

International GCSE

English as a Second Language (9–1)

Getting Started Guide


Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English as a Second Language (4XES2)

First teaching September 2024

First examination June 2025

Issue 1





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Through initiatives such as onscreen marking and administration, Pearson is leading the way in using technology to modernise educational assessment and to support teachers and learners.

This guide is Issue 1. We will inform centres of any changes to this issue. The latest issue can be found on the Pearson Edexcel website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/>

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Introduction

This Getting Started Guide provides an overview of our International GCSE English as a Second Language (9-1) (4XES2) qualification to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your learners.

Our package of support to help you plan and implement the specification includes:

Planning

We will provide a course planner and two editable Schemes of Work that you can adapt to suit your department. We will provide mapping documents that highlight key differences between new and legacy specification issues. We also provide training for international and UK-based schools.

Teaching and learning

To support you in delivering the new specification, we will provide two suggested Schemes of Work that will give you an option of sequential or spiral learning. We would recommend that you explore our print and digital learning and teaching resources that promote any time, any place learning to improve learner motivation and encourage new ways of working.

Understanding the standard

Sample Assessment Materials and Extra Assessment Materials will be provided.

ResultsPlus

ResultsPlus will provide the most detailed analysis available of your learners' examination performance. It will help you identify topics and skills where learners can benefit from further instruction.

examWizard

We will also offer examWizard, which is a free exam preparation tool containing a bank of past exam questions, mark schemes and examiners' reports for a range of International GCSE and International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level subjects.



Support

Our subject advisor ensures that you receive help and guidance from us. You can sign up to receive updates at <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/forms/subject-advisor-updates-for-teachers-and-tutors.html> or contact us using the support portal <https://support.pearson.com/uk/s/qualificationcontactus>.

Resources

Print and online learner resources are fully matched to the curriculum and feature comprehensive coverage of all topics. Specifically developed for international learners, they include signposted skills and teacher guidance on the application of the Pearson Progression Scale, as well as online teacher support.



Key features of the qualification

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English as a Second Language (4XES2) is a unitised qualification intended specifically for learners whose first language is not English. The recommended duration of the course is two years.

The content and assessment approach for this qualification has been designed to meet learners' needs in the following ways:

- **Unitised structure**

The unitised assessment structure offers learners the flexibility to sit examinations when they are ready and provides opportunities to resit individual unit assessments before receiving an overall qualification grade.

All units are available in the June and November exam series from June 2025 onwards.

To obtain an overall grade for the qualification, a cash-in code must be used alongside the unit entry codes.

- **Engaging and accessible topics**

The four core topic areas are of immediate relevance to learners' lived experiences and probable future plans. They will equip learners with the necessary vocabulary and command of language to socialise, travel abroad and thrive in educational settings and the workplace. The fifth topic provides the opportunity to choose one of three important global issues to explore, meaning that teachers can select the topic area that is most likely to engage their learners.

- **Core and optional vocabulary lists**

To help prepare learners for their examinations, the specification includes a list of core vocabulary that will be most useful. To further help teachers with lesson planning and differentiation, and to help learners with revision, this vocabulary has been sorted by topic and by difficulty level.



- **Four units, four grades**

Higher education institutions and employers have been known to require applicants to prove their level of language proficiency in all four key language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. This qualification has a separate unit for each of these key skills, and learners will receive a separate grade for each skill, as well as an overall grade.

- **Achievement mapped to CEFR and GSE**

To enable learners to demonstrate their level of achievement internationally, each 9-1 grade has been mapped to both the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and to the Global Scale of English (GSE). This will mean that learners can use this qualification to demonstrate a CEFR and a GSE grade for each of the four key language skills.

- **Clear and straightforward unit assessments**

These will include realistic and contextualised tasks that relate clearly to the prescribed topic areas. Unit assessments will be laid out, and instructions will be given in such a way as to be easily understood by learners from across the ability range. Task types will be recognisable from series to series. Clear mark schemes will allow teachers and learners to understand the assessment.

All unit assessments are designed to be at the same standard, and there is no step up in difficulty between units.

- **Catering for a broad ability range**

The 9-1 system of grading will cater for a wide ability range, while ensuring the most able learners are given a realistic challenge.

- **Learner choice**

The Speaking unit assessment includes a task where learners choose any area of Topic 5 (Global Issues) that interests them and prepare a topic talk on this area. This element of learner choice will offer ample opportunity for them to engage with the topic in a meaningful and enjoyable way.



- **Diverse and sensitive extracts**

Texts for the Reading and Listening units and throughout the support resources will be culturally sensitive and cover a diverse range of experiences.

- **Assessments designed with learner in mind**

Taking exams is stressful, and so the exams for this qualification have been designed with features to put learners at ease. The Speaking unit assessment includes time for learners to prepare after receiving their prompt cards, and a non-assessed warm-up conversation to ease learners into their exam. The number of words in Reading and Listening extracts and the number of speakers in Listening extracts have been reduced compared with the legacy qualifications to ensure that learners' cognitive load is not overburdened.

- **Broad and deep development of learners' skills**

This qualification will develop learners' language ability with the written and spoken forms of English, including:

- reading for both gist and detail
- listening to an argument or discussion, understanding the overall message and identifying attitudes and opinion
- writing in response to a given situation
- delivering a monologue as well as participating in extended discussion.



What's new?

The key changes are:

1. Unitised assessment structure
2. Introduction of key topic areas
3. Introduction of a core vocabulary list
4. Introduction of a grammar list
5. Updated assessment structure
6. Separate grade for each language skill
7. CEFR and GSE mapping

1. Unitised assessment structure:

Learners can sit or resit individual unit assessments before receiving an overall qualification grade.

All units are available in the June and November exam series. A cash-in code must be used to obtain an overall grade for the qualification. Individual unit assessments may be taken over a course of one or more examination series, or all four unit assessments may be taken together at the end of the course of study in a single examination series.

This is a skills-based qualification, where learners will develop their proficiency across all four skill areas alongside one another. The recommendation is for learners to sit all unit assessments at the end of the course of study, and use subsequent series as individual resit opportunities as needed. The recommended duration of the course is two years.

2. Introduction of key topic areas:

- This qualification has been brought into line with the rest of Pearson's Modern Foreign Languages qualifications and includes key topic areas that will feature in the assessment. This will enable teachers to focus their schemes of work on the most relevant vocabulary for success in the assessment.
- There are four core topic areas (Topic 1 Myself & Others; Topic 2 Travel & Tourism; Topic 3 Education; Topic 4 Employment). All learners are required to



study each of these four core topics. Each of these four core topics may appear on any of the unit assessment.

- There is one topic which provides optionality (Topic 5 Global Issues). All learners are required to study one topic from a list of three (The Environment; Equality; The Media). Learners' choice of optional topic will only be assessed in Unit 3: Writing and Unit 4: Speaking.

3. Introduction of a core vocabulary list:

- This qualification includes a core vocabulary list of the most useful terms for assessment preparation. Also, an optional topic vocabulary list is included to support the optional topic study.
- The assessment will target vocabulary in the core list but may also include and credit vocabulary not included in the core list.
- The core vocabulary list, included in the specification, has been sorted by CEFR level and by which topic each entry might most readily be related to. This presentation will help with lesson planning and differentiation, and aid learners with their revision.

4. Introduction of a grammar list:

- This qualification includes a grammar list carefully mapped to CEFR for assessment preparation.
- The grammar list, included in the specification, has been sorted by CEFR level. This presentation will help with lesson planning and differentiation, and aid learners with their revision.

5. Updated assessment structure:

- This qualification includes four compulsory units (Unit 1: Reading; Unit 2: Listening; Unit 3: Writing; Unit 4: Speaking).
- There are four assessment objectives, one for each of the four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking).
- Each unit assessment is equally weighted (25% of the overall qualification).

Skill	AO definition	% in International GCSE
AO1: Reading	Understand and provide a response in written English to a variety of types of written language	25% of the overall qualification



AO2: Listening	Understand and provide a response in English to a variety of types of spoken English language	25% of the overall qualification
AO3: Writing	Communicate, respond to, and use written English language while using a range of vocabulary and grammar structures	25% of the overall qualification
AO4: Speaking	Communicate, interact and use spoken English language using a range of vocabulary and grammar structures	25% of the overall qualification

6. Separate grade for each language skill:

- Higher education institutions and employers have been known to require applicants to prove their level of language proficiency in all four key language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking.
- This qualification has a separate unit assessment for each of these key skills, and learners will receive a separate grade for each skill, as well as an overall grade. Each unit assessment is designed to be at the same standard, and there is no step up in difficulty between units.

7. CEFR and GSE mapping:

- To enable learners to demonstrate their level of achievement internationally, each 9-1 grade has been mapped to both the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and to the Global Scale of English (GSE).
- This will mean that learners can use this qualification to demonstrate a CEFR and a GSE grade for each of the four key language skills.



Qualification overview

This new specification has been developed in response to feedback from the international school, UK independent school and language teaching community. Changes from the legacy qualification (4ES1) have been made to bring this specification into line with trends in modern foreign language teaching, learning and testing in the UK and internationally.

The qualification includes four core topic areas which all learners will study:

Topic	Key content
1 – Myself & Others	Homes Hobbies and leisure time Family, friends and relationships
2 – Travel & Tourism	Transport and accommodation Tourist activities (including shopping and ordering food and drink, as well as overcoming issues abroad, e.g. seeing a doctor) Travel destinations and reasons for travel
3 – Education	School life Future education plans Information and communication technology
4 – Employment	Part-time and voluntary work Future employment plans Job applications

Additionally, Topic 5: Global Issues provides a choice of three subtopics. Learners will study one of the following three options:

- The Environment
- Equality
- The Media

Topic 5 will be assessed in two units: Unit 3: Writing and Unit 4: Speaking.

In Unit 3, learners will need to make use of their knowledge of either The Environment, Equality or The Media in combination with one or more of the core topic areas.

For example, a task might ask learners to write an article in a school magazine: Topic 4 and Topic 5 (The Environment).



- 2 (a) You have been asked to write an article for the school magazine about how companies can be environmentally friendly.

In your article you **must**:

- write about **two** ways companies can be environmentally friendly
- write about **two** benefits to the environment of companies being environmentally friendly
- explain whether working for an environmentally friendly company is important to you.

(20)

In Unit 4, learners will deliver a short pre-prepared presentation on an aspect of their choice of either The Environment, Equality or The Media. For example, a learner who had studied Equality in class might prepare and deliver a presentation on anti-racism. This aspect of the qualification is intended to allow learners the opportunity to focus on something that they care about and will be eager to engage with.

Each of the four key language learning skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) is assessed separately and given equal weighting (25% of the overall qualification each). Assessment is unitised, with the first examination series to be conducted in the June 2025.

Assessment Overview

Reading

Weighting: 25%

Total Marks: 50

Duration: 1 hour

The aim of the Reading unit is to assess learners' understanding and provide a response in written English to a variety of types of written English language texts.

The unit assessment consists of six reading passages of increasing length and difficulty. Passages will relate to the core topics (1-4) only, and not to any optional subtopics from Topic 5 Global Issues.

Different types of texts will be included, e.g. factual information, explanation, instructions and opinions. Texts across a unit will include a mix of informal, semi-formal and formal writing styles.



This unit assessment may include multiple choice questions, multiple response questions, cloud sentence completion, fill the gap questions, and open-response questions.

Listening

Weighting: 25%

Total Marks: 50

Duration: 45 minutes

The aim of the Listening unit is to assess learners' understanding and provide a response in written English to a variety of types of recorded spoken English language texts.

The unit consists of nine recorded texts of increasing length and difficulty. Recorded texts may be in the form of monologues and dialogues and occasionally involve three speakers. Recorded texts will relate to the core topics (1-4) only, and not to any of the optional subtopics from Topic 5 Global Issues.

Learners will hear each text twice. They will be given time to read the questions before each part of the recording begins, and will be expected to respond to the questions as they listen.

This unit assessment may include multiple choice, multiple response questions, open-response and cloud sentence completion questions.

Writing

Weighting: 25%

Total Marks: 50

Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes

The aim of the Writing unit is to assess learners' written language competence through a variety of tasks which, where possible, reflect real-life situations and are relevant to learners and their backgrounds. The unit consists of three tasks.

Tasks in the Writing unit assessment may relate to any of the core topics (1-4). The second task will always relate to the optional subtopics from Topic 5 Global Issues, as well as one or more of the core topics (1-4).

Task 1 – Informal writing (75-100 words). Learners will be asked to compose an informal piece of writing (e.g. an email to a friend).



Task 2 – Semi-formal writing (100-150 words). Learners will be asked to compose a semi-formal piece of writing (e.g. an article). This task will present learners with three options. Each task will combine one of the optional subtopics (Topic 5 Global Issues) with one of the compulsory topics (topics 1-4). Learners should choose the task which corresponds to the optional subtopic they have prepared.

Task 3 – Semi-formal/formal writing (100-150 words). Learners will be asked to compose a semi-formal or formal summary of a longer text, which will be included in the question paper.

Speaking

Weighting: 25%

Total Marks: 50

Duration: 22-23 minutes

The aim of the Speaking unit is to assess learners' spoken language competence through a variety of tasks which, where possible, reflect real-life situations and are relevant to learners and their backgrounds. This unit assessment consists of three tasks.

Tasks in the Writing unit may relate to any of the core topics (1-4). The second task will always relate to an optional topic from Topic 5 Global Issues of the learner's choice.

Before the assessment begins, learners will be given prompt cards for Tasks 1 and 3. They will be given 10 minutes of preparation time under supervised conditions. Learners will be allowed to make notes during the preparation time.

The teacher/examiner will begin with by introducing themselves and asking a series of simple questions on a familiar topic as a warm-up exercise.

Task 1 – A structured role play (1-2 minutes). Learners will have five opportunities to speak, and in each case will be expected to say a few words/a short phrase/sentence in response to the prompt.

Task 2 – Topic talk (5 minutes). Learners will be given 2 minutes to deliver their pre-prepared monologue/speech on a topic of their choice from the three options in Topic 5 Global Issues, and the teacher/examiner will ask a number of follow-up questions.

Task 3 – Picture-based conversation (5 minutes). The teacher/examiner will lead the learner into an extended conversation covering the remaining topics not covered in the assessment thus far. The teacher/examiner will also be given a series of prompt



questions that they can use, but this list will not be prescriptive or exhaustive, to allow for a free conversation with genuine and spontaneous interaction.



Assessment guidance

Assessment guidance:

- detailed breakdown of Units 1-4
- question types
- command words
- relationship between command words and mark tariffs
- extended response questions, command words and anything else that you can think of
- examples of different types of questions and understanding the mark scheme requirements
 - explanatory questions
 - extended response questions
 - any others?

AO1 – Reading. Understand and provide a response in written English to a variety of types of written English language.

This assessment objective is tested in Unit 1: Reading by means of six written texts in English. The total word count for the unit assessment will be 1700-1800 words, divided unevenly across the six written texts. There is an incline in the difficulty as learners go through the unit assessment, with later texts typically longer and more complex than earlier texts.

The written texts will be of a variety of different text types, with a mix of formal, semi-formal and informal texts. Each text will target one of the four core topics – the optional subtopics from Topic 5 Global Issues will not be targeted in this unit.

The total marks for this unit assessment is 50. Of these, 30 marks are available for questions with closed responses. Types of closed-response questions include: multiple choice questions; multiple response questions; fill in the gap questions (selecting the correct word or phrase from a word cloud). A total of 20 marks is available for questions with open responses. Open-response questions require learners to come up with their own response and provide it in a free-text answer space.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Multiple Choice Questions
Text:

SCHOOL CLUBS

Art Club

Every week, the art teacher, Mr Jones helps us to paint a different building, person or plant. He gives us all the paints and equipment. Just bring an old shirt. Painting is fun but messy!

Every Thursday 3.30 – 5 p.m., in the art room

By Asim, Grade 9

Drama Club

Do you enjoy singing songs, playing games and dancing?

Then come to the Drama Club with Ms Walvis, the drama teacher. We do all that and more!

Twice a year, the Drama Club puts on a show. They are fun. But don't worry! You don't have to be in a show.

We meet every Tuesday afternoon, 3.30 – 5.30 p.m., in the music room, which is behind the School Hall and next to the Canteen.

By May, Grade 10



Question Paper:

1 Answer the questions below.

Put a cross in the correct box for each question.

(a) What do students need to take to the Art Club?

(1)



(Source: ©Shutterstock Images)



(Source: ©Pearson Asset Library)



(Source: ©Pearson Asset Library)

(b) How many shows does the Drama Club put on each year?

(1)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A one
<input type="checkbox"/>	B two
<input type="checkbox"/>	C three

(c) Where does the Drama Club meet?

(1)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A the music room
<input type="checkbox"/>	B the School Hall
<input type="checkbox"/>	C the Canteen

This set of questions is typical of the multiple-choice questions featured in the Reading unit assessment. Learners need to read and understand the text to extract a key detail and use this to select the correct option by writing an X in the correct box. This is a closed-response question and learners should not write in extra information. One mark is available for each question, with only one possible correct answer. Learners should not, therefore, select more than one option.

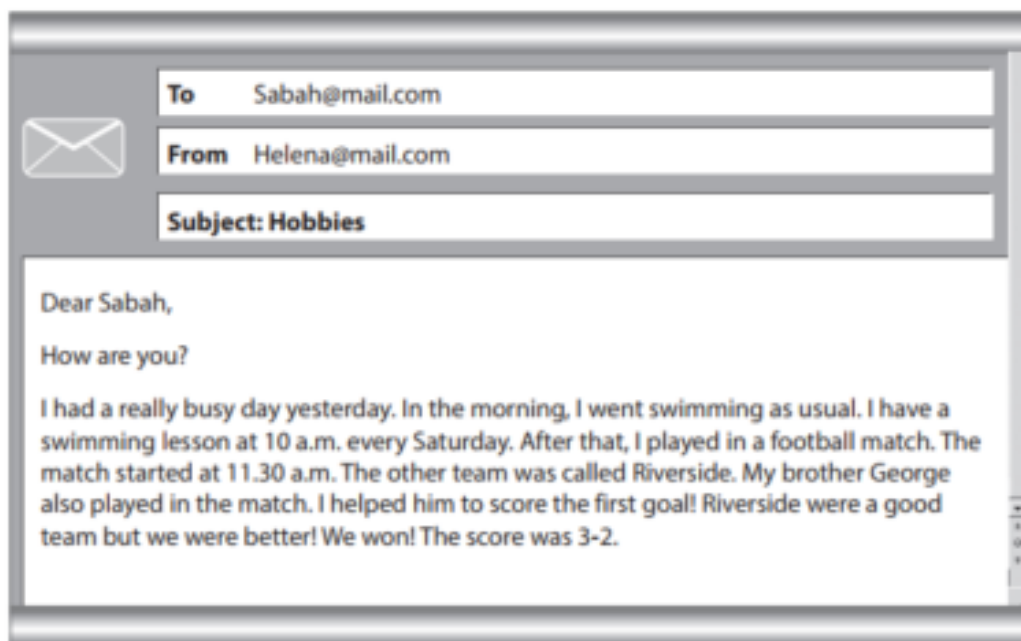
These questions are from the start of the paper and as such have the lowest demand. One way that lower-ability learners are supported in answering this question is through the inclusion of picture prompts.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Multiple Response Questions
Text:

Helena is writing an email to her friend Sabah.

Read the email below.



Question Paper:

3 Which sentences are true?

Put a cross in each one of the **three** correct boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	A Helena usually goes swimming on Saturday mornings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B The football match started at 10 a.m.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C Helena plays for the Riverside team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D Helena and George played in the football match.
<input type="checkbox"/>	E George scored the first goal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	F Riverside were not a good team.

(Total for Question 3 = 3 marks)

This question is typical of the multiple response questions featured in the Reading unit assessment. Learners need to read and understand the text to extract key details and use these to select the correct options by writing an X in the correct boxes. This is a closed-response question and learners should not write in extra information. Multiple marks are available for this kind of question, with as many correct answers as there are



marks available. One mark is awarded for each correct answer. Learners should, therefore, select as many options as there are marks available, but not more.

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Fill the Gap Questions

Text:

Helena is writing an email to her friend Sabah.

The email continues.

Subject: Hobbies

In the afternoon, George and I went for a bike ride. We cycled to the town park and got some ice creams. After we finished them, George saw some friends. They invited us to play basketball with them. We played for a long time.

On Saturday evenings, we usually eat pizza and then watch a film. But we went bowling instead! It was lots of fun. We ate burgers before we played two games of bowling. My mum won them both. She is very good because she plays every Sunday morning with her friends.

I don't want to go outside today because it's raining. I am going to cook fried rice for lunch. Also, I have lots of homework to do.

What are you doing today? Are you staying inside today, too?

Helena



Question Paper:

4 Complete the gap in each sentence using a word or phrase from the box below.

There are more words than gaps.

morning	evening	night	afternoon
before	after	while	fried rice
burgers	ice-cream	pizza	

- (a) George and Helena went for a bike ride in the (1)
- (b) They played basketball they ate ice creams. (1)
- (c) Most Saturday evenings, Helena's family eat (1)
- (d) Helena's mum goes bowling with her friends in
the (1)
- (e) Helena will eat for her midday meal. (1)

(Total for Question 4 = 5 marks)

This question is typical of the multiple response questions featured in the Reading unit assessment. Learners need to read and understand the text to extract key details and use these to select the correct word or phrase from a range of options to complete sentences which relate back to the text. Learners should copy the word or phrase exactly and not add in extra words of their own.

Each option should be used a maximum of once. There are more words than gaps to prevent learners from being able to guess the answers to some questions through a process of elimination.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Open-Response Questions
Text:

Read the blog below.

Preparing for University
www.sandrosblog.com

When I was at primary school, I used to look at the secondary school students and worry that I would never be ready to go to secondary school. The students looked tall, confident, and grown up, especially if they were wearing school uniform. Now I realise how much time I wasted worrying about nothing. I really want to avoid making the same mistake as I get ready to prepare for life at university.

So, what lessons can I learn from my past?

Firstly, I need to remember that things that seem scary and confusing soon become normal. At secondary school, I bought the same sandwich every day for the first month because I was too nervous to ask for anything else. At university, I will have lots of new experiences and challenges to deal with, but I am determined to feel excited, not nervous, about them.

Secondly, I must remember that just like all the first-year students I will be in the same situation. It will be the first time most of us will have lived away from home so we will all be finding out what it's like to cook and clean for ourselves and get to places on time without our parents' help!

Finally, I must remember to be open to new hobbies and activities. At university, I don't want to just do handball and play in the orchestra like I did at school, I want to try other things, like rock climbing or acting, too. Maybe there'll be things I've never even heard of!



Question Paper:

9 Answer the following questions.

You do not need to write in full sentences.

For each question write no more than **five** words.

(a) What made the secondary school students particularly scary to Sandro? (1)

(b) What mistake does Sandro want to avoid repeating? (1)

(c) For how long did Sandro buy the same food? (1)

(d) How does Sandro want to feel about going to university? (1)

(e) Who is Sandro referring to when he says 'most of us' (paragraph 4, line 2)? (1)

(f) Name **one** hobby or activity that Sandro did at school. (1)

(Total for Question 9 = 6 marks)

This question is typical of the open-response questions featured in the Reading unit assessment. Learners need to read and understand the text to answer a set of questions, in words of their choice. Learners are instructed not to write in full sentences, and to use no more than five words per answer. This is intended to help learners to manage their time well by not overwriting. This is also intended to make unit assessments easier to mark consistently by reducing the possibility for a learner to write an answer that contains a correct response alongside incorrect information.

Answers to open questions in the Reading unit assessment are marked for comprehension only – spelling or grammatical accuracy is not assessed in this question type. However, if the accuracy impedes communication, it may impact the mark (i.e. if the marker is not sure what the learner is meaning to write, they will not award a mark). Learners may either write a response in their own words or select some relevant text from the passage, provided it answers the question in five words or less. For example, a correct response to 9(e) would be “living away from home”.



General advice for approaching the Reading unit assessment

Teachers should encourage learners to read the entire text before choosing their answers. Texts will often include multiple references to a particular thing, and learners will need to take care when choosing their answers. For example, question 4(d) above is asking about food. A learner can conceivably skim the extract for mentions of food, spot “burgers” and recognise it as one of the options. This would be incorrect, however, as the question is asking about what Helena will eat in the future, but the text mentions that she ate burgers in the past. A good strategy is to begin by reading the questions for a text, then read the text itself in its entirety before attempting to choose correct answers for each question individually.

In general, questions will be arranged in the order that the answers appear in the text. For example, in question 3 above, the first option is about the time of Helena’s swimming lesson and the second option is about the time of her football match. This mirrors the order in which the information about these activities appears in the text. Teachers should alert learners to this fact as it may help them to search for relevant information in a longer text.

Questions in the Reading unit assessment may test learners’ ability to infer meaning from written texts. A good example of this is question 9(a) above. The text does not state that Sandro was scared, but use of the word “worry” and the descriptions of how the secondary school learners seemed bigger and older than him strongly implies his feeling. Understanding inference is a more challenging skill than simply extracting information from a text, and so learners should be prepared for this type of question with classroom activities based around inference, such as:

- semantic matching – matching vocabulary terms that share common meanings, e.g. “frustrating”, “cross” and “irritated” all relate to the idea of anger.
- definition matching – securing knowledge of vocabulary will help to detect the inferred meaning, e.g. if a character states that they “don’t eat meat”, this could imply they are vegetarian.
- guessing games – providing learners with texts that imply answers through description, with prizes for guessing the correct answer from the fewest clues. For example, a description of an in-school event might mention an “assembly”, “speeches”, “diplomas” and “graduates” – the event is implied to be a graduation.



AO2 – Listening. Understand and provide a response in English to a variety of types of spoken English language.

This assessment objective is tested in Unit 2: Listening by means of nine recorded texts of spoken English. The total word count for the unit assessment will be 1440-1530, divided unevenly across the nine recorded texts. There is an incline in the difficulty as learners go through the unit assessment, with later texts typically longer and more complex than earlier texts.

The recorded texts will be of a variety of text types, with a mix of formal, semi-formal and informal texts. Each text will target one of the four core topics – the optional topics from Topic 5 Global Issues will not be targeted in this unit.

The total marks for the unit assessment is 50, of which 35 marks are awarded for questions with closed responses. Types of closed-response questions include: multiple choice questions; multiple response questions; fill in the gap questions (selecting the correct word or phrase from a word cloud). Further, 15 marks are awarded for questions with open responses. Open-response questions require learners to come up with their own response and provide it in a free-text answer space.

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Multiple Choice Questions

Transcript:

A conversation about future careers

Transcript 3

Speaker 1 (male): What career do you want, Yasmin?

Speaker 2 (female): I want to be a journalist. I listen to the news on the radio every morning when I wake up.

Speaker 1 (male): Are journalists paid well?

Speaker 2 (female): Yes, they're paid quite well, but that's not very important to me. I just want to do a job that I enjoy. What do you want to do, Marco?

Speaker 1 (male): I want to work with plants. That's what I enjoy doing. My grandparents showed me how to grow flowers and vegetables.

Speaker 2 (female): Do you want to own a flower or vegetable shop?

Speaker 2 (male): No, I want to work outside. I want to have a business working in the gardens of big hotels or companies. Last month, I visited the gardens at the university. They were so beautiful. I hope to visit the university gardens again in the holidays.



Question Paper:

A conversation about future careers

Yasmin and Marco are talking about their career plans.

- 3** Listen to the recording and complete the sentences by putting a cross ☒ in the correct box for each question.

(a) In the morning, Yasmin gets news from ...

(1)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A her phone.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B the television.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C the radio.

(b) Yasmin thinks that journalists are ...

(1)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A not paid well.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B paid quite well.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C paid very well.

This set of questions is typical of the multiple-choice questions featured in the Listening unit assessment. Learners need to listen to and understand the recording to extract a key detail and use this to select the correct option by writing an X in the correct box. This is a closed-response question and learners should not write in extra information. One mark is awarded for each question, with only one possible correct answer. Learners should not, therefore, select more than one option.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Multiple Response Questions
Transcript:

An advert for Hillview School

Transcript 2 (a)

Speaker 1 (male): Are you looking for a great place to study? Then come to Hillview School.

Speaker 2 (female): We offer a great education. You can choose from more than twenty subjects including Music and Computer Science.

What's more, the teachers are excellent. They work very hard to make sure you do well in your exams.

Transcript 2 (b)

Speaker 1 (male): Hillview is a modern school. In every room, you will see Wi-Fi, computers and large TV screens.

In our sports centre, we have a gym, a basketball court and a swimming pool!

Hillview is close to the bus and train stations. And we have lots of places for bikes, too.

Speaker 2 (female): Come and visit us today!

Question Paper:

An advert for Hillview School

Listen to the radio advert for Hillview School.

2 (a) What does the advert talk about?

Listen to the recording and put a cross ☒ in each one of the **three** correct boxes.

(3)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A subjects
<input type="checkbox"/>	B friendships
<input type="checkbox"/>	C teachers
<input type="checkbox"/>	D rules
<input type="checkbox"/>	E exams
<input type="checkbox"/>	F uniform



This question is typical of the multiple response questions featured in the Listening unit assessment. Learners need to listen to and understand the recording to extract key details and use these to select the correct options by writing an X in the correct boxes. This is a closed-response question and learners should not write in extra information. Multiple marks are available for this kind of question, with as many correct answers as there are marks available. One mark is awarded for each correct answer. Learners should, therefore, select as many options as there are marks available, but not more.

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Fill in the Gap Questions
Transcript:

At a travel agency

Transcript 8

Speaker 1 (male): Hello, may I help you?

Speaker 2 (female): Yes, please. My family and I would like to go on holiday in the summer holidays, and we need some ideas.

Speaker 1 (male): Great, have you been to this travel agency before? Do we have your details?

Speaker 2 (female): Yes, we have come here lots of times. My name is Fatima Kumari.

Speaker 1 (male): Thank you. So, do you want a relaxing holiday? Or do you want to do lots of activities? Perhaps surfing or diving?

Speaker 2 (female): Well, we do want to go near the sea, but diving costs too much money and surfing is too scary! But, we do like going hiking and sightseeing.

Speaker 1 (male): So, would you like a quiet and peaceful resort, rather than a resort in a big city?

Speaker 2 (female): Yes, that's right. We live in a big, noisy city so we want something different!

Speaker 1 (male): So, would you like to stay in a small, quiet hotel, too?

Speaker 2 (female): No, not this time. We usually stay in small hotels, but we have stayed in large hotels once or twice before, and we want to try that again.

Speaker 1 (male): Great, I have a few suggestions of big hotels by the sea for you. Have a look at these...



Question Paper:

At a travel agency

Fatima is talking to a travel agent.

8 What does Fatima say?

Listen to the recording and complete the sentences below.

diving	hiking	sightseeing	surfing
never	often	rarely	peaceful
busy	noisy	quiet	

- (a) Fatima has been to the travel agency before. (1)
- (b) Fatima would like to go on holiday somewhere where she and her family can go and (2)
- (c) Fatima would like to go to a resort that is (1)
- (d) Fatima stays in big hotels. (1)

(Total for Question 8 = 5 marks)

This question is typical of the multiple response questions featured in the Listening unit assessment. Learners need to listen to and understand the recording to extract key details and use these to select the correct word or phrase from a range of options to complete sentences which relate back to the recording. Learners should copy the word or phrase exactly and not add in extra words of their own.

Each option should be used a maximum of once. There are more words than gaps to prevent learners from being able to guess the answers to some questions through a process of elimination.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Open-Response Questions
Transcript:

Over-tourism

Transcript 11

Speaker (male):

Over-tourism is a word to describe when there are too many tourists in a particular place. First used in 2012, it describes a problem that has been growing since the 1980s due to factors such as the availability of cheap air travel, enormous cruise ships, and the rising world population.

An example of over-tourism is Maya Bay in Thailand. Maya Bay is a beautiful place. It is a circular bay protected by tall cliffs, with white sand and turquoise water. Forty years ago, only a few tourists and local fisherman went there. Then, it was used as the location for the blockbuster film *The Beach*, released in 2000, and its popularity soared! By 2018, more than 5000 tourists visited the bay each day. Inevitably, that number of tourists caused terrible damage to the plants and wildlife in the bay.

To help the bay recover, the Thai government closed it for four years. It reopened in 2022, but with new restrictions to protect the beach. Now, speedboats cannot go into the bay and there are boardwalks to walk on. More importantly, visitors will only be able to stay for one hour. This means that there will only be 400 people on the beach at any time. And only 3000 people will be able to visit each day.

But over-tourism isn't just a problem for Thailand or natural beauty spots. Cities around the world, from Amsterdam to Auckland, are having to find ways to balance the benefits and disadvantages of tourists. Authorities are trying out different ideas, including increasing taxes for tourists or encouraging people to go at different times of the year. Unlike Maya Bay, they cannot simply empty their cities and lock the doors!



Question Paper:

Over-tourism

Noah is talking about over-tourism.

11 Listen to the podcast and answer the following questions.

You do not need to write in full sentences.

For each question write no more than **ten** words.

(a) Write down one of the reasons given for the problem of over-tourism. (1)

(b) Why has Maya Bay become so popular since 2000? (1)

(c) What was the number of daily tourist visits to Maya Bay in 2018? (1)

This question is typical of the open-response questions featured in the Listening unit assessment. Learners need to listen to and understand the recording to answer a set of questions, in words of their choice. Learners are instructed not to write in full sentences, and to use no more than ten words per answer. This is intended to help learners to manage their time well by not overwriting. This is also intended to make unit assessments easier to mark consistently by reducing the possibility for a learner to write an answer that contains a correct response alongside incorrect information.

Answers to open questions in the Listening unit assessment are marked for comprehension only – spelling or grammatical accuracy is not assessed in this question type. However, if the accuracy impedes communication, it may impact the mark (i.e. if the marker is not sure what the learner is meaning to write, they will not award a mark). Learners may either write a response in their own words or select some relevant text from the passage, provided it answers the question in ten words or less. For example, a correct response to 11(a) would be “rising world population”.

General advice for approaching the Listening unit

At the beginning of the assessment, learners will be given 5 minutes to read through the question paper, during which time they may make notes on the paper. Teachers should



prepare learners to make the most of this time by practicing reading questions and identifying key words.

Learners will hear each extract twice, and there will be a pause between each question. A good strategy for answering these questions is to make a note of initial thoughts during the first listening, and to use the second listening to confirm or change these choices, before writing in the final answers.

In general, questions will be arranged in the order that the answers appear in the recording. For example, question 11(a) above asks about the causes of over-tourism and 11(b) and 11(c) each ask about the case study of Maya Bay in particular. This mirrors the format of the transcript, which begins with an outline of the issue of over-tourism before moving on to consider the example of Maya Bay in more detail. Teachers should alert learners to this fact, as it may help them to listen out for relevant information in a longer recording.

AO3 – Writing. Communicate, respond to, and use written English language while using a range of vocabulary.

This assessment objective is tested in Unit 3: Writing by means of three tasks which require learners to answer in written English. Each task in the Writing unit assessment is an open response.

There is an incline in the difficulty as learners go through the unit assessment. Task 1 targets the lower grades, while Task 2 and Task 3 target the entire grade range. Every task is designed to be accessible to the entire ability range. The Writing unit differentiates learners by the quality of the output they produce.

Task 1 is an informal piece of writing (e.g. an email to a friend). Task 2 is a piece of semi-formal writing (e.g. an article). Task 3 is a piece of semi-formal or formal summary writing.

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Task 1

1 You want to go shopping with your friend at the weekend. Write an email to your friend about this.

In your email you **must**:

- ask your friend to go shopping with you
- write why you want to go shopping
- suggest where to meet your friend.

Aim to write approximately **80** words in English.

(10)



This task is typical of the tasks that learners will encounter for Task 1 in the Writing unit assessment.

Context is given to help learners understand the purpose of their writing – in this case, organising a shopping trip with a friend. Writing an email to a friend is very typical of Task 1, which will always require learners to produce a short piece of informal writing.

Task 1 will always clearly relate to one of the four core topics (Myself & Others, Travel & Tourism, Education and Employment). Topic 5 (Global Issues) will not be targeted by Task 1. For example, question 1 from Task 1 relates to Myself & Others as it asks learners to write about leisure time with friends.

Three bullet points outline what learners should include in their response. It may help some learners to structure their responses if they plan what they will write around these bullet points. It is not a requirement, however, for learners to structure their response in the same order as the bullet points. It is also not a requirement that learners spend an equal number of words on each bullet point. Finally, it should be noted that the bullet points do not prevent learners from introducing additional ideas of their own.

The writing produced in response to Task 1 is awarded marks for **communication and content**, and for **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Communication and content marks are awarded for the learner's coverage of the required information and level of written development, for use of tone and register (informal), and for clarity of communication.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy marks are awarded for the learner's appropriate and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Task 2

Choose either Question 2(a) or Question 2(b) or Question 2(c).

EITHER

- 2 (a) You have been asked to write an article for the school magazine about how companies can be environmentally friendly.

In your article you **must**:

- write about **two** ways companies can be environmentally friendly
- write about **two** benefits to the environment of companies being environmentally friendly
- explain whether working for an environmentally friendly company is important to you.

(20)

OR

- 2 (b) You have been asked to write an article for the school magazine about how people use media to connect with others.

In your article you **must**:

- write about **two** types of media that people use to connect with others
- write about **two** possible problems when using media to connect with others
- explain how important media is to you as a way of connecting with others.

(20)

OR

- 2 (c) You have been asked to write an article for the school magazine about experiencing equal or unequal treatment while travelling to other countries.

In your article you **must**:

- write about **two** benefits of travelling alone to other countries
- write about **two** ways in which people might experience unequal treatment whilst travelling
- explain whether you would travel alone to other countries.

(20)

Aim to write approximately **180** words in English.

Remember to use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary in your response.

These tasks are typical of the tasks that learners will encounter for Task 2 in the Writing unit assessment. There are three options, and learners should attempt only one. It is strongly recommended that learners choose the task which relates to the optional subtopic that they have prepared for with their teacher.

Context is given to help learners understand the purpose of their writing – in this case, writing an article for a school magazine. Writing an article or report is very typical of Task 2, which will always require learners to produce a piece of semi-formal writing.



Each task will relate to one of the optional subtopics for Topic 5 Global Issues (The Environment, Equality, The Media), and one of the four core topics. For example, 2(a) is related to both The Environment and Employment; 2(b) is related to both The Media and Myself & Others; 2(c) is related to both Equality and Travel & Tourism. In preparing learners for this task, teachers should spend time with their class considering how their chosen optional subtopic might relate to each of the four core topics.

Three bullet points outline what learners should include in their response. It may help some learners to structure their responses if they plan what they will write around these bullet points. It is not a requirement, however, for learners to structure their response in the same order as the bullet points. It is also not a requirement that learners spend an equal amount of words on each bullet point. Finally, it should be noted that the bullet points do not prevent learners from introducing additional ideas of their own.

The writing produced in response to Task 2 is awarded marks for **communication and content**, and for **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Communication and content marks are awarded for the learner's coverage of the required information and level of written development, for use of tone and register (informal), and for clarity of communication.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy marks are awarded for the learner's appropriate and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Task 3

- 3 You are doing a project about studying in another country. Read the text below and write a summary for your teacher.

IS STUDYING ABROAD THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU?

Any amount of time spent studying in a different country can be a positive experience. However, the idea will not appeal to everybody. There are many factors to consider before you decide whether it is an adventure that you might enjoy.

Positives of studying abroad

Studying in a different country will allow you to experience a different way of living, especially if you are in a homestay with a local family. You can try new foods, listen to music you have never heard before and learn about customs and traditions. If you have the time, you will be able to explore the area where you are staying and visit interesting places. The things you learn will stay with you throughout your life. You will have more knowledge and think in a different way after this trip. You will have the opportunity to meet lots of new people and make new friends. As you are away from your home, you will really appreciate the friends you make. Therefore, these new friendships are likely to last your whole life. This could be useful when you finish studying and start work or want to travel in that country again. In addition, the best way to learn and practise a new language is to talk to native speakers. The ability to speak many languages is always a good addition to your CV.

Negatives of studying abroad

You may be used to being away from your family while remaining in your home country. However, being away from them in a different country can be challenging. Despite the popularity of video-calling sites and apps, not being able to have regular and face to face contact can prove difficult, especially when you first arrive and may be feeling homesick. If you are on a homestay, it will take time to get used to being part of a new family with a different routine, and where a different language is spoken. You may feel a little lonely until you make new friends and become more comfortable. You should also be prepared for teaching methods and a classroom environment that may be very different to what you are used to. Paying for such a trip can be expensive, with flights, accommodation and other costs to think about. Also, family and friends at home will probably worry about how you are getting along.

All in all, such an experience has clear positives for students, as well as negatives. If you had the opportunity to study abroad, what would you decide?

In your summary you **must**:

- write about **two** positives of studying overseas
- write about **two** negatives of studying overseas
- based on the points in the text explain whether all school students should spend some time studying overseas.

You **must** use your own words where possible.

Remember to use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary in your response.

Aim to write approximately **180** words in English.

(20)

This task is typical of the tasks that learners will encounter for Task 3 in the Writing unit assessment. A source text of 400-450 words focused on one of the four core topics,



specifically Education. To help learners navigate the text, the source text is split into sections using clear subheadings.

Context is given to help learners understand the purpose of their writing – specifically working on a school project, and the summary should be written for a teacher to read. Writing a summary for a teacher is somewhat typical of Task 3, which will require learners to produce a piece of semi-formal writing, or more formal writing.

Three bullet points outline what learners should include in their response. It may help some learners to structure their responses if they plan what they will write around these bullet points. It is not a requirement, however, for learners to structure their response in the same order as the bullet points. It is also not a requirement that learners spend an equal number of words on each bullet point. Unlike Task 1 and Task 2, learners should avoid introducing new ideas and information. Task 3 is a summary writing task, so learners should aim to base their writing on the ideas and information contained within the source text. The final bullet point for Task 3 will always prompt learners to reach a conclusion, based on their reading of the text. Teachers should, therefore, prepare their learners to express and justify opinions, developing on these with examples and explanation. Again, learners should be reminded that this conclusion should be based on the source text, and not based on their own knowledge or ideas about the topic from beyond the source text.

The writing produced in response to Task 3 is awarded marks for **communication and content**, and for **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Communication and content marks are awarded for the learner's coverage of the required information and level of written development, for use of tone and register (semi-formal or formal), and for clarity of communication.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy marks are awarded for the learner's appropriate and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, which are their own (i.e. the learner has transformed the source text into their own words and not copied large chunks of the source text verbatim).

General advice for approaching the Writing unit

Each task suggests an approximate wordcount for learner response. These are suggestions only and learners will not be penalised simply for writing more or less than the suggested amount. The wordcount is provided to help learners to manage their time across the assessment. If they write significantly more than the suggested wordcount, it is likely that they will run out of time and not complete all tasks. Conversely, if they write



significantly less than the suggested wordcount, it is unlikely that they will have written enough to cover the entire task in sufficient detail to achieve a top mark. It would not be a good use of a learner's time in the assessment to spend minutes manually counting the number of words in their responses. Therefore, teachers should prepare their learners for this assessment by providing them plenty of opportunities for reading and writing practice so that they develop a sense of the length corresponding to 80 words and 180 words.

The tasks for the Writing unit assessment are set to be as open as possible to allow learners to write using vocabulary and ideas with which they are comfortable. Teachers can prepare their learners for this by incorporating, into their schemes of work, opportunities for learners to write about their own personal experiences and opinions as they relate to the four core topics and the teacher's chosen option for Topic 5 (Global Issues).

Each task in the Writing unit assessment will be clearly related to one or more of the set topics (Myself & Others, Travel & Tourism, Education, Employment, Global Issues). Learners should feel free to make use of any vocabulary that they know to produce the best response to the task possible, regardless of where it comes from. For example, Task 1 above relates to Topic 1: Myself & Others, but learners can make use of vocabulary from the core vocabulary list for any of the other topics, and/or vocabulary from beyond the core vocabulary list, as they see fit.

It is important to note that, while Task 1 is targeted at the lower end of the ability range, Task 2 and Task 3 cover the entire ability range. Therefore, in order to access top marks, responses to Task 2 and Task 3 should aim to include a broader range of relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures (both straightforward and complex) than are necessary for Task 1. Please see candidate style responses for further information on the expected level of response for each task.

AO4 – Speaking. Communicate, interact and use spoken English language employing a range of vocabulary.

This assessment objective is tested in Unit 4: Speaking by means of three tasks which require learners to answer in spoken English. As the assessment will be carried out in the centre by a teacher in the role of examiner, it is particularly important that teachers familiarise themselves with the format of the assessment. This assessment will be recorded by centres and submitted to Pearson for examination.

There is an incline in the difficulty as learners go through the unit assessment – Task 1 targets the lower grades, while Task 2 and Task 3 target the entire grade range. Every task



is designed to be accessible to the entire ability range. The Speaking unit assessment differentiates learners by the quality of the output they produce.

In order to properly administer this assessment, teachers/examiners should conceptualise the Speaking unit assessment as consisting of six steps, which must be carried out in the following order:

- 1 – Preparation time
- 2 – Non-assessed warm-up conversation
- 3 – Task 1: Role play
- 4 – Task 2: Topic talk
- 5 – Task 3: Picture-based conversation
- 6 – End of assessment

1 – Preparation time

The teacher/examiner should choose stimulus cards for Task 1 and Task 3, using the randomisation grid provided by Pearson. The randomisation grid ensures that Task 1 and Task 3 cover different core topics - see this example:

Candidate Order	Role Play Stimulus	Picture-based Conversation Stimulus
Candidate 1	RP1	PT2
Candidate 2	RP2	PT1
Candidate 3	RP3	PT4
Candidate 4	RP4	PT3
Candidate 5	RP1	PT3
Candidate 6	RP2	PT4
Candidate 7	RP3	PT2
Candidate 8	RP4	PT1
Candidate 9	RP1	PT4
Candidate 10	RP2	PT3
Candidate 11	RP3	PT1
Candidate 12	RP4	PT2

At the time when the learner is given the prompt cards, the teacher/examiner should collect the notes that the learner has prepared for Task 2. These will be returned to the learner at the appropriate stage of the assessment.

From the point when they are given the prompt cards, learners have 10 minutes to prepare for the assessment. During the preparation time, learners should be supervised and not have access to any additional resources such as a phone, the internet, dictionary or thesaurus. Learners may make notes (a maximum of one side of A4 paper of notes per task) during this time. Learners may keep these notes and look at them at any point throughout the assessment, but must give them to the teacher/examiner at the end of the assessment. Learners must not write on the stimulus cards.



2 – Non-assessed warm-up conversation

The teacher/examiner should introduce themselves to the learner and ask a couple of questions, as written in the General Instructions to Teacher. Questions will be general, e.g. “How is your day going?” and “What did you do before the test today?”

The warm-up conversation is not assessed. It is meant to put the learner at ease and to give them the chance to warm up their voice after their preparation time.

The warm-up conversation should be kept under 1 minute, and be clearly brought to a close by the teacher/examiner.

3 – Task 1: Role play (1-2 minutes)

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Learner Stimulus Card

Task 1 (Role play candidate card)

STIMULUS RP1

Topic: Making plans with a friend

Instructions to candidates:

You are talking to your friend. You want to go to the cinema together to see a film. The teacher/examiner will play the role of your friend and will speak first.

You will talk to your teacher/examiner using the five prompts below. Your teacher/examiner will speak in English and you must answer in English.

You are expected to say a few words or a short phrase/sentence in response to each prompt. One-word answers will not be sufficient to gain full marks.

- where you see - ! - you must respond to something you have not prepared
- where you see - ? - you must ask a question

Task:

You are talking to your friend. You want to go to the cinema together to see a film.

1. Cinema - how often
2. Film - type
3. !
4. Food - what
5. ? Cinema - price



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Teacher/Examiner Card

Task 1 (role play teacher/examiner card)

STIMULUS RP1

Topic: Making plans with a friend

Instructions to teacher:

- The English phrases below must be asked in English exactly as they are written down. There must be no supplementary questions and no re-phrasing of questions. The statements/questions may be repeated no more than twice.

Begin the role play by reading the following introduction:

We are now going to complete Task 1 of the test, which is the role play.

You are talking to your friend. You want to go to the cinema together to see a film. I am your friend. I will speak first.

1	<i>How often do you go to the cinema?</i> Allow the candidate to say how often they go to the cinema.
2	<i>What type of film do you want to see?</i> Allow the candidate to say what type of film they want to see.
3	! <i>When do you want to go to the cinema?</i> Allow the candidate to say when they would like to go to the cinema.
4	<i>We should have something to eat before the film. What do you want to eat?</i> Allow the candidate to say what they would like to eat.
5	? [Prompt the candidate to ask a question if necessary - do you have a question for me?] Allow the candidate to ask about the price of cinema tickets. <i>Give an appropriate brief response.</i>

This task is typical of the tasks that learners will encounter for Task 1 – Role play. Context is given to help learners understand the purpose of their speech – in this case, making plans with a friend. The roles are clearly shown on the stimulus card to enable learners to understand the scenario.



Task 1 focuses on more accessible, transactional settings and language elements. As such, making plans, asking for help and making purchases are very common scenarios for the Role play.

Task 1 will always clearly relate to one of the four core topics (Myself & Others, Travel & Tourism, Education and Employment). Topic 5 (Global Issues) will not be targeted by Task 1. For example, Task 1 relates to Myself & Others as it asks learners to talk about their leisure time.

The stimulus card provides the learner with some idea of what the teacher/examiner will ask them, but the exact script that the teacher/examiner will follow is not made clear to the learner ahead of time. This is to enable the learner to show their ability to respond spontaneously.

The stimulus card will always include an “!” symbol. This indicates to the learner that, at this point in the assessment, the teacher/examiner will say something, but the learner will not have any prior knowledge of what this will be. The learner should listen carefully and respond spontaneously.

The stimulus cards will always include a “?” symbol. This indicates to the learner that, at this point in the assessment, they should ask the teacher/examiner a question. The stimulus card will indicate the sort of question that would be appropriate to ask. For example, in Task 1 above, the prompt “? Cinema – price” lets the learner know that they should ask the teacher/examiner a question about the cost of going to the cinema. The teacher/examiner should respond with a brief statement, appropriate to the question asked by the learner. If the learner does not ask a question, the teacher/examiner is permitted to prompt them by asking “Do you have a question for me?”

The teacher/examiner must follow their script exactly, with no deviation, rephrasing or elaboration, although the learner may ask for any prompt to be repeated up to a maximum of twice repetitions. There are five prompts that form the basis of the role play, providing the learner with five opportunities to speak. Each of these opportunities are worth a maximum of 2 marks, so this task overall is worth a maximum of 10 marks. Each response is marked separately.

Learners will be rewarded for speech that is clearly communicated, appropriate to the context of the role play scenario, unambiguous, and with pronunciation that supports clear communication. Where a response meets all of these criteria, it will be awarded 2 marks. Where a response partly meets these criteria, it will be awarded 1 mark. Where there is a response which is highly ambiguous, or where pronunciation prevents



communication, or where there is no appropriate content, then the response will be awarded no marks.

4 – Task 2: Topic talk (5 minutes)

There is no learner stimulus card for this task. There is a single card relating to this task: Instructions to the teacher/examiner. This card includes instructions and sample questions for the teacher to ask in the follow-up discussion. This card should not be shown to the learner.

Before the day of the assessment, each learner should have prepared a 2-minute topic talk. This talk should be based on the optional subtopic from Topic 5 Global Issues that the learner has studied with their teacher. Each learner should choose an aspect of the optional subtopic they have studied that particularly interests them. They should spend time researching this aspect and develop their topic talk independently. Teachers are permitted to give their learners some general guidance and advice, but the choice of subject and development of the talk should be done by the learner. This is to give each learner the opportunity to choose something that genuinely interests them and to have some personal control over this part of the Speaking assessment.

At the start of this task, the teacher/examiner should return the notes which were collected at the start of the learner's preparation time.

The teacher/examiner will then prompt the learner to deliver their 2-minute topic talk. If the learner has not finished by the end of 2 minutes, the teacher/examiner should stop them by saying: "Thank you. You have now been speaking for 2 minutes. I will now ask some follow-up questions".

The teacher instructions card includes a range of questions, which the teacher/examiner should choose from and adapt as appropriate, to lead the learner into a follow-up discussion on their topic talk. The list of possible questions is not prescriptive – the teacher/examiner should select questions appropriate to the learner. The list of possible questions has an incline of difficulty – the earlier questions are less challenging than the later ones. Learners should be given the opportunity to demonstrate what they are capable of so the teacher/examiner should usually ask questions from throughout the list. In some cases, where a learner is struggling with the more challenging questions, it may be appropriate to choose more questions from the top of the list. The teacher/examiner can also ask up to two questions of their own, from beyond the list of questions on the teacher instructions card. The teacher/examiner should remember that the purpose of the follow-up discussion is to allow learners to demonstrate their command of the language, so any of their own questions should aim to invite an open response and be closely related to the topic that the learner has been speaking about.



At appropriate point for the learner, or at the end of a 3-minute discussion, the teacher/examiner should end Task 2 and collect the learner's page of notes for this task.

The spoken English produced in response to Task 2 is awarded marks for **communication and content**, and for **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Communication and content marks are awarded for the learner's coverage of information relevant to the topic and questions, and for the level of development and extended sequences of speech they can demonstrate. Learners are rewarded for spontaneous and fluent responses to questions, and clear communication with accurate and intelligible pronunciation and intonation.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy marks are awarded for the learner's appropriate and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

5 – Task 3: Picture-based conversation (5 minutes)

Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Candidate Stimulus Card

Task 3 (picture card: candidate prompt)

STIMULUS PT1

Topic: Homes



(Source: ©Shutterstock Images)

Describe the picture (e.g. people, place, activity).

The teacher/examiner will then begin a conversation with you relating to the picture and the topic of **homes**. In your responses remember to:

- give your opinions.
- talk about past, present and future.
- use a wide range of vocabulary.
- ? Ask a question about the topic (e.g. the cost of renting / buying).



Example from the Sample Assessment Material – Teacher/Examiner Card

Task 3 (picture card: teacher/examiner card)

STIMULUS PT1

Topic: Homes

Instructions to teacher/examiner:

Introduce Task 3 with the following:

We are now going to complete the final task, Task 3. Look at the picture. We are going to discuss the picture and the topic of homes.



(Source: ©Shutterstock Images)

Ask the questions below (in the order they are listed). There is no need to ask all the questions if the candidate is not able to continue.

- **Describe the photo. [Anything else?]**
- **Tell me about a place you lived in when you were younger. What was it like? [Tell me about it.]**
 - *What did you like/dislike about that place? [Tell me about that.]*
 - *What did you enjoy doing there? [Tell me about that.]*
- **What type of home do you want to live in when you are older? [Tell me about it.]**
 - *What rooms do you want to have in your home? [Tell me about them.]*
 - *What features do you want to have in your home? [Tell me about them.]*
- **Some people think that having an outside space or a garden at home is really important. Do you agree? [Why? / Why not?]**
 - *What alternatives do people have if they do not have an outside space at home?*
 - *Is building homes more important than having public spaces? [Why? / Why not?]*
- **How might homes be different in the future? [Tell me about that.]**
 - *What technology do you think people will have in their homes? [Tell me about that.]*
 - *Do you think homes will be built differently? [Tell me about that.]*
- **Allow the candidate the opportunity to ask you a question [Do you have a question for me?]. Give an appropriate brief response.**

At the end say: **Thank you. That is the end of the test.**



This task is typical of the tasks that learners will encounter for Task 3 – Picture-based conversation. The learner stimulus card includes a picture which relates to one of the four core topics (Myself & Others, Travel & Tourism, Education and Employment). Topic 5 (Global Issues) will not be targeted by Task 1. For example, Task 3 above relates to Myself & Others as it depicts a family moving into a home.

The teacher/examiner will lead the learner into an extended conversation based on the stimulus card. The first prompt will always require the learner to describe the picture on the card. The teacher/examiner card includes four further prompts, which the teacher/examiner should read out (in order). Each of the prompts includes extension prompts, which the teacher/examiner can choose to ask in order to elicit a more developed response from the learner.

The teacher/examiner does not need to make use of any of the extension prompts if the learner is producing developed responses without them. Similarly, the teacher/examiner does not need to ask all of the questions if the learner is unable to continue.

The prompts on the teacher card are designed to elicit a wide range of language structures from the learner. As such, they will cover past, present and future tenses, require learners to give opinions and ask a question.

The spoken English produced in response to Task 2 is awarded marks for **communication and content**, and for **linguistic knowledge and accuracy**.

Communication and content marks are awarded for the learner's coverage of information relevant to the picture and questions, and for the level of development they can demonstrate. Learners are rewarded for spontaneous and fluent response to questions, and clear communication with pronunciation and intonation that are accurate and intelligible.

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy marks are awarded for the learner's appropriate and accurate use of a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

6 – End of the Assessment

After Task 3 has been completed, the teacher/examiner must collect any notes that learners have made, and keep these notes securely until the Results Day. At this point, the notes should be disposed of securely.



Content guidance

It is important to note that all topic areas can be assessed at any level. Teachers should guard against limiting their learners to simple descriptive language, ensuring that they are given the opportunity to access and produce complex language. This involves moving on from the more concrete language of description learned at Key Stage 3 towards the language of justification required at a higher level. For example, learners may be able to describe a holiday destination, but at a higher level should also be able to explain what the advantages and disadvantages of that destination are, express their opinions about a variety of its features and justify their ideas.

Ideas on how to approach the themes and for activities within these themes are provided below. Note that these are suggestions only and are not prescriptive. Two sample schemes of work (one following a linear model and another following a spiral model) are also freely available to support planning and teaching of this qualification.

Topic 1 – Myself & Others

Subtopics:

- Houses & homes
- Family, friends & relationships
- Hobbies & leisure time

Activity Ideas:

- Discuss learners' own homes, explaining what they do and don't like about where they live.
- Research different types of homes – learners can look at a diverse range of English-speaking communities from around the world and focus on local differences in types of buildings and interior design.
- Write a brochure – learners can research their local areas and compile a brochure for English-speaking visitors.
- Write three diaries – one for this week and two imaginary ones (one for when the learner was much younger and another for when the learner was much older).
- Use stories to explore ideas about friendship and develop vocabulary. Learners write their own stories about friends.
- Keep a blog about their relationships with their family and friends.
- Write advice letters and article responses for a magazine dealing with family relationships – genuine examples can be used as reading practice, before learners write their own examples.
- Interview each other about their hobbies and favourite things (e.g. books, films and sports).



- Research how learners in the group help at home and give their opinions about this; then hold a class debate about whether young people should help at home and whether they should be given rewards for helping at home.
- Create a presentation with pictures and written language to explain how a learner's home has changed since it was built, and any changes that they would like to make in future.
- Select a picture of a special occasion to practise the picture-based speaking task.
- Design a questionnaire for learners in their own or a partner school to compare how birthdays, for example, are celebrated at home and in an English-speaking country.
- Create a short video blog about hobbies and leisure interests in the group.
- Role-play making plans to spend leisure time with a classmate, discussing what activities to do, where, when and with whom.
- Deliver presentations about learners' own hobbies – this activity fosters teamwork within the class while allowing practice discussing past experiences and explaining the advantages of particular activities.
- Read articles written by prominent figures in, for example, sports or the arts.
- Write reviews for films, books and/or events.
- Create presentations or posters about learners' role models, explaining why they admire them.

Combining this topic with Topic 5:

Ideas on how this topic may be combined with Topic 5 Global Issues may be helpful when preparing learners to tackle Task 2 in Unit 3: Writing. Note that these are suggestions only and they are not prescriptive.

The Environment:

- Ecohomes and energy conservation.
- Ways to help the environment at home.

Equality:

- Roles within a family or friend group and the impact of elements of a person's identity, e.g. age and gender/sex.
- Inclusion and accessibility in hobbies, e.g. sports and the arts.

The Media:

- What media do I read/watch and why? What do my friends/family read/watch and why?
- Benefits and disadvantages of social media for socialising.



Topic 2 – Travel & Tourism

Subtopics:

- Transport & accommodation
- Tourist activities
- Tourist destinations and reasons for travel

Activity Ideas:

- Research a holiday destination in an English-speaking country and plan travel, accommodation and activities for a visit.
- Use photographs of holiday destinations to practise the picture-based task for the Speaking assessment.
- Read reviews of tourist attractions on platforms like TripAdvisor. Learners can further develop this skill by researching on and writing their own reviews of attractions they have visited, either locally or while on their own holidays.
- Role-play various interactions such as hotel receptionist and guest; railway ticket office clerk and traveller; waiter and diner; doctor and patient; tour guide and tourist.
- Use hotel website information to work out the best accommodation for different groups of people, e.g. a family with three children, a couple looking for a romantic holiday and a single traveller.
- Interview each other about preferred types of holidays and/or accommodation.
- Compile an advantages and disadvantages chart for holidaying abroad or in one's own country.
- Write a newspaper article about a holiday that did not go well, e.g. an airport strike or a hotel with few facilities.
- Write a letter of complaint for an aspect of a holiday that went wrong, e.g. an unsatisfactory hotel or restaurant, or cancelled/delayed transport.
- Read postcards and match them with locations or pictures of holidaymakers.
- Research on an allocated traditional custom or festival from an English-speaking country. Information can be shared by making posters or presentations.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of travelling for reasons other than tourism, e.g. for work, volunteering or education.
- Research travel trends, e.g. voluntourism, and discuss whether learners will like to travel in this manner.
- Research an English-speaking area and produce a travel brochure or website.

Combining this topic with Topic 5:

Ideas on how this topic may be combined with Topic 5 Global Issues may be helpful when preparing learners to tackle Task 2 in Unit 3: Writing. Note that these are suggestions only and they are not prescriptive.

The Environment:



- The environmental impact of travel, e.g. pollution from air travel and impact of heavy tourism on local environment.
- Ways of minimising the environmental impact of one's travels, e.g. using public transport, avoiding air travel where possible and carbon-offsetting a trip.

Equality:

- Laws and customs of different English-speaking countries regarding equality and discrimination that one may want to bear in mind when travelling to other parts of the world.
- Accessibility issues related to travel, e.g. ensuring that a hotel is accessible for a wheelchair user and negotiating an airport with hearing loss.

The Media:

- How coverage in the media impacts tourism, e.g. tours of filming locations for famous films and TV series, and the impact of positive/negative reviews for travel destinations and tourist attractions.
- Different types of media used to advertise tourist destinations and attractions, e.g. travel documentaries, magazines/newspapers and social media influencers.

Topic 3 – Education

Subtopics:

- School life
- Future education plans
- ICT

Activity Ideas:

- Use websites for schools from English-speaking countries to compare and contrast learners' own school experience with the experiences of learners from around the world.
- Establish connections with English-speaking schools for learners to ask questions to their peers and report back on their responses, e.g. their opinions on topics such as the longer school day or sports in school.
- Write a list of pros and cons of a school uniform and use as a basis for discussion.
- Design an ideal school, including rules, curriculum and a uniform. Learners can present this to the class, and field questions from the audience, prompting them to justify their choices.
- Write a survey to find out which areas of school life cause stress/anxiety. Devise possible solutions for this and give a presentation as though addressing the headteacher, advocating for the proposed changes.
- The topic of future plans can be approached by asking learners about their own aspirations, and using websites to find out about others' experiences.



- Research different post-school education options, from university to apprenticeships to on-the-job training. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Brainstorm positive and negative aspects of travelling during a gap year, going to university or undertaking work experience.
- Create advertising materials (e.g. a prospectus or a podcast) for their own school, targeted at an audience of prospective learners.
- Write a blog about school life, covering sports events, concerts and shows, school trips, etc.
- Discuss their favourite subjects and favourite teachers, giving reasons for each.
- Role-play as a learner and a teacher discussing, e.g. asking for an extension to a homework project, explaining that the learner will miss an upcoming lesson, and discussing a piece of work produced by the learner – what was done well and what they could do to improve.

Combining this topic with Topic 5:

Ideas on how this topic may be combined with Topic 5 Global Issues may be helpful when preparing learners to tackle Task 2 in Unit 3: Writing. Note that these are suggestions only and they are not prescriptive.

The Environment:

- How learners can help to minimise their school's impact on the environment.
- The importance of learning about sustainability in school.

Equality:

- How different groups have different experiences in schools, e.g. learners with special educational needs, and disparities in access to education based on sex/gender.
- The importance of learning about equality, diversity and inclusion in school.

The Media:

- How the media is changing the way that teachers teach and learners learn, e.g. easy accessibility of online resources, the importance of evaluating online resources for reliability, and different types of media (written, audio, video) catering to different learning styles.
- The importance of learning about different types of media and media biases in school.

Topic 4 – Employment

Subtopics:

- Part-time and voluntary work
- Future employment plans
- Job applications

Activity Ideas:



- Research possible volunteering projects in English-speaking countries and write imaginary letters of application explaining why they wish to volunteer in a certain area.
- Read genuine or adapted job descriptions and match them to corresponding job titles.
- Practise writing a CV and letters of application for a dream job.
- Read genuine job adverts and make a list of the skills and qualities of an ideal candidate. Then, write a letter of application, including as many of these skills and qualities as possible.
- Role-play job interviews for various types of jobs and conversations between colleagues.
- Discuss learners' ideal employers, including areas such as type of work, salary, colleagues, boss, working hours and location of office (or working from home).
- Research careers that are linked to language learning, e.g. translator for an international organisation like the UN, international journalism, international business, teaching, government work and customer-focused work in sectors like hospitality and tourism.
- Create a pros and cons chart for having a part-time job alongside schoolwork.
- Watch videos of people discussing their career paths as practice for Listening assessment.
- Research prerequisites for different kinds of jobs, e.g. a particular degree, on-the-job training and particular skills/abilities. Expand on this by writing an action plan to secure a job with demanding prerequisites, such as becoming a lawyer.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of keeping a job for a very long time vs. changing jobs frequently.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having a full-time career vs. having a "portfolio career".
- Take personality tests such as the Meyers Briggs 16 Personality Types test, which recommends types of careers that might be appealing based on a personality type and preferences. Expand on this by writing a blog discussing learners' career goals and how they align with their personalities.

Combining this topic with Topic 5:

Ideas on how this topic may be combined with Topic 5 Global Issues may be helpful when preparing learners to tackle Task 2 in Unit 3: Writing. Note that these are suggestions only and they are not prescriptive.

The Environment:

- Green companies and whether a company's environmental impact is a factor in pursuing a job opportunity.
- Sustainable working practices, e.g. paperless offices and remote working.

Equality:



- The gender pay gap.
- Volunteering for charities that do work to help promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Media:

- How misuse of social media can impact employment prospects.
- Changing nature of jobs in the media, e.g. social media management and video production.



Delivery of the qualification – transferable skills

Why transferable skills?

To ensure learners have opportunities to acquire transferable skills, as well as subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills, to improve learners' progression outcomes is a central aspect of Pearson Edexcel International GCSE qualifications.

In recent years, higher education institutions and employers have consistently flagged the need for learners to develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence to the demands of undergraduate study and the world of work.

We have developed our teaching materials and support to:

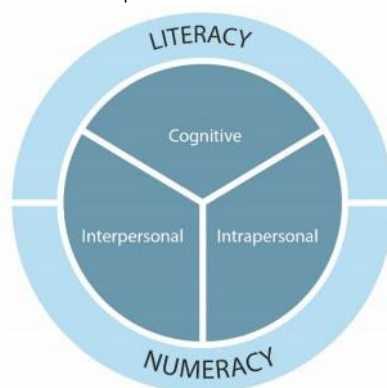
- increase awareness of transferable skills that are already being assessed (for both learners and teachers) and
- indicate where, for teachers, there are opportunities to teach additional skills that won't be formally assessed, but that would be of benefit to learners.

What are transferable skills?

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines skills, or competencies, as “the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning”.^[1]

To support the design of our qualifications, the Pearson Research Team selected and evaluated seven global 21st-century skills frameworks. Building upon this process, we identified the National Research Council's (NRC) framework^[2] as the most evidence-based and robust skills framework, and have used this as a basis for our adapted skills framework.

The framework includes cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.



¹OECD – *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives* (OECD Publishing, 2012).

²Koenig J A, National Research Council – *Assessing 21st Century Skills: Summary of a Workshop* (National Academies Press, 2011).



What can I do if I want to see improved learner outcomes through the development of transferable skills?

For each of our International GCSE subjects, we will provide a subject-specific interpretation of each of the identified skills and provide a comprehensive mapping as to how these elements can be developed and where they link to assessment. This can be found in the specification for Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English as a Second Language (4XES2).

The skills have been interpreted for this qualification to ensure they are appropriate for the subject. All of the skills identified are evident or accessible in the teaching, learning and/or assessment of the qualification. Pearson materials will support you in identifying these skills and developing them in learners.

Our editable scheme of work indicates, for each lesson or group of lessons, which skills can be acquired either through explicit assessment or through teaching and delivery. Please refer to the *Teaching and Learning Materials* section of the Pearson qualifications webpage for more materials to support you in identifying and developing these skills in learners.



Learner guide

Why study the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English as a Second Language (4XES2)?

This course will enable you to:

- develop your English language ability across four key language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking
- allow you to demonstrate your level of achievement in internationally recognised terms – you will not only get a 9-1 grade, but you will be able to determine equivalent CEFR and GSE grades
- study vocabulary relevant for a range of engaging and useful topics
- engage with an important global issue, such as The Environment, Equality or The Media
- provide a foundation for further study of secondary or higher education courses in English, and/or for employment in the English-speaking world.

What do I need to know, or be able to do, before taking this course?

We recommend that learners have achieved a level of English language proficiency equivalent to Level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; otherwise, there are no formal prior learning requirements for this qualification.

Is this the right subject for me?

Have a look at our Qualification overview section to get an idea of what's included in this qualification. Then, why not get in touch with our Student services:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/students.html> to discuss any

outstanding questions you may have. You can also have a look at

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns.html> to see what learners, teachers and education experts around the world think about our qualifications.

How will I be assessed?

This course is fully assessed through external examination.

What can I do after I've completed the course?

You can progress onto further study of English as a Second Language through taking the Pearson Test of English (PTE) and/or by studying your preferred International AS and A Level courses presented and assessed in English. Subsequently, you can pursue higher education.



What next?

Talk to your subject teacher at school or college for further guidance. If you are a private candidate, you should visit [Private candidates | Pearson qualifications](#)

For information about Pearson Qualifications, including Pearson Edexcel and BTEC qualifications, visit [qualifications.pearson.com](https://www.pearson.com/qualifications)

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