VTest English for Schools: Ages 7–10

Teacher's Guide

to Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing Sections

Burlington

VTest
for Schools

VTest English for Schools: Ages 7–10

Teacher's Guide to Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing Sections

All details are correct at the time of going to print.

This Guide may be subject to periodic revisions and updates for the purpose of improving its content and accuracy. These revisions may occur without prior notice. Please make sure that you use the most updated version.

Burlington

VTest

for Schools

www.vtest.com • info@vtest.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

Who is Burlington VTest for?

Burlington VTest is designed for young learners of all nationalities aged 7 to 10.

What does the test look like?

The test is modular. There are separate sections for Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. They can be taken individually, or in any combination. Our tests are designed to offer students maximum flexibility.

When can learners take the test?

The test can be taken at any time. The test sections are all online, so they can be taken anywhere with a good internet connection.

What device do I need to take the test?

You can use any computer, laptop or tablet with a good internet connection. We recommend a headset with a microphone for the Speaking section.

What levels of English does the test cover?

The test covers the levels from Pre-A1 to B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

What do the CEFR levels mean?

The CEFR describes broad divisions of linguistic proficiency using a system of letters and numbers. From lowest to highest, the levels are: Pre-A1, A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.

Each level describes what a learner should be able to do in the four skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. This is done with a set of relevant 'can do' descriptors that state the specific abilities learners should be capable of as practical users of the language.

See the end of this document for the full list of 'can do' statements the test focuses on in each skill for each level of proficiency.

What about learners who are above B1 level?

Very few learners in the 7–10 age group have the English language skills required at B2, C1 or C2 levels, which is why these higher levels are not covered on Burlington VTest English for Schools: Ages 7–10. Burlington VTest English for Schools: Ages 11–15 covers CEFR levels from Pre-A1 to C1.

Listening section: Structure and tasks

Total length: About 16 minutes

There are four distinct parts to the Listening section, each with a different focus.

The Listening section is adaptive. All students start with the same **Pre-A1** questions in Part 1. Based on their performance in Part 1, students either have **Pre-A1** or **A1** questions in Part 2. Similarly, based on their performance in Part 2, students have a listening comprehension task at **Pre-A1**, **A1** or **A2** in Part 3. Part 4 has listening comprehension tasks at all levels from **Pre-A1** to **B1**.

Each audio recording is played twice in the Listening section, so students have a chance to listen again and check their answers. Each task begins with a helpful example to demonstrate to students what they have to do.

The speakers in all recordings in the Listening section use British English.

Table 1 below summarises the different parts of the Listening section.

Table 1: Listening section overview

Part	# of items	Time
Part 1: Picture matching (Pre-A1)	5	About 2 minutes 30 seconds
Part 2: Conversation with 3-option multiple choice (Pre-A1 and A1)	5	About 5 minutes
Part 3: Hotspot matching (All levels)	5	About 3 minutes (Pre-A1) About 3 minutes 30 seconds (A1, A2)
Part 4: One column matching (Pre-A1 – A1) Two column matching (A2) True/False (B1)	5	About 2 minutes 30 seconds

Listening task types

Listening Part 1

In this part, the screen shows a number of different images. Students listen to five short conversations and in each case, identify the image that is mentioned in the conversation. Not all the images are mentioned.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to understand short conversations and identify key vocabulary items mentioned in the conversations. The items that are tested will be everyday objects such as furniture, food and drink, clothing, and so on.

Part 1 example

A typical example conversation might be:

    Girl: Mum, can you help me? Where is my jacket?

    Mum: Here it is.

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Ask students to name (and perhaps label) objects in different rooms of the school and home. You can make a game of this by putting the students in pairs or small groups, and then writing a letter of the alphabet on the board. Students try to find objects in the class, or at home, that begin with that letter. The pair or group that finds the most words wins.

2 Help students identify items and actions from simple descriptions that they read or listen to. You can make this a guessing game. Put students in teams. Describe an action or an object, and the first team to identify it correctly is the winner. An example could be: I have this at home at 7:30 = breakfast.

Listening Part 2

Students listen to a conversation and answer five multiple-choice questions. Each question has three options. At **Pre-A1** level, the conversation contains short pauses to allow students to identify the correct answer to each question. At **A1** level, students hear the whole conversation without interruptions and must choose the correct answer as they listen.

In this part, students are tested in particular on their understanding of numbers, days, dates, times, names and places.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to understand short factual conversations about everyday events and familiar situations.

Part 2 example

This is what students hear:

Tina: Who's that with you in the photo, Sam?
Sam: That's my sister.
Tina: What's your sister's name?
Sam: Carol.

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Make sure students know the names of the letters of the alphabet so they can spell and write names of people, places and addresses. You can do this by spelling out the name of an object in the room letter by letter. The first student to name the object is the winner.

2 Train the students to identify factual information such as days, dates, times, prices, everyday objects, locations and activities.

Listening Part 3

In this part, the task is the same at all three levels from **Pre-A1** to **A2**. Students see a picture of a location such as a room, street or shopping centre and listen to a conversation that describes the location. In each picture, five objects or parts of the picture have been removed. The things that have been removed are shown outside the picture along with a number of objects that do not belong in the picture.

Students listen to the conversation and decide which of the missing objects belong in the picture, and where they should be placed correctly

This listening comprehension activity tests students' ability to understand a description of a familiar place and the location of people, places and objects in relation to one another when mentioned in a conversation.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to accurately locate key elements of a description in an image by following a conversation.

Part 3 example

This is what students hear:

Girl: Do you have a TV in your room?

Boy: Yes. There's a TV on the table opposite my bed. I can watch before I go to sleep.

Girl: Do you like listening to the radio?

Boy: Yes. My radio is on a small table next to my bed.

Girl: Oh. I have a lamp next to my bed. Are your schoolbooks in your room?

Boy: Yes. My schoolbooks are in my bookcase, with my toys. I have three cars, a train and a blue lorry.

Girl: Have you got any posters?

Boy: Yes. No lorries, but I have a poster of a train. It's under my mirror.

Girl: Is that your favourite?

Boy: No, my favourite poster is a big motorbike. It's behind my bed.

Girl: For school, do you write with a pen and pencil, or do you have a computer?

Boy: I have lots of pens and pencils. I have a tablet, not a computer. It's cool. It's on my bed.

Girl: Lots of people have teddy bears on their beds.

Boy: Not me. I have a tiger.

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Practice describing rooms and other locations. You could do this by bringing to class two different pictures of kitchens, school yards or parks, and so on. The pictures should have a certain number of things in common. Give student A one picture, and student B the other picture. Ask them to describe their pictures to find out what they have in common.

2 Make sure students can follow descriptions of rooms, houses, shops and other locations involving prepositions of place. You can do this by asking students to take a photo of a location (for example, a room at home or a street near where they live), or to draw one. In pairs or small groups, students describe their photo or picture, and the others draw what they hear. Then they compare their drawing with the original.

Listening Part 4

The listening tasks are different for each of the four levels in this final part of the test.

However, in each case, the listening comprehension tasks in this part test students' ability to understand contextualised conversations on everyday topics and in familiar situations.

The final **Pre-A1** listening comprehension task involves listening to three short conversations on the same topic and matching the relevant answers mentioned to a list of six options on a chart. Each conversation may mention one or two of the options, and the options may differ in each conversation. Students have to find five correct answers in total.

For example, students may have to match activities that the speakers do to different days of the week, or a set of school classes to different times on a timetable, or favourite foods to the people who like them. Students have to listen and tick the relevant options.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to identify and understand the key points of factual conversations.

Part 4 example at Pre-A1 level

This is what students hear:

    Mike: Good morning, Linda.
    Linda: Hello, Mike.
    Mike: What's in your bag? A ball?
    Linda: No, my new doll. I like playing with her.
    Mike: Do you like sport, too?
    Linda: I don't like football, but I like swimming.
    Mike: Me, too.

10

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 List six related items (for example, items of clothing, types of food, modes of transport, places in a town) and describe or mention some, but not all of them, in a conversation. Students list the items mentioned.

2 Find or ask students to draw pictures of 5–10 related items on a theme (as above, or furniture in a room, animals, daily activities, etc.). Each picture should be on a different card or piece of paper. Display the cards so the students can see them, and ask them to remember them. Then turn over the cards and describe one picture. Students take turns trying to remember where the right picture is.

At **A1** level, students have to listen to a single, longer conversation and answer five questions by selecting the right answer for the two speakers.

Part 4 example at A1 level

Burlington
V Test
for Schools

Listen to the conversation and read the questions.

	Tina	Harry
Whose favourite group are they looking at?	☐	☐
Who likes loud music?	☐	☐
Who doesn't listen to the radio?	☐	☐
Whose brother has a guitar?	☐	☐
Who can play the piano?	☐	☐
Who sings at school?	☐	☐

PART 4/4

This is what students hear:

Harry: Hi, Tina. What are you doing?

Tina: Hi, Harry. I'm on the internet. This is the website of my favourite group. They're called the Dark Horses. Come and look.

Harry: They look cool. What music do they play?

Tina: Loud music. I love it – but my parents don't. You can hear them on the radio sometimes.

Harry: I don't listen to the radio. I listen to all my music on my tablet. It's much better.

Tina: I do. We listen in the car, and when we eat. My parents often play music in the evening, too.

Harry: Hey, is that your guitar? Can you play? Can you play something for me?

Tina: No, sorry. It's my brother's guitar. He plays a lot. He's very good.

Harry: Oh. I'd like to play the guitar, but I can't. I play the piano a little.

Tina: Have you got a piano at home?

Harry: No, they're too expensive. But I have lessons at school every week.

Tina: We have music lessons at school, too. But we don't play – we sing. We learn songs from different countries.

Harry: That's interesting. Do you dance? I always dance when I listen to good music.

Tina: No, not really.

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Ask students to write two or three true sentences about themselves, for example: where they live, what they like, what they did yesterday, and so on. Take in the sentences and read them out (or display them around the class). Can the students remember which sentences are about which people?

2 Choose two contrasting elements of a topic, such as dogs and cats, Britain and America, football and swimming, kitchens and bedrooms, and so on. Prepare a number of statements that are true for one of the two elements. Read each statement and ask students to decide which of the two elements it describes.

At **A2** level, students listen to a single more extended conversation and must match items from two columns.

Part 4 example at A2 level

12

This is what students hear:

Mark: It was a busy week! We did lots of interesting things in activity week.

Holly: Yes. It was brilliant. What did we do on Monday? Was that the theatre?

Mark: No, on Monday we had the project where we talked to the pilots. Do you remember?

Holly: Yes, of course. The airport was very interesting. Then we dressed up in costumes and played on stage on Tuesday. That was great.

Mark: That's right. It was cool. It's a pity the weather was too bad for us to play at the tennis club on Wednesday. I really wanted to learn a new sport.

Holly: Yes. But the film we watched instead was good.

Mark: Well, I like food, but I thought the film about the restaurant was boring, actually.

Holly: Was Thursday the stadium or the fire station?

Mark: Let me think. Yes, we met the firefighters on Thursday. They showed us how they put out fires, like the one at the post office last year, and we tried on their uniforms.

Holly: Right. So, Friday was the tour.

Mark: Yes. We visited the museum of sport in the stadium. At first, I thought we were going to see a match or something.

Holly: For me, the best was Saturday. The party at school was fantastic. Now I need to relax!

Mark: I agree!

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Prepare a short text about what you did on different days of the week, things you bought in different shops, or people you spoke to on different topics, and so on. Write the categories on the board (days of the week, shop names, etc.). Then read out what you did, what you bought, and so on, in random order, and ask students to match the items to the correct categories on the board.

2 Put students in groups of five. Assign each member of the group a different topic or subtopic within a broader theme. For example, topics could include countries they'd like to visit; morning, afternoon and evening weekend activities; birthday gifts they've received; or their routes home from school and the mode of transport they use. Instruct each student to ensure that their contributions are distinct for each assigned topic. This means that they should provide unique responses or perspectives for each aspect of the theme. After individual sharing, guide the group to have a collective discussion on the broader theme, where all group members participate and share their insights. Encourage the other students in the group to actively listen and make notes about the differences they observe in each member's responses during the group discussion.

At **B1** level, students listen to an extended conversation and answer five **True/False** questions about things that are said or implied in the conversation.

Part 4 example at B1 level

This is what students hear:

Tom: Are you doing something for the school concert, Sarah?

Sarah: Yes. It'll be my third time. I really enjoy it. Were you in it last year?

Tom: No, this is my first time. You're in the school orchestra, aren't you?

Sarah: Yes. Normally I would play the violin with the orchestra, but I hurt my hand playing volleyball, so I can't play at the moment.

Tom: That's a pity. So, what are you doing?

Sarah: I'm singing a few songs in the school pop group.

Tom: I thought Carla was the singer.

Sarah: She is normally, but she's ill. They asked me if I'd like to sing instead of her. I said yes, but I'm not as good as her. I think she could probably sing as a career, but I just do it for fun. How are you feeling about performing in public? Nervous?

Tom: Well, we've practised for weeks, so I'm actually feeling quite relaxed about it.

Sarah: You're lucky. I'm not. I only had a couple of hours with the group, unfortunately.

Tom: I'm sure you'll be fine. When are you playing? Are you at the start of the concert?

Sarah: Yes, we will be playing immediately after the head teacher has welcomed everyone to the concert. What about your group?

Tom: I thought we were going to be playing before the African drums, but now that's changed.

Sarah: So, you're the last group to play?

Tom: That's right.

Sarah: Great. Are your parents coming?

Tom: Yes, Dad's bringing his new camera to record me. He joked that he might call all the local TV and radio stations and invite them to film us, too.

Sarah: Imagine seeing us all on the TV!

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Write a number of statements about the class, for example: Everyone in the class likes football; Most but not all of the girls can play a musical instrument; At least three people have been to an English-speaking country, and so on. Ask students to stand up and mingle, asking questions to find out whether the statements are true or not.

2 Make a short recording of yourself talking to a friend about an everyday topic such as past holidays, future holiday plans or your weekends, and so on. Tell the class the topic of the conversation (for example, it was about holidays, price, accommodation and destination). In pairs or small groups, students write predictions about what you said, for example: I think the teacher said she wanted to go to New York in August; I think the teacher spent a lot of money on her holiday; I think the teacher went to the coast, and so on. Then play the recording. Give points to the pairs or groups that made the most correct guesses. You can also stop the recording after each turn and ask students to predict what comes next. As an alternative, you could give students a transcript of half of the conversation and ask them to guess the response before listening. For example:

A: Where would you like to go on holiday this summer?

B:

A: Oh really? That sounds great. I've heard the beaches are wonderful. And I think they have music festivals on the beach, too, don't they?

B:

A: And where do you plan to stay?

B:

A: That sounds adventurous! I don't think I would get much sleep in a tent. But I guess it's a cheap option.

Reading section: Structure and tasks

Total length: About 11 minutes

There are four distinct parts to the Reading section, each with a different focus.

The Reading section, like the Listening section, is adaptive. All students start with the same **Pre-A1** questions in Part 1. Based on their performance in Part 1, students either have **Pre-A1** or **A1** questions in Part 2. Similarly, based on their performance in Part 2, students have reading comprehension tasks at **Pre-A1**, **A1** or **A2** in Part 3. Part 4 has reading comprehension tasks at all levels from **Pre-A1** to **B1**.

Table 2 below summarises the different parts of the Reading section.

Table 2: Reading section overview

Part	# of items	Time
Part 1: Sentence matching (Pre-A1)	5	About 2 minutes
Part 2: Picture choice (Pre-A1 and A1)	5	About 3 minutes
Part 3: Yes/No questions (Pre-A1) True/False questions (A1 – A2)	5	About 2 minutes 30 seconds
Part 4: Multiple-choice picture selection (Pre-A1 – A1) 3-option multiple choice (A2) True/False (B1)	5	About 3 minutes 30 seconds

Reading task types

Reading Part 1

Students see a picture and make sentences that describe the picture. They do this by reading and matching sentence beginnings and endings. There is an example followed by five sentences. There are more sentence endings than beginnings, so not all of the sentence endings are used.

Students have about 90 seconds to match the sentence halves.

Part 1 tests students' understanding of prepositions of place, common word combinations, such as adjective + noun and verb + preposition, present simple descriptions of routines, habits, likes and dislikes and basic features of sentence grammar.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to complete the sentences by matching the two halves of sentences to make them both logical and grammatically correct.

Part 1 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Choose an interesting picture of a scene that includes people engaged in activities that include vocabulary already familiar to your students. Write 10–15 sentences about the picture, using relevant vocabulary items from the picture. Make sure that some of the sentences are false. Students read the sentences and decide which are true.

2 Put students in pairs and give each pair 5–10 strips of paper. Show the students a picture of a scene and ask each pair to write a sentence describing the picture on each strip of paper. Then they fold the strips in half so only the beginning or ending is visible, and pass on the strips to the next pair. Examples of possible sentences are:

There's a tall tree … on the right of the picture.

The man who is wearing jeans is … sitting on the grass.

Two girls are … talking to each other.

There's a big horse … behind the bushes.

Pairs now have to predict what the missing part of the description is.

Reading Part 2

There are two levels in this part. Depending on students' performance in Part 1, they will either receive **Pre-A1** or **A1** questions in Part 2. The format for the task is the same for both levels.

Students read a statement and answer a question about it. The question requires students to look at three images and choose the one that is most relevant to the statement. There is an example followed by five questions. For each question, students have about 20 seconds to choose the right picture.

Part 2 tests vocabulary range and sentence-level reading comprehension relating to everyday situations.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to read and understand simple messages in everyday texts.

Part 2 example at Pre-A1 level

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Prepare some prompts for students, such as: Write a sentence about two sports you enjoy and one you don't like; Write a sentence about one thing you did with your family at the weekend and two things you did alone; Write a sentence about two shops or buildings near where you live and one that is not near you; Write a sentence about two things that are in your room and one that is not. Students write their answers and also draw pictures of the three things. Students swap their sentences and circle the item that is different (for example, the one thing they did with their family, the one building not near them, the one item not in their room).

2 Write a topic on the board, for example: sports, food, clothes, shopping. Have students ask you a question about the topic, for example: Which sports do you like? OR: Do you play tennis? Write your answer on the board, mentioning three items in each case (for example: I like tennis and swimming, but I don't like football; I don't play tennis or squash, but sometimes I have a game of football with my friends). Then ask students a question based on your answers (for example: Which sport do I dislike? Which sport do I sometimes play?).

Reading Part 3

There are two different task types in Part 3. Students who are at **Pre-A1** level (based on their performance on Parts 1 and 2) read a short text and answer five Yes/No questions about it. Students who are performing at **A1** and **A2** levels (based on their performance on Parts 1 and 2) have different texts with five True/False questions to answer.

For all levels, students have two minutes to read and answer the five questions. The texts for all levels are examples of short personal correspondence: emails, social media messages or letters written by friends. Typically, they involve invitations to future events, questions about personal experiences and similar relevant topics.

At **Pre-A1** level, the texts will normally be 85–105 words long. For **A1** students, the texts are normally 130–150 words long. This increases to around 180–200 words for **A2** texts.

Assessment: In this part, students are assessed on their ability to locate and understand key factual information in a text.

A typical email at **Pre-A1** level might be:

Hi, Luke!

It's my birthday on Tuesday. My party is on Saturday at my house. Can you come and stay the night, then go home on Sunday? You can come with your sister, Ana, too.

Thomas

Possible Yes/No questions could be:

1   It is Luke's birthday on Tuesday.   Yes   No
2   The party is on Saturday.   Yes   No

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Find or write a short text about your school, town, or local area, or use a text from your textbook, and prepare a number of statements about the text, some of which are true, and others false. Put students in pairs or small groups and give each pair or team a copy of the text. Read the first statement. Students briefly discuss it, then stand up if they think the answer is Yes or True. When they stand up, ask them to explain why.

2 Write a worksheet with a number of statements on a suitable topic, for example: We have English classes on Tuesday; The sun's shining this morning; There are 20 students in the class; The school is near the airport. Make copies for all the students. Tell them to answer Yes or True to all the statements that are true, and to correct all the statements that are not true. Then they compare their answers.

Part 3 example at A1 level

Burlington V Test for Schools

Read and answer the question. Choose the right answer. You can see an example.

	True	False
Pat wants to see Alex at the weekend.	✓	
Pat says the weather is windy now.		
Alex doesn't need to bring a towel.		
Pat's mother can make lunch for them.		
Pat swam with a dolphin when she went to the beach.		
Pat must finish her school work before going to the beach.		

Hi Alex,

Do you want to come to the beach with me on Saturday? The weather's nice and sunny this week, and I don't want to stay at home like last weekend. It was so boring!

The only thing you need to bring is your swimsuit – we have lots of towels. Mum said she can

PART 3/4

Part 3 example at A2 level

Burlington V Test for Schools

Read and answer the question. Choose the right answer. You can see an example.

	True	False
Ben did not visit London with Sam.	✓	
Ben has only been to London once.		
Ben's father went to London on holiday.		
Ben ate in the same restaurant each evening.		
The factory was very loud.		
Ben enjoyed the football match.		

Hi Sam,

I'm writing to tell you about my trip to London. It was amazing.

My dad is a businessman and he needed to go there for work. He asked me if I wanted to go with him. Of course I said yes. I've always wanted to visit London. I know you have been there several times, but it was my first

PART 3/4

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Write or find a suitable text for the students or use one they have recently studied in the coursebook you use in class. Put students in pairs. Tell them to write as many true statements about the content of the text as possible in 2 minutes. When time is up, pairs compare their statements and try to locate in the text where the relevant information is. An alternative version is to assign different paragraphs or parts of the text to different pairs or teams of students and ask them to write at least two statements that are true for the part of the text they have been given.

2 Write a text on a suitable topic. The text should include three statements that are true and two that are false. Make copies for the students and tell them to read the text and decide which statements are true. Then ask students to write a similar text (for example about what they did on holiday, their weekend activities, their families, their plans for the future, etc.) with three true and two false statements. They swap texts and guess which statements are not true.

Reading Part 4

Pre-A1 and **A1** students both receive the same type of reading text, which involves a multiple-choice picture selection task. Texts are 85–105 words in length for **Pre-A1** level students, and 130–150 words in length for **A1** level students.

Students read a short text in the form of a letter, email or social media message in which the writer tells a story about an aspect of his or her life.

There are a number of images, five of which represent facts mentioned in the story. The students read the text and decide which five images go with the text.

An example of an extract from a possible text at **Pre-A1** level might be:

My bedroom
I really like my bedroom in our new house. It's got a big window and I can see the garden. All my books are in the bookcase next to my bed, and I have a big green desk with a new lamp and my computer.

Accompanying images could include:

A blue desk, a lamp, a garden, a cupboard and a bed.

Part 4 example at A1 level

Burlington V Test for Schools

Choose the 5 pictures that go with the story. You can see an example.

Which five pictures show what Lena did?

My weekend, by Lena

On Saturday I got up at 9 o'clock and had my favourite breakfast – pancakes with bananas. Then I took the bus into town. I met my three cousins in front of the library and we went to the sports centre. We played basketball there for an hour. Then we went shopping. I looked at roller skates in one shop. I didn't buy any because they were expensive. I bought two comic books. I like funny stories. After that, we were hungry so we went to a café. I had a bowl of noodles and a milkshake. When I was walking to the bus station to take the bus back home, I saw a poster about a circus in

PART 4/4

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Write or find a suitable text or use one from the coursebook you use in class. Find 10 images, some that relate to things mentioned in the text, and some that do not. Show the students the images and ask the students to discuss what the images depict. Then give the students the text and ask them to decide which images are mentioned in the text.

2 Ask students to write a short text, for example about what they did at the weekend, or a description of their home, what they ate for their different meals yesterday or places they have visited in town recently. They should also find or draw five images that relate to the things in their text, and five that don't. Then they swap texts with a partner and identify the drawings/pictures mentioned in their partner's text.

For students at both **A2** and **B1** levels, the activity is a reading text with five questions, each of which is followed by three answer options.

At these levels, texts are more substantial: **A2** texts are 260–280 words, and **B1** texts are 290–310 words, not including the questions.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to read and understand texts that tell personalized stories.

Part 4 example at B1 level

Full text

An unusual hobby

My uncle collects old stones. I don't mean small pretty ones with interesting colours. He has a large collection of all shapes and sizes, and most of them are dull grey things. Once I asked him why he was interested in things like that. 'They tell us stories about the history of the planet, how it was formed, and so on,' he said. I know – it sounds boring, right? That's what I used to think, too.

Mum, Dad and I spent some time with him in his cottage by the coast during the holidays. Although I was ready to go sailing in his boat, the terrible weather made it unsafe so we couldn't. Instead, we watched some great films and played board games.

On our last day, the wind was still too strong for sailing, so we decided to go for a long walk. 'The countryside is so beautiful,' Mum said as we came to some fields. 'Why don't we rest here and eat the sandwiches I've made?'

'The ground is very wet,' Dad said. 'It would be better if we had chairs or a blanket.'

'We can sit over there, on those stones,' I said, pointing at some stones a short distance away. We walked over through the tall grass and were about to sit down when my uncle shouted, 'Don't sit!'

'Why? Is it a snake?' asked Mum.

'No. A dinosaur,' he replied.

'A dinosaur? Where?'

'Look – these are not stones. This is a huge fossil. You know – the bones of a dinosaur that lived millions of years ago. You can see the head, and part of the body. It's magnificent!'

That's the story of how I nearly sat on a dangerous dinosaur. Now every year, thousands of people visit the fossil in its new home, a museum near my uncle's cottage. And maybe he is right: old things can sometimes be interesting and tell good stories.

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Find a suitable text or use one from the coursebook you use in class. Divide it into three or four equal sections. Put students into pairs or small groups, then ask each pair or small group to focus on a different section of the text. Tell students to write as many comprehension questions as possible on their section. When they are ready, ask students to take turns to ask and answer all the questions.

2 Find a suitable text with multiple-choice questions from the coursebook you use in class (or from an online source). Put students in pairs. Ask them to read the multiple-choice questions and to underline the key words in each option. Then they should re-read the text and find the reference to each of the key words they have underlined. These might be synonyms or paraphrases and not the same words. Then students decide which option is correct and which are wrong, and explain why. An alternative version of this is to ask students to underline 10–20 key words that are important in the text. Then they brainstorm synonyms for these words. Then do the same with key sentences: ask students to think of paraphrases for the key sentences. Finally, students compare their lists of synonyms and their paraphrases.

Speaking section: Structure and tasks

Total length: About 10 minutes

There are four distinct parts to the Speaking section, each with a different focus. Table 3 summarises the Speaking section. All students take all parts of the test, beginning with Part 1.

Table 3 summarises the different parts of the Speaking section.

Table 3: Speaking section overview

Part	# of items	Time
Part 1: Read aloud	One short text	About 2 minutes
Part 2: Flashcards	8	About 2 minutes 30 seconds
Part 3: Picture description	3	About 2 minutes 30 seconds
Part 4: Picture Story	Two stories, each composed of 4 pictures	About 3 minutes 30 seconds

Speaking task types

Speaking Part 1

Students read aloud and record a short text. The text is composed of three short, connected passages on the same topic.

Students have 30 seconds to view the whole text and prepare to read and record themselves.

The first passage is 8–12 words long. This is generally a single sentence. The second is 15–25 words long, and the final passage is 30–40 words long.

Students have 15 seconds to read and record each passage. Each passage is recorded separately.

The passages include contracted forms, question forms and positive and negative statements.

Part 1 tests students' ability to pronounce words clearly and to use stress, rhythm and intonation meaningfully, and naturally.

Assessment: Students are assessed on the accuracy of their pronunciation, and their ability to read a short text fluently without undue hesitation or repetition.

Part 1 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Give students a short text. Explain that you will read it to them. They have to listen and underline the words you stress, and also mark the places where you pause. It is a good idea to model how to do this first. Read the text aloud, then check whether students were correct regarding the words they have underlined and the pauses they have marked. Then put students in pairs and ask them to read the text to each other, using the same stress patterns and pauses you used.

2 Read a short text to the students in a boring, flat voice with no intonation. Stop at the end of each phrase and sentence and ask students to read the text with the correct intonation.

Speaking Part 2

Students are shown a set of flashcards one at a time and both read and hear a question that asks them to say what they see.

There is an example followed by eight questions, two at each CEFR level tested (**Pre-A1**, **A1**, **A2** and **B1**). Each student sees all the flashcards and should try to answer all the questions.

The first question at each level generally focuses on identifying a common object and can be answered with one or two words. The second question requires a longer, phrase-level answer.

Students have 10 seconds to record each answer.

Part 2 tests students' lexical range and grammatical accuracy.

Assessment: Students are marked on their ability to identify and name everyday objects, colours, places, jobs, routine activities, the correct use of prepositions of place and present tenses.

Part 2 example at Pre-A1 level requiring a short answer
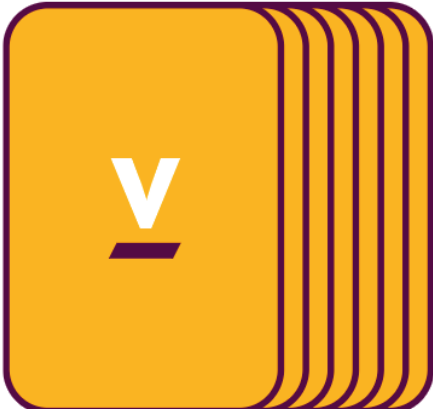
Part 2 example at Pre-A1 level requiring a phrase-level answer
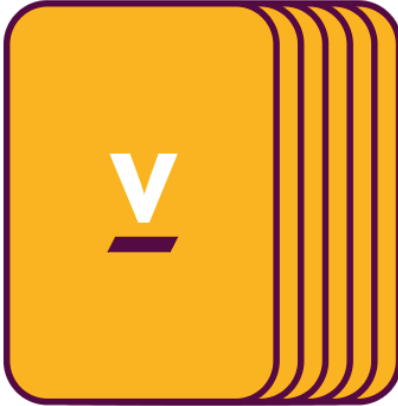
Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Make or bring to class a range of simple pictures of clothing, animals, clocks, daily activities, and so on. Practise asking and answering questions like the following:

> What's this?
> What colour is the hat?
> Which animals are eating?
> What is the girl doing?
> What time is it?
> Where is the cat?

2 Play guessing games. Ask students to think of something in the class, in their homes, or a daily activity, and so on. They can draw it if they like. Then in pairs or small groups they ask and answer questions such as:

> Is it a bed? Is it in the bedroom? Can I see one in this room?

Speaking Part 3

Students see a picture and answer three questions about it.

The picture shows a scene that includes several common, everyday activities taking place.

Students have 30 seconds to study the picture and prepare their answers to the three questions. They have 15 seconds to answer each question.

Part 3 tests students' ability to describe a picture using appropriate grammar and vocabulary.

Typical questions might ask students to say what people are doing, or how they are feeling, to explain why something is happening or to speculate about what might happen next.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary in coherent and cohesive answers in sufficient detail.

Part 3 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Find a picture that shows people doing different things. Ask students questions like, 'What is this person doing?' 'Where is this person going?' and 'How is this person feeling?'

2 Ask students to work in pairs or small groups. Each pair or group plans to act out a scene such as getting up and brushing their teeth, buying a ticket for the cinema, trying on shoes in a shop, and so on. Pairs or groups take turns to act out their scene. When each pair or group is in the middle of their scene, say 'STOP!' and ask the rest of the class to say what they think is going to happen next.

Speaking Part 4

Students tell two separate stories. For each story, they see four connected pictures that show a chronological sequence of events. Then they are asked to tell the story in their own words.

For each of the two stories, students have 30 seconds to study the pictures and prepare their story. Then they have one minute to record their story.

The pictures show everyday situations and familiar locations, but perhaps with a surprise or a twist at the end that makes the story interesting and worth telling.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary to tell a coherent story in sufficient detail.

Part 4 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Find a cartoon or picture story with three or more parts. Write expressions on the board that sequence a story, such as: 'first, early one morning, then, next, the next day, a few hours later, not long after that, finally, but, unfortunately,' and so on. Ask students how to include these expressions to link the parts of the story when they talk about the cartoon or picture story for one minute

2 Find a cartoon or picture story with three or more parts. Put students in groups of three or more. Make copies of the story, then cut out the individual pictures. Give each student one picture. In their groups, they describe their picture and then work out the probable sequence to make a story. As an alternative, you could ask students in pairs or small teams to create their own story that has four parts and draw the four parts. Then pairs or teams exchange their pictures with another pair or team. They take turns telling the story they have received. Finally, students compare their stories with the pair or team that created the original.

Writing section: Structure and tasks

Total length: About 21 minutes

There are four distinct parts to the Writing section, each with a different focus.

The Writing section is partially adaptive. All students take all four parts. The levels for Parts 1, 2 and 3 are the same for all students.

Part 4 consists of a guided writing task. Students will either be asked to respond to an essay prompt (guided essay) or to a more challenging email prompt (guided correspondence) based on their performance in Parts 1-3 of the Writing test.

Table 4 summarises the different parts of the Writing section.

Table 4: Writing section overview

Part	# of items	Time
Part 1: Spelling	8	About 3 minutes 30 seconds
Part 2: Word order	8	About 7 minutes
Part 3: Picture response	3	About 5 minutes 30 seconds
Part 4: Guided essay (Pre-A1–A1) Guided correspondence (A2–B1)	3	About 5 minutes 30 seconds

Writing task types

Writing Part 1

Students read a sentence with a missing word and see a picture that represents the missing word. They also see the letters needed to spell the word.

There is an example followed by eight sentences, two at each CEFR level (**Pre-A1**, **A1**, **A2** and **B1**). Each student sees all the sentences and should try to answer all the questions.

Students have 20 seconds to read the sentence and spell the word that completes the sentence.

Possible example sentences (visual support excluded here) might include:

    Do you like my new _ _ _ _ _ ?   e s d r s
    My dad _ _ _ _ _ _ me to school in the morning.   r i s d e v

Part 1 tests students' vocabulary range and their familiarity with English spelling conventions.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to complete the sentences by spelling the missing word correctly.

Part 1 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Make sets of cards. On one side, have pictures of jobs, everyday activities, furniture, animals, and so on. On the other side, write the letters that spell the key word, but in a random sequence or word cloud. Give each pair or small group of students a set of cards. They should start by looking at the scrambled letters. Can they work out what the picture is? When they have completed that activity, they look at the pictures and check that they can spell the word correctly.

2 Prepare some sentences about daily routines, the weather, places in town, animals, everyday objects around you, and so on. Choose one or two words from each sentence to leave as a gap. Make copies for each student. Write the missing letters for each word in a word cloud with scrambled letters on the board. Students read the sentences and decide what the missing word is and how to spell it.

Writing Part 2

Students see a picture and read eight sentences that are related to the picture. Each sentence is missing some words. The missing words are presented in random order in a word pool on screen. Students drag and drop the missing words into the correct place to complete each sentence.

The eight incomplete sentences are presented one at a time, but together they form a running text. The picture serves to set the context for the text, and thus is not strictly necessary for completing the sentences.

There is an example for guidance.

For each of the eight sentences, students have 45 seconds to put the missing words into the correct sequence. The sentences become progressively more complex, and the number of missing words increases.

Part 2 tests students' ability to recognise and use a range of common English grammar patterns.

Assessment: Students are assessed on the accuracy of their word ordering in completing the sentences.

Part 2 example

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Choose a text you have recently read in class. Remove a set of three consecutive words from one sentence, another set of four words from another, and another set of five words from another. Make copies of the gapped text and give it to the students. Write the missing words in a scramble on the board. Can they reconstruct each sentence?

2 Choose a suitable text for your students. It should have at least six sentences. You will make two versions of the text. For version A, choose a set of three consecutive words to remove from one sentence, and for version B, choose a different set of three words to remove, either from the same sentence, or from the next sentence. Continue like this, removing different sets of four, five and six words from the text. Write the missing words in a scramble at the bottom of the page. Put the students in pairs. Give version A to half the pairs, and give the other pairs version B. When the students think they have found the answers, make new pairs consisting of one person with version A and one person with version B. They compare their texts, which should now be the same.

Writing Part 3

Students are asked three questions about a picture showing a common or everyday situation. They have 30 seconds to study the picture and prepare their answers to the three questions. Then for each question, students have 90 seconds to write their answer. They should try to write about 20 words for each answer.

Typical pictures might show a shopping scene, a sporting event, a family celebration or a situation at school.

Part 3 tests students' ability to write grammatically accurate sentences using appropriate vocabulary.

Assessment: Students are assessed on their ability to write coherent and cohesive, grammatically accurate sentences with sufficient and appropriate detail and lexis.

Part 3 example

Part 3 example with write-in box

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Find a picture of a scene where people are doing different things. Put students in pairs or small groups. Each pair or small group should choose one person in the picture and write a sentence to say what the person is doing and why. Then they take turns to read out their sentences. The other students listen and try to guess which person in the picture is being described.

2 Using the same picture, or a different scene, ask students to work in pairs or small groups. Write on the board: 'What do you think is going to happen next? What do you think isn't going to happen?' How many examples can the groups find in three minutes? First, they discuss their ideas for a minute. Then they write their predictions. After three minutes, groups compare their answers.

Writing Part 4

There are two different personalised prompts in this part. Students will either respond to an essay prompt (guided essay) or respond to a more challenging email prompt (guided correspondence), based on their performance in Parts 1-3.

Students at the **Pre-A1** and **A1** levels (based on their performance for Parts 1-3), will write a guided essay. The guided essay consists of three related questions that students answer on a single topic. They have 30 seconds to prepare their answers, then they have 90 seconds to write each of the three answers. They should try to write about 10 words for each answer.

Example topics for the guided essay might include:

  My best friend
  A great holiday
  My favourite film

Typical questions focus on *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*.

Students at the **A2** and **B1** levels (based on their performance for Parts 1-3), will write a guided correspondence. This involves reading a short text that includes three questions and then replying to each of the questions. Students have 30 seconds to read the text and prepare their answers to the three questions. Then for each question, they have 90 seconds to write an answer of about 20 words.

Examples of correspondence include a text message from a friend with questions about a recent holiday, an email from school asking questions about participation in a forthcoming event and a questionnaire enquiring about eating habits.

The personal responses for each guided writing task test students' ability to write grammatically accurate sentences in a suitable style with appropriate vocabulary.

Assessment: For both the guided essay and guided correspondence tasks, students are assessed on their grammatical range and accuracy, lexical resources and task relevance.

Part 4 example at Pre-A1 and A1 levels

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Ask students to draw or bring to class a photo of something from home, such as: a room, a favourite toy, the view from their window, a piece of clothing, etc. Elicit from the class as many possible questions about the item, such as (for a piece of clothing):

> What is it?
> Do you like it?
> When do you wear it?
> Is it new?

OR (for a room):

> What room is it?
> How many rooms do you have at home?
> What do you do in the room?
> Do you like the room?
> What is in the room?

Then you choose two or more questions from the board and ask students to write their answers. In pairs or small groups, students compare their answers.

2 Put students in small teams. Give each team a different picture. Pictures could be of a room, animals, daily activity, place in town, etc. Explain that teams should talk about the picture, then each person should write one different sentence about the picture. When they have finished, teams swap their sentences, but not their pictures, and try to guess what the picture is.

Part 4 example at A2 and B1 levels

Burlington
V Test
for Schools

Ready? Start now.

Question 1/3

1:28

Reply to the email. Answer this question:

Hi Nicky,

Nice to hear from you.
Here are my answers to your questions.

You asked about my parents.

Write your text.

Write at least 10 words. You can write more.
Word count: 0

EMAIL	
From:	Nicky
Subject:	Questions for you

Hi!

I hope you are all right.
I want to know more about you and your family.
My dad works in an office and mum is a doctor.
What do your parents do?
Tell me about your school. What do you like most about school, and why?
I had a very boring weekend. What did you do last weekend? I hope it was more interesting than mine!
See you soon, I hope.

Nicky

PART 4/4

Tips for how to prepare students for this part:

1 Compose an email/social media text to the class that includes at least three questions. You could for example write about your weekend, and then ask what they did, when they did it and who they did it with. Or you could write about a TV programme or film you watched and ask what their favourite film or programme is, when they saw it, why they like it, and so on. Students write their answers. When they are ready, display the answers around the class. Ask students to read all the answers to find out which is the most similar and most different to theirs.

2 Tell the class you received a letter/email/social media message from a friend who wants to visit you. Tell them the message included lots of questions. Ask the students to guess what the questions were (for example: Can I visit you next week? How are your parents? Is there a cinema near you? What restaurants are near your home?) Write them on the board. Then ask students to write their answers to the questions.

Scoring

In the Listening and Reading sections, each response is scored as either correct or incorrect. Students who respond to all or most of the tasks correctly move up to a higher CEFR level for the next part of the test. Students who respond to all or most of the tasks incorrectly move down to a lower CEFR level. Students who respond to about half the tasks correctly continue on at the same CEFR level.

Some tasks on the Speaking and Writing sections are scored as either correct or incorrect, while others are scored using an automated scoring system. In the free production speaking tasks, the automated system scores responses on their intelligibility, their stress and intonation patterns and their ability to control appropriate grammatical and lexical resources. In the free production writing tasks, the automated system scores the accuracy and appropriacy of grammatical and lexical resources, and the degree of task relevance and completion.

'Can do' statements

The CEFR describes specific performance abilities at each level using what are called 'can do' statements. The 'can do' statements describe what learners at each level can do, by broad skill area.

There is, of course, a good degree of overlap between what learners can do in each skill at the different levels. As they go up through the levels, learners are assumed to be able to do everything mentioned at all previous levels, and add new skills.

The following pages summarise the CEFR 'can do' statements for each level by skill.

Table 5: CEFR 'can do' statements by level and skill

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
	... learners can			
Pre-A1	recognise and understand: • everyday, familiar words in simple questions and answers when they are spoken slowly and clearly. • numbers, prices, dates and days of the week when spoken slowly and clearly in simple questions and answers. • simple descriptions of rooms and familiar places with the help of pictures. • simple factual information in short conversations.	read and: • recognise familiar everyday words with the help of pictures. • understand information about the days, times and locations of events they are being invited to in short letters, cards and emails. • understand basic information such as menus with the help of pictures. • understand simple personal letters, emails and other short messages.	• read aloud a text about an everyday situation so people can understand most of what they are saying. • understand and reply to simple questions such as 'What is this?' and name some familiar people, objects, animals and actions. • give a basic description of a situation at home, at school or in their free-time. • talk about a picture story in simple words and phrases.	• spell a number of familiar words with the help of pictures. • write some simple phrases and short sentences using the right word order. • answer simple questions and give basic personal information about themselves and other people in writing.
A1	• identify when people give important and specific information, for example, about places, dates and times. • understand simple descriptions of rooms, familiar places and objects with the help of pictures. • understand important information about people, their likes and dislikes and everyday activities in short conversations when speakers speak slowly and clearly.	read and understand: • the main points of a short simple text given the help of pictures. • short texts on a number of subjects of personal interest such as news, travel and music, when they are written with simple words and supported by illustrations and pictures. • simple messages sent via social media or email with details about what to do, and when and where to meet, for example. • short, illustrated stories about everyday activities described in simple words.	• read aloud a short text based on a common situation using some English sounds and stress patterns clearly. • answer questions on everyday topics with simple phrases and sentences. • describe pictures of familiar scenes with simple phrases and sentences. • tell simple stories using basic words and expressions to give information about the people and what they are doing.	• spell a number of familiar words with the help of pictures. • recognise and use the correct word order in some simple phrases. • give information using simple phrases and sentences about themselves and other people in writing. • write simple messages, cards or emails.

CEFR	When ...			
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
	... learners can			
A2	• understand the most important information from short recordings when people are talking about familiar everyday situations. • follow short conversations about people, their lives and daily routines, and what they do and don't like. • understand basic details in descriptions of people, places, objects and activities.	read and: • understand short simple personal letters. • understand short narratives and descriptions of people's lives and everyday situations. • find factual information in short texts about familiar topics and situations.	• read aloud a short text based on a common situation and pronounce familiar words and phrases quite clearly, and generally use the correct stress, rhythm and intonation. • answer a range of questions about everyday objects, places and activities that people do. • describe people, places, possessions, daily routines and everyday activities that they can see in pictures and give their opinion about what they can see in simple terms. • tell a very short story using a range of words and phrases in simple grammatical structures.	• spell a range of words and phrases about basic and familiar situations correctly. • use simple grammatical structures with some control. • write short, simple stories based on pictures and using their own ideas. • write notes, emails and text messages to friends, family and other people, for example, replying to questions, making or accepting invitations, and so on.
B1	• follow the main points of extended discussions on everyday familiar topics. • identify the most important information about people, places, objects and activities when people are having everyday conversations on familiar topics.	• understand descriptions of places, events, feelings and people's opinions in a range of different types of texts, including short stories. • find the key factual information in different sorts of short texts. • understand letters, notes, messages and emails sent by friends, family and other people.	• follow the main points of extended discussions on everyday familiar topics. • identify the most important information about people, places, objects and activities when people are having everyday conversations on familiar topics.	• use in writing a range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. • write sentences about familiar situations using the correct grammar. • write detailed descriptions of people, places, objects and activities in predictable situations. • write and reply to personal letters and messages in good detail in an appropriate style.