

Assessment 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 tests in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

Version 7.1

Date:

November 21, 2022

Information Classification:

Client Confidential Data

Author: SQA and PSI

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Introduction

The Skills for English tests are for candidates for whom English is not their first language. They assess the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. They measure English language proficiency through practical and authentic tasks that candidates 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
- communicating to describe an experience, give information, or put forward a case

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scotland's national accreditation and awarding body, has produced and developed these tests in conjunction with PSI.

Skills for English tests are delivered online. Candidates can take the tests in multiple locations worldwide, in a variety of settings. They book online and sit the test within a matter of days or even hours of making a booking. Test results are available within 3 to 5 days of the test sitting.

Who is the test for?

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

Preparing for the Skills for English tests helps candidates develop skills that are essential for learning, life and work. Having an established level of English language helps to increase confidence, and successful candidates should be able to communicate ideas, opinions and feelings effectively and respond to those of other people. It can therefore help people to participate more fully in life within an English-speaking environment. The Skills for English tests assess candidates on their personal, social and transactional English in a variety of authentic contexts.

Aim of the tests

The tests provide evidence of English language proficiency for the purposes of acquiring a visa to enter the UK.

At levels A1, A2 and B1 (two components: Speaking and Listening), candidates demonstrate their ability to communicate verbally, to respond to questions about themselves, and to show their understanding of spoken English. The skills assessed include (but are not limited to):

- responding to questions about themselves and their everyday context
- engaging in functional and situational spoken activities, such as giving an invitation
- listening to a series of short texts and answering questions on what they hear

At levels B1, B2, C1 and C2 (four components: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing), candidates demonstrate their ability to deal with more challenging contexts across all four skills. The skills assessed include (but are not limited to):

- 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 suite of Skills for English tests covers six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. These map to the descriptors outlined within the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020). Mapping to the CEFR follows the procedures as recommended in the Council of Europe's 2009 manual [*Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment \(CEFR\)*](#).

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 (*basic user*, Council of Europe, 2001), test components cover speaking and listening skills only, in accordance with UK visa requirements for candidates at these levels.

At B1 level, candidates 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 allows candidates 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.

The following table provides a holistic and summarised set of CEFR levels, adapted from: [Global scale — Table 1 \(CEFR 3.3\): Common Reference levels \(coe.int\)](#)

CEFR Global Scale		
Proficient user	C2	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 themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express themselves 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.
Independent user	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their 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.
	B1	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 & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (for example, 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 their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

CEFR Global Scale		
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they, people they know and things they have. 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 candidates should be able to do in the four skills at each level, please see the following documents available online from the Council of Europe website:

Council of Europe, (2001) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (online pdf available: <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>)

Council of Europe, (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors*. Strasbourg: COE (online pdf available: <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>)

Marking

All Skills for English tests are delivered online. Reading and Listening are automatically marked. Speaking and Writing are recorded digitally during the test session and marked by qualified and trained markers.

Speaking

At A1 and A2 levels, candidates are 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, candidates are 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

At A1 and A2 levels, marks are awarded on the following basis:

- Part 1: 5 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 2: 5 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 3: 5 questions, 1 mark for each correct answer

At B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels, marks are 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 are 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, candidates are marked according to the following criteria:

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

Results

Results are *pass* or *fail* only at A1, A2, C1 and C2 levels. Candidates must pass every component at their given level to be certificated.

At B1 and B2 levels, candidates are awarded *pass with merit*, *pass* or *fail*. Passing with merit represents a higher level of English language ability than that achieved with the test level *pass* mark. Specifically, passing with merit reflects a skill level consistent with the CEFR plus descriptors at B1 and B2 (B1+ and B2+).

At the B1 level, a strong performance is distinguished from a passing performance with the 'addition of a number of descriptors which focus on the exchange of quantities of information.' (Council of Europe, 2001).

At the B2 level, a strong performance is distinguished from a passing performance with a 'focus on discourse skills. The new degree of discourse competence shows itself in conversational management (co-operating strategies). It is also apparent in relation to

coherence/cohesion. Finally, it is at this band that there is a concentration of items on negotiating.' (Council of Europe, 2001).

Candidates are only awarded the overall *pass with merit* grade if they achieve a *pass with merit* in each of the components. If candidates score a mix of *pass* and *pass with merit*, they are awarded the overall *pass* grade.

Should a candidate fail any single component, then the overall grade is a *fail*. Candidates' overall results are determined by their performance across all components for a given level.

At A1, A2, C1 and C2 levels, the results candidates receive are:

Pass: candidates can use this for their visa application.

Fail: candidates cannot use this for their visa application.

At B1 and B2 levels, the results candidates receive are:

Pass: candidates can use this for their visa application.

Pass with merit: candidates can use this for their visa application.

Fail: candidates cannot use this for their visa application.

Skills for English A1

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	15	approximately 10 minutes
Component 2: Listening	15	approximately 20 minutes

Total number of marks: 30

Topics covered at A1

Candidates at this level may need to engage in topics like these in each of the components of the Skills for English Speaking and Listening tests:

- family
- likes and dislikes
- home country
- times, locations and numbers
- daily routines, and weekend and leisure activities
- homes, rooms and where you live
- using 'can' and 'can't' to express ability and make requests
- making, accepting and refusing invitations
- making arrangements
- making suggestions, and accepting or refusing them
- talking about current activities
- describing people and places
- explaining basic problems
- writing simple instructions
- talking about future plans with 'going to'
- weather

A1 Speaking

Format of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2, and hear and see the prompts in part 3.

A1 Speaking (approximately 10 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: approximately 4 minutes
Part 3	Task: role play The role play has a clear purpose, such as describing an event to a friend or communicating with a shop assistant. Candidates respond to five prompts or questions.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts or questions provided or they can give further information.</p> <p>If they provide information that does not relate to the context of the role play, candidates cannot score the full range of marks available on the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>).</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: approximately 4 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: Can describe themselves, what they do and where they live. Can describe simple aspects of their everyday life in a series of simple sentences, using simple words/signs and basic phrases, provided they can prepare in advance.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: Can name an object and indicate its shape and colour while showing it to others using basic words/signs, phrases and formulaic expressions, provided they can prepare in advance.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</p> <p>Understanding an interlocutor: Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them clearly and slowly, with repetition, by a sympathetic interlocutor. Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions.</p> <p>Conversation: Can take part in a simple conversation of a basic factual nature on a predictable topic (for example, their home country, family, school). Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions. Can ask how people are and react to news.</p> <p>Goal-oriented co-operation: Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions. Can act on basic instructions that involve times, locations, numbers, etc. Can ask people for things and give people things.</p>

	<p>Obtaining goods and services: Can ask people for things and give people things. Can ask for food and drink using basic expressions. Can handle numbers, quantities, cost and time.</p> <p>Information exchange: Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. Can ask and answer questions about themselves and other people, where they live, people they know, things they have. Can indicate time by lexicalised phrases like “next week”, “last Friday”, “in November”, “3 o’clock”. Can express numbers, quantities and cost in a limited way. Can name the colour of clothes or other familiar objects and can ask the colour of such objects.</p> <p>Informal discussion: Can exchange likes and dislikes for sports, foods, etc., using a limited repertoire of expressions, when addressed clearly, slowly and directly.</p> <p>Interviewing and being interviewed: Can reply in an interview to simple direct questions, put very slowly and clearly in direct, non-idiomatic language, about personal details. Can state in simple language the nature of a problem to a health professional and answer simple questions such as “Does that hurt?” even though they have to rely on gestures and body language to reinforce the message.</p> <p>General linguistic range: Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type. Can use some basic structures in one-clause sentences with some omission or reduction of elements.</p> <p>Propositional precision: Can communicate basic information about personal details and needs of a concrete type in a simple way.</p> <p>Fluency: Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words/signs, and to repair communication.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p>
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A1 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English A1 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

A1 Listening (approximately 20 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on five short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogues or monologues.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer a single three-option multiple-choice question for each recording.</p> <p>Questions focus on key information.</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on a recorded conversation</p> <p>The conversation involves two speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer five three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Questions focus on key information which can come from one or both speakers.</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Part 3	<p>Task: listen to and give key details on a recorded monologue</p> <p>The monologue may, for example, be someone leaving a phone message or making an announcement.</p> <p>Question type: drag and drop</p> <p>Candidates use the information they have heard to complete five sentences, choosing their answers from ten options.</p>

	<p>Questions focus on key information.</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can follow language which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for them to assimilate meaning. Can recognise concrete information (for example, places and times) on familiar topics encountered in everyday life, provided it is delivered slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: Can understand some expressions when people are discussing them, family, school, hobbies or surroundings, provided the delivery is slow and clear. Can understand words and short sentences in a simple conversation (for example, between a customer and a salesperson in a shop), provided people communicate very slowly and very clearly.</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: Can understand in outline very simple information being explained in a predictable situation like a guided tour, provided the delivery is very slow and clear and that there are long pauses from time to time.</p> <p>Understanding announcements and instructions: Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions. Can understand when someone tells them slowly and clearly where something is, provided the object is in the immediate environment. Can understand figures, prices and times given slowly and clearly in an announcement by loudspeaker, for example, at a railway station or in a shop.</p> <p>Understanding audio, media and recordings: Can pick out concrete information (for example, places and times) from short audio recordings on familiar everyday topics, provided they are delivered very slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: Can deduce the meaning of an unknown word for a concrete action or object, provided the surrounding text is very simple and on a familiar everyday subject.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p>

Skills for English A2

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	15	approximately 10 minutes
Component 2: Listening	15	approximately 25 minutes

Total number of marks: 30

Topics covered at A2

Candidates are expected to engage with topics listed at A1 as well as the following:

- current work and studies
- past and future work and studies
- general health, medication and labels
- accommodation
- local area
- socializing
- personal opinions
- free time and going out
- television and media
- holiday and festivals
- food and ingredients
- shopping, returns, ordering and complaining
- emergencies, lost and found
- enquiries and bookings
- travel, maps, timetables and directions

A2 Speaking

Format of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2, and hear and see the prompts in part 3.

A2 Speaking (approximately 10 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: approximately 4 minutes
Part 3	Task: role play The role play has a clear purpose, such as describing an event to a friend or communicating with a shop assistant. Candidates respond to five prompts or questions.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts or questions provided or they can give further information.</p> <p>If they provide information that does not relate to the context of the role play, candidates cannot score the full range of marks available on the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>).</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: approximately 4 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. Likes/dislikes etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experiences: Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can describe everyday aspects of their environment, for example, people, places, a job or study experience. Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities. Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences. Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions. Can explain what they like or dislike about something. Can describe their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms. Can express what they are good at and not so good at (for example, sports, games, skills, subjects). Can briefly describe what they plan to do at the weekend or during the holidays.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: Can give simple directions on how to get from X to Y, using basic expressions such as "turn right" and "go straight", along with sequential connectors such as "first", "then" and "next".</p> <p>Sustained Monologue: putting a case: Can explain what they like or dislike about something, why they prefer one thing to another, making</p>

simple, direct comparisons. Can present their opinion in simple terms, provided interlocutors are patient.

Understanding an interlocutor: Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort. Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to them in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the interlocutor can take the trouble.

Conversation: Can establish social contact (for example, greetings and farewells, introductions, giving thanks). Can express how they feel in simple terms, and express thanks. Can ask for a favour (for example, to borrow something), can offer a favour, and can respond if someone asks them to do a favour for them. Can use simple, everyday, polite forms of greeting and address. Can converse in simple language with peers, colleagues or members of a host family, asking questions and understanding answers relating to most routine matters. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions and apologies. Can express how they are feeling, using very basic stock expressions. Can state what they like and dislike.

Goal-oriented cooperation: Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when they do not understand. Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions, and asking for and giving directions. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks using simple phrases to ask for and provide things, to get simple information and to discuss what to do next.

Obtaining goods and services: Can deal with common aspects of everyday living such as travel, lodging, eating and shopping. Can interact in predictable everyday situations (for example, post office, station, shop), using a wide range of simple expressions. Can get all the information needed from a tourist office, as long as it is of a straightforward, non-specialised nature. Can ask for and provide everyday goods and services. Can get simple information about travel, use public transport (for example, buses, trains, taxis), ask and give directions, and buy tickets. Can ask about things and make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks. Can give and receive information about quantities, numbers, prices, etc. Can make simple purchases by stating what is wanted and asking the price. Can order a meal. Can point out when something is wrong (for example, "The food is cold" or "There is no light in my room").

Information exchange: Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort. Can deal with practical

everyday demands: finding out and passing on straightforward factual information. Can ask and answer questions about habits and routines. Can ask and answer questions about pastimes and past activities. Can ask and answer questions about plans and intentions. Can give and follow simple directions and instructions, for example, explain how to get somewhere. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information. Can exchange limited information on familiar and routine operational matters. Can ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in their free time. Can ask for and give directions referring to a map or plan. Can ask for and provide personal information. Can ask and answer simple questions about an event (for example, ask where and when it took place, who was there and what it was like).

Informal discussion: Can exchange opinions and compare things and people using simple language. Can discuss what to do in the evening or at the weekend. Can make and respond to suggestions. Can agree and disagree with others. Can discuss everyday practical issues in a simple way when addressed clearly, slowly and directly. Can discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet. Can express opinions in a limited way.

Interviewing and being interviewed: Can make themselves understood in an interview and communicate ideas and information on familiar topics, provided they can ask for clarification occasionally, and are given some help to express what they want to. Can describe to a doctor very basic symptoms and ailments such as a cold or the flu. Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview. Can indicate in simple language the nature of a problem to a health professional, perhaps using gestures and body language.

General linguistic range: Has a repertoire of basic language which enables them to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though they will generally have to compromise the message and search for words/signs. Can produce brief, everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type (for example, personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information). Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words/signs and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places, possessions, etc. Has a limited repertoire of short, memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.

Propositional precision: Can communicate what they want to say in a simple and direct exchange of limited information on familiar and

routine matters, but in other situations they generally have to compromise the message.

Fluency: Can make themselves understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident. Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.

Notes:

- 1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at A2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1 level.

A2 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English A2 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

A2 Listening (approximately 25 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on five short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogues or monologues.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer a single three-option multiple-choice question for each recording.</p> <p>Questions focus on key information.</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on a recorded conversation</p> <p>The conversation involves two speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer five three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Questions focus on key information, which can come from one or both speakers.</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Part 3	<p>Task: listen to a recorded monologue to give key details</p> <p>The monologue may, for example, be someone leaving a phone message or making an announcement.</p> <p>Question type: drag and drop</p> <p>Candidates complete five sentences based on what they have heard, choosing their answers from ten options.</p>

	<p>Questions focus on key information.</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues</p> <p>Number of questions: five</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly. Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (for example, very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment), provided people articulate clearly and slowly.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: Can generally identify the topic of discussion around them when it is conducted slowly and clearly. Can recognise when people agree and disagree in a conversation conducted slowly and clearly. Can follow in outline short, simple social exchanges, conducted very slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: Can follow the general outline of a demonstration or presentation on a familiar or predictable topic, where the message is expressed slowly and clearly in simple language and there is visual support (for example, slides, handouts). Can follow a very simple, well-structured presentation or demonstration, provided it is illustrated with slides, concrete examples or diagrams, it is delivered slowly and clearly with repetition, and the topic is familiar. Can understand the outline of simple information given in a predictable situation, such as on a guided tour (for example, "This is where the President lives").</p> <p>Understanding announcements and instructions: Can understand and follow a series of instructions for familiar everyday activities such as sports, cooking, etc., provided they are delivered slowly and clearly. Can understand straightforward announcements (for example, of a cinema programme or sports event, that a train has been delayed), provided the delivery is slow and clear. Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. Can understand simple directions on how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport. Can understand basic instructions on times, dates and numbers, etc., and on routine tasks and assignments to be carried out.</p> <p>Understanding audio media and recordings: Can understand the most important information contained in short commercials concerning goods and services of interest (for example, CDs, video games, travel). Can understand in an interview what people say they do in their free time, what they particularly like doing and what they do not like doing, provided they speak slowly and clearly. Can understand and extract the essential</p>

information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly. Can extract important information from short broadcasts (for example, the weather forecast, concert announcements, sports results), provided people talk clearly. Can understand the important points of a story and manage to follow the plot, provided the story is told slowly and clearly.

Identifying cues and inferring: Can use an idea of the overall meaning of short texts and utterances on everyday topics of a concrete type to derive the probable meaning of unknown words from the context. Can exploit their recognition of known words to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words in short expressions used in routine everyday contexts. Can exploit numbers, dates, names, proper nouns, etc. to identify the topic of a text.

Notes:

- 1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at A2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1 level.

Skills for English B1

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	30	approximately 14 minutes
Component 2: Listening	30	approximately 40 minutes
Component 3: Reading	30	60 minutes
Component 4: Writing	30	60 minutes

Note: B1 candidates can choose to take components 1 and 2 only and be certificated for speaking and listening skills, or to be assessed on all four skills, taking components 1 to 4.

Total number of marks: 60 (2-component test) and **120** (4-component test)

Topics covered at B1

Candidates 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 the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2, and see the prompts in part 3.

B1 Speaking (approximately 14 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: 4 to 5 minutes
Part 3	Task: talk at length The scenario has a clear purpose, such as giving advice to a friend. Candidates respond to five prompts.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts provided or they can give further information.</p> <p>If their response does not relate to the context of the task, they cannot score the full range of marks available on the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>).</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: 4 to 5 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: Can clearly express feelings about something experienced and give reasons to explain those feelings. Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within their field of interest. Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a sequence of points. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions. Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, for example, an accident. Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe their reactions. Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions. Can describe events, real or imagined. Can narrate a story.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: 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, for example to indicate the nature of a problem or to give detailed directions, provided they can prepare beforehand.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: putting a case: 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 on subjects relating to everyday life, using simple expressions. Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can explain whether or not they approve of what someone has done and give reasons to justify this opinion.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their 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, etc. Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most</p>

situations likely to arise while travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, and express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (for example, family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

Conversation: Can start up a conversation and help keep it going by asking people relatively spontaneous questions about a special experience or event, expressing reactions and opinions on familiar subjects. Can have relatively long conversations on subjects of common interest, provided the interlocutor makes an effort to support understanding. Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics. Can follow clearly articulated language directed at them in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words/signs. Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to express exactly what they would like to. Can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference.

Informal discussion with friends: Can follow much of what is said around them on general topics, provided interlocutors avoid very idiomatic usage and articulate clearly. Can express their thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music or films. 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 make their opinions and reactions understood as regards solutions to problems or practical questions of where to go, what to do, or how to organise an event (for example, an outing). Can express beliefs, opinions and agreement and disagreement politely.

Goal-oriented co-operation: Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, and compare and contrast alternatives. Can give brief comments on the views of others. Can make their opinions and reactions understood as regards possible solutions or the question of what to do next, giving brief reasons and explanations.

Obtaining goods and services: Can deal with most transactions likely to arise while travelling, arranging travel or accommodation, or dealing with authorities during a foreign visit. 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, post offices, banks, for example, returning an unsatisfactory purchase. Can make a complaint. Can deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel

arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling, for example, asking a passenger where to get off for an unfamiliar destination.

Information exchange: Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within their field with some confidence. Can summarise and give their opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview or documentary and answer further questions of detail. Can find out and pass on straightforward factual information. Can ask for and follow detailed directions. Can obtain more detailed information. Can offer advice on simple matters within their field of experience.

Interviewing and being interviewed: Can provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation (for example, describe symptoms to a doctor), but with limited precision. Can take some initiative in an interview/consultation (for example, to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on the interviewer in the interaction. Can describe symptoms in a simple way and ask for advice when using health services.

Addressing audiences: Can give a prepared presentation on a familiar topic within their field, outlining similarities and differences (for example, between products, countries/regions, plans). Can give a prepared straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within their field which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision.

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 themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions 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.

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 the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly.

Fluency: Can express themselves with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and “cul-de-sacs”, they are able to keep going effectively without help. Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.

Notes:

- 1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1 and A2 levels.

B1 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English B1 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

B1 Listening (approximately 40 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on ten short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogue or monologue.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer a single three-option multiple-choice question for each recording.</p> <p>Focus: identifying key information</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on a recorded conversation</p> <p>The conversation involves two or three speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer ten three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Answers can come from all speakers.</p> <p>Focus: understanding specific, detailed information, opinions, attitudes and feelings, agreement or disagreement, and negotiation of meaning</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues, can be work or study oriented, but the focus of questions is general in nature and accessible to all candidates</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 3	<p>Task: show understanding of a recording of an extended monologue by answering questions</p> <p>The monologue should be on a topic of general interest, like a tourist site, and may be informal or presented in a more academic context.</p>

	<p>Question type: drag and drop</p> <p>Candidates complete two sets of five sentences or notes, choosing answers from ten options for each set.</p> <p>Focus: key information, main ideas, detailed or specific information, attitudes and opinions</p> <p>Topics: everyday issues, can be work or study oriented, but the focus of questions is general in nature and accessible to all candidates</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety. Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: Can follow much of everyday conversation and discussion, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or in a familiar variety. Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around them, provided it is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: Can follow a lecture or talk within their own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured. Can distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in standard lectures on familiar subjects, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety. Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics, provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard language or a familiar variety. Can understand the main points of what is said in a straightforward monologue (for example, a guided tour), provided the delivery is clear and relatively slow.</p> <p>Understanding announcements and instructions: 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>

Understanding audio media and recordings: Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard language. Can understand the main points of 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 (for example, a description of a holiday), provided the delivery is slow and clear.

Identifying cues and inferring: Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can listen to a short narrative and predict what will happen next. Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (for example, however, because) and temporal connectors (for example, after that, beforehand). Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words in a text by identifying their constituent parts (for example, identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).

Notes:

- 1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.
- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1 and A2 levels.

B1 Reading

Format of the Reading test

The Skills for English B1 Reading test has three parts. The test is computer marked.

B1 Reading (60 minutes)

Part 1 (20 minutes)	Task: identify the main message within a piece of writing by answering questions Text type: ten short texts (messages including digital, signs, notices, adverts) Question type: multiple-choice Candidates answer a single three-option multiple-choice question for each text. Focus: understanding of key information Number of questions: 10
Part 2 (20 minutes)	Task: read for information, orientation and instruction Text type: brochures, manuals, letters of instruction or communication (for example, from local councils, hospitals), leaflets Question types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • true, false or not given • three-option multiple-choice • matching (for example, topic to paragraph) Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type. Focus: understanding of key information Number of questions: 10
Part 3 (20 minutes)	Task: show understanding of key messages in long form writing by answering questions Text type: longer texts, exploring particular topics in some depth — can be factual or narrative

	<p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three-option multiple-choice • matching (for example, topic to paragraph) • drag and drop — completing sentences or notes <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, inference and global meaning, opinions, attitudes and the writer's purpose</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall reading comprehension: Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.</p> <p>Reading correspondence: 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, e-mails or postings giving a relatively detailed account of events and experiences. Can understand standard formal correspondence and online postings in their area of professional interest.</p> <p>Reading for orientation: 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 the labels on foodstuff 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 there are not too many abbreviations.</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: Can understand straightforward, factual texts on subjects relating to their interests or studies. Can understand short texts on subjects that are familiar or of current interest, in which people give their points of view (for example, critical contributions to an online discussion forum or readers' letters to the editor). Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment</p>

of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail. Can recognise significant points in straightforward news articles on familiar subjects. Can understand most factual information that they are likely to come across on familiar subjects of interest, provided they have sufficient time for rereading. Can understand the main points in descriptive notes such as those on museum exhibits and explanatory boards in exhibitions.

Reading instructions: Can understand instructions and procedures in the form of a continuous text, for instance in a manual, provided they are familiar with the type of process or product concerned. Can understand clearly expressed, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment. Can follow simple instructions given on packaging (for example, cooking instructions). Can understand most short safety instructions, (for example, on public transport or in manuals for the use of electrical equipment).

Reading as a leisure activity: Can read newspaper/magazine accounts of films, books, concerts, etc. produced for a wider audience and understand the main points. Can understand simple poems and song lyrics provided these employ straightforward language and style. Can understand descriptions of places, events, explicitly expressed feelings and perspectives in narratives, guides and magazine articles that employ high frequency everyday language. Can understand a travel diary mainly describing the events of a journey and the experiences and discoveries of the writer. 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 (numerical, temporal, logical) 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/signs from the context on topics related to their field and interests. Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words/signs from the context and deduce sentence meaning, provided the topic discussed is familiar. Can make basic inferences or predictions about text content from headings, titles or headlines. Can follow a line of argumentation or the sequence of events in a story, by focusing on common logical connectors (for example, however, because) and temporal connectors (for example, after that, beforehand). Can deduce the probable meaning of unknown words/signs in a text by identifying their constituent parts (for example, identifying roots, lexical elements, suffixes and prefixes).

Notes:

1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to

	<p>assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p> <p>3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1 and A2 levels.</p>
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B1 Writing

Format of the Writing test

The Skills for English B1 Writing test has two parts.

B1 Writing (60 minutes)

<p>Part 1 (approximately 20 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a short email, forum or social media post, or similar piece of communication</p> <p>The task sets out a context or problem, with an identified audience (for example, a friend) for candidates to address. The information that candidates need to communicate is given in three bullet points.</p> <p>Responses can be formal or informal and should allow candidates to respond with a greeting, give the prescribed information, and close with a summary or comment.</p> <p>Focus: written communication with identified audience, interactional and digital, with a clear purpose, covering a variety of functions needed in everyday contexts; for example, invitations and applications</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, accessible to all candidates and not requiring specialist vocabulary</p> <p>Number of required words in response: 70 to 100</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
<p>Part 2 (approximately 40 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a short discursive piece in response to a written stimulus</p> <p>The written stimulus gives the context and the issue to be discussed, and explains that candidates need to communicate the information given in the three bullet points.</p> <p>The candidate's response should comprise an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, which may involve the candidate's own opinion.</p> <p>Focus: writing a longer piece of discursive communication</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, accessible to all candidates and not requiring specialist vocabulary</p>

	<p>Number of required words in response: 110 to 130</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall written production: Can produce straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</p> <p>Creative writing: Can clearly signal chronological sequence in narrative text. Can give a simple review of a film, book or TV programme using a limited range of language. Can give straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest. Can give accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple, connected text. Can give a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined. Can narrate a story.</p> <p>Written reports and essays: Can produce short, simple essays on topics of interest. Can produce a text on a topical subject of personal interest, using simple language to list advantages and disadvantages, and give and justify their opinion. Can summarise, report and give their opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within their field with some confidence. Can produce very brief reports in a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.</p> <p>Overall written interaction: Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information, and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision. Can compose personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point they feel to be important.</p> <p>Correspondence: Can compose personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music or film. Can compose letters expressing different opinions and giving detailed accounts of personal feelings and experiences. Can reply to an advertisement in writing and ask for further information on items that interest them. Can compose basic formal e-mails/letters (for example, to make a complaint and request action). Can compose personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail. Can compose basic e-mails/letters of a factual nature (for example, to request information or to ask for and give confirmation). Can compose 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 and explaining problems. Can formulate notes conveying simple information of immediate relevance to friends, service people, teachers and others who feature in their everyday life, getting across comprehensibly the points they feel are important. Can take messages over the phone containing several points, provided the caller dictates these clearly and sympathetically.

Online conversation and discussion: 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 they 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, though lexical limitations sometimes cause repetition and inappropriate formulation.

Planning: Can work out how to communicate the main point(s) they want to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what they 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 themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions 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 themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their 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 discussing familiar topics.

Grammatical accuracy: Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control. Errors occur, but it is clear

what they are 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 they want.

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 their 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 (for example, with “however”). 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, for example, 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 the point they feel is most important. Can express the main point they want to make comprehensibly.

Notes:

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- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-A2 levels.

Skills for English B2

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	30	approximately 15 minutes
Component 2: Listening	30	approximately 40 minutes
Component 3: Reading	30	75 minutes
Component 4: Writing	30	60 minutes

Total number of marks: 120

Topics covered at B2

Candidates should engage with topics listed for levels A1, A2 and B1 as well as the following:

- learning and studying
- family life
- signs, notices, maps and directions
- films, reviews and the cinema
- hobbies and sports
- cultures, festivals and customs
- television, radio and newspapers
- modes of transport, types of accommodation
- travel in the UK and being a tourist
- climate change
- looking for work, describing jobs and applying for jobs
- health problems and visiting doctor, health centre or NHS services
- public and private systems
- wildlife and the environment
- science and space travel

B2 Speaking

Format of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2 and see the prompts in part 3.

B2 Speaking (approximately 15 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: 5 to 7 minutes
Part 3	Task: talk at length The scenario has a clear purpose, such as giving advice to a friend. Candidates respond to five prompts.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts provided or give further information.</p> <p>If their response does not relate to the context of the task, they cannot score the full range of marks available on the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>)</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: 5 to 6 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest. Can describe the personal significance of events and experiences in detail.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: Can communicate complex information and advice on the full range of matters related to their occupational role. Can communicate detailed information reliably. Can give a clear, detailed description of how to carry out a procedure.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: putting a case: Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples. Can construct a chain of reasoned argument. Can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with users of the target language, quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, and account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.</p>

Conversation: Can establish a relationship with interlocutors through sympathetic questioning and expressions of agreement plus, if appropriate, comments about third parties or shared conditions. Can indicate reservations and reluctance, state conditions when agreeing to requests or granting permission, and ask for understanding of their own position. Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a [audially/visually] noisy environment. Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient language user. Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.

Informal discussion with friends: Can keep up with an animated discussion between proficient users of the target language. Can express their ideas and opinions with precision, and present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly. Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting a point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses. Can account for and sustain their opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.

Goal-oriented co-operation: Can understand detailed instructions reliably. Can help along the progress of the work by inviting others to join in, express what they think, etc. Can outline an issue or a problem clearly, speculating about causes or consequences, and weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.

Obtaining goods and services: Can cope linguistically to negotiate a solution to a dispute like an undeserved traffic ticket, financial responsibility for damage in a flat, or blame regarding an accident. Can outline a case for compensation, using persuasive language to demand satisfaction and state clearly the limits to any concession they are prepared to make. Can state requirements and ask detailed questions regarding more complex services, for example, rental agreements. Can explain a problem which has arisen and make it clear that the provider of the service/customer must make a concession.

Information exchange: Can understand and exchange complex information and advice on the full range of matters related to their occupational role. Can use appropriate technical terminology when exchanging information or discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists. Can pass on detailed information reliably.

Interviewing and being interviewed: Can carry out an effective, fluent interview, departing spontaneously from prepared questions, following up and probing interesting replies.

Addressing audiences: Can give a clear, systematically developed presentation, with highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can give a clear, prepared presentation, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

General linguistic range: Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

Propositional precision: Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, though their language lacks expressive power and idiomaticity.

Fluency: Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of language. Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although they can be hesitant as they search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with users of the target language quite possible without imposing strain on either party.

Notes:

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- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B1 levels.

B2 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English B2 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

B2 Listening (approximately 40 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on ten short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogues or monologues.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer a single three-option multiple-choice question for each recording.</p> <p>Focus: identifying key information</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to a recorded conversation and answer questions</p> <p>The conversation involves two or three speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question types: sentence completion and multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates use what they have heard to fill in missing information and complete three sentences. When completing sentences candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Candidates answer seven three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Answers can come from all speakers.</p> <p>Focus: understanding specific, detailed information; opinions, attitudes and feelings; agreement or disagreement; some negotiation of meaning</p> <p>Topics: can be everyday issues, and can be work or study oriented, but need to be general in nature and accessible to all candidates</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

Part 3	<p>Task: show understanding of a recording of an extended monologue by answering questions</p> <p>The monologue should be on a topic of general interest, like a tourist site, and may be informal or presented in a more academic context.</p> <p>Question type: sentence completion</p> <p>Candidates fill in the missing single word or two-word phrase to complete ten sentences, using information given in the recording.</p> <p>When completing sentences, candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number only • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Focus: key information, main ideas, detailed or specific information, attitudes and opinions</p> <p>Topics: can be everyday issues, and can be work or study oriented, but need to be general in nature and accessible to all candidates</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: Can keep up with an animated conversation between proficient users of the target language. Can with some effort catch much of what is said around them, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several users of the target language who do not modify their language in any way. Can identify the main reasons for and against an argument or idea in a discussion conducted in clear standard language or a familiar variety. Can follow chronological sequence in extended informal discourse, for example, in a story or anecdote.</p>

Understanding as a member of a live audience: Can understand essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex. Can understand the point of view expressed on topics that are of current interest or that relate to their specialised field, provided the talk is delivered in standard language or a familiar variety. Can follow complex lines of argument in a clearly articulated lecture, provided the topic is reasonably familiar. Can distinguish main themes from asides, provided the lecture or talk is delivered in standard language or a familiar variety. Can recognise the point of view expressed and distinguish this from facts being reported.

Understanding announcements and instructions: Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety at normal speed. Can understand detailed instructions well enough to be able to follow them successfully.

Understanding audio media and recordings: Can understand recordings in the standard form of the language likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content. Can understand most documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast material delivered in the standard form of the language and can identify mood, attitude, etc.

Identifying cues and inferring: Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

Notes:

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- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B1 levels.

B2 Reading

Format of the Reading test

The Skills for English B2 Reading test has three parts. The test is computer marked.

B2 Reading (75 minutes)

Part 1 (25 minutes)	<p>Task: identify the main message within a piece of writing by answering questions</p> <p>Text type: five short texts (film reviews, news reports, informational web pages, blogs and travel logs)</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer two three-option multiple-choice questions per text; questions follow the order of the text.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding; questions can also focus on vocabulary or specific phrases used within the context of each text</p> <p>All texts have a title.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2 (25 minutes)	<p>Task: read for information, orientation and instruction</p> <p>Text types: brochures, manuals, letters of instruction or communication (for example, from local councils, hospitals), leaflets, guides, emails and other online materials</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • true, false or not given • sentences completion using one or two words and/or a number • matching (for example, topic to paragraph) <p>There is a maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding of gist, inference and global meaning, opinions, attitudes and the writer's purpose</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

<p>Part 3 (25 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: show understanding of key messages in long form writing by answering questions</p> <p>Text types: longer texts, exploring a particular topic in some depth; factual or narrative in nature (for example, articles) and, where possible, should have a UK context, without causing accessibility issues</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three-option multiple-choice • matching (for example, topic to paragraph) • sentence completion using one or two words and/or a number <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>One multiple-choice question could focus on a good title for the text.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding of gist, inference and global meaning, opinions, attitudes and the writer's purpose</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<p>Relevant CEFR descriptors</p>	<p>Overall reading comprehension: Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.</p> <p>Reading correspondence: Can read correspondence relating to their field of interest and readily grasp the essential meaning. Can understand what is said in a personal e-mail or posting even where some colloquial language is used.</p> <p>Reading for orientation: Can scan quickly through several sources (articles, reports, websites, books, etc.) in parallel, in both their own field and in related fields, and can identify the relevance and usefulness of particular sections for the task at hand. Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: Can obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised sources within their field. Can understand specialised articles outside their field, provided they can use a dictionary occasionally to confirm their interpretation of terminology. Can</p>

understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which particular stances or viewpoints are adopted. Can recognise when a text provides factual information and when it seeks to convince readers of something. Can recognise different structures in discursive text: contrasting arguments, problem–solution presentation and cause–effect relationships.

Reading instructions: Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in their field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided they can reread difficult sections.

Reading as a leisure activity: Can read for pleasure with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts (for example, magazines, more straightforward novels, history books, biographies, travelogues, guides, lyrics, poems), using appropriate reference sources selectively.

Identifying cues and inferring: Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including watching out for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

Notes:

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- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B1 levels.

B2 Writing

Format of the Writing test

The Skills for English B2 Writing test has two parts.

B2 Writing (60 minutes)

Part 1 (approximately 20 minutes)	<p>Task: write a short email, forum or social media post, or similar piece of communication</p> <p>The task sets out a context or problem, with an identified audience (for example, a friend) for candidates to address. The information that candidates need to communicate is given in three bullet points.</p> <p>Responses can be formal or informal and should allow candidates to respond with a greeting, give the prescribed information, and close with a summary or comment.</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 for example, apologising or making a complaint</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, accessible to all candidates and not requiring specialist vocabulary</p> <p>Number of words required in response: 100 to 140</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
Part 2 (approximately 40 minutes)	<p>Task: write a short discursive piece in response to a written stimulus</p> <p>The written stimulus gives the context and the issue to be discussed, and explains that candidates need to communicate the information given in the three bullet points.</p> <p>The candidate's response should comprise an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, which may involve the candidate's own opinion.</p> <p>Focus: writing a longer piece of discursive communication</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, accessible to all candidates and not requiring specialist vocabulary</p>

	<p>Number of words required in response: 150 to 200</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall written production: Can produce clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.</p> <p>Creative writing: Can give clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned. Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to their field of interest. Can give a review of a film, book or play.</p> <p>Written reports and essays: Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. Can produce a detailed description of a complex process. Can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem. Can produce an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources.</p> <p>Overall written interaction: Can express news and views effectively in writing and relate to those of others.</p> <p>Correspondence: Can maintain a relationship through personal correspondence using the language fluently and effectively to give detailed descriptions of experiences, pose sympathetic questions and follow up issues of mutual interest. Can in most cases understand idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms in correspondence and other communications and use the most common ones themselves as appropriate to the situation. Can compose formal correspondence such as letters of enquiry, request, application and complaint using appropriate register, structure and conventions. Can compose a forceful but polite letter of complaint, including supporting details and a statement of the desired outcome. Can compose letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views. Can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and e-mails. Can compose formal e-mails/letters of invitation, thanks or apology using appropriate registers and conventions. Can compose non-routine professional letters, using appropriate structure and</p>

conventions, provided these are restricted to matters of fact. Can obtain, by letter or e-mail, information required for a particular purpose, collate it and forward it by e-mail to other people.

Notes, messages and forms: Can take or leave complex personal or professional messages, provided they can ask for clarification or elaboration if necessary.

Online conversation and discussion: Can engage in online exchanges, linking their contributions to previous ones in the thread, understanding cultural implications and reacting appropriately. Can participate actively in an online discussion, stating and responding to opinions on topics of interest at some length, provided contributors avoid unusual or complex language and allow time for responses.

Compensating: Can use circumlocution and paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure. Can address most communication problems by using circumlocution or by avoiding difficult expressions.

Planning: Can plan what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient(s).

General linguistic range: Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

Vocabulary range: Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically.

Grammatical accuracy: Good grammatical control; occasional “slips” or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.

Vocabulary control: Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication.

Orthographic control: Can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions.

	<p>Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence.</p> <p>Flexibility: Can adjust what they say and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient and adopt a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances. Can vary formulation of what they want to say. Can reformulate an idea to emphasise or explain a point.</p> <p>Thematic development: Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly. Can follow the conventional structure of the communicative task concerned when communicating their ideas. Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting their main points with relevant supporting detail and examples. Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting their points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples. Can evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can clearly signal the difference between fact and opinion.</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some “jumpiness” in a long contribution. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices. Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs.</p> <p>Propositional precision: Can pass on detailed information reliably. Can communicate the essential points even in more demanding situations, although their language lack expressive power and idiomaticity.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p> <p>3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at B2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B1 levels.</p>
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Skills for English C1

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	30	approximately 15 minutes
Component 2: Listening	30	approximately 50 minutes
Component 3: Reading	30	75 minutes
Component 4: Writing	30	60 minutes

Total number of marks: 120

Topics covered at C1

Candidates should engage with topics listed for A1, A2, B1 and B2 as well as the following:

- personal identity and biographies
- technology and space travel
- political systems and politics in general
- hypothetical situations
- environmental and sustainability issues
- community issues

C1 Speaking

Format of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2 and see the prompts in part 3.

C1 Speaking (approximately 15 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: 5 to 7 minutes
Part 3	Task: talk at length The scenario has a clear purpose, such as giving advice to a friend. Candidates respond to five prompts.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts provided or provide further information.</p> <p>If their response does not relate to the context of the task, they cannot score the full range of marks available under the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>).</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: 5 to 6 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding them off with an appropriate conclusion.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: Can communicate clearly detailed distinctions between ideas, concepts and things that closely resemble one other. Can give instructions on carrying out a series of complex professional or academic procedures.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: putting a case: Can argue a case on a complex issue, formulating points precisely and employing emphasis effectively. Can develop an argument systematically in well-structured language, taking into account the interlocutor's perspective, highlighting significant points with supporting examples and concluding appropriately.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</p> <p>Conversation: Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.</p> <p>Informal discussion with friends: Can easily follow and contribute to complex interactions between third parties in group discussion even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Goal-oriented co-operation: Can frame a discussion to decide on a course of action with a partner or group, reporting on what others have said, and summarising, elaborating and weighing up multiple points of view.</p>

Obtaining goods and services: Can negotiate complex or sensitive transactions in public, professional or academic life.

Information exchange: See B2 descriptors.

Interviewing and being interviewed: Can participate fully in an interview, as either interviewer or interviewee, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support, and handling interjections well.

Addressing audiences: Can give a clear, well-structured presentation on a complex subject, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. Can structure a longer presentation appropriately in order to help the audience follow the sequence of ideas and understand the overall argumentation. Can speculate or hypothesise in presenting a complex subject, comparing and evaluating alternative proposals and arguments. Can handle interjections well, responding spontaneously and almost effortlessly.

General linguistic range: Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly, without having to restrict what they want to say.

Propositional precision: Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position.

Fluency: Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.

Notes:

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- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B2 levels.

C1 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English C1 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

C1 Listening (approximately 50 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on five short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogues or monologues.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer two three-option multiple-choice questions per recording; questions follow the order of the recording.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, attitudes and opinions, and inferred meaning</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to a recorded conversation and answer questions</p> <p>The conversation involves two or three speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question types: sentence completion and multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates use what they have heard to fill in missing information and complete three sentences. When completing sentences candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Candidates answer seven three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Answers can come from all speakers.</p> <p>Focus: the understanding of specific, detailed information; differing opinions; implicit attitudes and feelings; nuances and implied meaning, and relationships between speakers</p> <p>Topics: any aspect of everyday life (including work) appropriate in complexity for C1</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

Part 3	<p>Task: show understanding of a recording of an extended monologue by answering questions</p> <p>The recording may be, for example, in the form of a broadcast on a subject of general interest.</p> <p>Question type: sentence completion</p> <p>Candidates use what they have heard to fill in missing information and complete ten sentences.</p> <p>When completing sentences, candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number only • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Focus: discerning key information and finer points of detail, attitudes and opinions, implied meaning, the supporting evidence for arguments</p> <p>Topics: can be work or study oriented but need to be general in nature and accessible to all candidates</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can understand enough to follow extended discourse on abstract and complex topics beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the variety is unfamiliar. Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can follow extended discourse even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other people: Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex, unfamiliar topics. Can identify the attitude of each participant in an animated discussion characterised by overlapping turns, digressions and colloquialisms that is delivered at a natural speed in varieties that are familiar.</p> <p>Understanding as a member of a live audience: Can follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease.</p> <p>Understanding announcements and instructions: Can extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, for example, in a station or sports stadium, or on an old recording. Can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions or specifications for familiar products and services.</p>

	<p>Understanding audio media and recordings: Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between people.</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what will come next.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p> <p>3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B2 levels.</p>
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C1 Reading

Format of the Reading test

The Skills for English C1 Reading test has three parts. The test is computer marked.

C1 Reading (75 minutes)

<p>Part 1</p> <p>(25 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: show understanding of the main messages in short texts by answering questions</p> <p>Text type: five short texts (such as emails, blogs, discussion forums, articles, web pages)</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer two three-option multiple-choice questions per text; questions follow the order of the text.</p> <p>Focus: understanding of main message, implied and stated</p> <p>Questions can also focus on vocabulary or specific phrases used within the context of each text.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<p>Part 2</p> <p>(25 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: read for information, orientation and instruction</p> <p>Text types: brochures, manuals, letters of instruction or communication (for example, from local council, hospitals), leaflets, websites.</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to five three-option multiple-choice questions • sentence completion <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>Focus: understanding of detailed complex information, instructions and points of relevance</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

<p>Part 3</p> <p>(25 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: show understanding of key messages in long form writing by answering questions</p> <p>Text type: longer texts, exploring particular topic in some depth, can be factual or narrative/literary, and deal with contemporary issues, and can be academic or scientific in style so long as it is accessible to all candidates in terms of topic.</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to five three-option multiple-choice • matching — information to people (who said what) or information to corresponding paragraph • sentence completion <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, inference and global meaning, opinions, attitudes and the writer's purpose</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<p>Relevant CEFR descriptors</p>	<p>Overall reading comprehension: Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not these relate to their own area of speciality, provided they can reread difficult sections. Can understand a wide variety of texts including literary writings, newspaper or magazine articles, and specialised academic or professional publications, provided there are opportunities for rereading, and they have access to reference tools.</p> <p>Reading correspondence: Can understand any correspondence given the occasional use of a dictionary. Can understand implicit as well as explicit attitudes, emotions and opinions expressed in e-mails, discussion forums, vlogs/blogs, etc., provided there are opportunities for rereading and they have access to reference tools. Can understand slang, idiomatic expressions and jokes in private correspondence.</p> <p>Reading for orientation: See B2 descriptors.</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.</p> <p>Reading instructions: Can understand in detail lengthy, complex instructions on a new machine or procedure, whether or not the</p>

instructions relate to their own area of speciality, provided they can reread difficult sections.

Reading for leisure: Can read and appreciate a variety of literary texts, provided they can reread certain sections and that they can access reference tools if they wish. Can read contemporary literary texts and non-fiction produced in the standard form of the language or a familiar variety with little difficulty and with appreciation of implicit meanings and ideas.

Identifying cues and inferring: Is skilled at using contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to infer attitude, moods and intentions, and anticipate what will come next.

Notes:

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- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C1 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-B2 levels.

C1 Writing

Format of the Writing test

The Skills for English C1 Writing test has two parts.

C1 Writing (60 minutes)

<p>Part 1</p> <p>(20 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a short email, forum or social media post, or similar piece of communication</p> <p>The task sets out a context or problem, with an identified audience (for example, a friend) for candidates to address. The information that candidates need to communicate is given in three bullet points.</p> <p>Responses can be formal or informal and should allow candidates to respond with a greeting, give the prescribed information, and close with a summary or comment.</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 (for example, email to editor or local council)</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, not requiring specialist vocabulary.</p> <p>Number of words required in response: 150 to 200</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
<p>Part 2</p> <p>(40 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a discursive piece in response to a written stimulus</p> <p>The written stimulus gives the context and the topical issue to be discussed. It includes a statement, point of view, problem or argument that candidates must address. Candidates may be required to give their opinion or present an argument as well as describe or explain a view or position.</p> <p>The candidate's response should comprise an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, which may involve the candidate's own opinion.</p> <p>Focus: writing a longer piece of discursive communication</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, not requiring specialist vocabulary</p> <p>Number of words required in response: 250 to 300</p>

	Number of marks: 15
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall written production: Can produce clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can employ the structure and conventions of a variety of genres, varying the tone, style and register according to addressee, text type and theme.</p> <p>Creative writing: Can produce clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind. Can incorporate idiom and humour, though use of the latter is not always appropriate. Can give a detailed critical review of cultural events (for example, plays, films, concerts) or literary works.</p> <p>Written reports and essays: Can produce clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. Can produce a suitable introduction and conclusion to a longer report, article or dissertation on a complex academic or professional topic provided the topic is within their field of interest and there are opportunities for redrafting and revision.</p> <p>Overall written interaction: Can express themselves with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively.</p> <p>Correspondence: Can express themselves with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. Can, with good expression and accuracy, compose formal correspondence such as letters of clarification, application, recommendation, reference, complaint, sympathy and condolence.</p> <p>Notes, messages and forms: See B2 descriptors.</p> <p>Online conversation and discussion: Can engage in real-time online exchanges with several participants, understanding the communicative intentions and cultural implications of the various contributions. Can participate effectively in live, online professional or academic discussion, asking for and giving further clarification of complex, abstract issues as necessary. Can adapt their register according to the context of online interaction, moving from one register to the other within the same exchange if necessary. Can evaluate, restate and challenge arguments in professional or academic live online chat and discussion.</p>

	<p>Planning: Can, when preparing a more formal text, consciously adopt the conventions linked to the particular type of text concerned (for example, structure, level of formality).</p> <p>Compensating: Can exploit their range of vocabulary options creatively so as to readily and effectively use circumlocution in almost all situations.</p> <p>General linguistic range: Can use a broad range of complex grammatical structures appropriately and with considerable flexibility. Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express themselves clearly without having to restrict what they want to say.</p> <p>Vocabulary range: Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Can select from several vocabulary options in almost all situations by exploiting synonyms of even words/ signs less commonly encountered. Has a good command of common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; can play with words/signs fairly well. Can understand and use appropriately the range of technical vocabulary and idiomatic expressions common to their area of specialisation.</p> <p>Grammatical accuracy: Consistently maintains a high standard of grammatical accuracy. Errors are rare and difficult to spot.</p> <p>Vocabulary control: Uses less common vocabulary idiomatically and appropriately. Occasional minor slips but no significant vocabulary errors.</p> <p>Orthographic control: Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate apart from occasional slips of the pen.</p> <p>Flexibility: Can make a positive impact on an intended audience by effectively varying style of expression and sentence length, use of advanced vocabulary and word order. Can modify their expression to express degrees of commitment or hesitation, confidence or uncertainty.</p> <p>Thematic development: Can use the conventions of the type of text concerned to hold the target reader's attention and communicate complex ideas. Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. Can write a suitable introduction and conclusion to a long, complex text. Can expand and support the main points at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. Can produce well-organised, coherent text, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns.</p>
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Propositional precision: Can qualify opinions and statements precisely in relation to degrees of, for example, certainty/uncertainty, belief/doubt, likelihood, etc. Can make effective use of linguistic modality to signal the strength of a claim, an argument or a position.

Notes:

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Skills for English C2

Skills, knowledge and understanding being assessed

Test structure

Component	Marks (Total 120)	Duration
Component 1: Speaking	30	approximately 15 minutes
Component 2: Listening	30	approximately 55 minutes
Component 3: Reading	30	75 minutes
Component 4: Writing	30	60 minutes

Total number of marks: 120

Topics covered at C2

At C2 level, candidates engage with a wide variety of material drawn from most contexts.

C2 Speaking

Format of the Speaking test

There are three parts to the Speaking test. Each part gives candidates different opportunities to demonstrate their speaking performance. Part 1 is not assessed and is the same across all levels. Only parts 2 and 3 are assessed. Candidates listen to a recording and respond to questions within it. The Speaking test is recorded in its entirety. Candidates hear the questions in parts 1 and 2 and see the prompts in part 3.

C2 Speaking (approximately 15 minutes)

Part 1	Task: introduce yourself Candidates answer five questions about themselves. They must give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name • the spelling of their first name • where they are from • when they were born — their birthday • what they do Number of questions: five Duration: 1 to 2 minutes
Part 2	Task: topic exploration Candidates answer two sets of questions that explore the topics of personal context and everyday life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2.1: personal context — five questions • Part 2.2: everyday life — five questions Number of questions: 10 Duration: 5 to 7 minutes
Part 3	Task: talk at length The scenario has a clear purpose, such as giving advice to a friend. Candidates respond to five prompts.

	<p>Candidates can either limit their responses to the prompts provided on the task card or provide further information.</p> <p>If their response does not relate to the context of the task, they cannot score the full range of marks available under the 'Relevance and appropriacy of response' criterion (see <i>Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme</i>).</p> <p>Number of prompts: five</p> <p>Duration: 5 to 6 minutes</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral production: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured discourse with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: describing experience: Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: giving information: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Sustained monologue: putting a case: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Overall oral interaction: Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.</p> <p>Conversation: Can converse comfortably and appropriately, unhampered by any linguistic limitations in conducting a full social and personal life.</p> <p>Informal discussion with friends: Can advise on or discuss sensitive issues without awkwardness, understanding colloquial references and dealing diplomatically with disagreement and criticism.</p> <p>Goal-oriented co-operation: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Obtaining goods and services: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Information exchange: See B2 descriptors.</p> <p>Interviewing and being interviewed: Can keep up their side of the dialogue extremely well, structuring the discourse and interacting authoritatively with effortless fluency as interviewer or interviewee, at no disadvantage to other participants.</p> <p>Addressing audiences: Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk flexibly to meet the audience's needs. Can handle difficult and even hostile questioning.</p>

General linguistic range: Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what they want to say.

Propositional precision: Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (for example, adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations).

Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.

Fluency: Can express themselves at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right means to express their thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation.

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- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-C1 levels.

C2 Listening

Format of the Listening test

The Skills for English C2 Listening test has three parts. For each part of the test candidates hear the recording(s) twice. The test is computer marked.

C2 Listening (approximately 55 minutes)

Part 1	<p>Task: listen to and answer questions on five short recordings</p> <p>The recordings may be dialogues or monologues.</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer two three-option multiple-choice questions for each recording; questions follow the order of the recording.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, attitudes and opinions, inferred meaning</p> <p>Topics: everyday life contexts</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2	<p>Task: listen to a recorded conversation and answer questions</p> <p>The conversation involves two or three speakers with contrasting voices.</p> <p>Question types: sentence completion and multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates use what they have heard to fill in missing information and complete three sentences. When completing sentences candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Candidates answer seven three-option multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Answers can come from all speakers.</p> <p>Focus: the understanding of specific, detailed information; differing opinions; implicit attitudes and feelings; nuances and implied meaning, and relationships between speakers</p> <p>Topics: any aspect of everyday life (including work) appropriate in complexity for C2 level.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

Part 3	<p>Task: show understanding of a recording of an extended monologue by answering questions</p> <p>The subject should be a topic of general interest and the recording may be, for example, a broadcast.</p> <p>Question type: sentence completion</p> <p>Candidates use what they have heard to fill in missing information and complete ten sentences.</p> <p>When completing sentences, candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should use one or two words and/or a number only • must use the exact word(s) from the audio and spell them correctly <p>Focus: discerning key information and finer points of detail, attitudes and opinions, implied meaning, the supporting evidence for arguments</p> <p>Topics: can be work or study oriented but need to be general in nature and accessible to all candidates.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall oral comprehension: Can understand with ease virtually any kind of language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast natural speed.</p> <p>Understanding conversation between other speakers: Can identify the sociocultural implications of most of the language used in colloquial discussions that take place at a natural speed.</p> <p>Understanding as a member of live audience: Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology. Can make appropriate inferences when links or implications are not made explicit. Can get the point of jokes or allusions in a presentation.</p> <p>Understanding announcements and instructions: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Understanding audio media and recordings: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p> <p>3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-C1 levels.</p>

C2 Reading

Format of the Reading test

The Skills for English C2 Reading test has three parts. The test is computer marked.

C2 Reading (75 minutes)

Part 1 (25 minutes)	<p>Task: show understanding of the main messages in short texts by answering questions</p> <p>Text types: five short texts (such as emails, blogs, discussion forums, articles, web pages)</p> <p>Question type: multiple-choice</p> <p>Candidates answer two three-option multiple-choice questions per text; questions follow the order of the text.</p> <p>Focus: understanding of main message, implied and stated</p> <p>Questions can also focus on vocabulary or specific phrases used within the context of each text.</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
Part 2 (25 minutes)	<p>Task: read for information, orientation and instruction</p> <p>Text types: brochures, manuals, letters or emails of instruction or communication (for example, from local councils, hospitals), leaflets, guidance and handbooks, websites, formal organisation documents, blogs and forum posts.</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to five three-option multiple-choice • sentence completion <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>Focus: understanding of detailed complex information, instructions and points of relevance</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>

<p>Part 3</p> <p>(25 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: show understanding of key messages in long form writing by answering questions</p> <p>Text types: longer texts, exploring particular topic in some depth, can be factual or narrative/literary, and deal with contemporary issues, and can be academic or scientific in style so long as it is accessible to all candidates in terms of topic.</p> <p>Question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to five three-option multiple-choice • matching — information to people (who said what) or information to corresponding paragraph • sentence completion <p>Maximum of two question types, with a minimum of three questions per question type.</p> <p>When completing sentences or notes, candidates must use the exact word(s) from the text and spell them correctly.</p> <p>Focus: detailed understanding, gist, inference, opinions, attitudes and purpose of writer</p> <p>Number of questions: 10</p>
<p>Relevant CEFR descriptors</p>	<p>Overall reading comprehension: Can understand virtually all types of texts including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.</p> <p>Reading correspondence: Can understand specialised, formal correspondence on a complex topic.</p> <p>Reading for orientation: See B2 descriptors.</p> <p>Reading for information and argument: Can understand the finer points and implications of a complex report or article even outside their area of specialisation.</p> <p>Reading instructions: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Reading for leisure: Can read virtually all forms of texts including classical or colloquial literary and non-literary texts in different genres, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.</p> <p>Identifying cues and inferring: See C1 descriptors.</p>

Analysis and criticism of creative texts: Can give a critical appraisal of work of different periods and genres (for example, novels, poems and plays), appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning. Can recognise the finer subtleties of nuanced language, rhetorical effect and stylistic language use (for example, metaphors, abnormal syntax, ambiguity), interpreting and “unpacking” meanings and connotations. Can critically evaluate the way in which structure, language and rhetorical devices are exploited in a work for a particular purpose and give a reasoned argument concerning their appropriateness and effectiveness. Can give a critical appreciation of deliberate breaches of linguistic conventions in a piece of writing.

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- 2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.
- 3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-C1 levels.

C2 Writing

Format of the Writing test

The Skills for English C2 Writing test has two parts.

C2 Writing (60 minutes)

<p>Part 1</p> <p>(20 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a short email, forum or social media post, or similar piece of communication</p> <p>The task sets out a context or problem, with an identified audience (for example, a friend) for candidates to address. The information that candidates need to communicate is given in three bullet points.</p> <p>Responses can be formal or informal and should allow candidates to respond with a greeting, give the prescribed information, and close with a summary or comment.</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 (for example, email to editor or local council)</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, to be accessible to all candidates and not requiring specialist vocabulary</p> <p>Number of words in response: 150 to 200</p> <p>Number of marks: 15</p>
<p>Part 2</p> <p>(40 minutes)</p>	<p>Task: write a discursive piece in response to a written stimulus</p> <p>The written stimulus gives the context and the topical issue to be discussed. It includes a statement, point of view, problem or argument that candidates must address. Candidates may be required to give their opinion or present an argument as well as describe or explain a view or position.</p> <p>The candidate's response should comprise an introduction, a main body and a conclusion, which may involve the candidate's own opinion.</p> <p>Focus: longer piece of discursive communication</p> <p>Topics: issues of everyday life in the UK, not requiring specialist vocabulary</p> <p>Number of words in response: 250 to 300</p>

	Number of marks: 15
Relevant CEFR descriptors	<p>Overall written production: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader identify significant points.</p> <p>Creative writing: Can relate clear, smoothly flowing and engaging stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted. Can exploit idiom and humour appropriately to enhance the impact of the text.</p> <p>Written reports and essays: Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex reports, articles or essays which present a case, or give critical appreciation of proposals or literary works. Can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure which helps the reader identify significant points. Can set out multiple perspectives on complex academic or professional topics, clearly distinguishing their own ideas and opinions from those in the sources.</p> <p>Overall written interaction: Can express themselves in an appropriate tone and style in virtually any type of formal and informal interaction.</p> <p>Correspondence: Can compose virtually any type of correspondence necessary in the course of their professional life in an appropriate tone and style.</p> <p>Notes, messages and form: See B2 descriptors.</p> <p>Online conversation and discussion: Can express themselves with clarity and precision in real-time online discussion, adjusting language flexibly and sensitively to context, including emotional, allusive and joking usage. Can anticipate and deal effectively with possible misunderstandings (including cultural ones), communication issues and emotional reactions in an online discussion. Can easily and quickly adapt their register and style to suit different online environments, communication purposes and speech acts.</p> <p>Planning: See C1 descriptors.</p> <p>Compensating: Can substitute an equivalent term for a word/sign they can't recall, so smoothly that it is scarcely noticeable.</p> <p>General linguistic range: Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what they want to say.</p> <p>Vocabulary range: Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire, including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. Shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p>

	<p>Grammatical accuracy: Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions etc).</p> <p>Vocabulary control: Consistently correct and appropriate use of vocabulary.</p> <p>Orthographic control: Writing is orthographically free of error.</p> <p>Flexibility: Shows great flexibility in reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to give emphasis, differentiate according to the situation, interlocutor, etc. and to eliminate ambiguity.</p> <p>Thematic development: Can use the conventions of the type of text concerned with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease and fulfilling all communicative purposes.</p> <p>Coherence and cohesion: Can create coherent and cohesive text making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of cohesive devices.</p> <p>Propositional precision: Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of qualifying devices (for example, adverbs expressing degree, clauses expressing limitations). Can give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>1) The above descriptors have been adapted from the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) and should be used as a reference point for assessment purposes, and as a tool to assist learners and educators in understanding the standards required at each level.</p> <p>2) Not every descriptor in the above table will necessarily be covered by all tests.</p> <p>3) Skills, knowledge and understanding assessed at C2 include but are not limited to those assessed at A1-C1 levels.</p>
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Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme (A1)

	Relevance and appropriacy of response	Accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary)	Clarity and pronunciation
Marks			
5 and 4	Responses are appropriate and relevant to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.	Can produce short responses on familiar topics with reasonable accuracy. Can use a basic repertoire of words, phrases and formulaic language to good effect. May attempt to use basic subordinate structures with some success. Can link words with basic linking words to good effect. Errors and incorrect word choice, although evident, do not significantly impede communication.	Speaks slowly, with noticeable pauses and frequent repetition / self-correction. Mispronunciations occur but do not significantly impede communication. Much of discourse should be comprehensible.
3 and 2	Responses are generally related to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may self-correct or change their responses though these may not always relate directly to the questions/task. Where candidate responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions/task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.	Can produce short responses on familiar topics, using a very basic repertoire of words and phrases. Uses basic sentence forms, simple formulaic language and/or memorised sentence patterns. Can link sentences with basic linking words like 'and' and 'then'. Frequent errors may lead to misunderstanding.	Mispronunciations of individual words or sounds reduce clarity. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, poor rhythm and strong L1 interference may reduce clarity and cause some strain for the listener. Some attempt to vary intonation.
1	Responses are related to the questions and the Part 3 task in a very limited or inappropriate way.	Very limited success attempting basic sentence forms or formulaic language. Can only produce words in isolation rather than at sentence level. Frequent errors impede communication significantly.	Mispronunciations are very frequent and cause significant difficulty for the listener. Very limited variation in intonation.
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.		

Sample of Speaking Mark Scheme (B2)

	Relevance and appropriacy of response	Grammar Accuracy and range	Vocabulary Accuracy and range	Clarity and pronunciation	Coherence and structure
Marks					
6 and 5	<p>Candidate's responses are focused, relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses all questions and the task appropriately and may provide further detail to add to their response or to develop ideas.</p> <p>The candidate may change or correct their responses to relate more closely to the questions/task: corrections or amendments achieve closer relevance to the questions/task.</p>	<p>Candidate displays sound grammatical control, using a mix of simple and complex structures with relative ease. Any minor errors with more complex structures do not cause comprehension difficulties.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates a wide range of vocabulary, can produce appropriate collocations and can paraphrase to avoid repetition. Accuracy is generally high and any incorrect word choice does not impede communication.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is accurate and intelligible throughout with only minor occasional errors. Candidate's use of stress and intonation patterns are appropriate and there is minimal L1 interference which has no impact on communication.</p>	<p>Can speak at length with minimal loss of coherence, although there may be occasional self-correction or hesitation.</p> <p>Uses a range of discourse markers mostly appropriately and flexibly.</p>
4 and 3	<p>Candidate's responses are generally relevant and appropriate to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate addresses the majority of the questions and the task although may not add further detail to their response. The candidate may self-correct to ensure their response is addressing the</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates good control of routine and familiar expressions but accuracy may be compromised when attempting more complex constructions.</p>	<p>Range of vocabulary is narrower than the top band with a limited flexibility within more complex topic areas. Paraphrasing attempts are successful within a more limited scope.</p>	<p>Some mispronunciations of individual words or sounds reduce clarity. Inappropriate word/sentence stress, poor rhythm and/or L1 interference may reduce clarity and cause strain for the listener.</p>	<p>Able to speak for extended periods but some hesitation/self-correction impedes fluency at times. Handles communication in familiar topic areas with relative ease</p>

	<p>questions/task. This may not always be fully successful.</p> <p>Where candidate's responses are repeatedly unrelated to the questions and the Part 3 task, a maximum of 2 marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p>		<p>Accuracy is achieved on more common expressions and topics.</p>	<p>Some attempt to vary intonation.</p>	<p>Some effective use of discourse markers, although these may lack flexibility and range.</p>
2 and 1	<p>Candidate's responses do not always relate directly to the questions and the Part 3 task. The candidate may misunderstand the questions/task or may digress from the topic.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Grammatical accuracy is achieved intermittently on mostly simple utterances. More complex structures are not attempted and where they are, errors impede communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Can talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but with very limited lexical range and flexibility. There may be frequent word choice errors, some of which impede comprehension.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Pronunciation is clear only in very familiar formulaic expressions. Stress and intonation patterns may be faulty or missing and there is significant L1 interference. Hesitation and pauses are overlong and intrude.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>	<p>Links basic sentences with simple discourse markers. Repetition/ self-correction slows down more complex communication.</p> <p>Where the candidate's response is minimal in length and content, it should score 1 mark.</p>
0	Candidate is absent or does not provide any recorded responses.				

Sample of Writing Mark Scheme (B1)

	Relevance and appropriacy of response, coherence and structure	Grammar Range and accuracy	Vocabulary Range and accuracy
5 and 4	<p>The response addresses the task set and is fully appropriate.</p> <p>Communication is clear and managed through markers such as <i>however</i>, <i>whereas</i> and <i>although</i>. Discrete elements are connected using simple markers and cause no confusion to the reader. Errors in structure, paragraphing, cohesion and coherence are minimal.</p>	<p>Attempts a mix of simple and complex forms, some of which are successful.</p> <p>Routine, straightforward expressions are accurate, and errors do not impede communication. More complex structures may be attempted but not always successfully. Punctuation is simple but accurate.</p>	<p>The response shows a wide range of relevant everyday vocabulary used appropriately. Vocabulary is generally accurate when dealing with everyday topics. Spelling is generally accurate and any errors do not impede communication.</p>
3 and 2	<p>Candidate's response may not be directly related to the issue set out in the task or the response may not have addressed all bullet points.</p> <p>Communication is generally clear and ideas may be linked using a limited number of simple cohesive markers. Errors in structure, paragraphing, cohesion and coherence are evident but generally do not cause a strain on the reader.</p>	<p>Routine, simple and formulaic expressions are generally used with some accuracy. Errors may be more noticeable in number and may impede communication. Where complex structures are attempted, errors are frequent. There may be minor errors in punctuation which do not generally affect comprehension of message.</p>	<p>A more limited range of vocabulary, although still used appropriately and sufficient to complete the task. There are spelling errors, however these do not generally impede communication.</p>
1	<p>Candidate's responses may be minimal in length and content.</p> <p>Candidate's responses may not be wholly related to the task, or the message may be unclear and</p>	<p>Uses only a limited range of structures. Errors are frequent in all but the simplest of sentences. Basic sentence grammar is lacking. Punctuation is inconsistent, often impeding communication.</p>	<p>Vocabulary is limited, repetitive and frequently fails to convey meaning satisfactorily. Errors in spelling cause difficulty for the reader.</p> <p>Where candidate responses are substantially short, off-topic or do not address the task in any way, a</p>

	<p>communicate little to the reader.</p> <p>Where candidate responses are substantially short, off-topic or do not address the task in any way, a maximum of 1 mark should be awarded.</p>	<p>Where candidate responses are substantially short, off-topic or do not address the task in any way, a maximum of 1 mark should be awarded.</p>	<p>maximum of 1 mark should be awarded.</p>
0	Candidate is absent or response is entirely unrelated to the task or task is not attempted.		

Equality and inclusion

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

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please contact info@skillsforenglish.com.

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, (2020) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion Volume with new descriptors*. Strasbourg: COE

Revision history

Version	Date	Comments
V1.0	06/02/2020	First Draft Approved
V2.0	23/03/2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V1.0
V3.0	13/10/2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V2.0
V4.0	03/11/2020	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V3.0
V4.1	01/04/2021	Updated C1 and C2 Listening section (Part 1)
V5.0	08/11/2021	Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V4.1
V.6.0	21/02/2022	Changes made to the format of the document.. Final Draft Approved. Supersedes V5.0
V7.0	12/09/2022	Copyright statement and notice updated on cover
V7.1	21/11/2022	Test Duration for B1Speaking, and C1 and C2 Listening updated.
Last Reviewed	21/11/2022	

