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A1 Test Information Sheet for Teachers

Exploring Skills for
English Tests

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Contents

The A1 Student: CEFR Descriptors	3
The A1 Speaking Test	4
Speaking Part 1	4
Format of the task	4
Speaking Part 1 task	5
Sample responses	5
Speaking Part 2	6
Format of the task	6
Skills/functions being elicited and assessed	6
Tips for teachers	6
Sample Speaking Part 2 task	7
Sample questions	7
Sample responses	8
Speaking Part 3	9
Format of the task	9
Skills/functions being elicited and assessed	9
Tips for teachers	9
Sample Speaking Part 3 task	10
Sample responses	10
The A1 Listening Test	11
Listening Part 1	11
Format of the task	11
Skills/functions being assessed	11
Tips for teachers	12
Sample Listening Part 1 task	13
Listening Part 2	14
Format of the task	14
Skills/functions being assessed	14
Tips for teachers	14
Sample Listening Part 2 task	15

Listening Part 3	17
Format of the task	17
Skills/functions being assessed	17
Tips for teachers	17
Sample Listening Part 3	18

The A1 Student: CEFR Descriptors

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), A1 students:

- can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Further details of the CEFR can be found in [this manual](#).

The A1 Speaking Test

There are three parts to the Speaking test.

In Part 1, test takers will answer questions about themselves (not assessed).

In Part 2, test takers will answer questions on two topics.

In Part 3, test takers will respond to prompts set around a specific scenario, such as buying food or making a booking.

There is no live interlocutor or examiner present; the computer delivers the questions as pre-recorded audio clips and the test taker's answers are recorded.

After each question, test takers will hear a beep. They should answer each question after each beep. There is a clock displayed on the screen to show test takers how long they have to speak. There is also a volume button so that test takers can change the volume of the audio recording if they want to.

Examiners listen to the test taker's performance in both Parts 2 and 3 and allocate a mark based on their whole performance across both parts of the test. Responses to Part 2 and Part 3 of the Speaking test are marked together by trained and qualified examiners on:

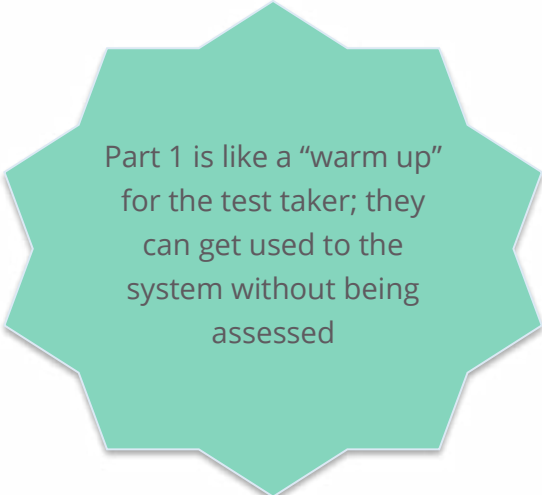
- Relevance and appropriacy of response – score between 0 and 5
- Accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary) – score between 0 and 5
- Clarity and pronunciation – score between 0 and 5

Test takers can take notes during the Speaking test. These note pages will be collected from the test taker at the end of each test.

Speaking Part 1

Format of the task

In Part 1, test takers are asked five questions. These questions are always the same – in all tests and at all levels. Test takers hear each question once and are given 10 seconds to answer each one. Part 1 of the Speaking test is NOT assessed; this part allows test takers to familiarise themselves with the test and the test platform.



Part 1 is like a “warm up” for the test taker; they can get used to the system without being assessed

Speaking Part 1 task

Below are the five questions a test taker is always asked in Part 1 of the A1 Speaking test.

1. What is your name?
2. Can you spell your first name, please?
3. Where are you from?
4. What is your date of birth?
5. What do you do?

Test takers have 10 seconds to answer each of these questions and their answers are recorded

Test takers can prepare and practise their answers in advance because Speaking Part 1 questions are always the same

Sample responses

1. My name is Amir Hassan.
2. A - M - I - R
3. I am from Pakistan.
4. I was born on 16 July 2005.
5. I am a student.

Test takers should practise spelling their first name

Test takers should answer in full sentences where possible, but do not have to worry about extending their answers in Part 1

Speaking Part 2

Format of the task

In Part 2, test takers are asked questions on two topics related to personal and everyday life. There are five questions per topic, so ten questions in total for Part 2. Test takers hear each question once, then they hear a beep. They are given 15 seconds to answer each question after each beep.

The topics and the language of the questions are accessible to A1 test takers. Topics include family, likes and dislikes, food, weather, daily routines and leisure activities, homes and where you live, things you can and cannot do, describing people, and talking about past events or future plans in a very simple way.

Skills/functions being elicited and assessed

In Part 2 of the Speaking test, A1 test takers are assessed on their ability to talk about themselves using simple, basic English. Questions will focus on aspects of everyday life such as:

- Describing what they do and where they live in simple terms
- Describing simple aspects of daily life
- Giving simple descriptions of people, places and possessions
- Talking simply about likes and dislikes
- Talking simply about free time, weekend plans or holidays

Tips for teachers

- Give test takers plenty of opportunities to practise talking about themselves, their routines, their likes and dislikes, and their opinions.
- Provide examples of vocabulary and phrases test takers will need to talk about everyday life.
- Give test takers the chance to practise asking and answering simple questions through pair-work activities.
- Support test takers with their pronunciation and fluency.
- Encourage test takers to add to their responses by providing more information where they can.
- Let test takers know that it doesn't matter if they run out of time; their answers to Part 2 and Part 3 are marked as a whole. They also shouldn't worry if they don't understand a question; they should just give the best answer they can and move on.
- Remind test takers that there is no live interlocuter so they cannot ask for a repeat of the questions.
- Monitor and correct unclear pronunciation.

Sample Speaking Part 2 task

The extract below is an example of the type of questions a test taker may encounter in Part 2 of the A1 Speaking test. This sample shows five questions with five sample responses. Part 2 of the Speaking test contains two sets of five questions, so ten questions in total.

In Speaking Part 2, there are 10 questions: 5 about one topic and 5 about another

Sample questions

1. What do you like doing at weekends?
2. Who do you see at weekends?
3. What time do you go to bed at weekends?
4. What did you do last weekend?
5. What are you doing next weekend?

Questions – even at A1 – are likely to include a range of tenses, for example present simple, present continuous and past simple

Test takers have 15 seconds to answer each of these questions

Make sure test takers know how to talk about activities they do/don't like, relationships and family members, different times of the day, days of the week etc.

Test takers should think about what they have said in previous responses and try to avoid repetition; for example, they could talk about football in Q1, eating in a restaurant in Q4 and going to the cinema in Q5 to avoid repeating the same activity three times

By giving two examples, this test taker shows they can extend their answers and link ideas

Sample responses

1. I like going shopping or going to the cinema.
2. I see my friends at the weekend. Sometimes I see my cousins.
3. At weekends I go to bed at about 11.30 p.m.
4. I went to the cinema with my friends and then we ate pizza.
5. I would like to go to the beach if the weather is good.

Test takers should respond in full sentences wherever possible

This test taker uses the past simple and "would like" correctly in questions 4 and 5

Speaking Part 3

Format of the task

In Part 3, A1 test takers are presented with a scenario and given 5 prompts or questions. The task allows them to engage with the scenario and reflects the kind of functional conversations which would take place in a given context, such as shopping. Each item on the role card is read to the test taker once. The role card and the prompts are also displayed on the screen for the test taker to read.

After test takers hear each prompt, they will hear a beep and then they have 35 seconds to give each answer. The topics and the language of the prompts are accessible and appropriate to A1 candidates. Scenarios include inviting a friend to a party, describing an event, going shopping, and other basic everyday occurrences.

Skills/functions being elicited and assessed

In Part 3 of the Speaking test, test takers are assessed on their ability to provide language in relation to a given scenario or context using simple, basic English. Prompts will focus on aspects of everyday life such as:

- Giving the time, date and location of an event.
- Inviting someone to an event.
- Ordering food and drink in a café.
- Asking for goods and prices in a shop.
- Describing an event or plans.

Tips for teachers

- Provide test takers with opportunities to use formulaic language, such as inviting people to an event.
- Provide examples of vocabulary and phrases needed to talk about everyday life and arrangements, such as times and dates.
- Set up role plays so that test takers can practise dialogues in different situations.
- Encourage test takers to expand on their responses where appropriate and relevant.
- Monitor and correct unclear pronunciation.

Sample Speaking Part 3 task

Below is an example of the type of scenario and questions a test taker may encounter in Part 3 of the A1 Speaking test.

Role Card: Buying something for a friend in a shop

1. Say who your friend is.
2. Say why you want to buy something for your friend.
3. Say what you want to buy.
4. Say why you think your friend will like it.
5. Ask how much it is.

Test takers will have 35 seconds to answer each item on the role card

The scenario is always given at the beginning of Part 3

Test takers will have to use their imagination and draw on personal everyday experiences to invent details, for example giving the reason in question 4

Sample responses

1. One of my best friends is Ahmed.
2. I want to buy him a nice present for his birthday. He is having a birthday party next Friday.
3. I want to get him a new jacket.
4. I think he will love this jacket because green is his favourite colour.
5. How much is it, please?

Formulaic language used correctly is expected at A1 level

Test takers can add extra information to their response

The A1 Listening Test

There are three parts to the Listening test.

In Part 1, test takers will listen to 5 short recordings and answer one 3-option multiple choice question (MCQ) after each recording.

In Part 2, test takers will listen to a longer conversation and answer 5 MCQs.

In Part 3, test takers will listen to a longer monologue and complete 5 “drag and drop” sentences.

Each recording is played twice. Test takers have time to read the questions before the recordings start and time to check their answers afterwards.

Test takers can take notes during the Listening test as they listen to the recordings. However, they must make sure that they have answered the questions on the screen at the end of each recording before they move to the next part of the test. The notes pages will be collected from test takers at the end of the Listening test.

Listening Part 1

Format of the task

In Part 1, test takers will listen to 5 short recordings, which may be dialogues or monologues. The topics will be on everyday topics and life contexts, which are appropriate and accessible for test takers at A1 level. For each recording, the script will be 30 to 60 words.

Questions in this part consist of a single three-option multiple choice question (MCQ) for each recording. The focus of these questions will be on one main point, and test takers will need to answer the questions as they listen. Test takers will have time to read and check their answers, and each recording is played twice.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Comprehension of the main message in monologues and in simple conversations for a given purpose.
- Understanding of specific, concrete information of an everyday, personal nature.
- Understanding of language relating to numbers, times, directions, locations, likes, needs, agreement and disagreement.

Tips for teachers

- Practise time management skills; test takers should use a clock or timer when practising so that they can see how much time they have to read the questions and check their answers.
- Build test takers' confidence by providing them with the opportunity to do practice tests.
- Encourage listening practice with a range of material used in different contexts.
- Help test takers to identify key messages, key information and factual information from a variety of sources, such as announcements and broadcasts.
- Remind test takers that they can use the second recording to answer and questions they have missed and/or to check their answers.
- Provide test takers with the skills to be able to understand unfamiliar words and phrases through context.
- Provide test takers with the opportunity to practise listening for numbers and letters/words being spelled.

Sample Listening Part 1 task

The extract below is an example of the type of recording and question a test taker may encounter in Part 1 of the A1 Listening test.

Both dialogues and monologues are used in Part 1

Sample Script

Speaker 1	What did you do yesterday, Ann?
Speaker 2	Well, I wanted to go <u>swimming</u> , but it was raining.
Speaker 1	So, did you go to the <u>cinema</u> ?
Speaker 2	No, Dad. I didn't have any money.
Speaker 1	So, did you stay at home?
Speaker 2	Yes, and I read a good book.

Each recording will be played twice

The correct answer may come from one or both speakers

The incorrect options (in this case a and c, underlined) are also mentioned in the script/recording

Sample Question

What did Ann do yesterday?

- a. She swam.
- b. She read a book.**
- c. She went to the cinema.

The options will not necessarily be in the same order as the script/recording

MCQs will always have 3 options: 2 distractors and 1 correct answer

Listening Part 2

Format of the task

In Part 2, test takers will listen to a conversation between two speakers (one male and one female). The speakers will be exchanging information on everyday topics and issues which are accessible and appropriate for A1-level test takers. For Part 2, the script will be 200 to 250 words.

Questions in this part consist of 5 three-option multiple choice questions (MCQ). The focus of these questions will be on key information which can come from one or both speakers. Test takers will need to answer the questions as they listen to the recording, and they will have time to read the questions beforehand and check their answers afterwards. Test takers will hear this section played twice.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Comprehension of the main message in simple conversations for a given purpose.
- Understanding of specific, concrete information of an everyday, personal nature.
- Understanding of language relating to numbers, times, directions, locations, likes, needs, agreement and disagreement.

Tips for teachers

- Encourage test takers to listen to a variety of recordings with a range of situations.
- Provide test takers opportunities to practise different question types.
- Ensure test takers have the skills to understand how formal and informal dialogues are organised.
- Practise time management skills; test takers should use a clock or timer when practising so that they can see how much time they have to read the questions and check their answers.
- Help test takers to identify key information and factual information.
- Provide test takers with the opportunity to practise listening for numbers and letters/words being spelled.
- Provide test takers with the skills to be able to understand unfamiliar words and phrases through context.
- Build test takers' confidence by providing them with the opportunity to do practice tests.

Sample Listening Part 2 task

Below is an example of the type of recording and questions a test taker may encounter in Part 2 of the A1 Listening test.

The first few lines of the script/recording usually set the scene

Part 2 is always a conversation between 2 people: 1 male voice and 1 female voice

Sample Script

Speaker 1	Sam, I'm so happy about our holiday next week.
Speaker 2	Me too. It's very exciting!
Speaker 1	What are we going to do on Monday? What about swimming?
Speaker 2	Yes, we can go to the beach in the morning and then we can go shopping in the afternoon.
Speaker 1	I'd like to go shopping on Friday, our last day. Are you okay with that?
Speaker 2	Okay, that's fine. So, about Monday afternoon then ... what about going to a nice restaurant by the sea?
Speaker 1	That's fine with me.
Speaker 2	And what would you like to do on Tuesday?
Speaker 1	Well, I'd like to go swimming again. I know there is also walking or shopping, but swimming really is my favourite thing to do, and we can't go to the beach very much in England. What do you think?
Speaker 2	You are right. I love swimming too.
Speaker 1	Great! It will be fun.
Speaker 2	Can we walk in the town on Wednesday, then?
Speaker 1	Why not? We can go to the park too. There's a beautiful park near the cinema, behind the museum.
Speaker 2	Great. Are we walking by the river on Thursday morning?
Speaker 1	Not in the morning because it's too hot. We can go late in the afternoon. But we need to be back at the hotel before seven in the evening because there is a band playing.

Make sure test takers are confident with days of the week, months, and times

Test takers should be able to understand preferences and expressions of like/dislike

The two speakers may disagree with each other and/or refuse a suggestion

Test takers should practise using prepositions of place

Speaker 2	Okay. Then we'll go shopping on the last day. What are you going to buy?
Speaker 1	Well, I want to buy something for mum. And I need something to give dad for his birthday when we get home too. And you?
Speaker 2	I want to buy a picture for mum and a t-shirt for my friend Jim.

This recording – like all parts of the Listening test – will be played twice

Sometimes the words in the scripts/recordings are not the same as the words in the questions, for example “mum” here in the script/recording and “mother” in question 5

Sample Questions

- Where will Sam and Sue go on Monday afternoon?
 - The beach.
 - A restaurant.**
 - Shopping.
- What activity do Sam and Sue both love to do?
 - Swimming.**
 - Walking.
 - Shopping.
- On Wednesday, Sam and Sue will ...
 - go to the cinema.
 - walk in the town.**
 - visit the museum.
- They will walk by the river ...
 - on Thursday morning.
 - on Thursday afternoon.**
 - on Thursday evening.
- Sam and Sue both want to buy presents for ...
 - their friend.
 - their father.
 - their mother.**

MCQs will always have 3 options: 2 distractors and 1 correct answer

Test takers should expect to see a mix of MCQ stems: some questions to answer and some sentences to complete

The incorrect options for each question are mentioned in the script/recording too, so encourage test takers to listen for the details connected to each option

Listening Part 3

Format of the task

In Part 3, test takers will listen to a monologue, for example someone leaving a voicemail message or an announcement. Scripts contain between 120 and 160 words at A1 level. Topics will be related to everyday issues appropriate to A1-level test takers.

There are five questions in Listening Part 3. Test takers must complete five sentences by using “drag and drop” to choose from a pool of ten options. The focus of these questions will be on key information. Test takers will need to answer the questions as they listen, but they will not need to spell any words as they will be choosing from options provided to them.

Test takers will have time to read the questions before they hear the recording, and time to check their answers after they listen. The monologue will be played twice.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Comprehension of the main message in monologues for a given purpose
- Understanding of specific, concrete information of an everyday, personal nature
- Understanding of language relating to numbers, times, directions, locations, likes, needs, agreements and disagreements

Tips for teachers

- Encourage test takers to practise listening to a variety of recordings from different sources concerning various everyday topics.
- Give test takers opportunities to listen to a variety of recorded messages or talks, and to note how the information is grouped/organized in such recordings.
- Teach strategies that focus on sentence completion and placing the correct words in gapped statements to identify the main points.
- Develop test takers’ skills in being able to understand unfamiliar words through context.

Sample Listening Part 3

Below is an example of the type of recording and questions a test taker may encounter in Part 3 of the A1 Listening test.

Listening Part 3 is always a monologue, meaning there is only one speaker

Sample Script

Hi Mum. I'm phoning to tell you about the girl who is living in my new flat. Her name is Sandra. She looks younger than me, but she's three years older. She is tall with long hair and blue eyes. Her mum is from England and her dad is from Scotland, but they live in Germany. Sandra works as a doctor five or six days a week and she loves her job. Sometimes she works at night, but she doesn't like doing that. She loves cooking and she's really good at it. Most days I only eat a sandwich for lunch, but yesterday Sandra made a really nice pizza. But there's one problem. You see, she needs to sleep in the day sometimes because she works at night. I can't invite my friends here or listen to music because there's too much noise. Well, you will meet Sandra soon and I am sure you will like her. Bye for now.

Sample Questions

1. Sandra is _____ than Marie.
2. Sandra's parents live in _____.
3. Sandra doesn't like working _____.
4. Sandra made _____ yesterday.
5. Sandra often _____ in the day.

Answers

1. younger than
2. Germany
3. at night
4. a pizza
5. sleeps

as a doctor	younger
older	a pizza
Germany	sleeps
at night	Scotland
a sandwich	listens to music

Test takers drag options from here to drop into each sentence

Test takers can change their answers by dragging a new option