



Practice Test 2

Level B2

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Introduction to Skills for English

About Skills for English

Skills for English is a qualification that enables you to demonstrate your knowledge of the English language for a range of purposes, including work, study or settlement. *Skills for English* tests make the process of taking a test and gaining an English language qualification as easy and convenient as possible.

Skills for English: SELT is a Secure English Language Test approved by the UK Home Office for UK Visa purposes. You take the level you need for your required visa, making the test quick and convenient. *Skills for English: SELT* is available to take in our network of test centres in over 120 countries.

Skills for English: Global is an SQA-assured test that you can take at your chosen level. You can take the test at home, using our secure online remote proctoring. *Skills for English: Global* is ideal for academic applications or professional development.

Skills for English provides an accurate measure of language proficiency through practical and realistic tasks that you would expect to undertake in an English-speaking environment. You choose the test level you require, from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). That way, you know you are preparing for, and taking, the level of test you need for your chosen purpose

All *Skills for English* tests use computer-based delivery for all skills. Reading and listening are automatically marked during the test session itself; speaking and writing are marked by professional markers (who have no access to your personal details) after you have finished. You move through each of the skills sections in a single test session, at home or in a test centre, then receive your results in as little as three days. When you receive your results, you will be given details of the individual outcome (pass/pass with merit/fail) for each skill taken, plus your overall test outcome (also pass/pass with merit/fail). You need to pass each of the skills taken to pass the test overall.

The Skills for English Practice Tests

Two sets of digital practice tests are available on the *Skills for English* website for people preparing to take the *Skills for English: SELT* and *Skills for English: Global* tests. Both practice tests are delivered on our testing platform and will give you a good idea of what to expect on test day. They cover all 6 levels of our tests and can be accessed by going to www.skillsforenglish.com

This booklet is a documented version of Practice Test 2, which is available on our website. It covers exactly the same material but is in a different format to help with your test

preparation activities. A separate booklet is available for each level of the test and can be used for both *Skills for English: SELT* and *Skills for English: Global* test preparation.

We ensure that *Skills for English* tests cover a variety of everyday contexts and scenarios including life, work and study. The contexts and scenarios in our practice tests are varied and representative of what you may see in our tests.

What is included in this document?

This document contains all the tasks which you will see at a given level on the *Skills for English* practice test pages for Practice Test 2. It covers all aspects of the test including:

- Speaking test questions and tasks
- Speaking sample answers and comments
- Scripts, questions and answers for the Listening tests

At B1 and above these documents also include:

- Reading texts, questions and answers
- Writing tasks
- Writing sample answers and comments

The commentary on the sample answers for Speaking and Writing tests will show you why each sample is an example of a good response.

How you can use this document

You can use this document in a variety of ways.

Test takers: you can use the information in this document alongside the digital practice tests on our website. We would suggest that you *always* try out the digital practice test as it will give you a good idea of what to expect on your test day. You can use this document to support any further preparation work you may want to do, for example to check on questions you may have missed or to reflect on your own performance.

Teachers and training providers: you can use the information in this document to support any training or practice work you may be doing with your students as well as any materials you may be developing for work in the classroom. This document will allow you to focus on specific parts or questions in the *Skills for English* tests and concentrate your student preparation on specific aspects of the tests.

For a full range of preparation and practice resources, visit www.skillsforenglish.com

Practice Test 2: B2 Speaking Test

There are 3 parts to this test.

All your answers are recorded.

Speaking: Part 1

In part 1, there are 5 questions about yourself.

Part 1 is not assessed.

After each question, you will hear a beep.

Answer the questions after each beep.

You will have 10 seconds to answer each question.

1. What is your name?

BEEP

2. Can you spell your first name, please?

BEEP

3. Where are you from?

BEEP

4. What is your date of birth?

BEEP

5. What do you do?

BEEP

That is the end of part 1.

Speaking: Part 2

In part 2 there are questions about 2 topics.

You will answer 5 questions about each topic.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

You will have up to 40 seconds to answer each question.

Now I am going to ask you some questions about films.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

1. Tell me about a film you have seen recently.

BEEP

2. What aspects of a film are likely to make it popular? Why?

BEEP

3. Have your tastes in films changed over the years? Explain your answer.

BEEP

4. What are the advantages of watching films at the cinema instead of at home?

BEEP

5. Do you think governments should support national film industries? Explain your answer.

BEEP

Now I am going to ask you about advertising.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

1. Tell me about an advertisement that has made an impression on you.

BEEP

2. To what extent does advertising affect how you decide what products to buy? Why?

BEEP

3. If you were working in advertising, how would you promote an expensive product like a new car?

BEEP

4. How has social media changed the ways in which businesses advertise their products?
Explain your answer.

BEEP

5. Do you think it's important to have laws to control advertising? Why?

BEEP

That is the end of part 2.

Speaking: Part 3

In part 3 you will talk about a subject on a role card.

The words on the role card will help you.

You can say more things if you like but you must say something about each point on the role card.

You have 1 minute to look at the role card.

You will have up to 5 minutes to speak.

Please remember to always check the *Skills for English* website for the latest version of your test specification.

Role Card: Explaining to a friend your opinion about working in groups.

- Talk about some different situations in which people need to work in groups.
- Explain the benefits of working in a group.
- Describe the role technology can play in group work.
- Talk about some problems people can have when working in groups.
- Suggest ways a group leader can help to make group work more effective.

That is the end of the B2 Speaking test.

Sample answers and comments

This page provides you with a transcript of model answers for a strong pass at B2 for Speaking Part 2. Note: Part 1 of the Speaking test is not assessed.

The comments show why these answers result in a strong pass.

Sample Answers

Speaking Part 2: Films

1. *A film I watched recently again is called 'Some like it hot'. It's a black and white movie which I first saw many years ago. It's a comedy with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemon. In this film Tony Curtis and Jack Lemon are two musicians who dress up as women to escape the mafia. This is because they are witnesses to a murder and are afraid of being killed themselves. As women, they join a band of musicians only to find themselves in a hotel with the mafia bosses they are trying to escape from. It's very funny.*
2. *I think it continues to be popular for several reasons. One is that the three main actors are well-known for playing comic roles. The other is that people tend to think it's funny when men dress as women and have to manage things like high-heeled shoes. The third reason is that like many other movies, it explores misunderstandings between men and women and the way their relationships can evolve and change.*
3. *I don't think my tastes in films have changed very much. I still hate horror movies and love science fiction the best. What has changed is the way I evaluate the movies that I watch. I am more critical and can analyse the positive and negative aspects much more succinctly than I did when I was younger. Then, I was only interested in exciting plots.*
4. *there are several advantages to watching films at the cinema. The bigger screen is one and the sound is probably much better. There is also something to be said about a group of people collectively having the same experience – that is watching the same film together. However, there are disadvantages too. At home, you can watch the film in silence and are not disturbed by other people. Also depending on whether you are streaming it or watching a DVD, you can pause the film and take a break. You can also eat and drink whatever you want.*
5. *I agree that government should support national film industries, just as they should support all the arts. Films like paintings music and theatre are expressions of a people's identity and says something about who they think they are and their place in the world. It's also vital for the population to be able to explore film, theatre and music specifically in terms of appreciating your national heritage.*

Speaking Part 2: Advertising

1. *There is one advertisement I particularly like on TV. I can't remember what it is advertising, so probably not working on me, but it is memorable, because it is of a fluffy knitted dog, putting on music, sitting in front of a fan and enjoying the music he has chosen. The dog looks so real and seems to understand that he is being filmed. Yet it is not real and we know that he is made of wool and yarn. It's a beautiful and imaginative advert.*
2. *I see advertising more as entertainment. I am not sure if it affects what I buy unless I am looking to buy something already. I often remember adverts but don't remember what they were trying to sell to me – so I don't remember the product. Adverts are more likely to have an impact once I am in a supermarket or wherever actually looking to buy food or cleaning products.*

3. *I hate car adverts which are trying to sell you an image of what your life would be like if you bought this car. When I want to buy a car, I am really interested in its usefulness. I am looking to buy the best car that I can for the money that I have. Therefore, if I was advertising an expensive car, I would be focusing on communicating the real, practical value that it would add to someone's life rather than selling them an image which can't possibly be realistic for many people.*
4. *I suppose social media has provided more outlets for companies to advertise their products. It has also allowed companies to target certain groups of people more specifically, for example by following trends or analysing the kinds of products they search on the internet. However, there is a negative side too. People can become used to seeing adverts popping up on pages and ignore what is being advertised. That's what happens with me, I no longer notice the adverts when they pop up on the side of the page.*
5. *Absolutely, otherwise companies would be able to say what they want to say about anything, any time, anywhere. Laws are required to ensure that wherever possible advertising is a good reflection of the product. Laws are also required to make sure that young people for example are not exposed to products that would be harmful to them – like cigarettes. We must remember that many companies don't actually care who the consumer is, so long as the products are selling. They only care about the bottom line.*

Speaking Part 3: Explaining to a friend your opinion about working in groups

So you want to know more about working in groups? Let me tell you about my experience of doing this. Mostly, I work in groups on projects at work. When we are starting a new project, we usually come together as a new group. Our manager decides which kinds of skills are needed to deliver the project and they select people with those skills. So we always start with a project kick-off meeting where we get to know each other, talk about the project and start making decisions: who is going to do what and why. This means that we start planning the project together and we all have a stake in completing it.

Groupwork is really beneficial when everyone is doing their part. If everyone is participating equally, you can really see the project moving forward, jobs being done, decisions being made and everyone is then enthusiastic. The other benefit is that groups can be more innovative. It means that you have someone to hand who really understands the project and who can explore ideas or solutions with you. However, one of the biggest problems in my experience has been with individuals who are not fully committed to working in groups. It just takes one person who is not participating, who doesn't get their fair share of the work done, to spoil the whole group. The other problem has been when one person takes over – they talk too much in group meetings and dominate, or they want to take all the control or the credit. This too can spoil group work and end in delivery times being extended.

When it comes to technology, some people would argue that technology has definitely helped group work. It has certainly helped groups who are working internationally. Technology has meant that you can have meetings no matter where you may be based, and you can bring a more diverse group of people together. But I don't think anything can beat the face-to-face meeting especially when a group of people are trying to brainstorm or solve a problem.

The best groups really work well when there is a strong leader who knows how to lead but also when to leave people to do what they do best. This is a leader who only speaks when the group needs direction or support but trusts the group also to do what they have committed to doing. A good leader is also one who is open to suggestions and different ways of doing things. Often with big projects, problems mean that half-way through you need to come up with a new solution or

solve a problem you didn't anticipate. A good leader understands this and looks for solutions with the team rather than pointing a finger and trying to find someone to blame.

Comments

This is an example of a good response at B2.

The candidate is able to address all the questions in Part 2 in some depth and talk about films, advertising and group work – topics which are both concrete and abstract. The candidate also provides extra information, expands on their answers, and provides examples.

In Part 2, the candidate is able to describe a film they have seen and talk about the film industry in general. They are also able to discuss advertising in some depth, talking about its impact on people and on businesses.

In Part 3, the candidate is able to talk at length about group work, the role of technology and the impact of leadership. They don't necessarily follow the order of the bullet points but they cover all the elements in their response. The response is coherent and flows smoothly as the candidate links their ideas using cohesive devices (*So, However, The other problem*).

The language is appropriate at B2 level and the candidate is able to show a wide range of vocabulary and phrases used correctly (*evolve, evaluate, succinctly, plots, streaming, exposed, kick-off meeting, have a stake in, innovative, dominate, anticipate*). The response is also accurate with a mix of simple and complex sentence structures. There are no errors.

Practice Test 2: B2 Listening Test

There are 3 parts to the listening test.

You will answer 10 questions in each part.

You will hear each recording twice.

Listening: Part 1

You will hear 10 short recordings.

For each question, 1 to 10, choose the correct answer.

You will hear each recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

You have 1 minute to read the questions.

1. What advice does the speaker give passengers about using the underground?
 - a. Make sure you know the name of the line.
 - b. Remember what the final station on the line is.
 - c. It's best to have your own copy of the map.

2. According to the woman, the main role of the guards is to...
 - a. protect the palace and its residents.
 - b. entertain the tourists.
 - c. maintain a tradition.

3. What is the biggest difficulty for the speaker when learning English?
 - a. Spelling.
 - b. Pronunciation.
 - c. Vocabulary.

4. What does the man say about the apartment?
 - a. The views made up for the traffic noise.
 - b. It was well-equipped.
 - c. It was on the outskirts of the city.

5. What is the speaker's opinion of the film?
 - a. It captured the atmosphere of the time.
 - b. The story was easy to follow.
 - c. The characters were uncomplicated.

6. What does the woman value most about playing team sports?
 - a. It encourages co-operation among her team.
 - b. It provides opportunities for her to socialise.
 - c. It inspires her to challenge herself.

7. What is the man's opinion about keeping up with the news?
 - a. He thinks television news tends to be more in depth.
 - b. He feels printed news can give a wider range of opinions.
 - c. He says online news is reliable.

8. What is stated about birds in the UK's bird report?
 - a. Certain species are finding the UK more tempting now.
 - b. Some species are migrating at different times of the year.
 - c. Species in the UK have been badly affected by new species arriving.

9. What does the speaker say about registering for a dentist?
 - a. Places may be limited for new patients.
 - b. A registration form must be completed prior to your first visit.
 - c. Places are given to those living close to the surgery.

10. What do the speakers decide to do first in their office?
- a. Increase the amount of storage.
 - b. Get rid of some furniture.
 - c. Arrange the files.

That is the end of part 1.

Listening: Part 2

You will hear an interview with a woman called Wendy in a podcast.

Listen to the first part of their conversation and answer questions 1 to 3.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

For questions 1 to 3, write no more than **TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the recording to fill each gap. Your spelling must be accurate.

You have 20 seconds to read questions 1 to 3.

1. Wendy studied online because she is responsible for _____.
2. Wendy decided to take an online course in _____.
3. In the presenter's opinion, the maximum number of _____ in any class should be limited.

Now listen to the rest of the podcast and answer questions 4 to 10.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

For questions 4 to 10, choose one correct answer (a, b or c) for each question.

You have 40 seconds to read questions 4 to 10.

4. What advantage does Wendy mention about the course?
 - a. It allowed her to forget about other concerns.
 - b. It helped her develop the habit of studying hard.
 - c. It covered more areas than she expected.
5. What disadvantage of the online discussions does Wendy mention?
 - a. There were a lot of interruptions.
 - b. One person wouldn't stop talking.
 - c. Students couldn't interact naturally.

6. What aspect of online discussions does Wendy suggest the English lecturer liked?
 - a. Having control over the timing of activities.
 - b. Being able to change activities without asking.
 - c. Adapting activities used in conventional classrooms.

7. What is Wendy's opinion of the online team games?
 - a. The technology is not advanced enough to do them.
 - b. Their success depends on the participants' computer skills.
 - c. They take too much time to explain.

8. What type of interruption do the speakers agree is most annoying?
 - a. A mobile ringing.
 - b. A technical problem.
 - c. An unexpected delivery.

9. What does Wendy say prevented her from studying?
 - a. Taking long rests.
 - b. Doing household tasks.
 - c. Spending too much time outside.

10. How did Wendy stop thinking about her studies at the end of each day?
 - a. By tidying her things away.
 - b. By doing some exercise.
 - c. By going somewhere different.

That is the end of part 2.

Listening: Part 3

Listen to a talk about a UK festival called Womad.

For each question, 1 to 10, write **ONE WORD ONLY** from the recording to complete the notes. Your spelling must be accurate.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

You have 1 minute to read the questions.

Womad – The World’s Festival

- Where held: Wiltshire, UK
- When: every year in July
- What can you see: artists from around the world

Writer’s experience at the festival

- took part by providing 1. _____
- particularly impressed by its 2. _____

Accommodation

- plenty of camping areas
- more peaceful camping for 3. _____

Facilities

- not enough 4. _____

The World of Children

- crafts: making 5. _____, designing T-shirts
- at the end of the festival: preparation to take part in a 6. _____

Taste the World Stage

- famous people gave 7. _____ of how to prepare food from their country
- most chefs used a 8. _____ recipe

Adult Workshops

- music masterclasses: a chance for musicians to work on a particular 9. _____
- 10. _____ was a surprising success

That is the end of the listening test.

Listening Scripts

Part 1

Question 1

Speaker 1	To find your way around the London Underground, you should know where you are on the map and your destination. No need to buy one as they are available in stations and on all platforms. The direction you're travelling in is indicated by north, south, east or west on the station signs. My recommendation is to memorise the name of the last stop on the line for the direction in which you're heading. Then you'll be sure you're not travelling the wrong way.
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Question 2

Speaker 1	I'm planning to watch the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. Do you know what it's about?
Speaker 2	It's when the soldiers on duty outside the palace are replaced by other soldiers.
Speaker 1	Actually, someone told me that soldiers suddenly start marching around, as though they're practising military exercises.
Speaker 2	Well, that's true and can appear quite random. Some people believe that it's purely symbolic but there is more to it than that. It reminds people that the Queen is always protected and has been going on for many years. It also has the added benefit of being one of London's main tourist attractions.

Question 3

Speaker 1	Learning English is challenging. Although the huge number of alternative words can put people off, for me the fact that English words come from so many different languages, like French and Greek, is what makes it fascinating, rather than a struggle. My issues are more to do with what's written on the page, and what comes out of my mouth. It's not that I write words incorrectly, more that the way something is written doesn't always indicate how to say the word. That can definitely lead to some interesting conversations.
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Question 4

Speaker 1	Hi Dan. How was your holiday?
Speaker 2	Fantastic. I rented someone's apartment on an app. It was incredibly clean and had all the essentials for a self-catering holiday. I thought I'd have to travel into the city centre each day but it was in a great location, close to all the sights.
Speaker 1	I expect that wasn't exactly quiet!
Speaker 2	Actually, it was on the twenty-fifth floor so we didn't notice the rush hour and we could see so much from the balcony.
Speaker 1	Sounds great.

Question 5

Speaker 1	If you're searching for a good film, check out <i>Seventeen</i> on Channel Five. It's set in the nineteen eighties and it's about a group of teenagers who go on a trip. The thing that struck me most was that it brought that era to life and I felt like I was there with them. The main characters are likeable although none of them are straightforward, and the plot holds your attention and keeps you guessing until the end. It's not to be missed!
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Question 6

Speaker 1	Can you explain the benefits of team sports?
Speaker 2	Well, you work together. That's obvious, but you may have to compromise, which is a useful life skill. One thing I've come to realise is that team-mates may be more athletic and if you're competitive, like me, then you're likely to push yourself to keep up with them. That's what really maintains my enthusiasm. It goes without saying that you're bound to become friends with people too and there are numerous get togethers.

Question 7

Speaker 1	How do I check the news? Well, online could be good for getting the news as it happens but you can't always depend on its accuracy. I often watch it on TV, as it's an easy way to get the main stories without worrying too much about all the details. For that, I still go back to traditional newspapers, taking my time over
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	them to understand the different sides of the argument. I know they're old-fashioned, but that's not always such a bad thing.
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Question 8

Speaker 1	Now for some wildlife news. The UK's bird report states that global warming is affecting many species of birds and those preferring cooler weather are having to move further north as the environment changes. The warmer UK climate is also attracting birds that previously stayed further south, such as quails. As numbers of these visitors rise, it may have a negative impact on native species. In addition, some migratory birds usually only seen in the UK during summertime now stay all year rather than migrating to southern Europe.
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Question 9

Speaker 1	Welcome to Dental Helpline. If you're looking for a dentist, remember that not all practices are taking on new patients. So, once you've identified those closest to you, give them a call to check you can sign up. Although your location is taken into account, priority will be given to those on the waiting list. When you find a dentist with spaces, book an initial appointment. You must complete a registration form on your first visit, so make sure you arrive at the surgery in good time.
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Question 10

Speaker 1	This office is a mess. We need to tidy it up before the move next week.
Speaker 2	Yes. I couldn't face it on my own. One of us needs to go through those documents and sort them out. I expect we can get rid of a lot of them, but we can't do that until we know what they are.
Speaker 1	We could put some shelves up to store things or we could do up this cabinet.
Speaker 2	Great idea. Let's sort through the paperwork first. Then we'll know what we need to keep.
Speaker 1	Good plan!

Part 2

Speaker 1	Hello, and welcome. The topic for today is what it's like to study online and whether it's any match for face-to-face classes. I'm going to talk to Wendy, who's recently completed a university course online. Hello, Wendy.
Speaker 2	Hi!
Speaker 1	So, why did you decide to study online?
Speaker 2	Well, that's a good question. Many people choose to study online as they have responsibilities, such as elderly relatives to look after. I'm just a parent of two kids, but my timetable needs to fit around theirs so I can take them to and from school. I wouldn't have done the course if I'd had to travel back and forth to uni.
Speaker 1	So what did you study?
Speaker 2	Well, I wanted to study drama, but I thought that would've been difficult to do online, so I decided on a creative writing course instead and actually that worked really well. Luckily it was a small group – there were only ten of us.
Speaker 1	Yes, personally, I think online classes only work with twelve participants or fewer. Once I had thirty people on the screen, which made it difficult to concentrate.

Speaker 1	So, Wendy, tell us what you liked about your course.
Speaker 2	Well, it was quite challenging at first, but I'm no stranger to hard work! And attending classes at home had unexpected advantages. It meant having time to myself every day when nothing else mattered – just what I was doing. Now I've got my degree and I'm thinking of enrolling on another course, to look at other aspects of the subject in more depth.
Speaker 1	There must have been some disadvantages though?
Speaker 2	Of course. One of the main ones was that it was difficult to hold natural discussions. In lectures, we could listen to the lecturer and see other participants in the class at the same time. We were allowed to speak and ask questions, but when one person spoke, it cut off the other person so people

	tended to stay quiet and let the person speaking carry on for longer than they normally would.
Speaker 1	Oh really? Were you able to work in groups?
Speaker 2	Oh, yes. One English lecturer had developed special discussion tasks for these online classes. He put us into smaller groups for some of these which was great. He'd send us a message when he wanted us all to get back together again. Sometimes we hadn't finished which was frustrating. I think he found it helpful though because he could be strict about how long we had to talk about things. In a normal classroom, we'd probably have found it difficult to move on to the next task that quickly.
Speaker 1	What about team games? Did you do any of those?
Speaker 2	We tried in some classes. We had one lecturer who was quite adventurous with technology. He attempted to do some writing games where we wrote a story as a group by sending messages to each other. It sounded good and everyone seemed to understand what we had to do. When we did the exercise, some people weren't confident enough with the technology though, so it meant a lot of time was wasted while they worked out how to operate their machines.
Speaker 1	That sounds annoying. Actually, I think I find certain interruptions more annoying when I'm in an online meeting, like when someone forgets to switch their phone off and it goes off when you least expect it.
Speaker 2	I can't stand that, but it's not as bad as losing your connection when you're in the middle of something.
Speaker 1	Yes, I doubt anything can beat that because there's nothing you can do about it. At least if the postman knocks on your door, you can ignore them.
Speaker 2	Or just quickly take in your post. People don't mind that so much, do they?
Speaker 1	No, probably not. So was there anything specifically distracting about being at home? Anything that took you away from your studies?
Speaker 2	You mean like not being able to pass my bedroom without having a lie down? Well, actually, that wasn't the case, but I did find it difficult to drag myself away from the garden sometimes. Doing mindless jobs like washing up, on the other

	hand, was a good way of collecting my thoughts so I think that was all part of the learning process.
Speaker 1	Hmm, one other thing I wanted to ask is how you managed to stop thinking about your studies and relax. Was it difficult?
Speaker 2	I think people have different ways to cope with this, like doing some stretching exercises straight after studying. For me, I would put my laptop and everything else in a box and shut the lid. That enabled me to switch off without having to go off somewhere like the park, although I always enjoy that.
Speaker 1	Well, thanks Wendy for that insight into what studying online is actually like.

Part 3

<p>Speaker 1</p>	<p>Hi and welcome to my podcast. Today I'm going to be talking about my experience at Womad. This UK-based festival takes place in a beautiful location in the county of Wiltshire in July each year. It brings together artists from all parts of the world, celebrating their diverse artistic cultures.</p> <p>I was fortunate enough to be able to take part in the festival last year.</p> <p>This all happened because of a musician friend of mine. She'd told me that the festival organisers were looking for someone to do a poetry reading of their work one evening before one of the comedy acts. It was a great opportunity for me and I loved every minute of it.</p> <p>So what did I think was special about Womad? Well, the programme for the festival was excellent and there was a wide variety of bands, but actually it was really the atmosphere that I'll remember most. All the staff, whatever they were doing, seemed to be having an amazing time and that made such a difference.</p> <p>Like most performers I stayed on the festival site. There was a special place for us to set up our tents behind the stages, away from the busiest areas. There were lots of places for families to camp too but they tended to get a bit chaotic!</p> <p>As you might have expected, one of the downsides was the access to certain facilities - the queues at the showers seemed to stretch for miles! There were plenty of toilets though and no shortage of stalls selling things to eat and drink.</p> <p>There seemed to be a particular emphasis on making the festival a special place for children. There were loads of things for them to do. The <i>World of Children</i> was an area especially for kids and it was open from 9 till 7 each day. I saw these incredible giant puppets outside and the kids could do crafts. Loads of kids were running around wearing T shirts they'd designed and masks they'd created from anything they could find. And the more adventurous could participate in activities such as circus skills. In fact, there were over two hundred free activities that children could do. Some of them got children ready to take part in a parade on the last evening. There was a tent for teenagers too.</p> <p>Another activity that was popular was the opportunity to see cookery demonstrations at the <i>Taste the World</i> stage. This was where celebrities and musicians took a break from performing in order to show an appreciative audience how to prepare one of their favourite dishes from their country. Overall,</p>
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what really impressed me was that they didn't just use a general recipe that you could find in a cookery book or online. The majority of them actually made secret recipes that had been passed down through the generations. It was a wonderful chance to see another side of these famous people.

Something else worth mentioning are the workshops for adults as you don't get these at every festival. There were various types. For example, there were masterclasses run by musicians that were especially popular with those who wanted to improve their technique, whether it be in drumming or singing. There were over eighty during the weekend. One of my favourites was African drumming, which took place most evenings. What was unexpectedly popular given the late nights everyone had was the daily yoga. That really set me up for the busy day ahead.

Answer key

Part 1

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. a
6. c
7. b
8. a
9. a
10. c

Part 2

1. (2/two) kids / kids
2. creative writing
3. participants/people
4. a
5. c
6. a
7. b
8. b
9. c
10. a

Part 3

1. poetry (reading)
2. atmosphere
3. performers
4. showers
5. masks
6. parade
7. demonstrations
8. secret
9. technique
10. (daily) yoga

Practice Test 2: B2 Reading Test

There are 3 parts to the reading test.

You will answer 10 questions in each part.

You have 1 hour and 15 minutes for the reading test.

Reading: Part 1

Read each short text and answer the questions that follow. For each question, choose the correct answer a, b or c.

Text for Questions 1 and 2

Park cafés in London - The Brew House at Kenwood House

The Brew House is a delightful park café located in the famous Kenwood House, a large mansion dating back to the 1600s. Kenwood House is situated within parkland that extends for many miles. When the weather is fine, it's a pleasure to put your feet up while enjoying lunch in The Brew House's peaceful, walled kitchen garden. Many of the herbs grown here are used in the good value food that the café serves. However, the café has an alternative for when it rains. You can have your meal at the tables and benches within The Brew House café itself – perfect if you are part of a larger group.

The Brew House only offers a limited range of dishes, but they're of excellent quality. There's a variety of sandwiches, a soup that changes daily, as well as vegetarian and meat main courses. It's very popular with families so expect a lengthy queue when the weather's good, but don't let that put you off. After grabbing a bite, make sure you sample the homemade ice cream. Why not take it away with you and eat it while taking a stroll around Kenwood House's colourful flower garden? Alternatively, you might like to hike around the rest of the Kenwood Estate, which has grassland, a wood and a pond. You'll need a strong pair of boots though, so this is only advisable for more experienced walkers.

1. What are we told about The Brew House park café at Kenwood House?
 - d. It is in a building attached to the main house.
 - e. It sources only local ingredients for its menu.
 - f. It offers visitors a choice of places to sit.

2. What does the writer recommend that all visitors should do?
 - a. Taste a particular item of food on offer.
 - b. Wander around the rest of the park.
 - c. Avoid going there at certain times.

Text for Questions 3 and 4

Should you be working while studying at university?**Nicola**

For me, having a part-time job while I was an undergraduate student seemed to make sense initially. My family couldn't help me financially, and so working was the only option. I discovered that nightshifts were the most profitable, but they weren't great if you had to wake up early for morning lectures or wanted to have a social life. I soon noticed the effect it was having on my grades. I was a bit stressed and eating more junk food than I did before, though my friends supported me as much as they could. I had to quit in the end – the job that is, rather than university. The benefit was instant, and I walked away with a degree I'm really proud of.

Alexander

Supporting myself financially through university was a necessity rather than a choice. Yet despite the fact that two of my jobs were at the university itself, the system didn't recognise that working students are more likely to have difficulties meeting deadlines. That's why the grade I actually received for my degree was lower than the one my tutors had originally thought I would get. It was a price worth paying though, as I finished my degree in a stronger position than most, due to the experience I'd built up. It even made up for all the partying I missed out on. So yeah, if I could turn back time, I wouldn't change a thing.

3. What did Nicola have difficulty with while at university?
 - a. Keeping her friendships.
 - b. Balancing aspects of her life.
 - c. Finding a well-paid job.

4. What does Alexander suggest he feels unhappy about regarding his university experience?
 - a. The result that was predicted for his studies.
 - b. The lack of time he had to socialise.
 - c. The sense of unfairness he felt.

Text for Questions 5 and 6

Wild swimming

If you're looking for a new leisure activity, why not try wild swimming?

I've always loved swimming, but I've never liked the smell of the chlorine in swimming pools or the way it burnt my eyes. It'd never occurred to me that there was an alternative until a friend took me to a swimming club at an artificial lake right in the centre of town. I was pleased to find that I felt comfortable right away, as club members come in all shapes, sizes and ages, ranging from professional young athletes to older pensioners. The longest-attending members, who literally break the ice with a hammer for their daily swim in winter, were more welcoming than scary which shocked me more than anything else. Yet even this seemed to create a sense of community rather than any anxiety, as I feared it might when I first saw them.

Like other wild swimming locations, you need to take notice of the regulations that prohibit you from swimming under the ice or when it's stormy. When the water's only six degrees Celsius, like it was when I started, it's important you pay attention to advice that newcomers inevitably receive, such as easing yourself into the water gently. Which brings me to why you'd bother when you could just go for a run instead. Well, there's something about the cold water that makes you feel truly alive. So go on, give it a go.

5. What does the writer find surprising about wild swimming?
 - a. The wide variety of people who do it regularly.
 - b. The behaviour of regular participants towards strangers.
 - c. The number of people who regularly do it in winter.

6. What does the writer suggest about wild swimming?
 - a. It's wise to listen to guidance from others.
 - b. It's most enjoyable when there are no rules.
 - c. It's more beneficial than running.

Text for Questions 7 and 8

Diary of an allotment holder

It's been a few years since I started renting my own allotment, one of a group of plots of land for growing fruit and vegetables. Being a city dweller, it's something I had only dreamt about until an elderly neighbour asked if I wanted to take his plot over. I never knew so much joy could be derived from digging up my own potatoes for dinner, even if I'd had to wait several months for them to grow, and I love being able to pop down to the allotment to see what's ready to be harvested, instead of having to rely on the supermarket for dinner. Of course, you don't always gain financially, especially when a crop that you've spent hours looking after fails. But thankfully, there's a real community spirit, which was one of the initial attractions.

Turning to the future, it's hard not to get overly ambitious. I sometimes have visions of supplying my friends with freshly-grown produce, but I need to be realistic. If I can just feed my family, that'll be a huge achievement. And I'm going to have to get used to losing a considerable amount to local wildlife, who seem to instinctively know when things like berries are ready and eat them all before I can. I've also arranged for an expert to advise me on which fruits and vegetables have most flavour. I've learned the hard way that bigger isn't always better, especially with pumpkins and tomatoes.

7. What was an unexpected benefit of taking on an allotment?
- Saving some money on his shopping bill.
 - The amount of pleasure he gained from his new lifestyle.
 - Being able to build a larger social network.
8. In future, the allotment holder believes he will be able to...
- produce more than his requirements.
 - protect plants against pests.
 - grow better-tasting crops.

Text for Questions 9 and 10

Newtown newsletter

Spring is in the air

Now that the icy winter mornings are finally behind us, it's time for all you nature-lovers to get out and about again, especially after last week's neighbourhood litter-picking event. We're spoilt for choice, with hiking, fishing and birdwatching available in our local green spaces. However, if you're heading out into the woods or areas with long grass, it's advisable to apply a good repellent to any bare skin. Late spring and summer are peak seasons for biting insects, such as ticks. If you get bitten, you could get an infection, so it's better to take action by covering up; after all, prevention is better than cure.

Here's the latest from our social events calendar. We've just received confirmation that tickets for the Newtown Youth Orchestra, who will be giving three performances of *Music from the Movies* this summer, are available. If previous years' concerts are anything to go by, this will be a memorable event with world-class music in an open-air setting. Those attending are free to bring a picnic. Each night is sure to end in a spectacular fashion as fireworks are planned to round off the performance.

Consequently, you might want to leave your four-legged friends at home as they are unlikely to appreciate the noise. Parents are welcome to bring their children with them and let them play, as long as their games don't prevent other music enthusiasts from enjoying the talented young performers. Arrive early to get a good place.

9. The purpose of the first paragraph is to ...
- provide a weather report.
 - make a public health announcement.
 - appeal for more environmental awareness.
10. What warning is given about the concert?
- It might be unpleasant for pets.
 - It is not suitable for young children.
 - It is a good idea to buy tickets in advance.

Reading: Part 2

Read the text below and answer questions 1 to 10.

Small ship cruising, UK

The west coast of the British Isles is one of the best places in the UK for bird sightings. However, spotting them from a rugged cliff is not the most advantageous position to be in. You're bound to have more luck out on the open water. So why not consider taking a small ship cruise? The itinerary for our 5-day cruise takes in not only the west coasts of England, Wales and Scotland, but also Rathlin Island and Derry in Northern Ireland, the latter of which is considered to be one of the finest walled cities in Europe.

The ship accommodates 70 passengers, which means you'll have many opportunities to mix with the other guests as well as the experienced crew. This is a vessel designed and used exclusively for tourism. Although we have a schedule, the whole experience is designed to be similar to that of a scientific expedition. We can pause if we see dolphins or a whale, for example, so you'll really have the chance to see both seabird and marine life up close. You'll also be in the exciting position of seeing some of the UK's most remote locations, as the on-board equipment includes landing craft, meaning we can go ashore in places that would otherwise be inaccessible. Our company alone provides services to some of these locations and this small ship cruise is truly a way of making memories to last a lifetime.

Days 1 to 5

Day 1, Plymouth, England

You'll be able to board from mid-afternoon. If you're arriving by bus or train, transfers are provided from the main stations. There'll be time to become acquainted with your fellow guests over drinks. Dinner will be served as the ship sets sail around sunset.

Day 2, Isles of Scilly

Tresco is the second biggest island of the Scilly Isles. One of the things you'll notice when disembarking is the absence of traffic. This is thanks to local efforts to ban most types of motorised vehicle and make it a haven for birds that gather at the island's two freshwater pools. There are special places called hides where you can do some birdwatching – these are free of charge.

Day 3, Lundy and Skomer Islands

We'll stop for a short time on Lundy, an island in the Bristol Channel, before we depart for Skomer. This is one of the most important breeding sites in the UK for puffins, guillemots and other birds, and is home to seals, which can be seen throughout the year. This is thanks to the mild UK weather.

Day 4, Holy Island, Wales

After spending the morning exploring the impressive sea cliffs, it's back on the ship for a trip across the Irish Sea. During this afternoon voyage, there'll be a chance to listen to a lecture in the lounge or you might fancy your chances at spotting marine life from the ship's deck. Be sure to wrap up if you choose the latter option as it can get extremely windy out there.

Day 5, Ailsa Craig, Scotland & Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland

By dawn, we will have stopped at the tiny island of Ailsa Craig, which is famous for its lighthouse. There will be a chance to explore before we leave for historic Rathlin Island. Its population is a fraction of what it used to be but the buildings that remain provide a fascinating insight into life in the past. A guide will take you on a walk to see the thousands of seabirds that call this island home. It is also the largest seabird colony in the island of Ireland.

Questions 1 to 5

For each question, choose True, False or Not Given.

1. It is easier to see birds from a ship out at sea than on dry land.
2. Passengers are encouraged to help with the sailing of the boat.
3. The ship is sometimes used for conducting scientific research.
4. The ship is unable to make any unscheduled stops.
5. Some of the distant places on the cruise are only served by this particular ship.

Questions 6 to 10

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

6. There's no need to book for guests travelling to Plymouth by public transport.
7. Tresco's rules on make it ideal for birdwatching.
8. Skomer is a place where many types of birds go for
9. Passengers can spend the afternoon of Day 4 attending a
10. The cruise's arrival at Ailsa Craig will be around

Reading: Part 3

Read the article and answer questions 1 to 10.

How to reduce waste at home

A

Have you ever felt frustrated by the fact that when one of your home appliances, (such as your washing machine or oven) breaks, it's often more economical to throw it away than to mend it? Well, you're not alone. In fact, a recent survey found that 45 per cent of British people were not aware of a repair service for everyday household appliances near where they live. Clearly, this out-of-date system of purchasing manufactured goods that break (often far too easily), and throwing them away when they do, cannot continue without serious environmental consequences.

B

The system in question is at the heart of most economic activity all over the world. Right from the extraction of valuable raw materials on a massive scale to poor design, manufacturing processes value the speed of production over quality of build and ultimate disposal of appliances. What's more, economies globally have grown to depend on this cycle of unethical consumer behaviour. Yet this system is causing millions of tonnes of waste to be dumped each year and has also bred a culture of waste that would have been alien to previous generations.

C

There are numerous manufactured products which are either difficult or impractical to repair when they break. Top of the list are printers. With so many moving parts that are impossible to buy replacements for, they're one of the items that go to landfill most frequently when they break. They are closely followed by digital products, such as tablets. Many of them look elegant from the outside, but when opened up, the first thing you notice is that parts are glued down so there's a high probability that they will crack if you try to replace them, especially the screen, which needs replacing more often than other parts. Also high on the list of unrepairable products are items that are made of plastic, especially if it's moulded plastic where there may be no way to open it up to look at the inside. And watch out for anything that requires tools like a special screwdriver, such as many toasters, coffee machines and mobile phones.

D

There is much truth in the old saying – ‘they don’t make them like they used to’. Even fifty years ago, products tended to be manufactured in the country where they were sold. This meant that the price of labour for manufacture or repair was roughly the same. However, nowadays, because products are often made more cheaply outside the UK, it’s more economical to throw products away and replace them than pay for them to be repaired. This is even when the costs of the raw materials and shipping are included. It’s easy to see why this business model took over from the previous break-repair cycle.

E

One way of fixing the system would be through greater international cooperation in regard to laws regulating processes. How difficult would it be to force companies to make their products repairable? Instead of high volume and low quality, companies could charge more for better quality products. That would mean fewer products being sold, but at a higher price. Yet this doesn’t address the culture of waste that most people alive today have grown up with. Repair shops should feature on every high street or companies could recycle their own products, using the reusable parts. Inevitably, this would require action from governments, such as lowering taxes. Another thing we all need to get used to is buying things second-hand. There is a certain kind of embarrassment attached to buying these, so this is another area that needs to be addressed.

F

It’s easy to feel pessimistic about our ability to change our habits, but where there’s a will, there’s a way. With more media attention than ever before on the importance of reducing carbon emissions, we’re all going to need to adapt to a world in which products cost more and get over the idea that we should always be looking for bargains. For example, even nowadays, where is the economy in buying a cheap toaster every few years, when there are some on the market that carry a 25-year guarantee and are built to be repaired? These are admittedly more expensive, and therefore out of reach to some individuals, but could these people buy a well-constructed second-hand product instead? One thing is sure, the revolution has begun and now it’s up to all of us to make sure it continues.

Questions 1 to 7

Match each statement (1-7) to the correct paragraph (A-F). You may use each paragraph more than once.

1. A contrast between 2 systems of production: past and present.
2. A global trend towards cheap mass production of goods.
3. Regulations for encouraging manufacturers to change their behaviour.
4. A list of products which are the worst offenders.
5. Different possible approaches for individuals to solve the problem.
6. Current opinions towards used goods.
7. Cost of production encouraging poor consumer behaviour.

Questions 8 to 10

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

8. are one product where spare parts are often unavailable.
9. The high cost of in the UK is one of the reasons why it's cheaper to buy than to repair.
10. The writer points to the role of the in changing consumer behaviour.

Answer key

Part 1

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. c
9. b
10. a

Part 2

1. T
2. NG
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. transfers
7. traffic
8. breeding
9. lecture
10. dawn

Part 3

1. D
2. B
3. E
4. C
5. F
6. E
7. D
8. printers
9. labour
10. media

Practice Test 2: B2 Writing Test

There are 2 parts to this test.

You must write a response to the task in both part 1 and part 2.

You have 1 hour for the B2 Writing Test.

We recommend you spend 20 minutes on Part 1 and 40 minutes on Part 2.

Writing: Part 1

Your local newspaper is asking for recommendations for 'local heroes' – individuals who have helped other people in your community.

You would like to recommend someone you know.

Write an email to the editor of the local newspaper.

In your email:

- say who you would like to recommend and describe the characteristics which make this person a local hero
- explain the kind of help this person has given to people in your local community
- suggest what kind of gift you think this person would like to receive

Write your email here. You should write between 100 and 140 words.

Part 1 sample answer

Dear editor

I would like to recommend my father for the local hero award. He's a kind, generous person who always helps other people in our community. For example, he volunteers at the local soup kitchen at weekends. This is a place where people with no home go and eat a free hot meal and spend the night. After helping cook for them, he stays overnight to help with security, which sometimes means he doesn't get much sleep. He does this regularly even though he's in his 70s.

With regards to the suggestion for an award, my father wouldn't want a big fuss. However, he really enjoys eating out. Therefore, I think a nice meal in an Indian restaurant would be the kind of gift that he would really appreciate.

Yours sincerely

Mary Collins

[134 words]

Comments

This is a good response to the task. The response addresses all the requirements of the task and is set out as a conventional email would be, with a relevant greeting (*Dear editor*) and ending (*Yours sincerely*). The response is appropriately paragraphed, with the first paragraph addressing bullet points 1 and 2 and the second addressing the final bullet point.

The candidate has used a wide range of relevant vocabulary (*kind, generous, volunteers, soup kitchen, overnight, security, big fuss, appreciate*). The candidate has also used more complex structures such as the conditional (*he would really appreciate*) and relative pronouns (*who, which*). The sentences are also linked using a variety of approaches (*After helping..., he stays, However, Therefore*).

Spelling and punctuation are both accurate.

Writing: Part 2

Some people say that in order to get a good job, it's important for young adults to go to university. Other people believe that it's better for them to start work straight after leaving school.

Discuss both of these views and then say which you agree with most.

Write about:

- earning potential
- cost of university
- work experience

Write your answer here. You should write between 150 and 200 words.

Part 2 sample answer

Going to university is the best way to get a good job. However, some people believe that young adults should start work straight away. I'll discuss both of these opinions before giving my own.

Firstly, those who believe it's better for young adults to go to university will undoubtedly mention the young person's earning potential. Certainly, evidence suggests graduates earn more than those who do not have a degree. However, starting from the bottom and working your way up through a company is also a sure way to a high salary eventually. In addition, the substantial cost of attending university is likely to leave graduates with a significant debt that will take many years to repay. This would be avoided by someone who starts work immediately. A final point is that starting work will give young adults an advantage over graduates as they will have more work experience, at least initially.

To conclude, I believe that all young adults would benefit from going to university rather than starting work immediately, mainly because I think it is easier for graduates with a degree to change career later on in life than for those with work experience in one field.

[198 words]

Comments

This is a good response to the task. The response is well organised: the candidate has introduced the topic and explained how they will address it (*I'll discuss both....before giving my own*) in the first paragraph. In paragraph 2, they address all three bullet points and in paragraph 3 they give their opinion. The candidate has also organised their response well using words such as *Firstly, However, In addition, A final point, To conclude*.

The grammar is accurate and the language used shows a good knowledge of a wide range of relevant vocabulary (*undoubtedly, earning potential, evidence suggests, starting from the bottom, substantial cost, attending university, work experience*).

Spelling and punctuation are both accurate.



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