

## **International Certificate**

# Computer-Based Test Teachers' Familiarisation Guide

Pearson English International Certificate (Previously PTE General).  
With the same quality standards as the paper test, this secure and equivalent test will be available on-demand in a computer-based format that is more convenient for test-takers, and course-agnostic for teacher preparation.

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# What Is the Pearson English International Certificate?

The Pearson English International Certificate, available as a paper or computer-based test, is an assessment solution of English communication ability for school and work. It measures listening, reading, speaking, and writing proficiency at six levels: A1, Level 1 (A2), Level 2 (B1), Level 3 (B2), Level 4 (C1), and Level 5 (C2), in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The test includes twelve different item types as described below in the Test Format section.

The Pearson English International Certificate requires that test takers can successfully complete real-life tasks using real-world English (also known as “international English”) such as writing messages, understanding talks and presentations, comprehending newspaper articles, and participating in conversations.

A computer-based test (CBT) is a digital version of an exam delivered on a computer. For security and reliability purposes, the Pearson English International Certificate is administered primarily in Pearson-approved testing centers on a secure computer system. Options for taking the test from home with online, live proctoring will be available in some locations. Contact your local Pearson office to learn more about this option.

## Test Format: Integrated Skill Assessment Improves Accuracy of Results

The Pearson English International Certificate is uniquely effective in measuring international English communication proficiency because it tests multiple skills at the same time. It also assesses core skills like vocabulary and grammar, but rather than requiring rote memorization, these skills are tested in the context of communication skills. This is important for today’s modern, global, academic and professional environments, which requires the use of multiple language skills; for example, listening to information and then writing about what is heard.

*“The [Pearson English International Certificate] reflects the main objective of our courses: the development of communicative skills. It concentrates on real communication and contextualized interaction. Moreover, Pearson’s vision of English as a global language caters for non-native students’ needs.”*

Analía, Exams Coordinator for the Language Extension Programs, Universidad Nacional de Catamarca (Argentina)

Table 1 below compares how Pearson applies this methodology to the paper and computer-based test.

*Please note that item types and number of items will vary depending on the level of the exam selected.*

Item type	Skill	No. of items in paper-based test	Paper-based test Section no.	No. of items in computer-based test	New item for CBT
<b>Short multiple-choice items</b>	Listening	10	Section 1		
<b>Listen and read</b>	Listening and Reading			<b>2</b>	✓
<b>Dictation</b>	Listening & writing	1	Section 2	<b>4</b>	
<b>Listen and then speak</b>	Listening & speaking			<b>10</b>	✓
<b>Listen to the passage and then speak</b>	Listening			<b>6</b>	✓
<b>Listen to the conversation and then speak</b>	Listening			<b>6</b>	✓
<b>Sentence completion</b>	Listening	2 (each item has 5 questions)	Section 3		
<b>Short multiple-choice gap items</b>	Reading	5	Section 4	<b>6</b>	
<b>Reading passage with multiple choice item</b>	Reading	5	Section 5	<b>6</b>	
<b>Short answer questions</b>	Reading	2 (each item has 4 questions)	Section 6	<b>6</b>	
<b>Text completion</b>	Reading	7	Section 7		
<b>Read and then speak</b>	Reading and Speaking			<b>6</b>	✓
<b>Open writing task linked to Reading</b>	Writing	1	Section 8		
<b>Read and write</b>	Reading and writing			<b>2</b>	✓
<b>Open writing task</b>	Writing	1	Section 9	<b>1</b>	
<b>Discussion</b>	Speaking	1	Section 10		
<b>Describe Image</b>	Speaking	1	Section 11	<b>4</b>	
<b>Roleplay</b>	Speaking	1	Section 12		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>		<b>53-59</b>	

Table 1

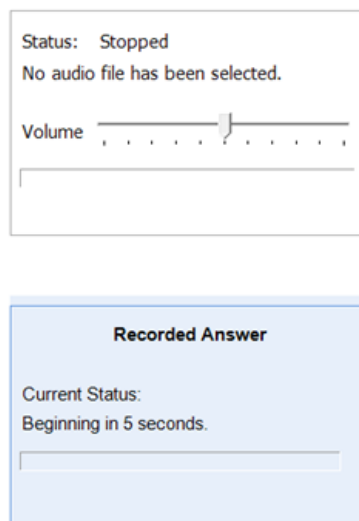
The Pearson English International Certificate computer-based exam is a more “friendly” exam, that tests multiple skills simultaneously, in context. This means that not only can the test be completed more quickly, but also that true communication skills —the ability to listen AND speak, to read AND WRITE are measured, not just knowledge of English words and grammar.

**Sample items: One example item from each skill area of the test is pictured in the following section. Please note that the test includes more item types than just those pictured, and that the appearance of certain items might vary depending on the level.**

## LISTENING

Below are images of sample item types of the four skills tested during the exam. The first item type assesses listening. The test taker must listen to a conversation and then provide a short, spoken response to a comprehension question, thereby testing listening, speaking, and comprehension in one item.

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



**Image 1. Computer-based test sample listening item type**

## READING

Image 2 below is a sample reading question from the exam at levels A1-A2. There are five such questions on the computer-based exam that assesses the test takers ability to understand the important detail in the written text by requiring that they select the proper picture.



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

**Sunnyside Restaurant**  
Lunch Menu  
Soup – Chicken with rice and vegetables – Ice cream £5.00  
(Tea/Coffee extra - £1 per cup)  
  
Special Offer! Hot Chocolate drink £1.50

What does the Sunnyside £5.00 lunch include?



Image 2. Computer-based test sample reading item type

## SPEAKING

Image 3 is a sample item type for speaking. Test takers must describe the picture they see below in 25 to 40 seconds (depending on the level) after they begin recording.

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.

Image 3. Computer-based test sample speaking item type

## WRITING

Image 4 is a sample writing item type at levels A1 and A2 that requires the test taker to write a short text in their own words about what they see in the image. The length of the required response increases for higher-level exams and the prompts vary.

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

Image 4. Computer-based test sample writing item type

## Test Validation: Built & Certified by Experts

The Pearson English International Certificate is awarded and regulated by the world's leading experts in language proficiency testing and assessment – Edexcel and Ofqual respectively.

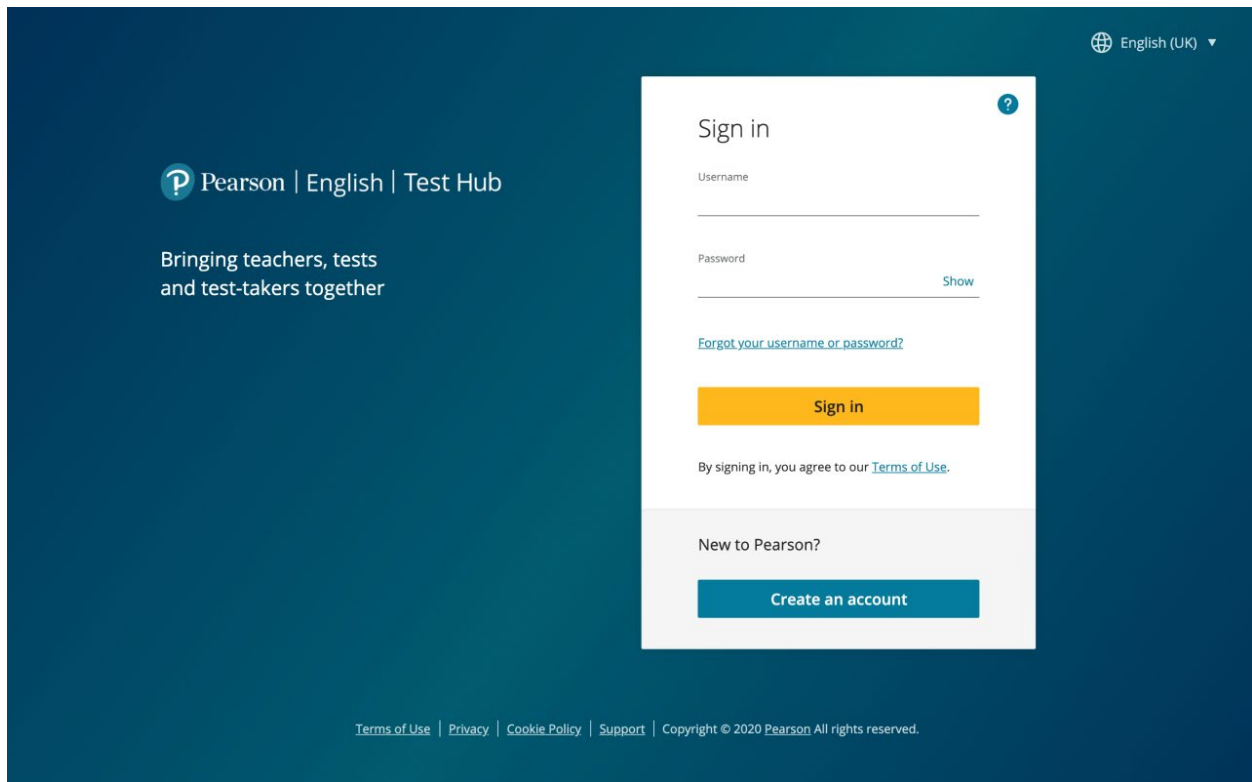
Edexcel is the largest awarding organization of language proficiency exams in the world, and the official awarding body for the Pearson English International Certificate. Edexcel delivers more than 130 million exams a year for academic and vocational qualifications in schools, colleges, and workplaces around the world.

Ofqual is the official authority for qualifications, exams, and tests around the world. Pearson English International Certificate is regulated by Ofqual, validating its high-quality standards.

# Introducing Test Hub: Flexibility & Convenience for Test Takers

With the addition of the more flexible computer-based format, Pearson has maintained its high standard of integrated skill testing, while shortening the amount of time necessary to take the test.

Test-takers and test centre administrators can now manage the entire process--from registration and purchase to gathering and sharing test results--in a single location online called Test Hub. Other computer-based tests require multiple sites and logins to purchase a test, schedule a test, and get scores online.



**Image 1**

The easy-to-use interface shown above in Image 1 is available in multiple languages and offers a simple step-by-step process to:

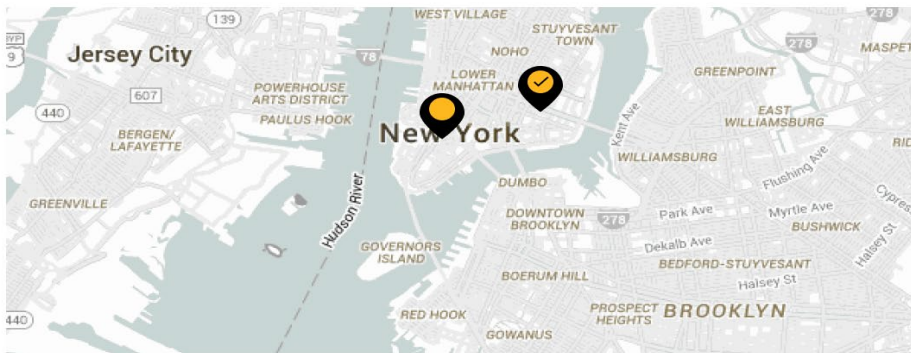
- Purchase a test
- Identify location of nearest Pearson-approved testing center
- Find a date/time to take the test
- Purchase Readiness Tests (beginning in 2021)
- Get comprehensive test results
- Share test results with schools and employers.



## You are booking your **B1 International Certificate**

Your institution has 2 test centers available.  
Please select where you would like to take your test.

- Pearson Professional Test Center (Private)**  
118-35 Queens Blvd #1260, Queens, NY 11375, United States 0.7 miles  
[Test Center information](#)
- Pearson Professional Test Center (Private)**  
100 William St #1200, New York, NY 10038, United States 1.7 miles  
[Test Center information](#)



Continue

**Image 2. Test scheduling and location tool in the Pearson Test Hub.**

The computer-based test was designed to reduce student and teacher stress with more convenient scheduling options. Computer-based tests offer flexibility in date, time, and location, and test takers will get results weeks faster. Best of all, test takers and test centres will have unlimited access to the secure, on-demand web portal.

## Did you know?

According to 750 general English test takers in Europe, Mexico, and Argentina, the primary consideration for choosing a test is:

*"The type of certificate that I receive"* 66%

When asked what else test-takers want in a General English test, they were equally interested in:

*"The flexibility offered on the date of the test"* 29%

*"The flexibility offered on the time of the test"* 28%

*"The flexibility offered on the location of the test"* 23%

*"The speed at which I receive the test results"* 20%

## Scoring: How the test is scored

All the items in the International Certificate test are computer scored. Some item types are scored based on if the answer is correct or not, others include additional aspects such as the quality of the response and other criteria including word count. For example, in the Describe Image item type, traits such as oral fluency, content and pronunciation are scored. Scores for speaking and writing item types are generated by automated scoring systems.

There are two types of scoring:

### **Correct or incorrect**

For these item types, 1 point is given for a correct answer, and no points for an incorrect answer.

### **Partial credit**

For these item types, answers can be scored as correct, partially correct or incorrect. Correct responses receive the maximum number of points available, incorrect responses receive 0, and partially correct in between 0 and the maximum score. Some item types have multiple questions (e.g. Passage comprehension) for these item types, each question is treated as correct or incorrect, and a total score calculated for each item.

## Part 1: Listening and Speaking

Item type	Test Levels	Time allowed	Number of items	Scoring	Communicative skills scored	Traits scored
<b>Read Aloud</b>	A1-C2	40-55 mins*	6	Partial credit	Reading Speaking	Oral Fluency Pronunciation Content
<b>Describe Image</b>	A1-C2		4	Partial credit	Speaking	Oral Fluency Pronunciation Content
<b>Listen and Repeat</b>	A1-C2		10	Partial credit	Speaking Listening	Oral Fluency Pronunciation Content
<b>Listen to the Conversation</b>	A1-C2		6	Correct/Incorrect	Speaking Listening	NA
<b>Passage Comprehension</b>	A1-A2		6	Partial credit (for each correct answer)	Listening	NA
<b>Passage Comprehension</b>	B1-C2		6	Partial credit (for each correct answer)	Listening Speaking	NA
<b>Listen and Read (Hotspots)</b>	A1-C2		2	Partial credit (for each correct word)	Listening Reading	NA
<b>Listen and then Write (Dictation)</b>	A1-C2		4	Partial credit	Listening Writing	NA

\*The time allotted in each section might vary according to the level

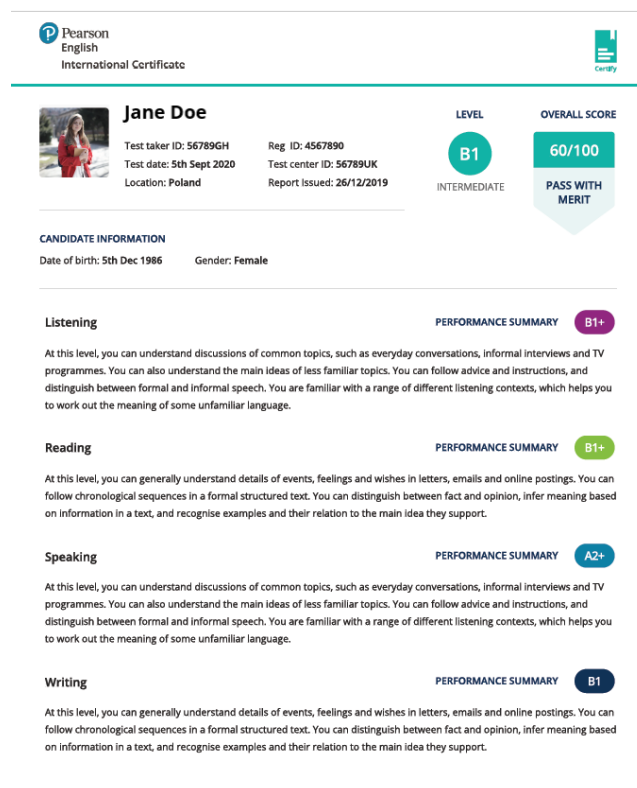
## Part 2: Reading and Writing

Item type	Test Levels	Time allowed	Number of items	Scoring	Communicative skills scored	Traits scored
<b>Choose the Right Picture</b>	A1-A2	40-55 mins*	6	Correct/Incorrect	Reading	NA
<b>Short Answer Questions</b>	B1-C2		6	Partial credit (for each correctly answered question)	Reading	NA
<b>Choose the Word or Phrase</b>	A1-C2		6	Partial credit	Reading	NA
<b>Read and then Write (Recall)</b>	A1-C2		2	Partial credit	Reading Writing	Grammar Vocabulary Content  Formal Requirement
<b>Short Writing Task</b>	A1-A2		1	Partial credit	Writing	Grammar Vocabulary Spelling Content Development, Structure and Coherence Formal requirements General linguistic range
<b>Short Writing Task</b>	B1-C2		1	Partial credit	Writing	Grammar  Vocabulary  Spelling  Content  Development, Structure and Coherence  Formal requirements  General linguistic range

\*The time allotted in each section might vary according to the level

# Scoring: Comprehensive Machine Scoring Simplifies Remediation & Eliminates Bias

With the introduction of the computer-based test, Pearson has also enhanced its digital score reports. Teachers will find ample data in the score reports to measure, track, and compare individual and class performance. The score report will also provide recommended activities and specific exercises for remediation within each skill set. Image 3 below is a sample of what the score report for test takers will include.



The image shows a sample score report for Jane Doe, Pearson English International Certificate. The report includes the following information:

- Candidate Information:** Jane Doe, Test taker ID: 56789GH, Reg. ID: 4567890, Test date: 5th Sept 2020, Test center ID: 56789UK, Location: Poland, Report issued: 26/12/2019.
- Level:** B1 (Intermediate)
- Overall Score:** 60/100 (Pass with Merit)
- Candidate Information:** Date of birth: 5th Dec 1986, Gender: Female
- Listening:** Performance Summary B1+  
At this level, you can understand discussions of common topics, such as everyday conversations, informal interviews and TV programmes. You can also understand the main ideas of less familiar topics. You can follow advice and instructions, and distinguish between formal and informal speech. You are familiar with a range of different listening contexts, which helps you to work out the meaning of some unfamiliar language.
- Reading:** Performance Summary B1+  
At this level, you can generally understand details of events, feelings and wishes in letters, emails and online postings. You can follow chronological sequences in a formal structured text. You can distinguish between fact and opinion, infer meaning based on information in a text, and recognise examples and their relation to the main idea they support.
- Speaking:** Performance Summary A2+  
At this level, you can understand discussions of common topics, such as everyday conversations, informal interviews and TV programmes. You can also understand the main ideas of less familiar topics. You can follow advice and instructions, and distinguish between formal and informal speech. You are familiar with a range of different listening contexts, which helps you to work out the meaning of some unfamiliar language.
- Writing:** Performance Summary B1  
At this level, you can generally understand details of events, feelings and wishes in letters, emails and online postings. You can follow chronological sequences in a formal structured text. You can distinguish between fact and opinion, infer meaning based on information in a text, and recognise examples and their relation to the main idea they support.

Image 3- Sample score report

Scoring for the Pearson English International Certificate tests will employ a hybrid model of machine scoring for multiple choice items, and human evaluators for the speaking and writing units. In the near future, scoring for the Pearson English International Certificate will be done by a computer using artificial intelligence. That process involves hundreds of language experts feeding the machine thousands of completed tests as proper examples of results. [Research](#) shows that when machines score high-stakes certification exams, the results are consistent with the conclusions of expert evaluators, but it improves on results overall by eliminating any possible human bias.

According to the results of research documented in the whitepaper called *Pearson Test of English Academic: Automated Scoring*, a machine cannot be “distracted” by factors such as a test taker’s accent, appearance, personality, or body language. Such impartiality means that test takers can be confident that they are being judged solely on their language performance, and stakeholders can be

assured that a test taker's scores are "generalizable" – that they would have earned the same score if the test had been administered in Beijing, Brussels, or Bermuda.

Automated scoring will not only eliminate any possible human bias but, it will also reduce the time with which results are delivered by weeks. Pearson assessment experts, teachers, and evaluation experts are currently training the artificial intelligence engine with thousands of expert judgements on candidate writing and speaking performance. Scoring via artificial intelligence will be available after Pearson is satisfied that enough evidence has been gathered to produce accurate, reliable outcomes every time.

## Test Preparation: Are Your Students Ready?

Pearson is proud to announce a new era in practice testing that will ensure students' readiness for the exam. These new practice tests--available on Test Hub--have been designed to show cognitive ability and identify how a person is likely to perform on the Pearson English International Certificate.

Readiness tests are available for levels A2, B1, B2, and C1 and results are ready in minutes. The green, amber, and red traffic lights seen in Image 4 will indicate if a student is ready to take the test or has more work to do. The readiness tests provide detailed results and suggest remediation broken down into the four skills tested during the exam: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The remediation is also mapped to Pearson English coursebooks to assist with preparation.

The screenshot displays a Pearson Readiness Test report for Jane Doe. At the top, it identifies the test as a 'READINESS TEST FOR INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE' and lists the test taker's name, date (11/11/2020), and institution (Readiness Demo Account). A disclaimer states that the report is only an indication of readiness and cannot be used as a certificate of proficiency. The main section is titled 'B1 Readiness Test Summary' and shows a 'Readiness Prediction' of 'Not Ready' (indicated by a red pill-shaped button). A legend on the right defines the status colors: red for 'Not Ready', orange for 'Potentially Ready', and green for 'Ready'. Below this is the 'B1 Skills Readiness' section, which shows a horizontal bar with four categories: LISTENING (Ready, green), READING (Not Ready, red), SPEAKING (Ready, green), and WRITING (Potentially Ready, orange).

**Image 4-Sample Readiness test report**

Comprehensive tests results with remediation recommendations (as described in the section on computer-based testing above) will also be available as part of the Readiness test.

# Why Choose the Pearson English International Certificate?

The computer-based Pearson English International test is a flexible and convenient option for students and teachers. With on-demand testing, teachers can schedule exams at a time that best suits the class program. And with faster results from the Readiness test and exam, teachers can remediate skills in less time.

	Paper-based test	Computer-based test
<b>Test available on-demand in testing center</b>	Offered 7 times per year	Yes
<b>Readiness tests for test takers</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Time necessary for students to complete exam</b>	Varies from under 2 hours to more than 3 hours	Under 2 hours
<b>Number of required testing sessions for test takers</b>	2	1
<b>Teacher remediation suggestions in score report</b>	No	Yes
<b>Time until students get results</b>	6 weeks	6-8 weeks at launch will shrink to 1 week by 2022
<b>Test result expiration</b>	No expiration	No expiration

## Teacher Resources Simplify Remediation

Teachers can leverage the Readiness tests as a true indication of ability by skill area AND include specific recommendations for remediation from Pearson materials like the books *Wider World*, *Gold Experience*, *Speak Out* and *Business Partner*. In addition, teachers can access the new Practice Test Plus eBook, online and in print at <https://www.pearson.com/english/catalogue/exam-prep/practice-tests-plus/practice-test-plus-pte-general.html>

In addition to these resources, recorded webinars and live Q&A sessions will be offered throughout 2021, including the following topics:

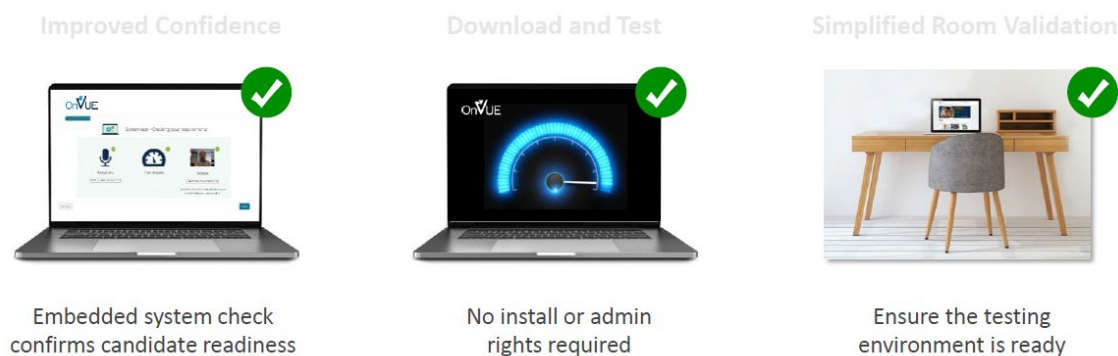
- Getting to know the Pearson English International Certificate and the computer-based test
- Pedagogy and overview of the computer-based test items; how to prepare your students
- Scoring the computer-based test; engine training and AI – future-proofing General English exams

Additional resources will be available for teachers beginning Q2 2021.

# Security – Keeping Tests & Test Takers Safe

Test and test taker security are paramount for the efficacy of the Pearson English International Certificate. For that reason, Pearson continually enhances its processes and technology. This high-stakes test is primarily administered in a Pearson-approved testing centre. Pearson requires photo identification, an on-site photo during check-in, and digital signatures. Multiple versions of the test are used, and test takers are physically separated to prevent cheating and provide sufficient social distance while taking the test.

For test takers taking the test remotely via the Online Proctored delivery mode, the system provides a streamlined experienced that has embedded system & security checks as well as ID verification.



**Image: Remote testing user experience flow**

## Teachers' Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are the main differences between paper and CBT?**

There are 4 differences:

1. The computer-based test can be scheduled in as little as 24 hours at a Pearson-approved test center or at home using OnVue, our Online Proctoring system. The paper-based test has seven test sessions available each year.
2. Test takers can be tested on all four skills—listening, reading, speaking, and writing—in **one** sitting with the computer-based test. Unlike other computer-based tests, test takers will not need to schedule a second appointment to take the speaking section.
3. The computer-based test can be completed more quickly. For example, the C1 paper test requires 3:01 to complete, while the C1 computer-based test requires only 1:55.
4. Ultimately, results will be received more quickly and with more detailed feedback and remediation suggestions than the paper-based test.



### **How do I know which test is best for my students?**

Test format should be selected based on students' comfort. If your students are comfortable using a computer-keyboard, mouse, and headset with microphone-they should have no difficulty taking the computer-based test. If your students are not comfortable using a computer, a paper test will probably be best to avoid adding additional stress to the test.

### **What training/guidance will my students need to take the computer-based test?**

Your students should be familiar with the item types in the Pearson English International Certificate exam. They should also have experience using a computer keyboard, mouse, and headset with microphone. The Pearson-approved testing centre will provide additional information on preparing for the test day, check-in procedures, and other procedures and safety rules.

### **Will my students have an equal chance of passing the CBT as the paper-based version of the test?**

Yes! The paper-based and computer-based versions both use the same methodology for assessment and are held to the same standards of performance. The only difference is that computer-based tests can integrate more skill types simultaneously (for example listening AND writing) and this reduces the number of questions and shortens the time required to complete the test.

### **What training/guidance will my students need to take the computer-based test?**

Your students should be familiar with the item types that are included in the test. If these are not taught in the classroom, test takers can prepare using the Pearson English Warm Up app, available for free on the app stores. Test takers can also prepare to take the computer based test using the Readiness test available in the Test Hub; the item types are similar to what is on the test. Instructions for each item type in the test will be included during the exam.

Test takers should also be comfortable using a computer keyboard and mouse, and a wired headset with microphone. The test centres will provide guidance on all other processes and rules for check in, safety in the testing environment.

### **When can the CBT test be delivered?**

Unlike the paper test, which is administered seven times each year, the computer-based test is available on demand at any Pearson-approved testing center or at home using OnVue, our Online Proctoring system. Appointments can be scheduled within as little as 24 hours.

### **What if internet connectivity is not available where/when the students take the computer-based test?**

Any approved testing location will have sufficient internet connection for hassle-free test completion. If testing from home, Test takers will need to run the system check before taking the test to ensure they have adequate connectivity.

### **How does the test score speaking and writing tasks?**

At launch, the new computer-based Pearson English International Certificate, will be scored by a hybrid model of machine and English language assessment experts. Multiple choice questions are reviewed by the machine and the spoken and written sections are scored by humans. After Pearson completes training its machine with artificial intelligence, the entire exam will be scored by machine.

### **How long does it take to get results for the computer-based test?**

Scores for the computer-based test will be weeks quicker than the paper-based test, which are available 6 weeks after the exam. During 2021, results from computer-based tests will take longer, as we standardise scoring. The aim is to turnaround scores in 2022 within 2 weeks of testing.

### How can I get copies of my students' results on the test?

Candidates' results are posted in their Test Hub account. You can ask them to share the results with you by email. If your institution purchased the test for your students, an administrator should also have access to the candidates' results.

### How can I choose the Pearson computer-based test for my students?

The computer-based test is delivered at authorised centres in your community or at home using OnVue, our Online Proctoring system. The test must be purchased on Test Hub by the student (with a credit card or PayPal account) or your school. You can read more about how to purchase the test at <https://www.pearson.com/english/catalogue/assessment/international-certificate.html>

### Are accommodations available for the candidates who need them?

Yes, for candidates who require extra time on the test, a 25% extra time version of the exam is available. Interface options such as zoom text and different coloured contrasts are also available in the test centres. A request for accommodations and documentation specifying the need for accommodations must be submitted in advance of the test. More information will be available on Test Hub.

### Do test takers get a certificate when they pass the test?

Yes. they will receive a printed, water-marked certificate by post within a few weeks.

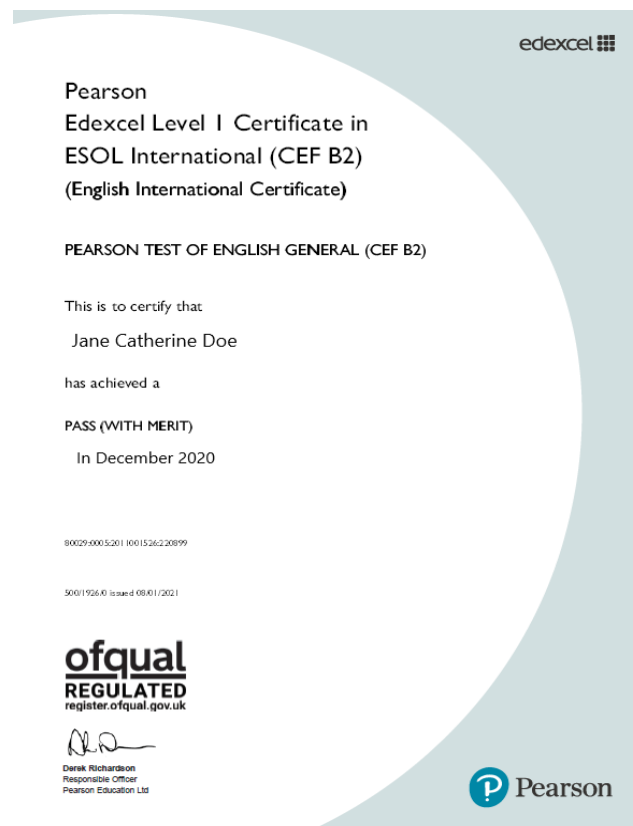


Image 10. Sample certificate from computer-based exam

**Additional considerations**

Please note that parent/guardian consent will be required for all test takers under the age of 18.

For test takers using OnVue, a parent/guardian will need to provide consent at the time of the appointment before the test can be launched.

# Find Out More about the Pearson English International Certificate

For more information about the computer- or paper-based Pearson English International Certificate, go to <https://www.pearson.com/english/catalogue/assessment/international-certificate.html> or contact us at [internationalcertificate@pearson.com](mailto:internationalcertificate@pearson.com)

## **Address**

Language Testing Division of Pearson  
Operations Team  
80 Strand  
London  
WC2R 0RL  
UK