> Part 1	In this part, you are asked to answer three questions on personal topics. You are expected to talk for 30 seconds per question.	It's a good idea to practice introducing yourself and talking about your personal experiences. Think about how you can talk about familiar topics (e.g. holidays, weekend activities, sports) and practise giving general information about those topics.
<b>Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanations</b> Part 2	In this part you 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). You are expected to talk for 45 seconds per question.	You should try to be fluent and spontaneous, showing little sign of effort. Make sure you answer all three questions.
<b>Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations</b> Part 3	In this part you 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). You are expected to talk for 45 seconds for each question.	<p>To prepare for this task, practise comparing two different things (e.g. two cities or two houses). Focus on describing their advantages and disadvantages.</p> <p>To achieve a very high score in this part, it's important to make sure you are using correct grammatical structures when you speculate.</p>



Part	Description	Preparation
<b>Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic</b> Part 4	<p>In the final part, you will see a picture and be asked three questions about an abstract topic.</p> <p>You are given one (1) minute to prepare an answer and in this time, you can take notes. You are expected to talk for two (2) minutes.</p>	<p>A common error is to describe the photo. You will not receive a high score if you describe the photo. The questions are more abstract (e.g. how you feel about something).</p> <p>Another common error is to go off-topic. Focus on answering each question in clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech.</p> <p>To prepare for this part, it is a good idea to practise speaking for two minutes on an abstract topic (e.g. How do you feel about _____?).</p> <p>Make sure you practise using your planning time to structure what you are going to say.</p>

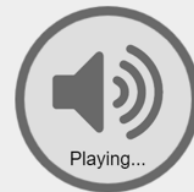


**Speaking part 1: Personal information**

In this part, you answer some questions about yourself. Listen to the instructions and speak clearly into your microphone when you hear the signal.

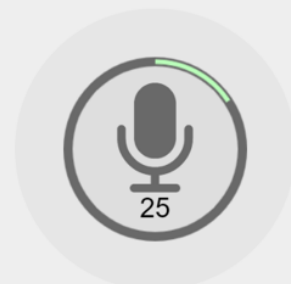
Each part of the test will appear automatically. You can stop recording your response before the timer runs out by tapping on the stop button, but we recommend that you try to speak for the full time available to maximise your score.

**Part One.** In this part I'm going to ask you three short questions about yourself and your interests. You will have 30 seconds to reply to each question. Begin speaking when you hear this sound.




When the time to record comes, the timer begins. This tells you the amount of time you have been recording for (in the screen shot below, the timer shows that it has been recording for 25 seconds).


Please tell me about your family.



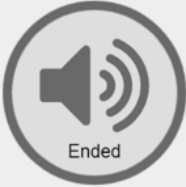
As each new question appears, the same procedure is followed.

What do you like doing in your free time?



Click to Finish Answering Early 

What's the weather like today?



You have now completed this part

77 %

Uploading your answer for marking...

Please do not close this page until the answer has finished uploading.



The areas assessed in this part of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly you 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).

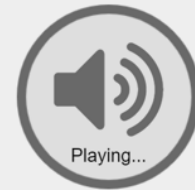
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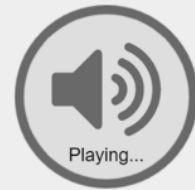
**Speaking part 2: Describe, express opinion and provide reasons and explanation**

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

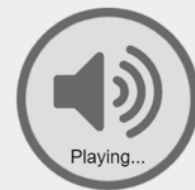
**Part Two.** In this part I'm going to ask you to describe a picture. Then I will ask you two questions about it. You will have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when you hear this sound.



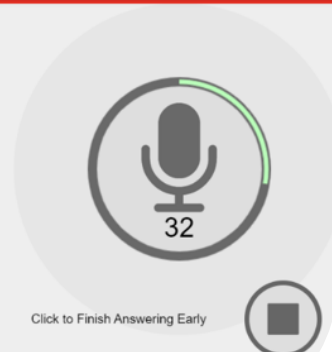
Describe this picture.



Tell me about a time when you visited a museum.



Do you think people should pay to visit museums, or should they be free?





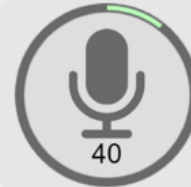
**Speaking part 3: Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations**

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

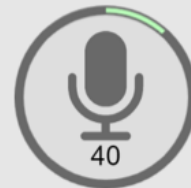
**Part Three.** In this part I'm going to ask you to compare two pictures and I will then ask you two questions about them. You will have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when you hear this sound.



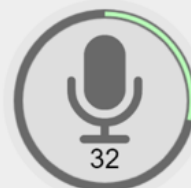
Tell me what you see in the two pictures.



What kind of people play these two sports?



Which of these two sports is more difficult to play? Why?



Click to Finish Answering Early



The areas assessed in parts 2 and 3 of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly you 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, you again need to answer three questions but this time you answer them all in one response.

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



Tell me about a time when you were on your own.  
How did you feel about it?  
What are some of the ways of passing the time on your own?


Playing...



Tell me about a time when you were on your own.  
How did you feel about it?  
What are some of the ways of passing the time on your own?

**You now have one minute to think about your answers. You can make notes if you wish.**

49



Tell me about a time when you were on your own.  
How did you feel about it?  
What are some of the ways of passing the time on your own?

**You now have two minutes to talk.**

117



During the preparation time, it is important to take notes, as these will help you organise and remember what you want to speak about. Rather than writing out exactly what you want to say, make brief notes and use these to structure your 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).



# How to take the online test

When you start every Aptis ESOL test, the introductory screen looks like this:

Welcome to the Aptis Grammar and Vocabulary Test.  
The test consists of two sections:  
Grammar: 25 questions  
Vocabulary: 25 questions  
Total Time: 25 minutes  
When you click on the start button, the test will begin.

On screen, the questions will appear like this:

In those days, my father \_\_\_\_ never eat dinner after eight o'clock.

☐

will

☐

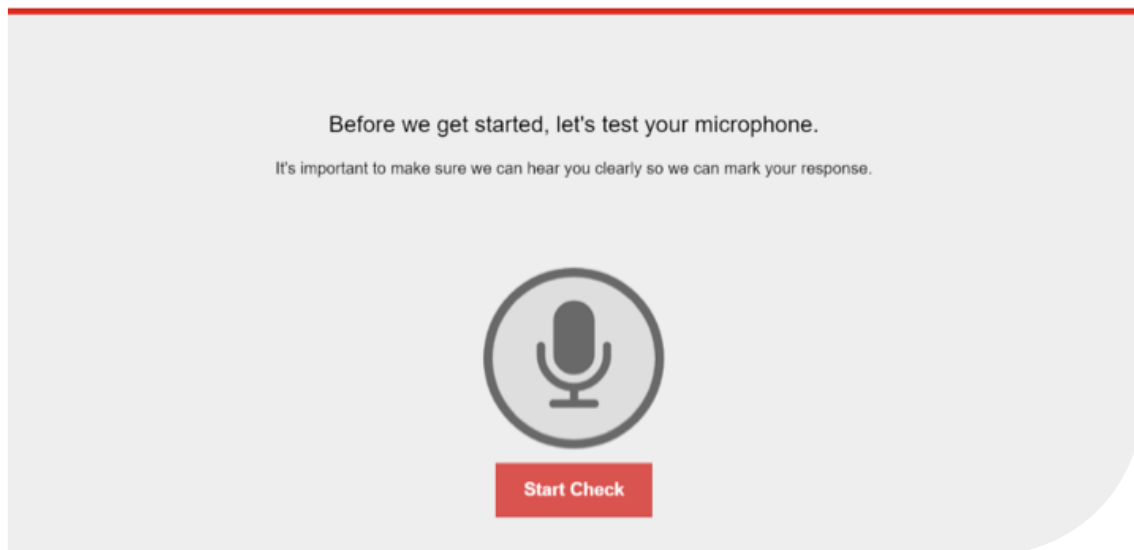
used to

☐

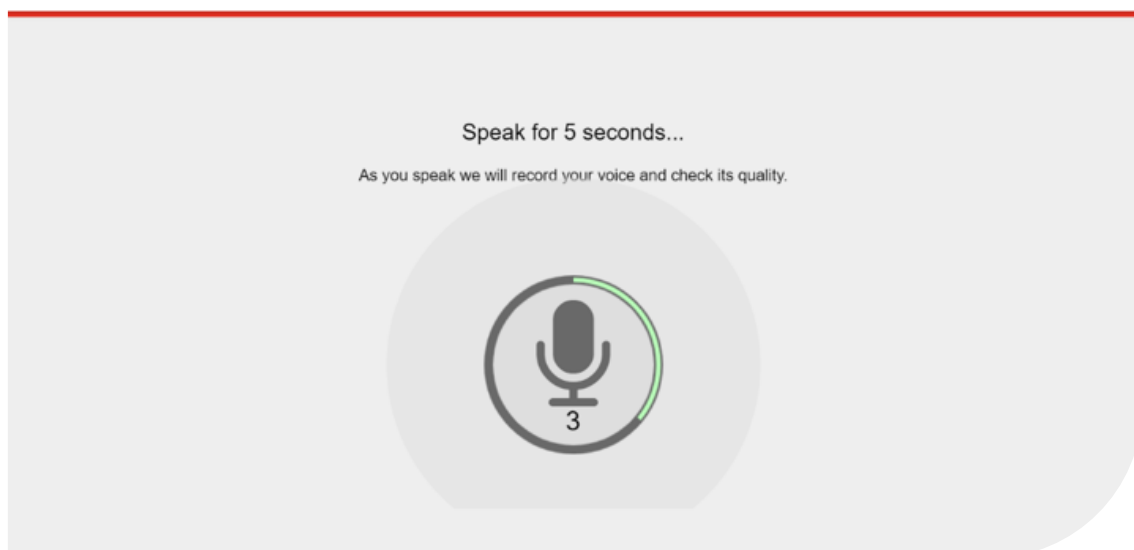
would

**Speaking test voice recording**

Make sure your test is taken in a quiet room. The following screen will appear. This allows you to check the sound recording system on your computer.

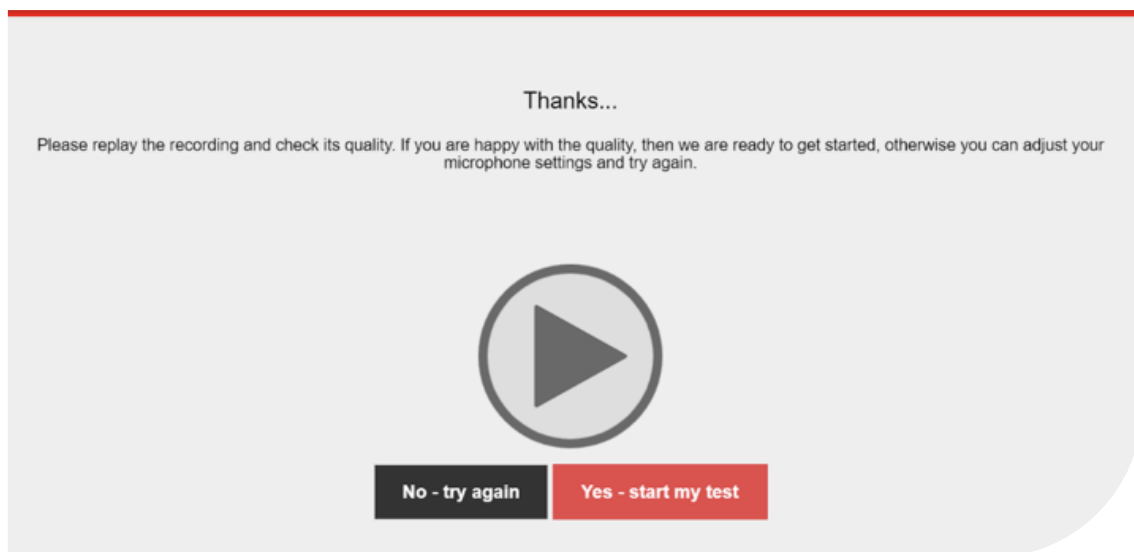


Once you click **Start Check**, the screen below appears. You will now need to record a sample of speech.





When you have finished your recording, the following screen appears. You can replay the recorded sound. If you can hear it properly, click on **Yes** (start my test), if not click on **No** (try again).



During the microphone check, make sure you say a whole sentence and not just one or two words. Assessing the quality of the microphone needs more than a few words.

## Aptis ESOL for all

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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 to anyone who wants to take them. We also believe that each person should have the opportunity to perform to the best of his or her ability on the Aptis ESOL tests.

If you have a disability and believe that Aptis ESOL is not accessible to you, or believe that the form of the test will not allow you to show your true level of English, please contact your local British Council centre to talk about the ways in which the test can be modified for your 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.

Please discuss it with us to ensure that we can support you with a test which is both fair to you and maintains the high standards and reliability of Aptis ESOL.



## Final checklist

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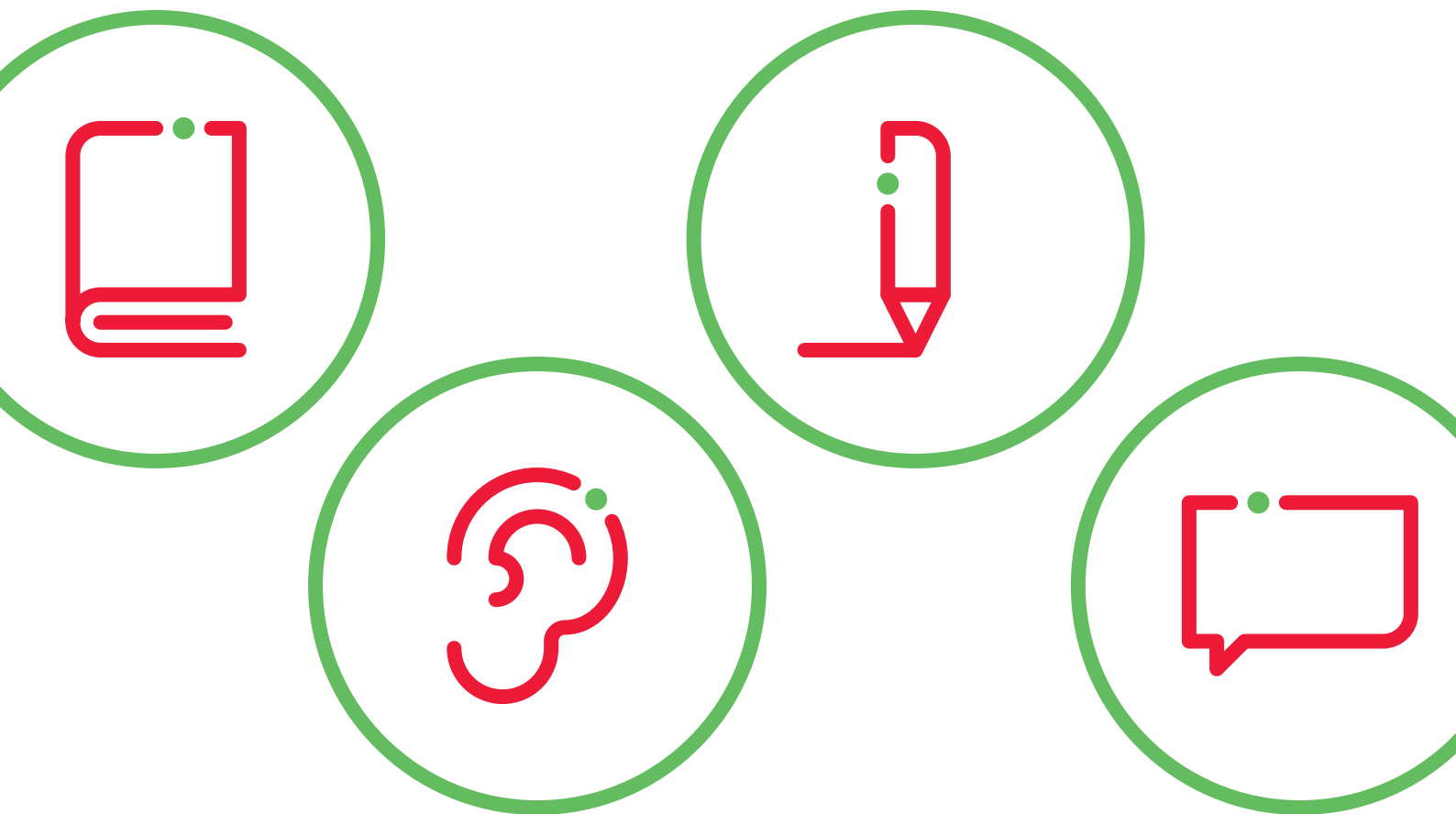
We hope these notes will help you prepare for your Aptis ESOL test. Here's a checklist to make sure you're fully prepared.

- **Review the different grammar parts:**  
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-equals-core-inventory-general-english>
- **Visit the LearnEnglish website to prepare for the grammar and vocabulary test:**  
<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

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- **British Council | EAQUALS Core Inventory for General English:**  
<http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/cpd-teacher-trainers/british-council-equals-core-inventory-general-english>
- **LearnEnglish Grammar:**  
<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar>
- **LearnEnglish Vocabulary:**  
<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary>



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