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A2 Test Information Sheet for Teachers

Exploring Skills for
English Tests

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The A2 Student: CEFR Descriptors

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), A2 students:

- can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).
- can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.
- can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

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

The A2 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 takers' 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 markers on:

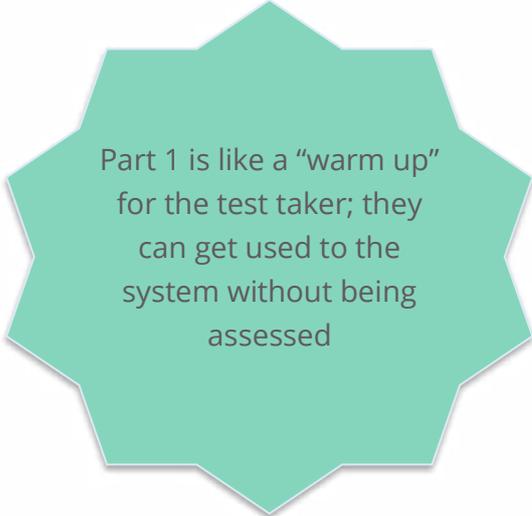
- Relevance and appropriacy of response – score between 0 and 5
- Accuracy of response (grammar and vocabulary) – score between 0 and 5
- Clarity and pronunciation – score between 0 and 5

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 A2 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 Manuela Gomez.
2. M - A - N - U - E - L - A
3. I am from Chile.
4. I was born on 3rd December 1992.
5. I am a dentist.

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 A2 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 simple way.

Skills/functions being elicited and assessed

In Part 2 of the Speaking test, A2 test takers are assessed on their ability to talk about themselves using 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 your 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.
- Provide strategies so that test takers can expand on their responses where appropriate.
- Let test takers know that it doesn't matter if they run out of time before finishing what they want to say as 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 A2 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

Questions are likely to include present, past and future tenses

Sample questions

1. Do you have a lot of free time? Why or why not?
2. Do you usually spend your free time alone or with friends and family? Why?
3. What's your favourite way to spend your free time?
4. Describe a free time activity you would like to start doing in the future.
5. What did you like doing in your free time when you were younger?

Test takers have 15 seconds to answer each of these questions

Ensure test takers are confident talking about free time activities, likes and dislikes, family and friends, their childhood/past experiences, and future hopes/plans

Test takers should think about what they have said in previous responses and try to avoid repetition; for example, they could talk about going running in Q3, playing chess in Q4 and going swimming in Q5 to avoid repeating the same activity three times

Sample responses

By adding extra information (e.g. providing reasons), test takers can extend their answers and show they can link

1. I don't have a lot of free time because I work long hours and I have young children.
2. I usually spend my free time with my family, but I like to be alone sometimes too because it helps me to relax.
3. I like going for long walks in the countryside with our dog. I also enjoy watching movies at the cinema.

Test takers should respond in full sentences wherever possible

4. I'd like to go to the beach more and I have always wanted to learn to surf, but the beach is quite far from my house.
5. When I was younger, I played badminton a lot. I was quite good and I really enjoyed it, but unfortunately I don't have time now.

This test taker uses a range of tenses and grammatical structures in their responses, such as present simple, past simple, present perfect, and like + verb-ing

Speaking Part 3

Format of the task

In Part 3, A2 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 A2 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 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 A2 Speaking test.

The scenario is always given at the beginning of Part 3

Role Card: Booking a room in a hotel

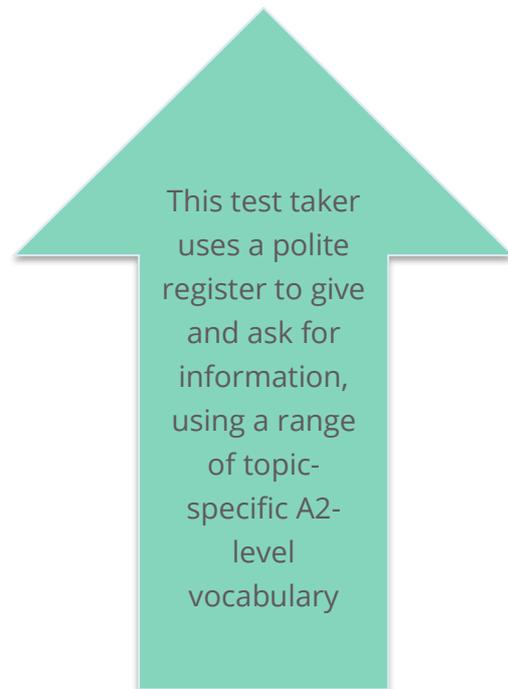
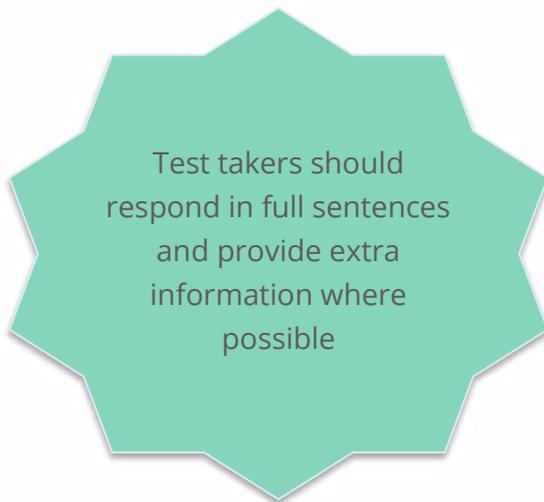
1. Explain when and why you want to stay in the hotel.
2. Say what kind of room you would like and for how many people.
3. Talk about things you will need in your room.
4. Ask about eating and drinking in the hotel.
5. Ask about things to do near the hotel.

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

Part 3 usually requires test takers to use a range of language functions, for example giving information, asking, describing and suggesting

Sample responses

1. Hello. I'd like to stay at your hotel for a week in August. It's my friend's birthday so we will visit the city.
2. I'd like to book one family room for myself and three children, and a single room for my friend.
3. We'd like a bath and a fridge in each room if possible. Oh, and a TV in the family room for the children, please.
4. What time is breakfast served and do we have to pay extra? Is there a restaurant in the hotel to have dinner?
5. We'd like to visit some museums when we stay. Could you tell me about any good ones in the city? And is there a zoo near the hotel?



The A2 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 A2 level. For each recording, the script will be 60 to 90 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 A2 Listening test.

Both dialogues and monologues are used in Part 1

Each recording will be played twice

Sample Script

Speaker 1	Hi Molly, how are you?
Speaker 2	Oh, hi Dave. Are you catching the number 23 bus too?
Speaker 1	Yes, I am. I usually get the 21, but I'm going to <u>the library</u> today to change my books. Are you going there?
Speaker 2	Not today. I have to go to <u>the dentist</u> opposite the library.
Speaker 1	Oh, I go to that one too. What's the problem?
Speaker 2	One of my teeth is really hurting.

The correct answer may come from one or both speakers

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

Sample Question

What are both people going to do?

- a. **Catch the same bus.**
- b. Go to the library.
- c. Visit the dentist.

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 A2-level test takers. For Part 2, the script will be 300 to 360 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.
- Build test takers' confidence by providing them with the opportunity to do practice tests.
- Help test takers to identify key information and factual information.
- Provide test takers with the opportunity to practice 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.

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 A2 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	Hi, how are you?
Speaker 2	Oh, hi! I'm fine. I haven't seen you for ages.
Speaker 1	I don't come to this part of town very often, but I wanted to do some exercise today so I came here for a walk. I ate a sandwich in the car and I'll have a coffee this afternoon.
Speaker 2	It's a long way to come in lunchtime traffic.
Speaker 1	Yes, it is. But I like it here. The park is beautiful at this time of year.
Speaker 2	Yes, there are a lot of lovely trees. I always have my lunch here if it isn't raining. Then I get a coffee on my way back to the office.
Speaker 1	Even in the winter?
Speaker 2	Yes, I don't mind when the weather is cold like today. I just hate the rain.
Speaker 1	Well, it's a nice day today for December. And that must be your favourite seat in the sun. So, are you still working for Donalds bank?
Speaker 2	Yes, I am. I remember we used to chat in class about our plans to work for Donalds bank.
Speaker 1	You're a ... you're a manager now, aren't you?
Speaker 2	Yes. Did you read about me in <i>Banking Magazine</i> ?

The correct answers may come from one or both speakers

Test takers may need to understand implied meaning, for example "we used to chat in class" suggests the two speakers were at school together

Speaker 1	No, I didn't see that. Someone else who lives on my street from school told me, I think.
Speaker 2	Which bank do you work for? I know you told me, but a long time ago and I've forgotten.
Speaker 1	I used to work for Barnets bank but I don't work there any more.
Speaker 2	Really? What happened?
Speaker 1	I lost my job last week. Well, not just me. Everybody in the building. The manager called a meeting and said they were shutting the West Park bank. Thirty people were working there, and we all lost our jobs. It was horrible.
Speaker 2	Gosh, that's terrible! Bust Barnets has other places in town.
Speaker 1	Yes, it was just the one place that closed. I wanted to find a job at one of the other Barnets banks in town and I have already spoken to the managers there, but there aren't any jobs at the moment. So, it's very bad news ... and just before our holiday.
Speaker 2	Oh no! Are you still going on holiday?
Speaker 1	I don't know. I really need to find another job before having a holiday.
Speaker 2	Well, if there's anything I can do ...
Speaker 1	Well, actually, I'm really glad to see you today. Are there any jobs at your bank?

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

Something related to the incorrect options (the distractors) is always mentioned in the script/recording, so encourage test takers to listen for the details connected to each option

Sample Questions

1. What is the man doing when he meets the woman?
 - a. Eating his lunch.
 - b. Having a coffee.
 - c. Walking in the park.**

2. What is the weather like?
 - a. Wet.
 - b. Sunny.**
 - c. Warm.

3. The man and the woman ...
 - a. knew each other at school.**
 - b. work for the same company.
 - c. live on the same street.

4. Why doesn't the man work for Barnets bank now?
 - a. He had a problem with the manager.
 - b. They closed the building where he worked.**
 - c. He didn't like the job.

5. What does the man say about the other Barnets banks?
 - a. There aren't any jobs for managers.
 - b. Some of the other banks are closing.
 - c. He has asked about working in them.**

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

If test takers change their mind about the correct answer when they listen to the recording for the second time, they can change their original answer

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 300 and 350 words at A2 level. Topics will be related to everyday issues appropriate to A2-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 A2 Listening test.

Sample Script

Welcome to Morton Art Museum. I hope that you will enjoy your visit. I will be your guide today, and I am here to give you information about the paintings here on the first floor. Here is a map of the art gallery with notes about each of the paintings and photographs. You can use it later to find your way to our museum shop, café, art cinema and toilets on the second floor. So, let's start in this room on our left. These paintings are all by painters from the Morton area. On the right of each painting, you can find some information about each painter and the painting, such as the year it was painted. There are pieces of art from many different years in this room. The oldest is from the 17th century and the newest was painted just two years ago. You will notice that the subjects of most of these paintings are wild landscapes and farm animals. This is because as I said, all of these paintings are by painters from this area. For example, this one here was painted in 1873 by Stephen Wills, who lived on a farm in the area for his whole life. Under each painting you will see three buttons: red, orange and green. If you like the painting, choose green. If you don't like it, push red. If you think it's okay, choose orange. Your opinion of the paintings helps us to choose what kind of paintings to show in our museum in the future. If you have children with you, you can collect black and white drawings of some of the paintings from this table in the middle of the room, so that your children can use pens to colour them when they get home. You can come back and look at all these paintings later, but now I want to show you the photographs we have in the next room ... [fade out]

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

Test takers can change their answers by dragging a new option

drawings	farm
map	wild
gallery	pens
right	paintings
left	buttons

Sample Questions

1. The _____ will give visitors information about how to find places on the second floor.
2. Information can be found on the _____ of each painting.
3. There are many paintings of _____ animals.
4. The _____ show the museum what kind of art people like.
5. Children can take some _____ home.

Test takers drag options from here to drop into each sentence

Answers

1. map
2. right
3. farm
4. buttons
5. drawings