

Top Tips for ESOL Candidates

Writing

- Read the instructions for each question carefully
- If there are, for example, 4 bullet points telling you what to include in your writing, then make sure you provide an answer for each point.
- In multiple choice questions only tick one box. If you change your mind, then clearly cross out your first answer.
- Be careful to use capital letters and lower-case letters correctly, where directed.
- Where told to write (for example) 3 sentences, or 2 adjectives, or 1 joining word, then do so, or you will lose marks.
- Read through what you have written at the end of the assessment, and try to spot errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar that you might have made. Marks are deducted for all these 3 things.
- Don't forget to plan your writing when asked to do so. Marks are deducted if you do not do this.

Reading

- Read the instructions for each question carefully. What are you being asked to do?
- When answering 'the main purpose/point of the text' questions, look for that purpose/point being mentioned in each paragraph or section, not just in one.
- Look for clues in questions that direct you to where the answer can be found in the text. Look for words with a similar meaning for example, or different ways of saying the same thing.

Speaking and Listening

- Prepare for discussions. Make notes that you can refer to.
- If making a presentation, use notes to prompt you. Avoid reading pre-prepared sentences word for word.
- Practise presentations in advance so you feel comfortable speaking.
- Remember to ask questions about other people's presentations.
- In discussions, ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going.
- Avoid one or two-word answers. Try to offer extra information.
- Listen and respond tasks: Don't try and write every word you hear. Just write the key words down.
- If in a discussion you are asked to agree on a final decision, then make sure you do so.
- Try and practise discussions with your colleagues if possible.