



# Specification

This document provides detailed information about the Skills for English tests to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the assessments in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers, lecturers and test-takers, and contains all the mandatory information you need to prepare for the test.

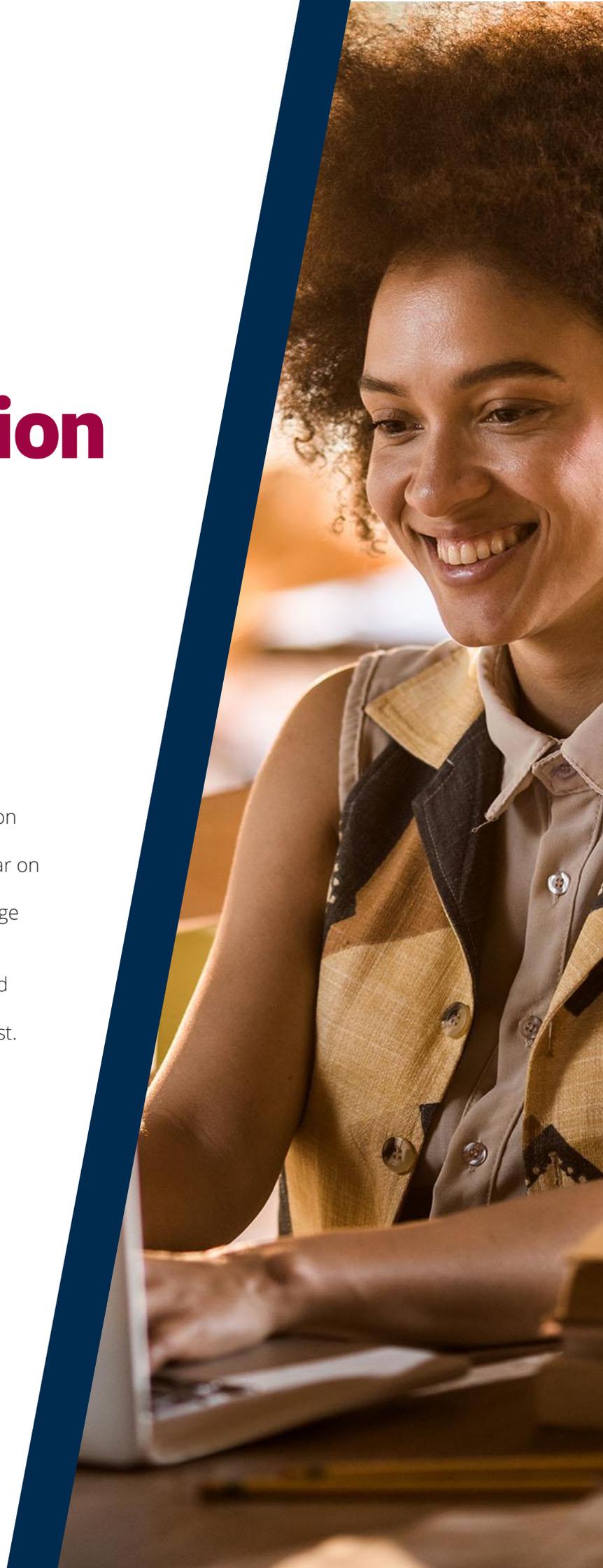
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## Revision History

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1.0	February 6, 2020	First Draft Approved.
2.0	March 23, 2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V1.0.
3.0	October 13, 2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V2.0.
4.0	November 3, 2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V3.0.

## Approval Section

Name	Position	Signature	Date

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## Introduction

The Skills for English tests have been written for test-takers<sup>1</sup> who are speakers of other languages. They assess the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. They aim to provide a measure of English language proficiency through practical and authentic tasks which test-takers could expect to undertake in their everyday lives in an English-speaking environment. These include (but are not limited to):

- writing notes, emails and text messages
- reading and understanding a variety of written material such as newspaper articles, messages and other informational texts
- listening and responding to oral texts, such as public announcements, presentations and talks
- conversational skills in English

Skills for English tests are all computer based. This allows the tests to be delivered in multiple locations worldwide, in a variety of settings. Test-takers can book a test online and be able to sit the test within a matter of days. Certification of results is provided in as little as 14 days and in all cases within no more than 28 days.

## Who is the test for?

The Skills for English tests are for test-takers aged 16 or over whose first language is not English. The tests do not require any previous work experience, specialised knowledge or vocabulary beyond what test-takers may need in their everyday social, academic or professional lives. However, test-takers must have already developed English language skills to the relevant Common European Framework of Reference levels (Council of Europe, 2001). Possible test-takers are those wishing to enter the UK for work or study, to access further or higher education or to establish themselves within an English-speaking community as a spouse or partner.

For test-takers planning to live, study and/or work in the UK, preparing for the Skills for English Tests will help develop skills that are essential for learning, life and work. Having an established level of English language helps to increase confidence, and successful test-takers should be able to effectively communicate ideas, opinions and feelings and respond to those of other people. This allows them the opportunity to participate more fully in life within an English-speaking environment. The Skills for English tests will assess test-takers on their personal, social and transactional English in a variety of authentic contexts.

## Aim of the tests

The tests are written for test-takers who are required to provide evidence of their English language Proficiency. In the case of Skills for English (UKVI), this has been approved by the UK Home Office for the purposes of acquiring a visa in order to enter the UK.

At levels A1, A2 and B1 (2 components), test-takers will be able to demonstrate their ability to communicate verbally, to respond to questions about themselves and to show their understanding of spoken English. Skills assessed will include (but are not limited to) the following:

*responding to questions about themselves and their everyday context engaging in transactional spoken activity such as giving an invitation listening to a series of short texts and answering questions on what they hear*

At levels B1 (4 components), B2, C1 and C2, test-takers will be able to demonstrate their ability to deal with more challenging contexts across all four skills.

Skills assessed at these levels will include (but are not limited to) the following:

*proficiency at relevant CEFR levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English understanding written and spoken texts in English in the contexts of everyday life producing written English in the contexts of everyday life applying knowledge and understanding of language in spoken and written English*

## Overview

The Skills for English tests are a suite of tests covering 6 levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2), which map to the descriptors outlined within the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). Mapping to the CEFR follows the procedures as recommended in the Council of Europe’s manual Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), available at: [http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Manuel1\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Manuel1_EN.asp).

The CEFR Companion Volume with new descriptors (Council of Europe, 2018) has been used as a complement to the CEFR in the writing of all items, to reflect the growing need for descriptors relating to mediation, reactions to literature, plurilingual/pluricultural competence and online interaction since the publication of the original policy document in 2001. The Companion Volume can be found at <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

The table below outlines the format of the Skills for English Tests.

	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
A1	✓	✓		
A2	✓	✓		
B1	✓	✓		
B1	✓	✓	✓	✓
B2	✓	✓	✓	✓
C1	✓	✓	✓	✓
C2	✓	✓	✓	✓

At levels A1 and A2, test components cover Speaking and Listening skills only, as per the UK visa requirements for test-takers at these levels (basic user, Council of Europe, 2001). At A1 and A2 level, test-takers will be able to demonstrate their ability to communicate verbally, to respond to questions about themselves and to show their understanding of spoken English. Skills assessed will include the following:

*responding to questions about themselves and their everyday context engaging in transactional spoken activity such as giving an invitation listening to a series of short texts and answering questions on what they hear*

At B1 level, test-takers have a choice of taking only the Speaking and Listening skills components, or opting for all four skills components of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. This is to allow those test-takers who are entering at the lower end of the independent user level (Council of Europe, 2001) a greater breadth of choice, dependent on UK visa requirements. Tests at B2, C1 and C2 levels cover all four skills.

## Awarding

Results are pass/fail only. Test-takers must pass every component at their given level in order to be certified.

# Skills for English Tests Assessment Content

The Skills for English tests assess general English language skills across all levels of CEFR in the context of everyday life. Therefore, context and topics generally relate to life in the UK. Language used will be British English.

They are used to support test-takers' visa applications for entry to the UK.

CEFR Global Scales (taken from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>)

<b>PROFICIENT USER</b>	<b>C2</b>	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	<b>C1</b>	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
<b>INDEPENDENT USER</b>	<b>B2</b>	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

	<b>B1</b>	Can understand the main points of clear, standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
<b>BASIC USER</b>	<b>A2</b>	Can understand sentences and frequently-used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (eg very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	<b>A1</b>	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

***\*For further information about CEFR levels and what test-takers should be able to do in the four skills at each level, please see the following documents available from the Council of Europe website:***

Council of Europe, (2001) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Council of Europe, (2018) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors. Strasbourg: COE

## Equality and inclusion

This assessment is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible to all test-takers. All necessary measures have been taken to avoid bias.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled test-takers and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## References

Council of Europe, (2001) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Council of Europe (2009) Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR): A Manual. Strasbourg: COE

Council of Europe, (2018) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors. Strasbourg: COE

## Results

Test-takers' overall results are determined by their performance across all components for a given level.

At all levels, the results test-takers will receive are:

**Pass:** test-takers will be able to use this result for their visa application.

**Fail:** test-takers will not be able to use this result for their visa application.

## How will test-takers be marked for each paper?

### Speaking

At A1 and A2 levels, test-takers will be marked according to the following criteria:

- relevance and appropriacy of response
- accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary)
- clarity and pronunciation

At B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels, test-takers will be marked according to the following criteria:

- relevance and appropriacy of response
- grammar (accuracy and range)
- vocabulary (accuracy and range)
- clarity and pronunciation
- coherence and structure

### Listening

Across all levels, marks will be awarded on the following basis:

- Part 1: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 2: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 3: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer

### Reading

At B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels, marks will be awarded on the following basis:

- Part 1: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 2: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 3: 10 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer

## Writing

At B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels, test-takers will be marked according to the following criteria:

- relevance and appropriacy of response
- coherence and structure
- grammar — range and accuracy
- vocabulary — range and accuracy

# Skills for English B1

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

## Assessment structure

Component	Marks	Duration
<b>Component 1: Speaking</b>	30	Approx. 10 minutes
<b>Component 2: Listening</b>	30	Approx. 40 minutes
<b>Component 3: Reading</b>	30	60 minutes
<b>Component 4: Writing</b>	30	60 minutes

**Note:** B1 test-takers can choose to take components 1 and 2 only and be certificated for speaking and listening skills, or they may choose to be assessed on all four skills, taking components 1–4.

## Topics covered at B1

Test-takers are expected to engage with topics listed at levels A1 and A2 as well as the following:

- the self
- family and culture
- work and study
- making choices
- hopes and plans
- past experiences
- forms and letters
- daily life
- the home, the neighbourhood and places to live
- getting things done
- free time and things to do
- media
- healthcare and wellbeing

- accidents and emergencies
- places of interest and getting there
- opinions, arguments, questions and answers
- talking about work and education in general terms
- advertisements, application forms and letters

## B1 Speaking

### Format of Speaking assessment

There are 3 parts to the Speaking test, each providing the candidate with different opportunities for the Speaking performance. Only Parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Test-takers will engage with a recording and respond to recorded questions and tasks on screen.

### B1 Speaking (approx. 10 mins)

	Focus
<b>Part 1</b>	<p><b>Introducing self</b></p> <p>Test-takers answer five questions about themselves. They are required to give the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their name</li> <li>the spelling of their first name</li> <li>where they are from</li> <li>when they were born — their birthday</li> <li>what they do</li> </ul> <p>Number of questions: 5</p> <p>Duration: 1–2 minutes</p>
<b>Part 2</b>	<p><b>Topic exploration</b></p> <p>Test-takers are presented with two tasks, each exploring a given topic. Questions focus on personal context and everyday life. Test-takers respond to questions posed to them and record their responses to each question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task 1: personal context — five questions</li> <li>Task 2: everyday life — five questions</li> </ul> <p>Duration: 4–5 minutes</p>

<p><b>Part 3</b></p>	<p><b>Extended talk</b></p> <p>Test-takers are given a situation within which they present information in an extended talk, in response to 5 prompts provided on the task card.</p> <p>Tasks have a clear purpose such as giving advice to a friend. Test-takers can either limit their responses to the prompts provided on the task card or provide further information.</p> <p>Where the candidate’s response does not relate to the context of the task, test-takers will not be able to score the full range of marks available on the ‘Relevance and appropriacy of response’ criterion.</p> <p>Duration 4-5 minutes</p>
<p><b>Relevant CEFR descriptions</b></p>	<p><b>Overall oral production:</b> Can sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field reasonably fluently, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</p> <p><b>Sustained monologue: describing experience:</b> Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest. Can relate a straightforward narrative or description in a linear sequence of points reasonably fluently. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident. Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions. Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions. Can describe events, real or imagined. Can narrate a story.</p> <p><b>Sustained monologue: giving information:</b> Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision. Can describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions. Can report straightforward factual information on a familiar topic, e.g. to indicate the nature of a problem or to give detailed directions, provided he/she can prepare beforehand.</p> <p><b>Sustained monologue: putting a case:</b> Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time. Can give simple reasons to justify a viewpoint on a familiar topic. Can express opinions or subjects relating to everyday life using simple expressions. Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can say whether or not he/she approves of what someone has done and give reasons to justify this opinion.</p>

**Overall spoken interaction:** Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract cultural topics such as films, books, music. Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions, and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life.

**Conversation:** Can start up a conversation and help keep it going by asking questions. Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest provided that the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding. Can follow clearly articulated speech though may have to ask for repetition. May sometimes be difficult to follow when they are trying to say exactly what he/she would like to. Can express and respond to feelings. Can ask for a favour, can offer a favour and can respond if someone asks him/her to do a favour for them.

**Informal discussion with friends:** Can follow much of what is said provided interlocutors avoid very idiomatic usage and articulate clearly. Can express his/her thoughts about abstract or cultural topics. Can explain why something is a problem. Can give brief comments on the views of others. Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose etc. Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest. Can express belief, opinions, agreement and disagreement politely.

**Goal-oriented co-operation:** Can follow what is said though may ask for repetition. Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives. Can give brief comments on the views of others. Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards possible solutions, or the question of what to do next, giving brief reasons and explanations. Can invite others to give their views on how to proceed.

**Obtaining goods and services:** Can deal with most transactions likely to arise while travelling. Can ask in a shop for an explanation of the difference between two or more products serving the same purpose in order to make a decision, posing follow-up questions as necessary. Can cope with less routine situations in shops etc, such as returning an unsatisfactory purchase. Can make a complaint.

**Information exchange:** Can exchange and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. Can summarise and give his/her opinion about a short story, article, talk etc and answer further questions in detail. Can find out and pass on straightforward factual information. Can ask for and follow detailed directions. Can offer advice on simple matters within his/her field of experience.

**Interviewing and being interviewed:** Can provide concrete information required in an interview consultation. Can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information. Can take some initiative in an interview. Can describe symptoms in a simple way and ask for advice when using health services. Can use a prepared questionnaire.

**Addressing audiences:** Can give a prepared presentation on a familiar topic within his/her field, outlining similarities and differences. Can give a prepared presentation which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision. Can take follow-up questions but may have to ask for repetition if the speech was rapid.

**Notes:**

- 1) Statements above have been collated from the original framework as well as from the updated CEFR Companion Volume (2018).
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all items.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B1 includes but is not limited to those assessed at A1 and A2.

# B1 Listening

## Format of Listening assessment

The Skills for English B1 Listening test has three parts. Test-takers will hear the recording twice

### B1 Listening (approx. 40 mins)

	Focus
<b>Part 1</b>	<p>Test-takers listen to 10 short recordings, which may be dialogue or monologue, and answer a single three-option MCQ for each recording.</p> <p>Questions focus on identifying key information. The recording is played twice.</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<b>Part 2</b>	<p>Test-takers listen to a conversation between two speakers (one male and one female), or possibly three speakers, where topics allow, exchanging information, and answer 10 3-option MCQs.</p> <p>Answers can come from all speakers.</p> <p>Questions focus on understanding of specific, detailed information, opinions, attitudes and feelings, agreement/disagreement, and negotiation of meaning.</p> <p>The recording is played twice.</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues, which can be resolved through discussion. A study context is possible where students discuss general study-related issues.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<b>Part 3</b>	<p>Test-takers listen to an extended monologue, e.g. a talk on a topic of general interest such as a tourist site, or on a topic of general interest presented in a more academic context.</p> <p>Test-takers complete 2 sets of 5 items (10) set out as notes capturing information from the monologue by using either 10 drag and drop or 5</p>

	<p>notes completion (FIB) and 5 drag and drop. Notes are set out in two sets of 5 items to reduce reading load. Answers are provided in a pool of 10 options in total for each set.</p> <p>Focus: key information, main ideas, detailed or specific information, attitudes and opinions.</p> <p>The recording is played twice.</p> <p>Topics: can be work or study oriented but focus of questions must be general in nature and accessible to all test-takers.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<p><b>Relevant CEFR descriptors</b></p>	<p><b>Overall listening comprehension:</b> Can understand straightforward factual information about common every day or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent. Can understand the main points of clear, standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school or leisure, including short narratives.</p> <p><b>Understanding conversation between other speakers:</b> Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion provided it takes place in standard speech and is clearly articulated in a familiar accent. Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her provided speech is clearly articulated.</p> <p><b>Listening as member of live audience:</b> Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her field provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward. Can distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in standard lectures on familiar subjects, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech. Can follow a straightforward conference presentation or demonstration with visual support on a topic or product within his/her field, understanding explanations given. Can understand the main points of what is said in a straightforward monologue like a guided tour, provided the delivery is clear and slow.</p> <p><b>Listening to announcements and instructions:</b> Can understand simple technical information such as operating instructions for everyday equipment. Can follow detailed directions. Can understand public announcements at airports, stations and on planes, buses and trains, provided these are clearly articulated in standard speech with minimum interference from background noise.</p>

**Listening to media and recordings:** Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material of personal interest delivered in clear, standard speech. Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly. Can understand the main points and important details in stories and other narratives (e.g. holidays) provided the speaker speaks slowly.

**Watching TV, film and video:** Can understand a large part of many TV programmes on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. Can follow many films in which visuals and action carry much of the storyline and which are delivered clearly in straightforward language. Can catch the main points of TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. Can follow a TV commercial or trailer for, or scene from, a film understanding what the actors are talking about provided that the images are a great help in understanding and the delivery is clear.

**Identifying cues and inferring:** Can listen to a short narrative and predict what will happen next. Can follow a line of argument or the sequence of events in a story by focusing on common logical connectors (e.g. however, because). Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar.

**Note:** Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all items.

# B1 Reading

## Format of Reading assessment

The Skills for English B1 Reading test has three parts.

### B1 Reading (60 mins)

	Focus
<b>Part 1</b> <b>(approx. 15–20 mins)</b>	<p>Focus: main message</p> <p>Text type: 10 short texts (messages, including digital, signs, notices, adverts etc). One question per text.</p> <p>Question types: three-option MCQ . Number of questions: 10</p>
<b>Part 2</b> <b>(approx. 15–20 mins)</b>	<p>Focus: reading for information, orientation and instruction</p> <p>Text type: brochures, manuals, letters of instruction/communication (e.g. from local council, hospitals etc), leaflets etc.</p> <p>Question types: T/F/NG, MCQ and matching. A maximum of three NG in any 10 questions.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<b>Part 3</b> <b>(approx. 20 mins)</b>	<p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, inference, and global meaning, opinions, attitudes and purpose.</p> <p>Text type: longer texts, exploring particular topics in some depth, can be factual or narrative.</p> <p>Question types: 3-option MCQ, matching (eg topic to paragraph), notes taking using “drag and drop”, sentence completion using “drag and drop”.</p> <p>No more than 2 item types can be used with each text, and a minimum of 3 items per item type</p> <p>Up to two item types can be used, with at least three questions of each item type.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

<p><b>Relevant CEFR descriptors</b></p>	<p><b>Reading correspondence:</b> Can understand formal correspondence on less familiar subjects well enough to redirect it to someone else. Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen-friend. Can understand straightforward personal letters, emails or postings giving a relatively detailed account of events and experiences. Can understand standard formal correspondence and online postings in his/her area of professional interest.</p> <p><b>Reading for orientation:</b> Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information and gather information from different parts of a text or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task. Can scan through straightforward factual texts in magazines, brochures or on the web, identify what they are about and decide whether they contain information that might be of practical use. Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material such as letters, brochures and short official documents. Can pick out important information about preparation and usage on labels of foodstuffs and medicine. Can assess whether an article, report or review is on the required topic. Can understand the important information in simple clearly-drafted adverts in newspapers or magazines, provided that there are not too many abbreviations.</p> <p><b>Reading for information and argument:</b> Can understand straightforward factual texts on subjects relating to his/her interests. Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their point of view (e.g. letters to the editor, online discussion forum). Can identify the main conclusions in clearly-signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, although not necessarily in detail. Can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects. Can understand most factual information that he/she is likely to come across on familiar subjects of interest, provided he/she has sufficient time for rereading. Can understand the main points in descriptive notes such as those on museum exhibits and explanatory boards in exhibitions.</p> <p><b>Reading instructions:</b> Can understand instructions and procedures in the form of a continuous text, for example in a manual, provided that he/she is familiar with the type of process or product concerned. Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment. Can follow simple instructions given on packaging, e.g.</p>
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cooking. Can understand most short safety instructions, e.g. on public transport.

**Reading as a leisure activity:** Can read newspaper/magazine accounts of films, books, concerts etc written for a wider audience and understand the main points. Can understand simple poems and song lyrics. Can understand the description of places, events, explicitly-expressed feelings and perspectives in narratives, guides and magazine articles that are written in high frequency everyday language. Can understand a travel diary mainly describing the events of a journey and the experiences and discoveries the person made. Can follow the plot of stories, simple novels and comics with a clear linear storyline and high frequency everyday language, given regular use of a dictionary.

**Identifying cues and inferring:** Can exploit different types of connectors and the role of key paragraphs in the overall organisation in order to better understand the argumentation in a text. Can extrapolate the meaning of a section of a text by taking into account the text as a whole. Can identify the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context on topics related to his/her field and interest. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings. Can follow a line of argument or the sequence of events in a story by focusing on common logical connectors and temporal connectors. Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words in a written text by identifying their constituent parts.

# B1 Writing

## Format of Writing assessment

The Skills for English B1 Writing test has 2 parts.

### B1 Writing (60 mins)

	Focus
<b>Part 1</b> <b>(approx. 20 mins)</b>	<p>Test-takers write a short email, forum post, tweet or similar piece of communication to an identified audience for a given purpose. The communication may be formal or informal in nature. The task allows the candidate’s response to be organised in terms of a beginning or salutation, key information and a closing, summary or comment.</p> <p>The task sets out a context or a problem to be addressed, identifies the audience and lists, in a series of three bullet points, what information needs to be communicated.</p> <p>Focus: written communication with identified audience, interactional and digital in nature with a clear purpose, covering a variety of functions needed in everyday contexts, e.g. invitations and applications.</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, to be accessible to all test-takers and NOT requiring specialist vocabulary.</p> <p>Number of required words in response: 70–100</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
<b>Part 2</b> <b>(approx. 40 mins)</b>	<p>Test-takers write a short discursive piece in response to an issue presented in the task. The task allows the candidate response to be organised in terms of an introduction, the main body of the text addressing the bullet points, and a conclusion which may be giving the writer’s own opinion.</p> <p>The task sets out the context and the issue to be discussed, and identifies in a series of 3 prompts, points that test-takers must address.</p> <p>Focus: writing a longer piece of discursive communication.</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, to be accessible to all test-takers and NOT requiring specialist vocabulary.</p>

	<p>Number of required words in response: 110–130</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
<p><b>Relevant CEFR descriptors</b></p>	<p><b>Overall written production:</b> Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</p> <p><b>Creative writing:</b> Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can write a simple review of a film, book or TV programme using a limited range of language. Can write straightforward detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest. Can write accounts of experiences describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. Can write a description of an event, or a recent trip — real or imagined. Can narrate a story.</p> <p><b>Written reports and essays:</b> Can write short simple essays on topics of interest. Can write a text on a topical subject of personal interest, using simple language to list advantages and disadvantages, give and justify his/her opinion. Can summarise reports and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence. Can write very brief reports in a standard conventional format which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions. Can present a topic in a short report or poster, using photographs and short blocks of text.</p> <p><b>Overall written communication:</b> Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics. Check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision. Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important.</p> <p><b>Correspondence:</b> Can write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music and films. Can write letters expressing different opinions and giving detailed accounts of personal feelings and experiences. Can reply to an advert in writing and ask for further information on items which interest him/her. Can write basic formal emails/letters, for example to make a complaint and request action. Can write letters describing experiences, feelings and events. Can write basic emails/letters of a factual nature, for example to request information or ask for and give confirmation. Can write a basic letter of application with limited supporting details.</p>

**Notes, messages and forms:** Can take routine messages that are likely to occur in a personal, professional, or academic context. Can take messages communicating enquiries, or explaining problems. Can write notes conveying simple information of immediate relevance to friends, service people, teachers and others who feature in his/her everyday life, getting across comprehensibly the points he/she feels are important. Can take messages over the phone containing several points provided that the caller dictates these clearly and sympathetically.

**Online conversation and discussion:** Can engage in real time online exchanges with more than one participant, recognising the communicative intentions of each contributor but may not understand details or implications without further explanation. Can post online accounts of social events, experiences and activities, referring to embedded links and media, and sharing personal feelings. Can post a comprehensible contribution in an online discussion on a familiar topic of interest, provided that he/she can prepare the text beforehand and use online tools to fill gaps in language and check accuracy. Can make personal online postings about experiences, feelings and events, and respond individually to the comments of others in some detail, although lexical limitations sometimes cause repetition and inappropriate formulation.

**Relaying specific information in writing:** Can relay in writing specific information points contained in texts on familiar subjects. Can relay in writing specific relevant information contained in straightforward informational texts on familiar subjects. Can relay in writing specific information given in a straightforward recorded message, provided that the topics concerned are familiar and the delivery is slow and clear.

**Explaining data in writing:** Can interpret and present in writing the overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g. graphs, bar charts) explaining the important points in more details, given the help of a dictionary or other reference materials. Can describe in simple sentences the main facts shown in visuals on familiar topics.

**Processing text in writing:** Can summarise in writing the information and arguments contained in texts on subjects of general or personal interest. Can summarise in writing the main points made in straightforward informational spoken and written texts on subjects that are of personal or current interest, provided spoken texts are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech. Can paraphrase short written passages in a simple fashion using the original text wording and re-ordering.

**Planning:** Can work out how to communicate the main points he/she wants to get across exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what he/she can recall or find the means to express.

**General linguistic range:** Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision, and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film. Has enough language to get by with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocution on topics such as family hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.

**Vocabulary range:** Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. Has sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocution on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life such as family hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.

**Vocabulary control:** Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations. Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when talking about familiar topics.

**Grammatical accuracy:** Errors occur but it is clear what he/she is trying to express. Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used routines and patterns associated with more predictable situations.

**Orthographic control:** Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.

**Flexibility:** Can exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he/she wants.

**Thematic development:** Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time. Shows awareness of the conventional structure of the text type concerned when communicating his/her ideas. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points.

**Coherence and cohesion:** Can introduce a counter-argument in a simple discursive text. Can link a series of shorter discrete simple elements into a connected linear sequence of points. Can form longer sentences and link

them together using a limited number of cohesive devices — e.g. in a story. Can make simple logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.

**Propositional precision:** Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision. Can convey simple straightforward information of immediate relevance, getting across which point he/she feels is most important. Can express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly.

**Notes:**

- 1) Statements above have been collated from the original framework as well as from the updated CEFR Companion Volume (2018).
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all items.



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