

International Certificate Young Learners

Firstwords (Level 1)

V5.0 | June 2024

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Test takers demonstrate that they can:

- read the English alphabet and recognize simple words and phrases in both written and spoken English
- understand and talk about basic facts related to their own lives and environments

Introduction to the Guide

Who is it for?

The Pearson English International Certificate - Young Learners guide is designed for anyone who is preparing students for the test or wants to learn more about it.

What is in the guide?

This guide contains five key parts:

- The first part, an Introduction to Pearson English International Certificate Young Learners, includes an overview of the test, targeted test takers and the skills tested. Key features of the test, such as realistic situations, fun and motivating tasks, and integration of skills, are outlined. Information about test delivery and test results is also given.
- The second part provides an outline of the preparation resources that will be made available to instructors and test takers.
- The third part includes general information about scoring within the test.
- In the fourth part, an overview of the formats of the spoken and written tests is provided.
- The final part of the guide gives a detailed explanation of each task within the written and spoken parts at Firstwords Level. This includes a description of each task type, the skills assessed, what test takers have to do, the objectives and timings. In addition, details about scoring and the marking criteria are presented.

1. Introduction to Pearson English International Certificate - Young Learners

Overview

What is Pearson English International Certificate - Young Learners?

Pearson English International Certificate - Young Learners (PEIC Young Learners) is an assessment solution at four different levels of English language proficiency: Firstwords (Level 1), Springboard (Level 2), Quickmarch (Level 3) and Breakthrough (Level 4). These tests are designed to be interesting and enjoyable for children. They also aim to make their first experiences of learning English very memorable and motivating.

The tests are provided by Pearson Edexcel, the largest UK awarding body for academic and vocational qualifications. Pearson Edexcel is the official awarding body for International Certificate - Young Learners.

The primary goal of the tests is to assess a young learner's ability to use English language communicatively. There is an emphasis on real-life scenarios rather than on knowledge of specific language items and vocabulary.

Although the test is presented using British English, any standard variation of English will be accepted. Knowledge of the English alphabet is assumed at all levels.

Who takes International Certificate - Young Learners?

International Certificate - Young Learners tests are for children aged between six and 13, who are speakers of other languages.

What skills are tested?

International Certificate - Young Learners assesses the four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. It consists of two parts: a written test which assesses listening, reading and writing, and a spoken test. The spoken part of the test and the written part are taken separately. Because of the communicative nature of International Certificate - Young Learners, the tests can be shorter without compromising the reliability of the results.

Key features

Realistic contexts

Children are tested on their ability to use structures and functions in realistic contexts. At higher levels, they are also assessed on their ability to use language to carry out specific communicative tasks. The emphasis is on real-life situations that learners will encounter, not on how well they remember vocabulary and structures. For this reason, International Certificate - Young Learners uses real-life scenarios rather than grammatical exercises. This means that it is a measure of real, practical English.

Familiar content

Throughout the four test levels, test takers experience some of the everyday activities, adventures and mishaps of the Browns, a British family. They become familiar with the characters and events, which makes the testing experience both very comfortable and highly engaging.



As the tests are scenario-based, topics and language are repeated. This reinforcement of content and language gives test takers the confidence they need to perform well.

The topics in International Certificate - Young Learners are international, age-appropriate and of interest to children, for example, topics like families, pets, school and people's appearance are included.

Fun activities

The format of the test is enjoyable. The spoken part consists of a group board game played with other test takers. Another task allows candidates to give short talks and communicate with each other. Many of the tasks in the written part are based around colorful, amusing visuals.

Integrated skills

International Certificate - Young Learners integrates the four skills. This is important because when communicating in English, students are often required to combine several language skills to perform a task.

Test delivery

Test sessions are scheduled 6 times a year.

International Certificate - Young Learners consists of a written paper-based test and a spoken test (with an examiner and a group of five test takers), which are delivered through a number of registered centers in over 40 territories globally.

Test centers delivering International Certificate - Young Learners are typically schools and language schools. Each prospective center is required to provide evidence that the tests will be conducted according to the regulations as part of registering to become a test center. In some territories there are locally based agents or representatives.

Information about test session dates, test center locations, registering to take International Certificate - Young Learners or registering to become a test center is available at https://gualifications.pearson.com/en/gualifications/international-certificate/young-learners.html

Test results

Using an online marking system (e-Pen) and a web-based test center service system, Pearson provides fast and helpful feedback on individual performance of students in the tests.

The tests are prepared and marked by teams of professionals and successful test takers receive a certificate of attainment from the largest examining body in the UK, Edexcel Limited.

Detailed feedback is provided in the form of a candidate performance report, which includes a breakdown of the scores for listening, speaking, reading and writing. The report for Firstwords only does not include a breakdown of the writing score. These are sent to the test centers who distribute them accordingly. The grades awarded for the test are Distinction, Merit or Pass. Every candidate, regardless of the level of performance, will receive a certificate





Test structure

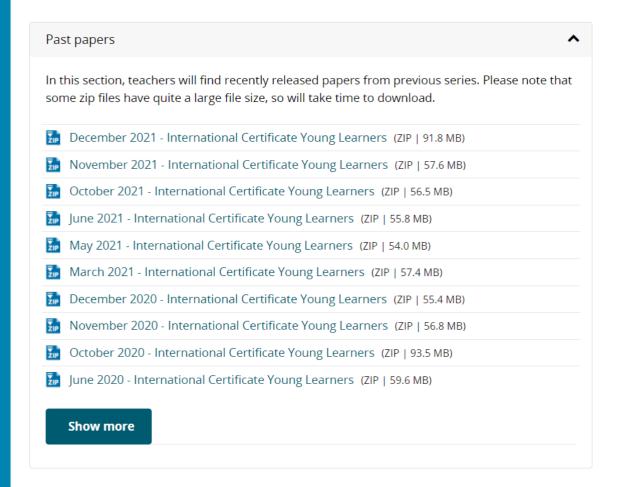
The written test at this level lasts for 60 minutes. There are six tasks which test listening, reading and writing.

60 minutes						
Task	Skills					
numbers						
One	Listening					
Two	Listening					
Three	Reading					
Four	Reading					
Five	Reading					
Six	Reading and					
	writing					

The spoken test at this level lasts for 20 minutes and there are two tasks.

20 minutes				
Task numbers	Skills			
Seven	Speaking			
Eight	Speaking			

2. Test Preparation Resources



Past papers

A number of official past papers with audio, transcripts and answer keys for all levels are available now to download for free.

The resources are available at https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/international-certificate/young-learners/resources.html

New resources for International Certificate - Young Learners are regularly added to this site.

3. Overview of Scoring

The written and spoken parts of the test at Firstwords have a weighting of 100 score points; 80 for the written component and 20 for the spoken. There are 40 listening, reading and writing items in total and each one carries a weighting of 2 score points. There are two speaking tasks, each with a weighting of 10 points.

The distribution is listed in the table below:

Written part of test	Task numbers	Skills	Task types	Number of items	Score points
	One	Listening	3-option picture-based multiple choice	8	16
	Two	Listening	Match name to picture- based object /person	7	14
	Three	Reading	Match question to answer	5	10
	Four	Reading	Match utterance to picture	5	10
	Five	Reading	Match word to picture	8	16
	Six	Reading and writing	Gap fill	7	14
Total				40	80
Spoken part of test	Seven	Speaking	Question and answer (board game)	At least 2	10
	Eight	Speaking	Short talk	1	10
Total				3 or more	20
Total written and spoken parts					100

4. Overview of Test Format

The **written part** of International Certificate - Young Learners at this level lasts **60 minutes** and has six tasks. It tests listening, reading and writing skills. The **spoken part** of the test lasts for **20 minutes** and has two tasks that candidates engage in with an examiner and four other test takers.

The table below indicates the skills tested, task types, number of items, task objectives and what candidates have to do for each task within the written and spoken parts of the test.

Written part of	Task numbers	Skills	Task types	Number of items	Task objectives	What test takers haveto do
test	One	Listening	3-option picture-based multiple choice	8	To assess the ability to identify the details of very simple spoken discourse, e.g., times, locations, actions of people, prices, quantities, etc	Listen to a conversation twice and answer eight questions by choosing one from three picture answer options
	Two	Listening	Match name to picture- based object/person	7	To assess the ability to identify the details of very simple spoken discourse, e.g., people's appearance, everyday activities, simple objects etc	Listen to a conversation twice and match the names of seven people to pictures of these people or objects associated with them
	Three	Reading	Match question to answer	5	To assess: - understanding of the structural relationship between questions and responses - the ability to recognize appropriate responses to questions in a simple dialogue	Read five questions and match them to the most appropriate answer options
	Four	Reading	Match utterance to picture	5	To assess the ability to recognize simple functional use of language in social situations familiar to young learners	Match five short written utterances to the pictures which illustrate their meaning
	Five	Reading	Match word to picture	8	To assess the ability to recognize commonly used nouns	Match eight words to pictures which represent their meaning
	Six	Reading and writing	Gap fill	7	To assess the ability to understand a short text	Read a short text containing seven gaps and choose the missing word for each from the choices given
Spoken part of test	Seven	Speaking	Question and answer (board game)	At least 2	To assess the ability to ask and answer short questions about personal information and interests	Ask and answer short questions about personal information and interests
	Eight	Speaking	Short talk	1	To assess the ability to speak about a topic of personal interest and answer questions in relationto it	Speak about a topic of personal interest and answer questions

5. Description of Task Types

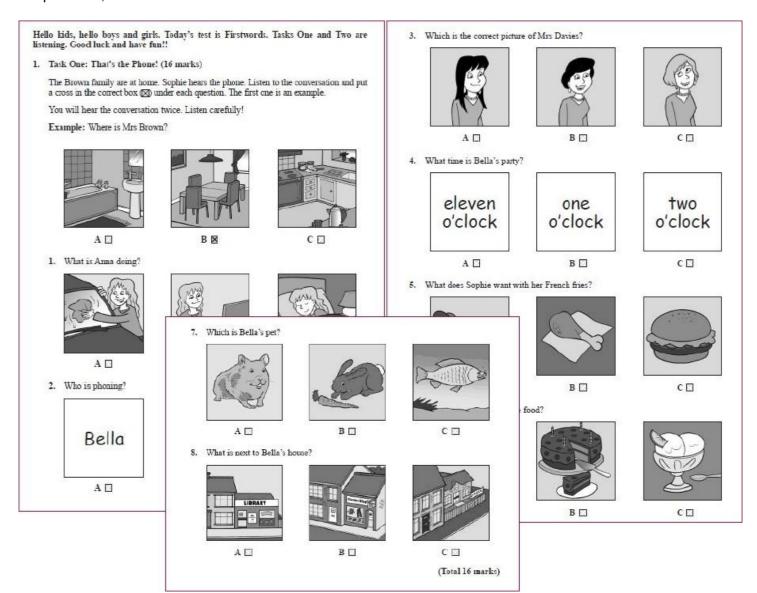
Written test [60 minutes]

This part of the guide presents a description of the tasks within the written test at Firstwords. This includes the skills tested, what test takers have to do, the objective(s) of the task and details on scoring.

Task One Listening

3-option picture-based multiple choice

Task One is a 3-option picture-based multiple choice activity that tests listening skills. It assesses the ability to identify the details of very simple spoken discourse, e.g., times, locations, actions of people, prices, quantities, etc.



What candidates do

Test takers listen to a conversation twice and answer eight questions printed on the test paper. For each one, they choose the correct picture from three answer options by putting a cross in the box next to it.

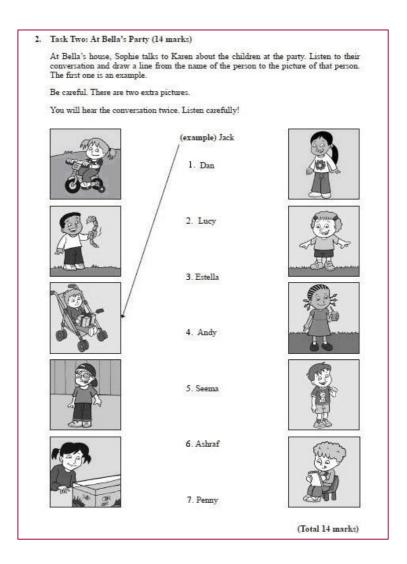
Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. A maximum of **16 points** can be achieved.

Task Two Listening

Match name to picture-based object/person

Task Two is a *Match name to picture-based object/person* activity that tests listening skills. It assesses the ability to identify the details of very simple spoken discourse, e.g. people's appearance, everyday activities, simple objects etc.



What candidates do

Test takers listen to a conversation twice and match the names of people mentioned on the audio to pictures of these people or objects associated with them by drawing a line between the word and the picture. There are seven names to match and nine pictures. Two of the pictures are extra.

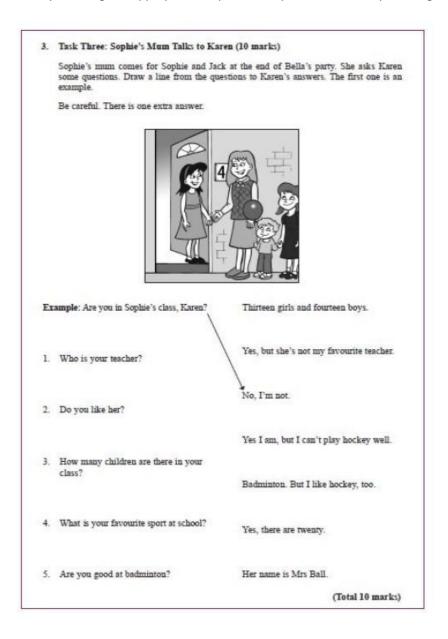
Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. If more than one line is drawn to a name or a picture, no score points will be given to the item. A maximum of **14 points** can be achieved.

Match question to answer

Task Three is a *Match question to answer* activity that tests reading skills. It assesses:

- understanding of the structural relationship between questions and responses;
- the ability to recognize appropriate responses to questions in a simple dialogue.



What candidates do

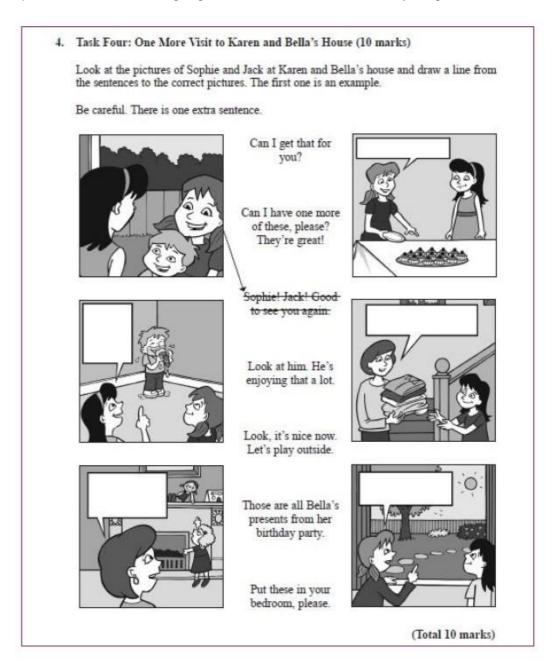
Test takers read five questions and match them to the most appropriate answer options by drawing a line between the two. There are five questions to answer and six answer options. One of the answers is extra.

Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. If more than one line is drawn to an answer, no score points will be given to the item. A maximum of **10 points** can be achieved.

Match utterance to picture

Task Four is a *Match utterance to picture* activity that tests reading skills. It assesses the ability to recognize simple functional use of language in social situations familiar to young learners.



What candidates do

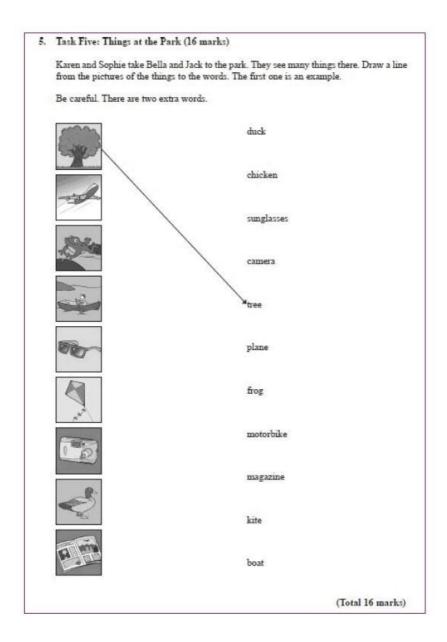
Test takers read six short written utterances and match five of them to pictures which illustrate their meaning by drawing a line between each. One of the utterances is extra.

Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. If more than one line is drawn to an answer, no marks will be given to the item. A maximum of **10 points** can be achieved.

Match word to picture

Task Five is a *Match word to picture* activity that tests reading skills. It assesses the ability to recognize commonly used nouns.



What candidates do

Test takers match words to pictures which represent their meaning. There are eight words to match out of ten and eight pictures. Two of the words are extra.

Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. If more than one line is drawn from a picture to a word, no score points will be given to the item. A maximum of **16 points** can be achieved.

Gap fill

Task Six is a *Gap fill* activity that tests reading and writing skills. It assesses the ability to understand a short text.

the n	nissing wo	ords. Use th		oox at the botto		Sophie to finish and Be careful, you do r
				•	he is a(1)	
scho	ol. Karen l	has got a (2)	bu	it she has not g	ot a brother. Her sist
(3)			is Bella. Jac	k and I are at i	ner (4)	no
						ing room. Karen and
						ing room. Karen and
			in the kitch	en. We are hav	ring a (7)	

What candidates do

Test takers read a short text with gaps and choose a word for each from the choices given in the word box. There are seven gaps to complete and ten words to choose from. There are three extra words.

Scores

This task type is marked as either **correct or incorrect**. Each correct answer has a weighting of 2 score points. A maximum of **14 points** can be achieved.

Spoken Test [20 minutes]

This part of the guide presents a description of the tasks within the spoken test at Firstwords. This includes the skills tested, what candidates have to do, timing, the task type objective(s) and details on scoring.

Task Seven Speaking

Question and answer (board game)

Task Seven is a *Question and answer* activity that tests speaking skills. It assesses the ability to ask and answer short questions about personal information and interests.



What test candidates do

In groups of five with an examiner, test takers play a board game. They take it in turns to throw a dice and then move their counters according to the throw of the dice. Each square on the board has a question written on it. When a candidate's counter lands on a square, the examiner directs them to address the question to another test taker in the group, who must respond. It is then the next person's turn. The game continues in this way until all the test takers have responded to at least two of the questions on the board. The activity lasts for **10 minutes**.

Scores

This task type has a weighting of **10 score points**. A maximum of 5 points are awarded for Grammar and Vocabulary Usage and 5 for Pronunciation. The marking criteria and score distribution are listed in the table below:

Grammar and Vocabulary Usage	Pronunciation
5 Excellent range of vocabulary, and grammar used accurately and appropriately. Errors are rare and found only in low frequency lexis and more complex grammatical forms.	5 Excellent pronunciation demonstrating awareness of intonation patterns required for asking questions as well as appropriate sentence and word stress, and correct individual sounds.
4 Good lexical and grammatical range, but there may be occasional errors. It may be that either grammar or vocabulary is a little weak, but one or the other compensates for this. Errors do not impede understanding.	Good pronunciation, which can be readily understood by listeners, despite some lapses in pronouncing individual words and problems with stress and intonation.
3 Errors in both grammar and vocabulary are evident, but the test taker has enough knowledge in these areas to communicate and there is little need for clarification.	There are some mispronunciations at word and sentence levels, but in general listeners do not have any major problems. It may be that repetition is needed on occasion.
2 Despite occasional good usage, grammar and vocabulary choice is frequently incorrect and this causes problems for the listeners as well as some misunderstanding.	Frequent errors in various aspects of pronunciation make the speaker difficult to understand or result in misunderstanding and /or make it necessary for listeners to ask for repetition.
1 Although there is knowledge of individual vocabulary items and some grammar, these are so limited that real communication is rarely possible.	1 Although utterances can be recognized as English, they are so difficult to follow that communication breaks down.
No useful knowledge of grammar or vocabulary at the required level.	Pronunciation not recognized as English discourse.

Short talk

Task Eight is a *Short talk* activity that tests speaking skills. It assesses the ability to speak about a topic of personal interest and answer questions in relation to it.



What candidates do

Test takers take turns to pick a labeled picture card illustrating a topic from a pack. They talk for one minute about the subject on the card. This is followed by a further minute of questions from other candidates and possibly the examiner. This continues until all test takers have spoken about one topic and answered questions. They are assessed on their talk and responses to questions. The activity lasts for **10 minutes**.

Scores

This task has a weighting of **10 score points**. A maximum of 5 points are awarded for Grammar and Vocabulary Usage and 5 for Pronunciation. The marking criteria and score distribution are listed in the table below:

Grammar and Vocabulary Usage	Pronunciation
5 Excellent range of vocabulary, and grammar used accurately and appropriately. Errors are rare and found only in low frequency lexis and more complex grammatical forms.	5 Excellent pronunciation demonstrating awareness of intonation patterns required for asking questions as well as appropriate sentence and word stress, and correct individual sounds.
4 Good lexical and grammatical range, but there may be occasional errors. It may be that either grammar or vocabulary is a little weak, but one or the other compensates for this. Errors do not impede understanding.	4 Good pronunciation, which can be readily understood by listeners, despite some lapses in pronouncing individual words and problems with stress and intonation.
3 Errors in both grammar and vocabulary are evident, but the test taker has enough knowledge in these areas to communicate and there is little need for clarification.	There are some mispronunciations at word and sentence levels, but in general listeners do not have any major problems. It may be that repetition is needed on occasion.
2 Despite occasional good usage, grammar and vocabulary choice is frequently incorrect and this causes problems for the listeners as well as some misunderstanding.	2 Frequent errors in various aspects of pronunciation make the speaker difficult to understand or result in misunderstanding and /or make it necessary for listeners to ask for repetition.
1 Although there is knowledge of individual vocabulary items and some grammar, these are so limited that real communication is rarely possible.	Although utterances can be recognized as English, they are so difficult to follow that communication breaks down.
No useful knowledge of grammar or vocabulary at the required level.	Pronunciation is not recognized as English discourse.

Contact us

You can contact us in the following ways:

- Visit https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/international-certificate/young-learners.html
- Email us at pqs.internationaeo@pearson.com
- Write to us at the Language Testing division of Pearson, 80 Strand, London WC2R ORL, UK

Appendix A: Language Content

The following list includes the types of language content that are typically assessed at this level including areas of language use, main structures, topics and vocabulary. Structures and vocabulary given in italics are for guidance only and are not intended to be a complete list.

Areas of language use

Introduce and greet other people Identify people by name

Ask someone their name

Respond to simple instructions

Identify key classroom, household and other objects

Ask/answer about color and position of objects

Ask/tell someone their/your age

Ask/talk about families

Request things

Express simple likes

Suggest simple activities

Describe people's appearance in terms of age, height and features

Express numbers from 1 to 20

Main structures

Has / Have got

I've got a dog. Has he got a dog? He hasn't got a cat.

• There is / are

How many dogs are there?

• The imperative and negative imperative

Get up. Sit down. Be quiet. Don't touch.

• The verb 'to be' in the present tense

He's John. Are you Mary? I'm not tired.

• The present continuous (affirmative only)

Mr Brown is watching television.

• 'Can' for ability and requests

Mrs Brown can swim.

• 'Let's' for simple suggestions

Let's go to the cinema.

Basic question words

What? Where? What color? Who? How many? How much? Which?

Demonstratives - pronouns and adjectives

This is... That's... Is this/that...? This book is good.

Possessive 's'

Ben's book

Personal and possessive pronouns and adjectives

I, mine, my etc

Plural of nouns

books, cats, classes, houses, children, men, women

• Prepositions of place

The book is on/under/by the chair.

• Simple conjunctions

and, but

Topics

- Families
- Pets and Animals
- School
- The Body and People's Appearance
- Toys
- Houses

Vocabulary

- Simple colors red, blue, green, yellow
- Nouns for family members mother, father, mum, dad, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandmother
- Numbers from 1 to 20
- The house kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, garden
- Parts of the body
 arm, leg, head, back
- Children's clothes

 T-shirt, shorts, sweatshirt, baseball cap, trainers
- Basic adjectives for feelings

```
happy
, sad,
tired,
hungr
y
```

• Common pets and zoo animals

dog, cat, tortoise, rabbit, snake, monkey, lion, tiger

Common toys/playthings

```
e,
comp
uter
game
s, doll
```

- Verbs often used for classroom instruction sit down, stand up, open your books, write, fill in
- Classroom objects book, pencil, pen, ruler, school bag

Appendix B: Vocabulary List

The following tables include the vocabulary typically tested at Firstwords (Level 1).

A	В	С	D	E	F	G	н
a	baby	café	dad	each	face	game	hair
about	back	cake	daddy	ear	fade	garden	ham
above	badminton	calendar	day	easy	family	get	hamster
across	bag	call	desk	eat	fantastic	giraffe	hand
after	ball	camera	diary	egg	fast	girl	happy
again	banana	can	different	elephant	father	girlfriend	hat
all	baseball	cannot	dining	else	favourite	give	have
alphabet	baseball cap	car	room	end	find	glass	he
already	basketball	careful	dinner	English	finish	glasses	head
an	bath	carefully	dirty	enjoy	first	go	headphones
and	bathroom	carrot	disco	eraser	fish	good	hear
animal	be	case	do dog	example	floor	goodbye	helicopter
answer	beach	cat	doll	expensive	flower	granddad	hello
apple	beautiful	catch	door	extra	fly	grandfather	her
arm	bed	chair	double	eye	following	grandma	here
armchair	bedroom	cheese	draw		food	grandmother	herself
ask	beef	chicken	drawing		foot	great	hi
asleep at	behind	child	dress		football	green	him
aunt	bell	chip	drink		for	grey	himself
automatic	below	chocolate	driver		french fries	guitar	hippo
	between	cinema	duck		friend		hippopotamus
	big	class			friendly		his
	bike bird	classmate			frog		hit
	birthday	classroom					hobby
	black	clean					hockey
	blue	clear					home
	board	clock					homework
	boat	close					horse
	body	clothes					hot dog
	book	coke					hour
	bookcase	color					house
	boring	colored					
	box	come					
	boxer boy	computer					
	bread	correct					
	break	country					
	breakfast	course					
	brother	cousin					
	brown	cow					
	bubble	crayon					
	burger	crocodile					
	bus	cross					
	but	cupboard					
	buy						
	bye						

	J	K	L	M	N	0	P
ice cream	jacket	kick	lamp	magazine	name	of	page
in	jeans	kid	large	man	new	oh	paint
interesting	juice	kind	last	many	next	ok	paper
into	jump	kitchen	later	mark	night	old	pardon
it	just	kite	laugh	mat	nightie	on	park
its		know	learn	match	no	open	part
			leave	maths	nose	or	party
			left	me	not	orange	pause
			leg	meat	now	other	pea
			lemon	medium	number	our	pen
			lemonade	meet		ours	pencil
			less	member		out	phone
			lesson	middle		outside	photo
			let	milk		over	piano
			letter	minute			pick
			level	mirror			picture
			library	Miss			pineapple
			life	missing			pink
			like	mobile			plane
			line	money			play
			list	monkey			player
			listen	month			playground
			little	more			please
			live	morning			pocket
			living	mother			point
			room	motorbike			pool
			long	mouse			potato
			look	mouth			pound
			lot	Mr			present
			loud	Mrs			pretty
			love	much			purple
			lunch	mum			push
				museum			put
				music			
				must			
				my			

Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	Y
question	radio	sad	table	ugly	vegetable	wait	year
	read	same	tennis	uncle	very	walk	yellow
	red	sausage	talk	under	video	wall	yes
	remember	say	teacher	understand	visit	want	you
	repeat	school	team	us	visitor	watch	young
	restaurant	sea	teddy	use	volleyball	water	your
	rice	sentence	television	usually		way	
	ride	she	tell			we	
	right	sheep	tennis			wear	
	room	shirt	test			well	
	run	shoe	than			what	
		shop	thank			when	
		short	that			where	
		shorts	the			which	
		show shower	their			white	
		snower	them then			window with	
		sign	then there			with	
		sign	these			wornan	
		sister	they			word	
		sit	this			write	
		skirt	those				
		sleep	through				
		slight	tick				
		small	ticket				
		smile	tiger				
		snake	time				
		so	tired				
		soccer	to				
		sock	today				
		sofa	together				
		some	tomato				
		something	tomorrow				
		somewhere	too				
		song	tooth				
		sorry sound	tortoise town				
		speak	town toy train				
		spell	trainers				
		spider	tree				
		sport	trousers				
		stair	try				
		stand	T-shirt				
		start	turn				
		stay	twice				
		still					
		stop					
		story					
		street					
		subject					
		sun					
		sunglasses sure					
		sweatshirt					
		sweet					
		swim					
		swimmer					
		swimming					
		swing					

Be yourself in English.

