

International Certificate

Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Scope and sequence

V1.0 May 2021

Introduction

These lesson plan ideas have been designed to provide specific test taking strategies for each item type in Pearson English International Certificate. You can use them to develop lessons with a focus on strategies or integrate them into test preparation or general English proficiency classes.

There are 14 lessons, each of which focuses on three strategies that your students can apply when responding to a particular International Certificate item type. The lessons follow the order of the actual test, and each one takes a five-step approach to introducing and practicing the item type strategies:

- Step 1 introduces the item type and provides an example screenshot.
- Step 2 lists the three strategies for the item type.
- Step 3 provides an explanation of each strategy and opportunities for students to practice them in guided individual, pair or group activities.
- In Step 4 students respond to an item simulating the test conditions.
- In Step 5 students compare their responses and have an opportunity to discuss sample answers.

After completing all the lessons (applicable to level), students will have practiced all item types in the Pearson English International Certificate test using authentic test items.

Most of the lessons include two example items; one at the start of the lesson to illustrate the different strategies in controlled practice, and another at the end, where students make an attempt at providing responses, simulating the actual test.

Each lesson includes an **Appendix** of test items (spanning levels A2-C1) with accompanying transcripts, sample responses and answer keys that you can copy and distribute to your students. Mp3 audio files are provided for the item prompts and sample responses.

Although the strategies have been specifically developed to help test takers achieve better results on the Pearson English International Certificate, they can be beneficial to any learners trying to improve general English proficiency.

These lesson plan ideas can be used in conjunction with the Online Readiness Test, Warm Up App and the Question Bank. You can also refer to the item type videos and the Test Tips and Strategies Guide on our website to further explain each item type when introducing it in Step 1 of the lesson plans.

For more information visit: <https://www.pearson.com/english/catalogue/assessment/international-certificate.html>

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Lesson 1 - Read aloud (All levels)

Time allocated: 60 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to read aloud a sentence or short text. It tests accurate pronunciation and how fluent the learner is at speaking, and if the words in the text are understood and repeated accurately.

Look at the text below. You have 40 seconds to prepare. After the beep, read the text aloud in a clear voice. You have 40 seconds to read aloud.

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 29 seconds.

This hotel is perfect for families with children. Its facilities include rooms with sea views, a restaurant with a special menu designed for kids, a huge swimming pool, and a kids' club which provides a wide range of fun activities. What's more, the hotel is just a few minutes' walk away from a beautiful beach.

***Note the preparation time varies across levels: A1/A2: 25 seconds; B1/B2: 40 seconds; C1/C2: 60 seconds**

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

You have a set preparation time* to go through the text. Read it silently to understand the topic and use the punctuation and grammar to identify where pauses are needed between meaning groups.

Strategy 2

When you speak into the microphone, read every single word. Do not skip words or rush through. Apply your letter-sound knowledge or phonemic awareness to pronounce unfamiliar words.

Strategy 3

When you speak, try to link the words within phrases and do not emphasize grammar words such as prepositions and articles. This will help you achieve native-like rhythm and phrasing, and sound more fluent.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they will have a set preparation time to prepare and familiarize themselves with the text before the microphone opens. They should use the time to understand the topic and use the punctuation and grammar to identify where pauses are needed between sentences. Doing so will help them to read more fluently and give the full meaning of the text.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activity:

- Select around six short texts of two or three sentences (of no more than 60 words) from any appropriate reading material (or source online), at a suitable level for your learners. Hand out the texts and in pairs, tell them to look at the punctuation and grammar and mark the chunks with a slash /.

See an example below of how to do this using the item on page 1 in the snapshot:

The hotel is perfect for families with children./ Its facilities include rooms with sea views,/ a restaurant with a special menu designed for kids,/ a huge swimming pool/ and a kids' club/ which provides a wide range of fun activities./ What's more,/ the hotel is just a few minutes' walk away/ from a beautiful beach.

- Working individually, ask the class to silently read each one, paying attention to chunks (allow no more than 1 minute when practicing), then move on to the next text.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that they should read all words in the text. To become skilled readers, they should be able to identify and/or predict words quickly and accurately. They are aiming to develop proficiency that helps them decode the printed words into spoken language. Decoding also involves recognizing sight words, i.e., common words that should be recognized on sight such as *should*, *ought*, and associating spelling with sounds. Approximately 84% of English words are phonetically regular. Therefore, teaching the most common sound- spelling relationships in English is extremely useful for readers.

To apply this strategy, do the following activities:

- Ask students to make a list of sight words in their lexical range, e.g., *another*, *because*, *here*, *there*, *where*, *whole*, *could*, *enough*, *though*, etc. and practice reading them to each other in pairs.

(For lower levels a simpler activity could be to notice the effect of adding an 'e' to the end of a word, for example):

cap	cape
mat	mate
pin	pine
not	note
pet	Pete
kit	kite

If students are familiar with the phonetic symbols, write down a list of vowels (e.g., /i:/, /ʌ /, /ə/) and have them think of all letter representations that are associated with each sound, (e.g., /i:/-ee, ea, e, y) and provide example words. Do the same for the more difficult consonants (e.g., /f/ as in **full**, **effort**, **half**, **phone**, **cough**).

Strategy 3

Explain that it is important to understand how the combination of stressed and unstressed syllables helps to create sentence rhythm in English. Learners should also know how to group syllables together into larger

units such as phrases or thought groups. Thought groups include short sentences, phrases, clauses, and transition words and phrases that make the organization of the text clear (e.g., *on the other hand*, *for example*, *in fact*).

In addition, they should try to link the final sounds of words to the next word in the phrase. For example, if the final sound of a word is a consonant and the next word starts with a vowel, they should blend the last consonant of the word with the next word, e.g., *They lived in Hong Kong* sounds like *They live din Hong Kong*.

To practice this strategy, do the following activities in pairs:

- Display this sentence from the example on page 1: “*This hotel is perfect for families with children.*” Divide the sentence into thought groups and mark the unstressed syllables. Then ask them to practice reading it to each other.

Example: *This hotel is perfect for families with children./*

- Now ask them to mark the words that can be linked in each thought group (in this case *for families* sounds like *f families*). Have them practice reading it until they sound like fluent readers.
- Display the second and third sentence from the example Read Aloud item on page 1 and repeat the activities.

Step 4: Respond to a Read Aloud Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. Select an example appropriate to level from the **Appendix** and highlight the preparation time before the microphone will open. Remind the class of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Handout copies of the item example you are using. If possible, seat students at separate workstations or away from each other. Have students record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

If students have recorded their responses, ask them to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Optional: play the corresponding audio file response in the ‘Read Aloud’ folder as an awareness raising activity.

Appendix

A2

Look at the text below. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, read the text aloud in a clear voice. You have 20 seconds to read aloud.

Audio script (sample answer)

Many schools take their pupils on trips to museums. These trips help young people to learn about history and culture. School children often think the trips are exciting.

B1

Look at the text below. You have 40 seconds to prepare. After the beep, read the text aloud in a clear voice. You have 30 seconds to read aloud.

Audio script (sample answer)

In order for competitors to succeed in the same markets, it's important that each company has its own special quality that customers will like. They need something that makes them different from other businesses. There is no room to relax in a very competitive industry.

B2

Look at the text below. You have 40 seconds to prepare. After the beep, read the text aloud in a clear voice. You have 35 seconds to read aloud.

Audio script (sample answer)

The amount of plastic waste is increasing at an alarming rate. Most plastic cannot be recycled effectively, so it ends up in landfill sites or in the ocean. Plastic waste can harm our wildlife and pollute the environment. We all have a duty to consume less and insist that companies use alternative ways to package their products.

C1

Look at the text below. You have 60 seconds to prepare. After the beep, read the text aloud in a clear voice. You have 35 seconds to read aloud.

Audio script (sample answer)

I love outdoor pursuits, but I'd never had the chance to venture outside my own country. Last year, however, I decided to be more adventurous and book a hiking holiday to Peru! The sight of the sun rising over the mountains first thing in the morning was almost overwhelming, and certainly a memory I'll cherish for years.

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**Lesson 2 - Describe the Image
(All levels)**

Time allocated: 60 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This is a long-answer item type that asks the learner to look at a photograph or picture and describe what they see. It assesses the accuracy and fluency of speech.

Look at the picture. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, speak into the microphone and describe the picture. You have 25/40 seconds to give your response.



Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 22 seconds.

*Note the response time varies: A1/A2: 25 seconds; B1/B2: 40 seconds; C1/C2: 40 seconds.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

You have 25 seconds to study the image. Use the onscreen notepad to take notes on the details, starting with what you can see and then what is happening.

Strategy 2

Use full sentences and a range of vocabulary to give as much detail as possible.

Strategy 3

Keep speaking for the required time, the more you say, the more thorough your description will be.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they will only have 25 seconds to look at the image before the microphone opens. They should use the time efficiently to study the image and identify the main features that can be defined by answering the questions, *What can I see in the picture? What is happening? Who is in the picture?* (Note on test day physical paper is not allowed but students can take notes on the onscreen notepad).

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Use the example image from page 1. For lower levels allow up to 2 minutes when first practicing this item. For B1+ keep timings to 30 seconds and expect more sophisticated use of tenses; present perfect, past perfect continuous etc.
First, ask students to write a sentence in the present simple answering *what they can see in the picture*, and a second sentence in present continuous answering *what is happening*. For example, *I can see two people in a restaurant, they are ordering food.*
- Now get them to read aloud their sentences in pairs, noting correct use of tense and any variations in responses. (As an extension, elicit further examples on the use of colour, details or inferences appropriate to the level of the group.)

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that it is important to use full sentences and a range of vocabulary to give as much detail as possible. Lower levels should aim to construct simple sentences with a subject, verb and object. They should also try

to link short sentences.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Using the same example, work together to write 3-5 sentences to describe the picture. Encourage students to give as much detail as their lexical range will allow. Some examples could include: *I think the woman is ordering but the man is still thinking, The restaurant could be quite expensive because the waiter is dressed in a suit and the table settings look very nice, Possibly this meal is happening at lunch time because the clock shows 1pm, Maybe this is a couple celebrating a birthday or anniversary, for example.*
- Then have each pair form a group with another pair and read their sentences to each other, noticing the commonalities or differences. Feed back as a whole class.

Strategy 3

Explain to your students they should do their best to keep speaking for the required time (25/40 seconds) because the more they say, the more thorough their description will be.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- With the same image in front of them and using the sentences in their notebooks from strategies 1 and 2, ask them to practice reading aloud their descriptions, timing themselves to speak for 25 or 40 seconds. Remind them that their descriptions should flow and link logically from one idea to the next, so allow enough time to make any adjustments to sentences and think through the order of ideas before speaking. When everyone is ready, ask them to describe the image to their partner. You can highlight any strong answers by asking for a few volunteers to read to the whole class.
- To allow for further practice, handout images from magazines or the internet and repeat the steps in this lesson plan, gradually working towards students feeling confident describing pictures in a logical order and speaking comfortably for 25/40 seconds.

Step 4: Respond to a Describe the Image Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Select an appropriate example from the **Appendix** and highlight they will have 25 seconds to study the image and 25/40 seconds to give their response. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

If possible, seat students at separate workstations or position them in a way that they will not interfere with each other when speaking. Have them record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

If students have recorded their responses, ask them to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Optional: play the corresponding audio file response in the 'Describe the Image' folder, as an awareness raising activity.

Appendix

A2

Look at the picture. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, speak into the microphone and describe the picture. You have 25 seconds to give your response.



Audio script (sample answer)

A woman is reading to a small boy. He is lying in bed and holding a toy tiger. The boy and woman are both smiling. The book is about an elephant. There is also a rabbit and a monkey on the bed.

B1

Look at the picture. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, speak into the microphone and describe the picture. You have 40 seconds to give your response.

**Audio script (sample answer)**

This is a celebration. It looks like a wedding lunch with a small group of people. The guests are sitting round the table and smiling. In the middle of the table, there are some beautiful flowers. The bride and groom are cutting their wedding cake together. The woman is wearing a white wedding dress and the man is wearing a dark blue suit. They look very happy.

B2

Look at the picture. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, speak into the microphone and describe the picture. You have 40 seconds to give your response.

**Audio script (sample answer)**

This photograph looks like it is set in an office. There are five colleagues who are working on a project together. They are all gathered around a table, and there is also a board standing next to the table. One woman is holding a piece of paper in her hand and pointing at something on it. It seems like she's explaining a graph. Her four colleagues are standing around her and looking at the information. One man is pointing at the paper. On the table, there are more papers with graphs on them, a marker, and a pair of glasses.

C1

Look at the picture. You have 25 seconds to prepare. After the beep, speak into the microphone and describe the picture. You have 40 seconds to give your response.

**Audio script (sample answer)**

This photo shows some people in a TV studio. In the foreground, there are two camera people. The younger one is holding a lever to rotate the camera from side to side. He's wearing headphones with an integrated microphone. The camera is pointing in the direction of five people in the background, who are standing and talking. They're holding scripts and might well be actors rehearsing a scene or discussing something technical related to the recording.

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Lesson 3 - Listen and Repeat (All levels)

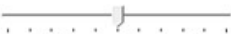
Time allocated: 45 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to listen to a sentence or short text and then repeat it. It tests listening comprehension at the word and sentence level and pronunciation and fluency. It tests if the words heard are known, understood and repeated accurately.

Listen to the recording. Repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

Status: Beginning in 1 seconds.

Volume 

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 3 seconds.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Understand and reconstruct what is heard by breaking down the text into small, manageable chunks, gradually building the length and complexity.

Strategy 2

Pay attention to the sentence structure, e.g., if the sentence starts with *there* or the impersonal *it*, or if the verb is in active or passive voice. Knowledge of the word order of the main sentence structures will help you reconstruct the sentence correctly without omitting words or substituting with the wrong words.

Strategy 3

Pronounce all consonants and vowels clearly, and place word and sentence stress correctly. Remember that in English the sentence stress is usually on the last content word or important words.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain that utterances will vary in length (and get longer at B1 and above), and the best way to become skilled in re-producing sentences is to break them into manageable chunks of language. Students should also understand the speaker's intended meaning. This task should not be treated as a mechanical repetition of words without meaning.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask your students to read sentences to each other beginning with short ones and gradually increase the length, complexity and form. Adjust the vocabulary and complexity depending on level. For example, *Schools educate students. Secondary schools educate students. Secondary schools educate their students. All secondary schools educate their students. All secondary schools diligently educate their students.*
- During the practice, ask the student who reads the sentences to assess his/her partner's performance by crossing out words that were omitted, inserting words that were added, putting a checkmark next to sentences that were repeated correctly, etc.

Strategy 2

Remind your students of the basic word order of English: Subject, Verb, Object. Students should be aware that English has a fixed word order, and there are a certain number of sentence structures that they should remember. This will help them reconstruct the sentences correctly without omitting words or substituting with the wrong words.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to list all the sentence types in English and their structures that they are familiar with, providing more support for lower levels. Encourage them to use a range of vocabulary and topics when they provide the example sentences.
- Ask students to read their sentences to each other, beginning with the core parts: the subject and the verb, and gradually increasing the complexity by adding other parts of speech such as objects, adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc. For example, *Children play. Most children play. Most children play best. Most children play best in separate groups. Most children play best in small, separate groups. Most children play best in small, separate groups for a few hours each day.*
- For B1+ levels, repeat the activity with other sentence structures. For example, *It was estimated that China was the largest producer of gold, accounting for 11 per cent of total global production. The government advised people to lock up their homes. People were advised by the government to lock up their homes.*

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that pronunciation accuracy is an important aspect of this item type, and they should systematically improve their pronunciation so that they sound not just intelligible, but as natural as possible. There are two areas students should pay attention to: 1) sounds and 2) word and sentence stress.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Identify which sounds your students have difficulty pronouncing. This will depend on their first language, for example the S + consonant for Spanish speakers, or for Chinese learners, pronouncing some diphthongs as in *how/now* or *phone/cone* is a problem. In this case, find some minimal pairs for students to listen to and repeat, e.g., *Bow* and *Boat*.
- Provide some sentences appropriate to level and have them distinguish between content and function words and mark the stressed syllables.

Ask students to identify the sentence stress, i.e., the last content word which usually provides new information. For example, *Michael is always in trouble with his boss for being late.*

- Ask students to repeat utterances without looking at the written sentences.

Step 4: Respond to a Listen and Repeat Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. Play an example audio file from the folder 'Listen and Repeat' and use the **Appendix** to view the transcript. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson, asking them to apply these strategies.

If possible, seat your students at separate workstations or position them in a way that they will not interfere with each other when speaking. Have them record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

If students have recorded their responses, ask them to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Appendix

A2

Listen to the recording. Repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script (sample answer)

There is no uniform at this school.

B1

Listen to the recording. Repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script (sample answer)

The travellers should arrive at their destination before midnight.

B2

Listen to the recording. Repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script (sample answer)

According to the map, the cathedral must be nearby.

C1

Listen to the recording. Repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script (sample answer)

Without being particularly superstitious, I occasionally read my horoscope just for fun.

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Lesson 4 - Listen to the Conversation (All levels)

Time allocated: 20 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to listen to a short conversation and then answer a question about the conversation. It tests the accuracy of the listening comprehension of the learner.

Listen to the conversation. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

Status: Stopped
No audio file has been selected.

Volume

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 5 seconds.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Keep your attention on the audio and take notes of key words on the onscreen notepad to help you remember the information you hear.

Strategy 2

Listen carefully for the question word to focus your response.

Strategy 3

Speak clearly and remember a short, simple response is satisfactory.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that while listening to the recording, they may find it useful to note keywords on the onscreen notepad they are provided with at the test centre. This is advised as it will help them to remember the information they hear.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Get ready to write keywords on a piece of paper.
- Access the audio folder for this item type and play the file 'Listen to the Conv_audio_example 1'. Ask students to listen carefully and note keywords. (Remember to pause it before the question.)
- Have students compare and discuss the keywords they have noted in pairs.
- If needed, play the recording a second time and ask them to check their notes and/or add to them.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that after listening to the conversation they need to answer one question on what they have heard. They don't need to respond with a full sentence - a short simple answer is enough. They should listen carefully for the question word to focus their response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- In pairs ask students to write a list of all the question words in English. When they have finished, feed back on the board and remind the class of their possible functions:

What (for a thing, when there are many things)
Which (for a thing, when there aren't many things)
Who (for a person)
Where (for a place)
Why (for a reason)
When (for a time)
How (for a method)
Whose (to ask about possession)

- Play the question from the example (Listen to the Conv_audio_example 1) and ask students to note down their answer. Play it a second time if needed. Elicit the question word (*What*) and remind them to use their notes to identify an example of a *thing*.

Strategy 3

Remind your students that they need to give a spoken response for this item type. It is therefore important that they speak very clearly. A short, simple response is all that is required.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask how many students noted down the correct answer (*envelopes*) on their piece of paper.
- Ask students to record their response on their phones or computer and play it back to their partner.

Remind them of the three syllables and clap these out, drawing their attention to the stress on the first syllable: en/ve/lopes.

Step 4: Respond to a Listen to the Conversation Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Use an appropriate audio example from the same folder and reference the audio script and answer key in the **Appendix**.

Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies. If possible, seat students at separate workstations or away from each other. Have them record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Appendix

A2

Listen to the conversation. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

Audio script

V1 Male child: Mum, can I have potatoes with my chicken?

V2 Female adult: Well, we're all having rice tonight.

V1 Male child: Oh, ok. That's great!

Narrator: What will the boy have with his chicken?

Answer key

rice

B1

Listen to the conversation. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

Audio script

V1 Male adult: Could you pass the milk?

V2 Female adult: It's run out, but there's some cream left.

V1 Male adult: That'll be fine, thanks.

Narrator: What does the woman give to the man?

Answer key

Cream

B2

Listen to the conversation. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

Audio script

V1 Male teen: How come you weren't at Lucy's party on Saturday?

V2 Female teen: I'd already promised to do a yoga class with my sister, unfortunately.

V1 Male teen: Someone said you were doing revision. I thought that was highly unlikely!

Narrator: What did the girl do on Saturday?

Answer key

(do a) yoga (class)

C1

Listen to the conversation. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

Audio script

V1 Female adult: Wow, this shed is a complete mess! I'll grab the lawn mower and get started.

V2 Male adult: I'll tidy it now. Once I've finished, I'll trim the hedges too if you like.

V1 Female adult: Thanks, that'll be handy. And thanks for planting the tomatoes this morning too.

Narrator: What gardening task is the woman about to do?

Answer key

Mow the lawn/cut the grass

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**Lesson 5 - Passage Comprehension
(Choose the Right Picture)
Levels A1 & A2**

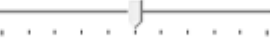
Time allocated: 25 minutes


Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to listen to a short passage and answer **three** comprehension questions by choosing the correct image. It tests listening comprehension and understanding of a short passage.

First, listen to a story. Then, you will hear three questions. Please choose one picture for each question.


Status: Beginning in 5 seconds.


Volume 






Listen to the question and choose the correct picture.

Status: Beginning in 8 seconds.

Volume 



Listen to the question and choose the correct picture.

Status: Beginning in 8 seconds.

Volume



Listen to the question and choose the correct picture.

Status: Beginning in 8 seconds.

Volume



Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Keep your attention on the audio and take notes of key words on the onscreen notepad to help you remember the information you hear.

Strategy 2

Remember the importance of the question words to focus your response.

Strategy 3

Keep your eyes hovering over the pictures when listening to the question, noticing any key differences. Choose the picture that answers the question.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that while listening to the recording, they may find it useful to note keywords on the onscreen notepad they are provided with. This is advised as it will help them to remember the information they hear.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Get ready to write keywords (on a piece of paper when practicing in class).
- Access the audio folder for this item type and play file 'Audio_story'. Ask students to listen carefully and note keywords.

Example: *Anna good languages, dream travel – no money – friend said be Eng teacher - agreed – now travels, makes money.*

- Have students compare and discuss the keywords they have noted in pairs.
- If needed, play the recording a second time and ask them to check their notes and/or add to them.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that after listening to the story they need to answer three questions, one after the other, by choosing the correct image. They should remember to listen carefully for the question word to focus their response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- In pairs ask students to write a list of all the question words in English. When they have finished, feed back on the board and remind the class of their possible functions:

What (for a thing, when there are many things)
Which (for a thing, when there aren't many things)
Who (for a person)
Where (for a place)
Why (for a reason)
When (for a time)
How (for a method)
Whose (to ask about possession)

- Hand out the pictures from page 1 and 2 in the same order they are displayed above. Allow a few moments for students to notice the details in the pictures and ask if they can see any connections with their notes from strategy 1 and the images.

Strategy 3

Remind your students that there are 3 questions and they need to choose the picture that answers each question. They should keep their eyes hovering over the images while the audio is playing, noticing the key differences between the three. (Note on test day there will also be some time before the recording starts where the images can be viewed.)

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- From the same folder play the three questions (Audio_Q 1/2/3) and tell students to keep their eyes hovering over the three pictures as they listen for the question word.
- Play the questions a second time if needed. Elicit the question word (What) and remind them to use their notes from strategy 1 along with the pictures, to help them make the correct choice.
- Tell students to check their answers with a partner first, then feed back as a class:

Question 1: picture A (travel)

Question 2: picture C (no money)

Question 3: picture B (English teacher)

Step 4: Respond to a Passage Comprehension (Choose the Right Picture) Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Use audio file 'Audio_A2' and the sample item in the **Appendix**. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Appendix

A2

First, listen to a story. Then you will hear three questions. Please choose one picture for each question.

Audio script

V1 Male adult: On Natasha's birthday, she woke up to a cup of coffee but no cards or flowers. Her husband was at the office, so Natasha went shopping. After lunch she went home and discovered her husband and friends at her birthday party.

1. What did Natasha see in the morning on her birthday?



2. Where was Natasha's husband in the morning?



3. What did Natasha find when she went home?



Answer key

1. B
2. B
3. B

International Certificate

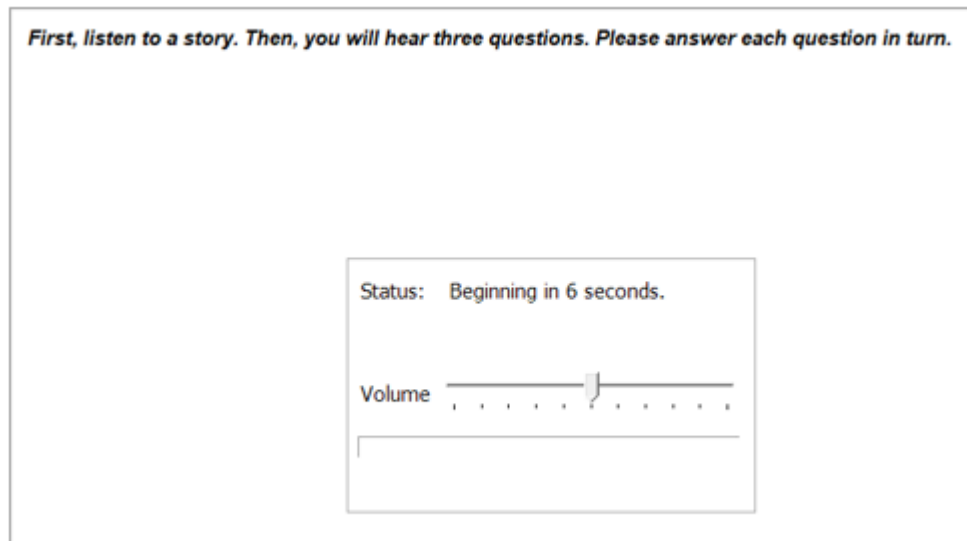
Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 6 - Passage Comprehension (Levels B1 & above)

Time allocated: 25 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to listen to a short passage and answer **three** comprehension questions with a short, spoken response. It tests listening comprehension and understanding of a short passage.



Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Keep your attention on the audio and take notes of key words to help you remember the information you hear.

Strategy 2

Listen carefully for the question words to focus your response.

Strategy 3

Speak clearly and remember a short, simple response is satisfactory.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that while listening to the recording, they may find it useful to note keywords on the onscreen notepad that they are provided with at the test centre. This is advised as it will help them to remember the information they hear.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Get ready to write keywords on a piece of paper (if not using a computer).
- Access the audio folder for this item type and play file 'Passage Comp_audio_example 1'. Ask students to listen carefully and note keywords. (Remember to pause it before the questions start.)
- Have students compare and discuss the keywords they have noted in pairs.
- If needed, play the recording a second time and ask them to check their notes and/or add to them.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that after listening to the story they need to answer **three** questions, one after the other, on what they have heard. Their answer could be a few words or a very short sentence. They should listen carefully for the question words to focus their response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- In pairs ask students to write a list of all the question words in English. When they have finished, feed back on the board and remind the class of their possible functions:
 - What (for a thing, when there are many things)
 - Which (for a thing, when there aren't many things)
 - Who (for a person)
 - Where (for a place)
 - Why (for a reason)
 - When (for a time)
 - How (for a method)
 - Whose (to ask about possession)
- Play the three questions from the example (Passage Comp_audio_example 1) and ask students to note down their answer for each one. Play it a second time if needed. Elicit the question words (*How* and *What*) and remind them to use their notes to help them.

Strategy 3

Remind your students that they need to give a spoken response for this item type. It is therefore important that they speak very clearly. A short, simple response is all that is required.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask how many students noted down the correct answers (*excited, tidying up her flat, cancel their visit*) on their piece of paper.
- Ask students to record their response on their phones or computer and play it back to their partner. Remind them to pay attention to stress and syllables and clap these out, for example: *ex/ci/ted/*

Step 4: Respond to a Passage Comprehension Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Use an appropriate audio example from the same folder and reference the audio script and answer key in the

Appendix.

Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies. If possible, seat students at separate workstations or away from each other. Have them record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

Appendix

B1

First listen to a story. Then you will hear three questions. Please give a short, simple answer after each question. Your answer could be a few words or a very short sentence.

Audio script

V1 Male adult: John was on the bus to town. He had to buy a present for his wife for their wedding anniversary. At the department store, John found the perfect gift, but his wallet wasn't in his pocket. 'Oh, no! Where is it?' he said. Just then, someone shouted, 'Hey, is this yours?' One of the bus passengers had found it.

1. *Why did John need to buy a gift?*
2. *Where did John realise he had lost his wallet?*
3. *Who gave John his wallet back?*

Answer key

1. *It was his (wife's) wedding anniversary/for his (wife's) wedding anniversary/for a wedding anniversary*
2. *At the department store (where he found a gift)/At the (big) shop (where he went to buy a gift)*
3. *A (bus) passenger/Someone who was on the bus with him*

B2

First listen to a story. Then you will hear three questions. Please give a short, simple answer after each question. Your answer could be a few words or a very short sentence.

Audio script

V1 Female adult: It had been an enjoyable party but just as Sarah was saying farewell, she noticed her diamond engagement ring was missing from her finger. Upset, she hunted in the armchair where she had been sitting but it was gone. An hour later, Sarah took off her raincoat, took her handkerchief from the pocket – and found it was folded around her ring.

1. *When did Sarah realise she had lost her ring?*
2. *Where did Sarah search for her ring?*
3. *Where did Sarah discover her ring?*

Answer key

1. *As she was leaving (the party). / As she was saying farewell/goodbye.*
2. *In the armchair (where she was sitting). / In the armchair (where she had been sitting).*
3. *(In a/her) handkerchief.*

C1

First listen to a story. Then you will hear three questions. Please give a short, simple answer after each question. Your answer could be a few words or a very short sentence.

Audio script

V1 Male adult: Much to John's dismay, Ashley, a junior colleague, was promoted and put in charge of the team. John regarded Ashley as a rival, so the last thing he wanted to do was work under him! However, gradually, John's perceptions changed. Ashley was receptive to John's ideas about marketing. Even better, Ashley was willing to share his specialist manufacturing expertise to help John expand his knowledge. Ashley's promotion actually served as the motivation John needed to focus on his career goals.

1. *How did John feel when his team changed at the start of the year?*
2. *How did John initially perceive Ashley?*
3. *What area of business did John learn about from Ashley?*

Answer key

1. dismay/dismayed
2. (as) (a) rival
3. manufacturing

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 7 - Listen and Read (Hotspots) All levels

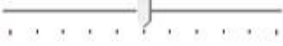
Time allocated: 45 minutes


Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This is an item type that asks learners to find the five differences between the written text and the spoken text. It integrates listening and reading skills and tests the ability to recognize individual words in a text.

Listen to the recording. Click on the words in the text that are different from what you hear.

Status: Beginning in 6 seconds.

Volume 



Sam is a young boy. He lives in a small house in a big town. Every day he goes to work by car. He works in a hotel. In the evening he likes to play football in the park with his friends.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

You only have ten seconds to read through the text before the recording starts. Focus on quickly reading and working out the pronunciation of the content words.

Strategy 2

As you listen, concentrate on every single content word you hear, i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Pay attention not only to words that carry the sentence stress, but also to those that may be de-emphasized.

Strategy 3

As you listen, silently read each content word on the screen, and quickly compare what you hear to what you see.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they only have ten seconds to go through the text, so they should focus on the content words while reading and ignore grammar words such as prepositions or articles. The incorrect words will most likely be nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs, such as easily confused words that are similar in sound, spelling or meaning, e.g., *most and many, late and later, night and evening, annual and yearly*.

As they read the text, students should sound out the content words silently. Working out the pronunciation of the written words will help figure out the incorrect words when they hear the recording and compare the written and spoken forms.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Adapting for the level of your students, present a list of easily confused words, some examples could include: *affect, allusion, assure, breath, advice, lay, loose*. Have them read the words in pairs and make sure they know the correct pronunciation.
- Then dictate words that look or sound alike, e.g., *effect, illusion, insure, breathe, advise, lie, lose* and as you are speaking, have students write each word next to the one that sounds similar.
- Hand out copies of the example item on page 1. Ask students to read the text silently, then practice in pairs to work out the pronunciation of any unfamiliar words. (For higher levels simply source a longer, more sophisticated text to demonstrate this activity.)

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that they will hear the recording only once, so they should concentrate while listening and try not to miss any words as they quickly move through the text. Remind them that the wrong words are most likely to be content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and that not all content words will carry the sentence stress. This is why they should also listen to words that are pronounced quickly or de-emphasized by the speaker.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Display some sentences, adapting for level e.g., *The town of Callander in Scotland is a popular destination with tourists. People visit from all over the world to see the unique landscape and sample their national dish, haggis. For those who enjoy hillwalking, the region boasts some of Scotland's most scenic trails*. Read them aloud naturally, and have students identify the de-emphasized content words.
- Have students look at their copies of the example used in strategy 1. Read this aloud and have them follow the text as they listen to every single content word.

Strategy 3

Remind your students of Strategy 1, i.e., they should be able to pronounce each content word in the transcription of the text. This will help them quickly compare what they hear with what appears on the screen and identify the incorrect words.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Have students look at their copies of the example used in strategy 1. If using the item on page 1, access the audio folder for this item type and play the file 'Listen and Read_audio_example_1'. Ask them to listen, read the text silently and circle the incorrect words. Alternatively, use your own example and corresponding audio and follow these steps.
- Have students compare their answers with the correct ones.

Step 4: Respond to a Listen and Read Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. Select an example appropriate to level from the **Appendix** and highlight they will have ten seconds to read the text before the recording starts. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Hand out the audio script you're using and play the corresponding audio file in the 'Listen and Read' folder. Have students circle the incorrect words, reminding them that **on test day they will click the words on the screen that are different.**

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to compare each other's responses in pairs or groups, then get them to check their answers with the correct ones and play the audio again.

Appendix

A2

Listen to the recording. Click on the words in the text that are different from what you hear.

Audio script

This is an announcement about the presentation in room 765. Mr Morris will talk about the school show, which is about animals in Africa this year. The school is doing this in November and Mr Morris is looking for actors today. Please go if you are interested.

Text

[‘wrong’ text words in {brackets}]

This is an announcement about the presentation in room {759}. Mr Morris will talk about the school {concert}, which is about {life} in Africa this year. The school is doing this in {December} and Mr Morris is looking for {dancers} today. Please go if you are interested.

Answer key

1. 759
2. concert
3. life
4. December
5. dancers

B1

Listen to the recording. Click on the words in the text that are different from what you hear.

Audio script

Welcome to Bridport everyone and welcome to our first Happy Place festival! This event brings together people of all ages and cultures to share their experiences of being positive, happy and healthy. We have the best British bands playing on various stages all weekend long. We also have amazing chefs creating the best dishes from all over this beautiful planet.

Text

[‘wrong’ text words in {brackets}]

Welcome to Bridport everyone and welcome to our first Happy Place festival! This {occasion} brings together people of all {languages} and cultures to share their experiences of being positive, happy and healthy. We have the best British {groups} playing on various stages all {evening} long. We also have amazing {cooks} creating the best dishes from all over this beautiful planet.

Answer key

1. occasion
2. languages
3. groups
4. evening
5. cooks

B2

Listen to the recording. Click on the words in the text that are different from what you hear.

Audio script

I'm calling the show to talk about the problems I've encountered since deciding to work from home. I honestly hadn't expected it to be quite so challenging. For instance, it's difficult to focus because there are so many distractions at home, especially from my children! I think it's harder to be very productive when there's no physical separation between your work and home life. When I used to go out to work, my work finished the moment I left the office. Now however, there are no specific boundaries, so switching off mentally is much harder. I'm constantly at work!

Text

[‘wrong’ text words in {brackets}]

I'm calling the show to talk about the problems I've {faced} since deciding to work from home. I honestly hadn't expected it to be quite so {demanding}. For instance, it's difficult to focus because there are so many {interruptions} at home, especially from my children! I think it's harder to be very {efficient} when there's no physical separation between your work and home life. When I used to go out to work, my work finished the moment I left the office. Now however, there are no specific {limits}, so switching off mentally is much harder. I'm constantly at work!

Answer key

1. faced
2. demanding
3. interruptions
4. efficient
5. limits

C1

Listen to the recording. Click on the words in the text that are different from what you hear.

Audio script

If you've ever found yourself bemoaning the fact that people don't speak 'correctly' nowadays, then today's show is for you! We're discussing why languages tend to mutate over time. There are parallels to be drawn between biological and linguistic evolution. Evolutionary biology has shown that humans adapt to their environment by selecting the specific traits which will help them survive. Similarly, people's use of language reflects the context within which they are operating. For various sociological reasons, certain words may become outdated and be replaced by other expressions. This often occurs as a result of exposure to different cultural influences.

Text

[‘wrong’ text words in {brackets}]

If you've ever found yourself {lamenting} the fact that people don't speak 'correctly' nowadays, then today's show is for you! We're discussing why languages tend to {diverge} over time. There are {analogies} to be drawn between biological and linguistic evolution. Evolutionary biology has shown that humans adapt to their environment by selecting the specific {attributes} which will help them survive. Similarly, people's use of language reflects the context within which they are operating. For various sociological reasons, certain words may become {obsolete} and be replaced by other expressions. This often occurs as a result of exposure to different cultural influences.

Answer key

1. lamenting
2. diverge
3. analogies
4. attributes
5. obsolete

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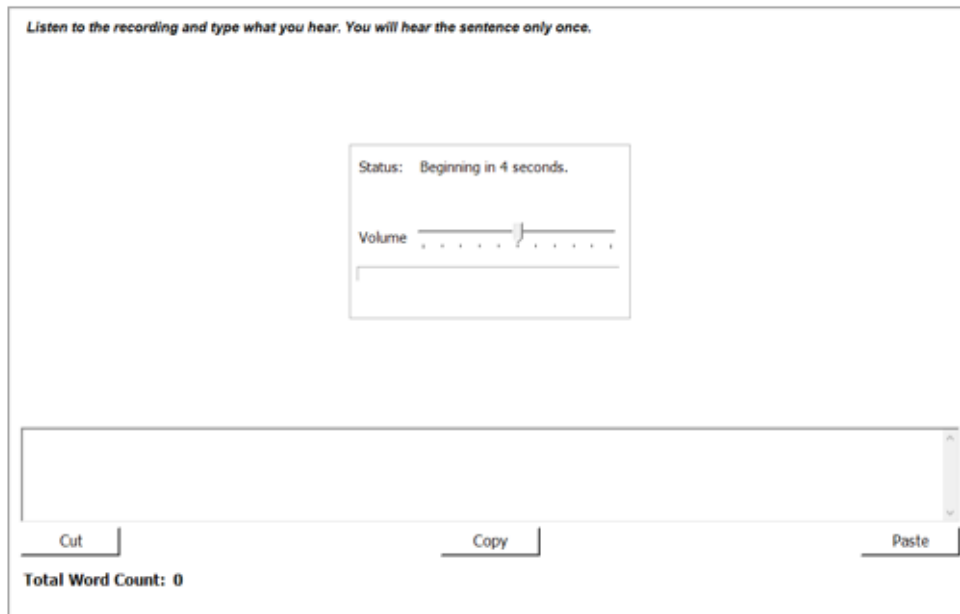
Lesson Plan Ideas:
Test Taking Strategies

**Lesson 8 - Listen and then Write
(Dictation) All levels**

Time allocated: 40 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to listen to a sentence or short text and write what they have heard. It tests listening comprehension at the word and sentence level. It tests the ability to write accurately and understand sentence structure, word order and connectors.



The screenshot shows a listening comprehension interface. At the top, it says "Listen to the recording and type what you hear. You will hear the sentence only once." Below this is a status box that says "Status: Beginning in 4 seconds." and a volume slider. Below the volume slider is a large text input area. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Cut", "Copy", and "Paste", and a "Total Word Count: 0" indicator.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Type the content words or keywords into the response box or write them on the onscreen notepad provided. Then add in the function words and the inflectional endings, using your knowledge of English grammar and sentence structure, as well as your memory.

Strategy 2

To improve your writing or typing speed, you can also use abbreviations and symbols to write down as many words as possible while listening.

Strategy 3

Use your phonemic awareness and grammar knowledge when checking spelling.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that if they can type or write fast, they can do so either directly into the response box or on the onscreen notepad. They should focus on the content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Remind students of the basic word order of English: Subject, Verb, Object. Explain that knowledge of the sentence structure will help them reconstruct the sentence correctly and predict the position of any function words, such as prepositions or articles. Level appropriate, remind students of the passive and active sentence structures, and the sentence types: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and conditional; simple, compound and complex.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to provide example sentences to illustrate different sentence structures and sentence types. Encourage them to use a wide range of vocabulary and topics, as far as their lexical range allows.
- Ask students to read the sentences to each other (remind them they need to follow an oral sequence of information, comprehending variations in tone, speed and accent). Their partners should try to write as they listen, focusing on the content words or keywords, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs, e.g., *Most people are unhappy when life is too predictable and lacks any new experiences.* (People unhappy life predictable lack new experience). Then have students reconstruct the complete sentence based on what they can recall and their knowledge of grammar.

Strategy 2

Explain to students that they can also make use of their note-taking skills while listening. They need to develop a uniform system of abbreviations and symbols that make sense to them. Remind students that they should be consistent by using the same system when note-taking. Using different symbols or abbreviations for the same word, e.g., using b4 and bef for the word before, can cause confusion.

Explain it is important they have enough time to change all the symbols to English words before moving on to the next item.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to generate a list of common words and phrases that can be abbreviated, e.g., with (w/), without (w/o), should be (s/b), because (bec), experience (exp), the (th), by (b), etc.
- Have students read some sentences to each other, e.g., *You must submit your assignments by next Friday at the latest.* Their partners should try to write down each sentence as they listen, using abbreviations and symbols only (*U mst subm yr assign b nx fri at th ltst*). Then they should try to write the full words.
- Now ask the student who reads the sentence to assess his/her partner's sentences by putting a checkmark next to the ones written correctly.

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that they must be mindful of correct spelling as they type each word. For any unknown words, they should try to apply their knowledge of the regular sound-letter correspondence to predict the spelling. Students should also use their grammar and word formation skills to identify and correct any mistakes, such as wrong past tense inflections or wrong adverb suffix.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Dictate some difficult words appropriate to level and have students write them down, e.g., *weird, millennium, accidentally, misspell, accommodate, irresistible, liaison, embarrass, pronunciation, privilege*. Have them discuss and work out the sound-letter correspondences.

- Write down some incorrect sentences (e.g., **Five of the student fail to submit they assignment last Friday. *I think the important of creative today real reflect a fundament shift in the nature of the economy.*) Have students work in pairs to correct the sentences (*Five of the students **failed** to submit **their** assignments last Friday. *I think the importance of **creativity** today **really** reflects a **fundamental** shift in the nature of the economy.*) Have them analyze each mistake and explain the contextual, grammar and word formation clues that helped them make the corrections.

Step 4: Respond to a Listen and then Write Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. They will hear a sentence only once and write it down immediately. Select an example appropriate to level from the **Appendix** and remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Play the audio in the 'Listen and then Write' folder and ask students to dictate the sentence.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's written sentences in pairs or groups. Then show the correct answers and play the audio again.

Appendix

A2

Listen to the recording and type what you hear. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script

She is going to plan our trip.

B1

Listen to the recording and type what you hear. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script

Looking at a phone screen at night can damage your sleep.

B2

Listen to the recording and type what you hear. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script

The novel I read recently had a totally unexpected ending.

C1

Listen to the recording and type what you hear. You will hear the sentence only once.

Audio script

Our manager was uncharacteristically quiet during the meeting.

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 9 - Choose the Right Picture (Levels A1 & A2)

Time allocated: 15 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type




This question asks learners to read a short text and select the best picture to answer the question. It tests the holistic understanding of short messages, notes and short pieces of writing.

Read the text. Choose a picture to answer the question.

Donna's Fruits.

The best apples, bananas and strawberries in town!

What is the correct picture for the shop?



Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Read the question first, paying attention to the key words. This will tell you what information you are looking for in the pictures.

Strategy 2

Focus on the main text and identify the key words so they stand out.

Strategy 3

Remember key vocabulary items should be visible in the correct picture. This will help you to eliminate those that do not contain the specified items or that contain items that have not been mentioned.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that it is important they read with purpose and look at the question first. This will tell them what information they are looking for in the text.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Hand out the example item on page 1 and tell students to look at the question first, paying attention to the key words. Make sure they can identify the focus of the question: *What is the correct picture for the shop?*

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that after looking at the question they need to divert their attention immediately to the main text. They should identify the important vocabulary items so they can find these in the pictures.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- In pairs ask students to read the text in the box and make a note of the words that hold most importance. Take note if they are slow writers, it is enough to simply recognise or point them out verbally. Make sure they have identified the nouns: apples, bananas, strawberries.

Strategy 3

Remind your students that key vocabulary items should be visible in the correct picture. This will help them to eliminate those that do not contain the specified items or that contain items that have not been mentioned.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Tell the pairs to consider the key details they have identified in both the question and the main text and choose the picture that matches this. Ask them what information they are looking for specifically in one of these pictures: (apples, bananas, strawberries).
- Tell them to agree on the correct picture with their partner.
- Elicit from the class why it couldn't be picture 2 or 3, (picture two has oranges instead of strawberries and picture 3 has oranges, but no bananas).

Step 4: Respond to a Passage Comprehension (Choose the Right Picture) Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Use the example/s in the **Appendix**.

Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to check each other's responses in pairs.

Appendix

A2

Read the text. Choose a picture to answer the question.

Hi Mum,

It's hot here so we're going to visit the beach. We went to the mountains yesterday and the pool this morning.

*Love,
Marie*

Where is Marie planning to go?



Answer key

A

A2

Read the text. Choose a picture to answer the question.

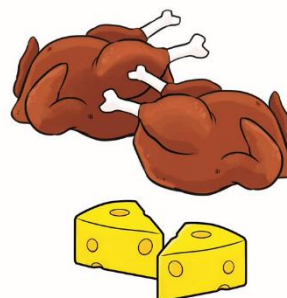
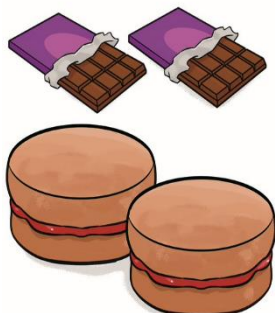
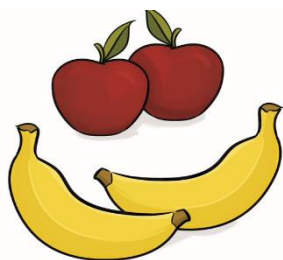
On sale this week at lower prices:

Sunday only: chicken and cheese

Monday to Wednesday: apples and bananas

Thursday to Saturday: cake and chocolate

What costs less on Tuesdays?



Answer key

A

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 10 - Short Answer Questions (Levels B1 & above)

Time allocated: 25 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to read a longer text and answer questions on the text. It tests reading comprehension and specific information included in the text.

Read the information from a website below and answer the questions. Use no more than three words for each answer.

Achoo! The Oxgate Research Centre needs you!

Do you suffer from hay fever? Whether you have severe or mild symptoms, the Oxgate Research Centre is looking for your help with their medical research. The researchers are using social sensing, a new investigative technique through which large data sets are collected by asking people to track their own behaviours and input information into a mobile phone app. After downloading the app, you will be asked to press a button every time you sneeze. Over time, it is also possible that the app might be able to recognise the sound of your sneeze. Using location data sent through the app, researchers will then be able to detect the presence of pollen in particular areas. Participants in the research project will only be contributing to important research, but will also be able to avoid irritation by using the app to see where others have been experiencing symptoms.

You can find more information about this research project by visiting www.orc-hfproject.org

Example: Who is looking for help? Oxgate Research Centre

Question 1. What research method is being used?

Question 2. What device must participants have?

Question 3. What are researchers trying to locate?

Question 4. What condition is being studied?

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Read the questions before you read the passage and pay attention to any key words. This will indicate the specific information you are looking for in the text.

Strategy 2

Focus on extracting the general gist of what is in the text first, rather than the meaning of every individual word and phrase. Concentrate on what you understand rather than worrying about words that are new to you.

Strategy 3

Scan for details and use the content from the text where possible to keep your responses brief and accurate. Respond using no more than three words for each answer.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that for this item type they are being tested on their overall reading comprehension as well as their ability to identify specific information within a text. It is therefore important that they read with purpose and focus their attention on the four questions first.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Hand out the example item text and questions shown on page 1. In pairs tell students to note down the key words in each question, e.g.: *What **research method** is being **used**?*
- Elicit answers for all four questions, making sure everyone can determine the focus in each sentence. Remind them that these details will speed up their purposeful reading of the text later.
- Ask the class if anyone can predict what the text might be about or some of the details the questions call for etc.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that when they first encounter the text, they should focus on extracting the general gist, rather than the meaning of individual words and phrases. Remind them to concentrate on the information they understand rather than worrying about words that are new to them.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask students to read through the text quickly to get an idea of the general content and the development of the ideas. Tell them it is likely they will find a few words they don't know but rather than fixate on it, simply make a note of it if they want to and carry on reading.
- Tell them to remain aware of the questions and key words in the previous strategy and be prepared in their reading to notice some connections or even find an answer.
- Discuss as a class the basic gist of the text and call upon volunteers to share the words they didn't know, if any. From the context, can they guess the meaning?

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that now they have determined the focus of the four questions and understand the gist of the text, they are ready to scan for the details. Remind them they must answer each question using no more than three words.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Do the example question as a group first. Remind them of the key words and consider hiding the answer, checking they can identify *Oxgate Research Centre* without issue.
- Refer to each question one by one and use the key words to focus on the details they are looking for. Remind them it is perfectly acceptable to respond using words from the text where possible, this will help keep answers brief.
- Ask pairs to join up with another pair to make a group of four. Check they agree on the answers and feed back as a class. Answers: *social sensing; (a) mobile phone; presence of pollen; hay fever.*

Step 4: Respond to a Short Answer Questions Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Select an appropriate example from the **Appendix**. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups. After they have done this, show the correct answers and check responses for accuracy as a whole class.

Appendix

B1

Read the review below and answer the questions. Use no more than 3 words for each answer.

The Colour Café is very modern, but it's in a historic building and from the outside it looks very old. The furniture is unusual because it's all red and the inside walls are green. It's not like anywhere else in the city. I usually have a sandwich for lunch, but this time I felt like the soup instead. And I was really pleased with it! The chicken looked good too, so I might have that another time. In general, the food was great, and they give you large amounts of it. Overall, it's good value for money. I'll be back very soon.

Questions

Example: How does the writer describe the café?

1. What is red?
2. What did the writer have to eat?
3. What does the writer think about the prices?
4. When will the writer have his next meal there?

Answer Key

Example: (very) modern

1. (the) furniture
2. (the) soup
3. good value/(they're) reasonable
4. (very) soon

B2

Read the blog post below and answer the questions. Use no more than 3 words for each answer.

My friends have been into escape rooms for a while, but I couldn't see the appeal until recently. In fact, I'd never have discovered how thrilling they are, if my colleagues hadn't dragged me along to one.

Escape rooms are places where teams collaborate to solve clues in order to "escape" from a room. Although leisure centres in my city have started developing escape rooms, the majority here are in former industrial sites, which adds to the atmosphere.

I'd assumed escape rooms were primarily designed to attract video game players, but I saw many families taking part. On reflection, this makes sense, because escape rooms encourage teamwork. For instance, I loved the word puzzles, whereas my teammates excelled at the maths clues which were beyond me. Overall, I'd recommend escape rooms to anyone.

Questions

Example: How does the writer describe their experience in an escape room?

1. Who managed to get the writer to try an escape room activity?
2. What is the most common type of venue for escape rooms in the writer's city?
3. Who did the writer originally believe was the target market for escape rooms?

4. What aspect of the experience did the writer find difficult?

Answer Key

Example: thrilling

1. (some/his/her/the writer's) colleagues/co-workers
2. former industrial sites
3. video game players/gamers
4. (the) maths/math clues

C1

Read the magazine article below and answer the questions. Use no more than 3 words for each answer.

Whenever my mother nagged me to sit still, my granny would remark, 'Fidgeting is a sign of alertness.' Now, research seems to back her up, at least partially. Making continuous, small physical movements, or 'fidgeting', is now thought to be beneficial.

Fidgeting has been shown to reduce stress and benefit cognition. For instance, fidgeting aids concentration, thereby contradicting generations of parents and teachers who viewed it as evidence of an unfocused mind.

The way it reduces stress is similar to the calming effect of colouring in pictures, an activity now taken up by adults for its therapeutic effect. Both activities involve repetitive movements which are more soothing than the processes involved in creative activities such as painting.

The physical benefits of fidgeting are negligible for highly active people. Nevertheless, since it improves blood circulation, it may help sedentary workers. However, there's no denying that fidgeting may irritate some colleagues. It can be distracting, so during important meetings it might be wise to refrain from doing it!

Questions

Example: Which relation tried to get the writer to stop fidgeting?

1. What did many people in the past think that fidgeting indicated?
2. What aspect of fidgeting and colouring in pictures makes people feel calmer?
3. What type of people does the writer say may get physical benefits from fidgeting?
4. In what circumstances does the writer recommend that people avoid fidgeting?

Answer Key

Example: mother

1. (an) unfocused/unfocussed mind/lack of focus/lack of concentration
2. repetitive movement(s)
3. sedentary workers
4. (in/during) (important) (work/business/office) meetings

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 11 - Choose the Right Word or Phrase (Gap fill) All levels

Time allocated: 20 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks learners to read a short text and select the best word or phrase to complete the text. It tests the learner's holistic understanding of short messages, notes and short pieces of writing.

Read the text. Choose a word or phrase to fill the gap.

We're looking for a shop assistant to work in our busy store. If you have not worked in a shop before, we'll ____ and teach you the important skills. Contact the manager for more information and an application form.

accept training
arrange training
apply training

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

First read the whole text quickly to make sure you understand the general topic and meaning.

Strategy 2

Look at the context around the gap and try to predict the word or type of word that could logically fill each gap before you look at the word options.

Strategy 3

Look at and analyze the options. Choose the one that best matches your predictions.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that for this item type it is important to quickly skim the whole text first to get an overall sense of the meaning. When we read gapped texts quickly for gist, our mind automatically predicts and fills in gaps in our reading with logical information.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Give each student a copy of the example item on page 1 without the word options.
- Ask students to quickly skim the text and then tell you the gist.
- Provide comments on your students' ideas and confirm the answer (a shop is advertising for a new member of staff).

Strategy 2

Tell your students that once they have established the gist of the text, they should read it through again without looking at the word options. This time they should try to predict the word or part of speech that is needed to fill each gap.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to read the text again and work with their partner to predict the word or part of speech that is needed to fill the gap. If they need more prompting, ask them to consider if it needs to be a verb, noun, adjective, based on the words before it and immediately after it. **Remind them the correct word needs to fit with the overall meaning of the sentence and the natural collocation that it may form.**
- Display and discuss possible options.

Strategy 3

Looking at the gap, students should now analyze the options to see how or whether each one matches their earlier predictions, and pick the option that is the best match grammatically or in terms of meaning.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Show the word options from the example item on page 1.
- Ask students to work together to analyze the options according to the predictions that they made in the previous activity. Tell them to look for a word that matches their predictions in terms of meaning and part of speech.
- Provide comments on their response, and then display the answer (arrange training).

Step 4: Respond to a Choose the Right Word or Phrase (Gap fill) Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Select an appropriate example from the **Appendix**. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups. After they have done this, show the answer for the example used and have students discuss why this is the most appropriate.

Appendix

A2

Read the text. Choose a word or phrase to fill the gap.

TOWELS

Please take a clean towel from here.

Please ____ dirty towels in the box next to the swimming pool.

Answer options

- A. send
- B. bring
- C. leave

Answer Key

- C. leave

B1

Read the text. Choose a word or phrase to fill the gap.

Visit to Marco's Restaurant

We had a family party there on Saturday night. The atmosphere was great. Although it took the waiter 20 minutes to serve us, the food was terrific. I really ____ it. Book a table now!

Answer options

- A. can recommend
- B. can suggest
- C. can promise

Answer Key

- A. can recommend

B2

Read the text. Choose a word or phrase to fill the gap.

A local children's charity has been ____ one of the council's Community Hero awards. The winner will be selected from a list of twelve local organisations and will receive a substantial cash prize.

Answer options

- A. nominated for
- B. announced as
- C. honoured with

Answer Key

- A. nominated for

C1

Read the text. Choose a word or phrase to fill the gap.

Polite Notice

For the well-being of everyone in the building, residents are reminded to refrain from all forms of ____ behaviour. This includes excessive noise after 10 p.m., leaving rubbish in the public areas of the building, aggressive conduct, and vandalism to the building. The Housing Association does not accept liability for any damage caused by such behaviour.

Housing Association

Answer options

- A. impetuous
- B. anti-social
- C. boisterous

Answer Key

- B. anti-social

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 12 - Read and then Write (All levels)

Time allocated: 30 minutes

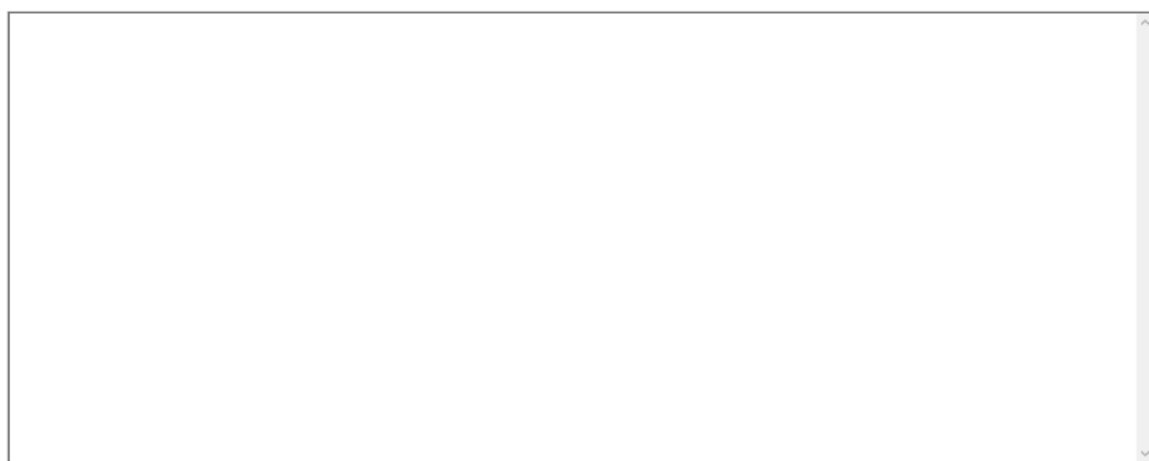
Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learners to read a short narrative or story. The text then disappears and the learner has to reconstruct the text. It tests reading comprehension, the ability to write accurately and understand sentence structure, word order and connectors.

Read the passage. After 30 seconds, the passage will disappear. Rewrite the passage in your own words. You have 120 seconds to write your answer.

Sarah's line manager at the biotechnology company where she worked had asked her to finalise her report by Friday. First thing on Thursday morning, the department head stopped by Sarah's desk and asked for the report. When Sarah explained that she hadn't expected to deliver it until the next day, the director apologised for alarming her, as she had got her days mixed up. Sarah felt very relieved.

Please write your answer below.



Cut Copy Paste

Total Word Count: 0

*Note the writing time varies as follows: A1/A2: 90 seconds; B1/B2: 120 seconds; C1/C2: 120 seconds.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Use the 30 seconds to carefully read the text and understand both the gist of the story and narrative structure.

Strategy 2

Re-tell the story in your own words, maintaining the key points.

Strategy 3

When you have finished writing, quickly check your grammar and spelling are correct before submitting your response.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they will only have 30 seconds before the passage disappears and that the onscreen notepad will not be provided for this item. It is therefore important that they remain focused and read the text as quickly and effectively as possible to identify the gist, ignoring grammar words like prepositions or articles.

It will also help students to separate ideas into a narrative structure with a beginning, middle and end.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Give students copies of the example Read and then Write item on page 1. For low levels you can use any example text of about three to four short sentences.
- When practicing, allow sufficient time to read the text and be able to conclude what the overall message of the story is. This is made simpler by breaking the text into three sections e.g., 1) *"Sarah was asked to write a report by Friday, 2) but was asked for it a day early by the Director. 3) She explained it wasn't due for another day, then received an apology"*.
- Elicit some examples verbally, without taking any notes.

Strategy 2

Remind your students that once they have determined the gist of the story, (without taking notes!) they need to write their answer in 90 or 120 seconds. **Explain that they need to use their *own words* to reconstruct the text and shouldn't attempt to recall verbatim.**

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Allow students to take a few moments to look at the passage on page 1 again, and agree on the main gist with their partner, considering the three-part narrative structure.
- Covering the copy of the passage, ask students to reconstruct the text using their own words as far as possible. Encourage them to paraphrase any keywords where they can, as this will cut down their writing time. An example of a possible response is below, but don't show this yet:

Sarah's boss asked for the finished report for Friday, so she was surprised when the Director demanded it early Thursday morning. Once she explained the deadline, the Director apologized for the mistake and worrying her, much to Sarah's relief.

- Elicit a few examples as a whole class and be prepared to support with ideas.
- Have students refine their response if necessary. Again, encourage them not to look back at the passage and to paraphrase where possible.
- Have students share their text with other pairs and discuss the differences in the sentences they have written.

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that once they have written their answer, it is important for them to take a moment to check that their grammar and spelling are correct before submitting their response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Allow time for students to carefully check their grammar and spelling. Monitor.
- Display the example response in Strategy 2:

Sarah's boss asked for the finished report for Friday, so she was surprised when the Director demanded it early Thursday morning. Once she explained the deadline, the Director apologized for the mistake and worrying her, much to Sarah's relief.

- Have students check the sentences for content, grammar and spelling, etc., as well as comparing this example with their own.
- *Extension:* In groups of four, compare the example response with the texts written among the group. Ask students to notice some of the different ways of constructing sentences, synonyms etc. and make a list. Feed back as a class.

Step 4: Respond to a Read and then Write Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. They will have 30 seconds to read the passage and 90/120 seconds to write their response. Select an example appropriate to level from the **Appendix** and remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's text in pairs or groups.

Finally, show the sample answer from the **Appendix** as an example.

Appendix

A2

Read the passage. After 30 seconds the passage will disappear. Rewrite the passage in your own words. You have 90 seconds to write your answer.

Text:

The school had a summer party last week. Anna sold cold drinks and ice creams there. It was very hot so Anna sold all of her ice creams. She made a lot of money for the school and they were happy.

Sample answer:

At the summer party, Anna sold all her ice creams because it was hot. She made money for the school and they were happy.

B1

Read the passage. After 30 seconds the passage will disappear. Rewrite the passage in your own words. You have 120 seconds to write your answer.

Text:

James was revising at home, but he had run out of biscuits. He really needed a snack, so he decided to go to the shop. He wrote a list of other things he needed: nuts, cream and sausages. He walked down the road to the supermarket, found everything from the list, paid and walked back home. But when he was back in his flat, he realised that he forgot the biscuits!

Sample answer:

James was a student. He was revising, but he was hungry. He decided to buy some biscuits and made a list of other things he wanted to buy. He went to the shop down the road and bought things from the list, but when he got home he realised that he didn't buy the biscuits.

B2

Read the passage. After 30 seconds the passage will disappear. Rewrite the passage in your own words. You have 120 seconds to write your answer.

Text:

Joe was selected to participate in an overseas study programme. He was looking forward to this incredible opportunity. However, he was very nervous about adapting to a new culture. Fortunately, everyone he met abroad was extremely welcoming. They helped him integrate, and thanks to them, he learnt so much about the country. The programme was a very positive experience and he stayed in touch with his new friends even after returning to his home country.

Sample answer:

Joe was excited about the chance to study abroad, but he was worried. He had concerns about whether he could get used to living in a different culture. However, things turned out well for Joe because the people he met while he was abroad made him feel very welcome. As a result, he learnt a lot and enjoyed his time abroad. He made great friends that he kept after he went home.

C1

Read the passage. After 30 seconds the passage will disappear. Rewrite the passage in your own words. You have 120 seconds to write your answer.

Text:

Mrs Palmer inherited an old piano and found an expert to carry out renovations. Upon starting the work, he came across something out of the ordinary – a bag stuffed with a large quantity of gold coins! Mrs Palmer quizzed her extended family and reported it to the police, but no one could shed any light on the source of the money. She decided to use the windfall to fund a scholarship for musicians.

Sample answer:

Mrs Palmer was left an old piano by a relation. It needed to have work done to it, and when this was started, a bag full of gold coins was found inside the piano. Mrs Palmer asked around among her relations and contacted the police, but no clues emerged as to where the money had come from. As it was unexpected, she used it for the benefit of musicians.

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 13 - Short Writing Task (Describe Image) Levels A1 & A2

Time allocated: 30 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

Test takers need to write a short description of an image. This question tests writing skills; the range and accuracy of the language used and grammar and vocabulary as an essential part of writing.

Look at the picture. You have 9 minutes to write about the picture. You must write at least 25 words.



Cut

Copy

Paste

Total Word Count: 0

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Make notes on the most prominent details, starting with what you can see and then what is happening.

Strategy 2

Follow up with further details using full sentences and a range of vocabulary.

Strategy 3

Check your grammar, spelling and word count before submitting your response.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they have 9 minutes to write about the picture but should allow enough time to make notes first, as this will give structure and a logical flow to their ideas. A simple outline for this is to ask two questions:

What can I see in the picture? What is happening?

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Display the example image from page 1. Ask students to write a sentence in the present simple answering *what they can see in the picture* and a second sentence in present continuous answering *what is happening*. For example, *I can see a mother and her two sons in their living room, the boys are playing together with their toys.*
- Now ask them to share their sentences with a partner, noticing correct use of tense and any variation in responses.

Strategy 2

Explain to your students that now we have established what the picture is about, we can follow up by describing the details. Remind them it is important to use full sentences and a range of vocabulary to make sure they give enough detail and reach at least 25 words.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask the class to look at the picture again and focus on the details. Elicit one or two examples and write them on the board, e.g., *The mum/mom is reading a magazine, it is 5 o'clock, etc.*
- In pairs ask students to make notes on the details they can see. They don't need to write in full sentences yet, it is enough to reference them at this point, e.g. *picture on wall, TV in corner, Mum has a drink, etc.* After several minutes elicit the ideas from the class and add them to the board.

- Using their sentences from strategy 1 (and referring to the board as and when needed), have pairs write 3-5 full sentences to describe the picture. Encourage them to use examples of present simple and continuous and to use as much vocabulary as they can.
- Then have pairs form a group with another pair and read their sentences to each other, noticing the range and variation of ideas. Feed back as a class.

Strategy 3

Remind your students that they need to write at least 25 words and must check their grammar and spelling before submitting their response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask pairs to read through their writing, checking for any mistakes with spelling or grammar and that they have written at least 25 words.
- Then show the sample answer below, raising awareness of a possible response:

It's five/5 o'clock and the children are playing with their toys in the living room. Their mum/mom is sitting down and reading a magazine. On the living room wall, there is a large picture and in the corner there is a television.

Step 4: Respond to a Short Writing Task (Describe Image) Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Use the example/s from the **Appendix**. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful? Ask students to compare and evaluate each other's responses in pairs or groups.

After they have done this, show the sample answer as an awareness raising activity.

Appendix

A2

Look at the picture. You have 9 minutes to write about the picture. You must write at least 25 words.



Answer Key

Sample Answer: *Two women are in a café. One woman is older. They are sitting at a table. They are talking and they look happy. There are two cups on the table and two plates with cakes on them. Behind them there is a man and a woman, sitting by the window.*

Look at the picture. You have 9 minutes to write about the picture. You must write at least 25 words.

**Answer Key**

Sample Answer: *It's 8 o'clock. A man is standing on a platform at a station. He is carrying a bag in one hand and he is talking on his phone. A train is arriving. There are other people waiting on the platform with suitcases or bags.*

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Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 14 - Short Writing Task (Essay) Levels B1 & above

Time allocated: 60 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This question asks the learner to write a short essay in response to a prompt. It tests paragraph and sentence structure, the range and accuracy of the language used and the ability to structure an argument or discussion in a written context. It also tests grammar and vocabulary as an essential part of writing.

Read the question. You have 10 minutes to write your response. You must write at least 75 words.

"It is better to live in the countryside than in a city."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

CutCopyPaste

Total Word Count: 0

*Note the word count varies across levels: B1/B2: at least 75 words; C1/C2: at least 100 words.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. It is important that you read the prompt carefully and identify both the focus of the question and the point of view from which you are required to write.

Strategy 2

Plan your ideas within an essay structure so your arguments follow a clear and logical format.

Strategy 3

Once you have written your essay, check it carefully. Make sure that you have written within the required word limit*, that your essay has the correct topic focus and point of view and that your grammar and spelling are correct.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that this item type requires them to write about a topic from a particular point of view. Students need to make sure that they have correctly identified the topic and followed the requirements of the prompt exactly.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Give students copies of the following prompt:
It is better to live in the countryside than in a city.
Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Ask students to underline the keywords that identify the topic focus and circle the keywords that identify the point of view from which the topic should be written.
- Provide feedback to the whole class: This prompt requires students to consider the topic of living in the countryside compared to a city. It requires them to determine their point of view; namely either they agree it is better to live in the countryside than a city, or they disagree. They are also required to explain why.

Strategy 2

Tell your students that once they have identified the topic focus and the point of view from which they will write from, they need to construct a sound argument or discussion. During the test they will have ten minutes to plan and write the essay. To use this time effectively and keep ideas in a clear and logical format, it is best to plan notes within an essay structure. It is possible to write good answers to this prompt that follow both a 'weigh up the arguments' or 'choose one side' structure. The point is to have a plan and use the structure that will allow them to get their points across in the most effective way.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Ask students to decide with a partner if their point of view will be to agree or disagree with the prompt, so they can write about it together.
- Give each pair a sheet of paper. Tell them to write the topic (*it is better to live in the countryside than a city*) and their point of view, i.e., *agree* or *disagree*, at the top of the page. Then tell students to write the following in a column on the left, making them aware this outline will follow a one-sided structure:

Introduction

Introduce/paraphrase topic and state your point of view

Main body

Argument 1 and explain

Argument 2 and explain

Conclusion

Sum up and supporting claim

- Give students a few minutes to brainstorm ideas. Tell them to write their ideas on the paper next to the most appropriate sections of the essay. (E.g., Introduction: better to live in the countryside than in a city = fully agree; Main body: housing often larger and cheaper; plenty to do outdoors like hiking and biking, also less pollution, great for mental health ...Conclusion: better in the countryside than a city due to more space and healthier lifestyle it supports....)
- Once students have written their sentences, have them share their ideas with the class.
- Give students time to expand their sentences with any details and supporting points to create a nearly-finished essay that is ready to be checked.

Strategy 3

Remind your students of the ten-minute time limit on test day and to leave time to give their work a final check. Once they have written their essay, they should make sure they have reached at least 75/100 words*, that their essay has the correct topic focus and point of view and that their grammar and spelling is correct.

Explain to your students that they will now review their work to check the topic focus and point of view and the appropriateness of their ideas.

To practice this checking strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Ask each pair to compare their responses with other pairs. Have students discuss whether they think their writing has covered the topic appropriately, or whether they have missed out any key areas, lost focus or strayed from the point of view.
- Ask students to read through their essays and check carefully for spelling or grammar mistakes.
- Once they are happy, have students share their experiences with the class and discuss any problems or queries.
- Lastly, put pairs into groups of four and hand out the sample response below, raising awareness of a possible answer.

Sample Answer: I disagree with this statement. In my opinion, it is much better to live in a city than in the countryside because there are a lot of things to do in cities. For example, there is a wide variety of different shops and restaurants. I think that city life is very pleasant for people. I also believe that there are more opportunities for jobs in the city. In the countryside, many people farm the land and if you don't want to do that job, there are not many other things you can do. For all these reasons, I much prefer living in a busy city, and I think it's better than living in the countryside.

Ask them to compare these ideas with their own and elicit the following:

Point of view: disagrees, better to live in a city

Essay structure: states point of view; argument 1 and example; argument 2 and example; sum up.

Word limit, grammar and spelling: 115 words, no grammar or spelling errors.

Step 4: Respond to a Short Writing Task (Essay) Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to the test item simulating the test conditions. Select an appropriate example from the **Appendix** and highlight they will have 10 minutes to read the prompt and write their essay. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Optional: Show students the sample answer from the **Appendix** to raise awareness of a possible response.

Appendix

B1

Read the question. You have 10 minutes to write your response. You must write at least 75 words.

"Schools should teach students useful skills like how to apply for a job or how to open a bank account."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

Answer key

Sample answer: *I completely agree that schools should teach students practical life skills. I think schools today are too focused on teaching academic subjects and preparing students for university. However, there is not enough focus on teaching really useful skills that students will need in adult life. Many students leave home to go to university. They may know how to write an academic essay, but some don't even know how to cook for themselves or how to handle things like paying rent or other bills.*

B2

Read the question. You have 10 minutes to write your response. You must write at least 75 words.

"As more and more people do most of their shopping online these days, there is no need for physical shops in the streets."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

Answer key

Sample answer: *It is certainly true that more and more people are shopping online these days. After all, it's obvious that there are benefits. You don't have to worry about parking, which is becoming more challenging with our overcrowded cities and towns. And, of course, you can get items online cheaper than in a shop, as there are fewer expenses for the business owner, resulting in better prices. But I really don't agree that shops have no place. Shops serve an important social function. For older people, meeting people while out shopping gives them human contact, and shops sometimes provide public noticeboards where customers share information.*

C1

Read the question. You have 10 minutes to write your response. You must write at least 100 words.

"People who spend time using social media develop a greater sense of empathy than those who do not."

Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Why or why not?

Answer Key

Sample answer: *The premise that social media enables people from diverse backgrounds to interact in ways which ordinarily would not be possible seems flawed. Social media usage doesn't automatically increase people's empathy.*

While social media can expose people to different views, this isn't always the case. For instance, some social media platforms have algorithms so that users are mainly sent notifications about topics that they have already liked before. Therefore, not all users encounter fresh perspectives.

Reading something on social media is far removed from understanding another person's life experiences, especially as people often present themselves in an inauthentic way online. Genuine empathy comes from spending meaningful time with others. That's why I support social engagement in a community rather than using social media.