



# Versant English Test

Official Guide for Test-Takers

April 2021 | v1.0



# Versant English Test

The online Versant English Test assesses the ability to communicate in spoken English. It is used by organizations around the world to test the English-speaking proficiency of new or existing students and staff. It assesses the following: Overall Ability, Sentence Mastery, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation.

This guide will help you understand the types of questions that will be asked and provides tips to help you answer them. The information can be used to develop useful strategies for the test day.

The test is divided into sections as shown in the table. Each section starts with instructions and a sample item. Each question is timed, and the total length of the test is 17 minutes.

As well as reading this guide, we recommend you request a free online [sample test](#). You can also buy a scored online [Practice Test](#) to review your skills.

Item type	Skill(s) tested	Items in test
Reading (Part A)	Fluency and Pronunciation	8
Repeat (Part B)	Sentence Mastery, Fluency, Pronunciation	16
Short Answer Questions (Part C)	Vocabulary	24
Sentence Builds (Part D)	Sentence Mastery, Fluency, Pronunciation	10
Story Retellings (Part E)	Sentence Mastery, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation	3
Open Questions (Part F)	Sentence Mastery, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation This item is not scored.	2

# Skills tested

The following table describes the skills assessed and scored by the test. An example score report is provided at the end of the guide.

Skill	Definition
Overall Ability	Overall Ability describes your ability to understand spoken English and speak clearly on everyday topics. Scores are based on a weighted combination of the main sub-scores described below (Sentence Mastery, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Pronunciation).
Sentence Mastery	This skill describes your ability to understand, remember and say English phrases and clauses in complete sentences. Your performance depends on accurate understanding of a given sentence and appropriate usage of words, phrases and clauses in meaningful sentences.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary reflects the ability to understand common everyday words spoken in context and to produce such words as needed. Your performance depends on your familiarity with the form and meaning of everyday words and their use in conversations.
Fluency	Fluency reflects your ability to replicate natural rhythm, intonation and timing when repeating, reading and creating sentences
Pronunciation	Pronunciation reflects your ability to produce consonants, vowels and stress in a native-like manner in context. Performance depends on your knowledge of the sound and stress of everyday words.
Intelligibility	Intelligibility is a measure of how understandable you are as a speaker. Even when your spoken English proficiency is low, if intelligibility is high, it means that native speakers will find you easy to understand. This is not included in your overall score.

# Access to the test

The Versant English Test is taken online via mobile phone app, a web browser, or Computer Delivered Testing (CDT) software. Your test administrator will advise on methods you can use. The test is autoscored using Pearson's highly trusted, state-of-the-art technology. Results are available in minutes. To take the test you will need:

- Test instructions (including a link to system requirements) and a Test Identification Number from your test administrator.
- Access to a computer with an up-to-date web browser or the [Versant Computer Delivered Testing \(CDT\) software](#) (for Windows).

Or

A smartphone (Apple or Android).

- A good internet connection.
- A headset with microphone boom.
- A quiet room where you can work without interruptions throughout the test.

Your test administrator may also ask you to take the test using a remotely monitored system. You will be notified in advance if this is the case.

# Navigating the test

- To start the test, you will be asked to enter the Test Identification Number to ensure the test is valid.
- Before the questions begin you will need to a few system checks to ensure your audio and microphone are working and that your answers are recorded.
- An examiner's voice will then guide you through the test and explain how to answer the different types of questions.
- Each new Part starts with an instruction screen and a sample item, so you know what is expected.
- Each question is timed.
- If you don't start speaking within a certain time, the test will assume you aren't going to answer and move on to the next question.
- If you do not complete an answer, your partial response will be saved and scored as it is.
- You can only move forward – it is not possible to go back to a previous question or re-record an answer.

# General tips for answering

All your answers are spoken aloud and recorded for scoring. To ensure they are recorded clearly, watch the [video on tips for Versant test takers](#) and follow the steps below:

- Make sure you are in a quiet room with no background noise (even loud fans and air conditioning can cause interference).
- Ensure your headset is properly connected (to avoid static or technical issues).
- Speak clearly at a normal volume (don't shout or whisper).
- Speak at a normal speed (do not rush or speak extra slowly).
- Try pronouncing words that you do not know but be aware you should not correct yourself.
- Consider which words need to be stressed.
- Pay attention to punctuation (e.g., commas, semi colons, and periods) as these will give you clues for pauses in your speech.
- Give a single response that shows your ability. You will not be able to re-record your answer.

# Part A: Reading

## Instructions



Click to hear instructions

A

Reading

Instructions

Please read the sentences as you are instructed.

**You hear:**

Please read sentence two.

**You say:**

1. This weekend is Ann's birthday.

2. **"She is going to visit her daughter."**

3. They will have a picnic in the park.

4. The weather should be perfect.

Replay

Next

## Example question

A

Reading

1 / 8

Read the sentences as instructed.

1. I usually just eat cereal.
2. My roommate never cleans the kitchen.
3. So I guess my dishes are easier to clean than his.
4. He cooks hamburgers and leaves his dirty dishes in the sink all night.
5. There's a new movie showing tonight.
6. I heard it's supposed to be good.
7. We should see it after we go out to dinner.
8. There isn't much else to do on a Thursday night.

### What will you have to do?

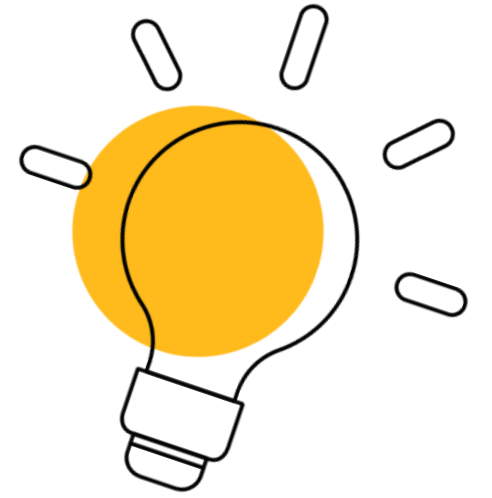
- You will be shown a set of numbered sentences.
- You will be asked to read one of the sentences out loud.
- You will need to read it as it appears.
- You will have 15 seconds to answer.

### What skills are being tested?

- This question familiarizes you with speaking aloud.
- It also tests Pronunciation and Fluency.

# Reading *tips*

- Make sure you read out the sentence that was requested.
- Consider what the sentence means and change your intonation to express its meaning (e.g. think about which words to stress and where to pause).
- Start speaking within 6 seconds or the test will move on to the next question.



**You can practice by trying the question below.**



***Click to hear instructions***

**Read the sentences as instructed.**

1. I usually just eat cereal.
2. My roommate never cleans the kitchen.
3. So I guess my dishes are easier to clean than his.
4. He cooks hamburgers and leaves his dirty dishes in the sink all night.
  
5. There's a new movie showing tonight.
6. I heard it's supposed to be good.
7. We should see it after we go out to dinner.
8. There isn't much else to do on a Thursday night.



# Part B: Repeat

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

B

Repeat

Instructions

Please repeat each sentence that you hear.

**You hear:**

"Leave town on the next train."

**You say:**

"Leave town on the next train."

Replay

Next

## Example question

B

Repeat

1 / 16

Repeat what you heard.

### *What will you have to do?*

- You will hear a sentence.
- You will need to repeat it the sentence.
- You will have 15 seconds to answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This tests your understanding and recall of how phrases and sentences are structured (Sentence Mastery). It also assesses Pronunciation and Fluency.

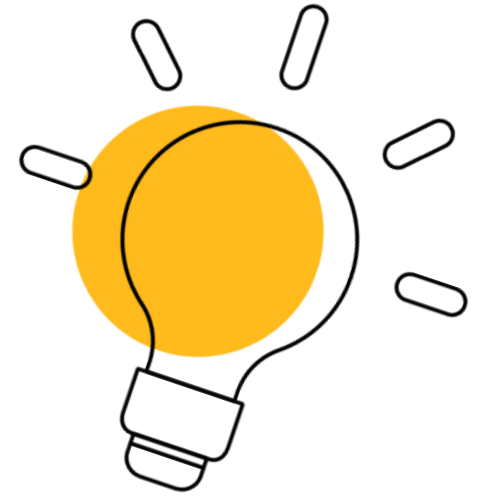
# Repeat *tips*

- Listen to the prompt.
- Consider the meaning of the sentence.
- Repeat what you heard using the same voice and tone e.g., try to use the same rhythm, pauses, and intonation that you heard in the recording.
- Start speaking within 6 seconds or the test will move on to the next question.

**You can practice by listening to the prompt below.**



***Click to hear  
the prompt***



# Part C: Short Answer Questions

## Instructions



**Click to hear instructions**

**C** Questions
Instructions

Now, please just give a simple answer to the questions.

You hear:

"Would you get water from a bottle or a newspaper?"

You say:

"a bottle" or "from a bottle".

Replay
 Next

## Example question

**C** Questions
1 / 24

Answer the question.

### **What will you have to do?**

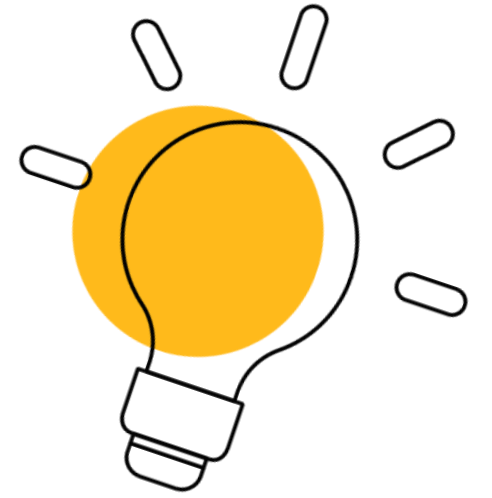
- You will hear a short question and will be asked to answer a question about it.
- You will need to answer with a single word or a short phrase.
- You will only hear the question once.
- You have 15 seconds to answer.

### **What skills are being tested?**

- This question tests Vocabulary.

# Short Answer Questions *tips*

- Focus on the meaning or the question being asked.
- Do not give a long or detailed reply.
- You must start to answer within 6 seconds or the test will move onto the next question.



**You can practice by trying the question below.**



***Click to hear  
the question***

# Part D: Sentence Builds

## Instructions



Click to hear instructions

D

Sentence Builds

Instructions

Please rearrange the word groups into a sentence.

You hear:

"was reading"... "my mother"... "her favorite magazine"

You say:

"My mother was reading her favorite magazine."

Replay

Next

## Example question

D

Sentence Builds

1 / 10

Rearrange the word groups into a sentence.

### *What will you have to do?*

- You will hear three short phrases.
- The phrases will be in a random order.
- You will need to rearrange them into a sentence.
- You will have 15 seconds to answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question assesses Sentence Mastery, Fluency, and Pronunciation.

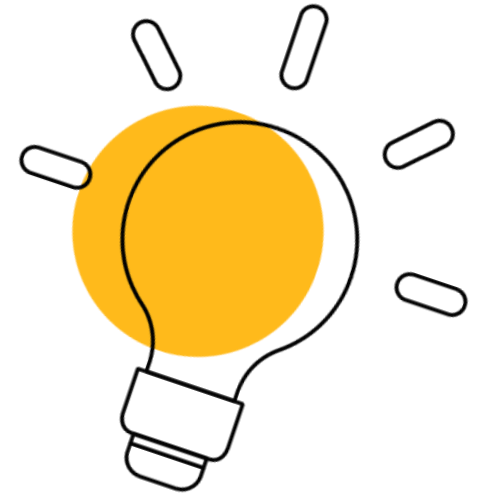
# Sentence Builds *tips*

- Listen carefully to the phrases.
- Consider what they mean and decide how they should be arranged.
- Speak clearly when you answer.
- Start speaking within 8 seconds or the test will move on to the next question.

**You can practice by trying the question below.**



*Click to hear  
the prompt*



# Part E: Story Retellings



## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**E** Story Retellings
Instructions


You will hear three brief stories. Each story will be spoken once, followed by a beep. When you hear the beep, you will have 30 seconds to retell the story in English. Try to retell as much of the story as you can, including the situation, characters, actions, and ending. You will hear another beep at the end of the 30 seconds.


 Replay
 Next

## Example question

**E** Story Retellings
1 / 3

Please listen.





### *What will you have to do?*

- You will hear a short story followed by a beep.
- After the beep you will need to retell the story in your own words.
- You will have 30 seconds to tell the story.
- There will be another beep at the end of the 30 seconds.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This item measures your ability to listen and understand information then reformulate it in detail. It assesses Fluency, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, and Sentence Mastery.

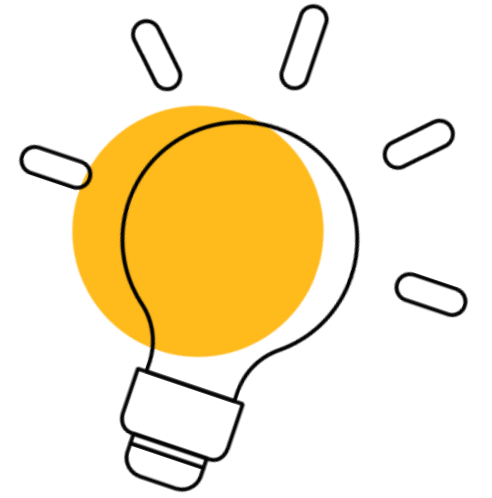
# Story Retellings *tips*

- Listen carefully to the story.
- Focus and try to remember names, places and what happened.
- Plan what will you say focusing on key information including who, what, when, where and the outcome.
- Use your own words – do not repeat exactly what you heard.
- Speak clearly using complete sentences and correct grammar.

**You can practice by trying the question below.**



***Click to hear  
the story***





# Part F: Open Questions

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

F

### Open Questions

Instructions

You will hear two questions about family life or personal choices. Each question will be spoken twice, followed by a beep. When you hear the beep, you will have 40 seconds to answer the question. You will hear another beep at the end of the 40 seconds.

↺
Replay

➡
Next

## Example question

F

### Open Questions

1 / 2

Please listen.

⊘

### ***What will you have to do?***

- You will be asked a question about family life or personal choices. The question will be repeated and followed by a beep.
- After the beep you will need to give your opinion.
- You will have 40 seconds to respond.
- At the end of the 40 seconds you will hear another beep and another question.

### ***What skills are being tested?***

- This captures your ability to respond spontaneously. It is not scored but will be available to authorized Pearson listeners if test scores need to be reviewed.

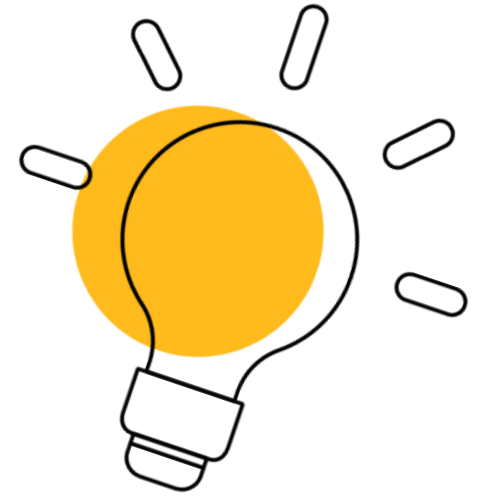
# Open Questions *tips*

- Listen to the question.
- Decide your position and then think about 1-2 arguments to support it.
- Speak clearly in complete grammatical sentences.

**You can practice by trying the question below.**




***Click to hear  
the question***



# Score reports

Score reports may be shared with you by the test administrator. They provide a score against internationally recognized scales (*Global Scale of English, CEFR and Versant scale*) and summarize your ability overall and for specific skills. They also offer tips to improve so you can perform better in future tests.



**Versant English Test**

**John Doe**

Test Completion Date (GMT) 27 April 2020    Test Identification Number (TIN) 12345678

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ⓘ Versant scores are aligned to the Global Scale of English (GSE). The GSE runs from 10 to 90, with clear statements of what a learner can achieve at any point on the scale. Learn more at: <https://www.pearson.com/english/about/gse.html>

**Overall GSE Score**

59

10 90

CEFR: B2

Candidate can manage some slow, short, isolated utterances, or spoken formulas, but has difficulty following any native conversation; candidate may often pause to search for words and is difficult to understand.

**Understanding the Skills Overall Score**

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand spoken English and speak it intelligibly at a native-like conversational pace on everyday topics. Scores are based on a weighted combination of four diagnostic subscores.

**GSE**

The Global Scale of English (GSE) is a standardized, granular scale from 10 to 90, which measures English language proficiency. Visit [English.com/gse](https://www.english.com/gse) to learn more.

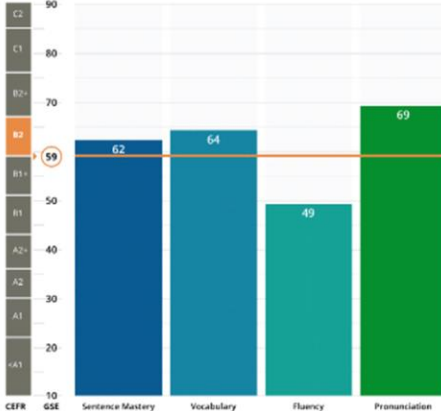
GSE 59/90 is equivalent to Versant 58/80

62 Sentence Mastery

64 Vocabulary

49 Fluency

69 Pronunciation



Skill	Score
Sentence Mastery	62
Vocabulary	64
Fluency	49
Pronunciation	69

**Intelligibility**

4

Good

Listeners may require a little effort at times to understand some of the candidate's speech.

**Intelligibility**

Intelligibility is a measure of how understandable a candidate is as a speaker. Even when spoken English proficiency is low, if intelligibility is high, it means that native speakers find the speech easy to understand.

TIN: 12345678

**Current Capabilities in Detail**

**Sentence Mastery:** GSE: 62/90    Versant: 60/80    CEFR: B2

**Current capabilities:**  
Candidate can understand, recall and produce some English phrases and clauses in sentence context. Candidate produces some simple meaningful sentences.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Practice ordering a meal from an English menu using complete sentences.
- Practice identifying the nouns, verbs, and adjectives in sentences.

**Understanding the Skills**

**Sentence Mastery**

Sentence Mastery reflects the ability to understand, recall and produce English phrases and clauses in complete sentences. Performance depends on accurate syntactic processing and appropriate usage of words, phrases and clauses in meaningful sentence structures.

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**Vocabulary:** GSE: 64/90    Versant: 61/80    CEFR: B2

**Current capabilities:**  
Candidate may understand some very basic words in spoken English, especially if the words are used in slow, clear, simple speech.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Learn the names of common objects around you every day.
- Practice saying new words aloud and relating them to words you already know.

**Vocabulary**

Vocabulary reflects the ability to understand common everyday words spoken in sentence context and to produce such words as needed. Performance depends on familiarity with the form and meaning of everyday words and their use in connected speech.

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**Fluency:** GSE: 49/90    Versant: 51/80    CEFR: B1

**Current capabilities:**  
Candidate speaks in a slow manner with many hesitations, false starts, and/or long pauses. Most words are spoken in isolation and/or not grouped according to natural word or phrase level boundaries.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Practice describing your daily routine, linking words together without long pauses.
- Learn common English phrases and practice saying them quickly and smoothly.

**Fluency**

Fluency reflects the rhythm, phrasing and timing evident in constructing, reading and repeating sentences.

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**Pronunciation:** GSE: 69/90    Versant: 64/80    CEFR: B2+

**Current capabilities:**  
Candidate mispronounces many consonants and vowels, resulting in a strong, intrusive non-English accent. Stress placement is often unclear, and syllables may sometimes be added or skipped.

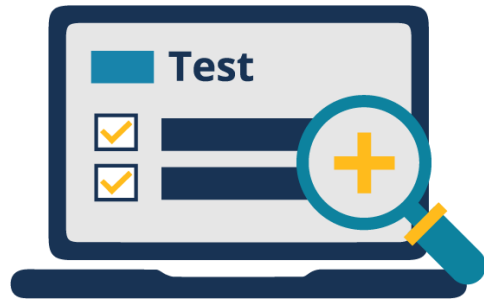
🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Use an online dictionary to hear words spoken out loud and repeat them as closely as possible.
- Listen to English sounds and then practice producing them.

**Pronunciation**

Pronunciation reflects the ability to produce consonants, vowels and stress in a native-like manner in sentence context. Performance depends on knowledge of the phonological structure of everyday words.

# Need more help?



Try an unscored sample test on the Versant website.

[Request a demo](#)



Purchase a practice test online to assess your own abilities and discover how you can improve your skills.

[Buy a practice test](#)

