

## **International Certificate**

# Computer-Based Test Test-Takers' 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.

The Pearson English International Certificate is accepted by schools and corporations around the world as a reliable standard for accurate English communication skills.

More than 500,000 English learners have certified their English communication skills with Pearson for higher education and job placement in 35 countries.

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.

Pearson’s new computer-based test also brings several new advantages for test-takers:

- ✓ You can schedule an exam at any time at a Pearson-approved testing center or at home using OnVue, our Online Proctoring system. It can be scheduled in as little as 24 hours and you do not need to wait for scheduled exam dates.
- ✓ The computer-based test can be completed in two hours or less in one sitting. Other tests require a second appointment to take the speaking exam.
- ✓ You will get your results several weeks faster.
- ✓ You will have access to free and purchased preparation materials and scores to tell you how ready you are for the computer-based test.

See Table 1 below for a comparison of the paper versus computer-based exam for the Pearson English International Certificate.

	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

**Table 1. Comparison of paper vs. computer-based test**

## 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.

**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.*

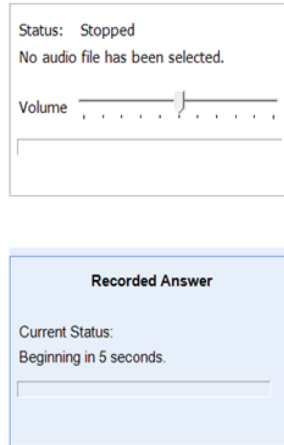


Image 1. Computer-based test sample listening item type

## 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.*



CutCopyPaste

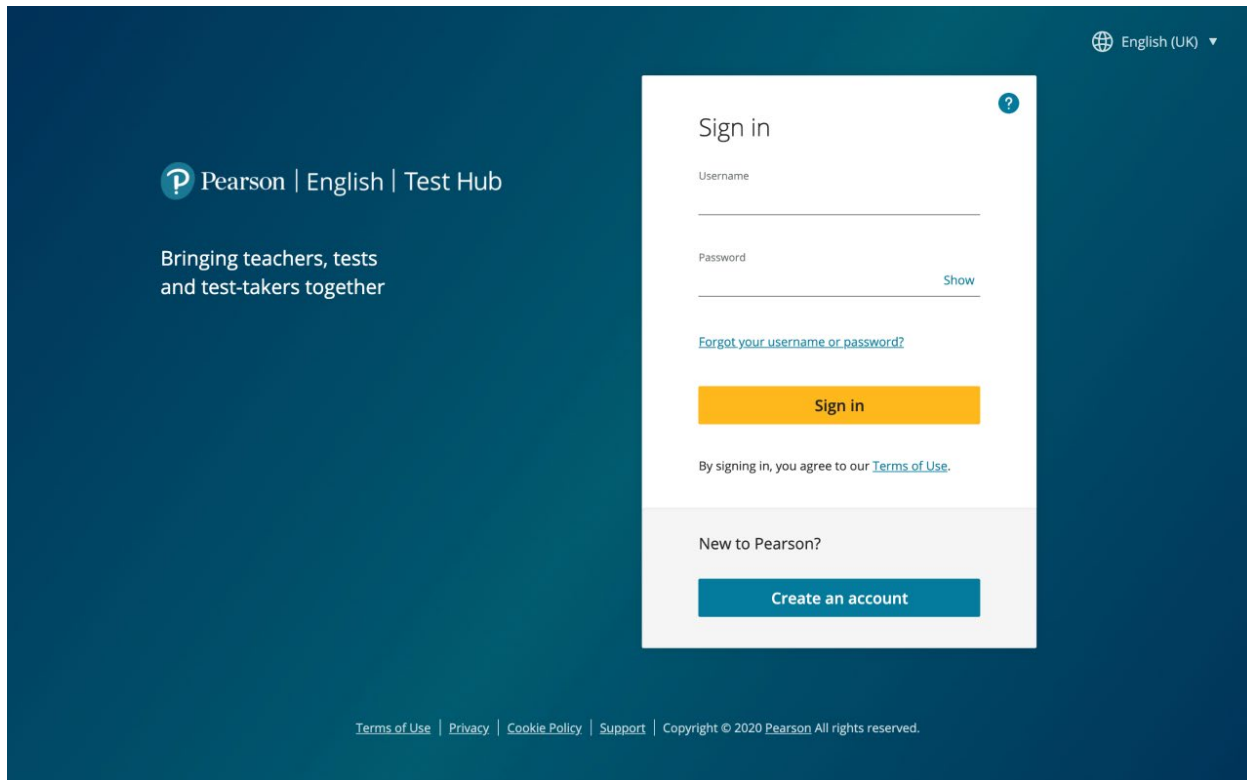
**Total Word Count: 0**

**Image 4. Computer-based test sample writing item type**

# Introducing Test Hub: Flexibility and 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 5**

The easy-to-use interface shown above in Image 5 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
- Get comprehensive test results
- Share test results with schools and employers.

Test Center	Distance <a href="#">Show km</a>
<b>Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin/Relaciones Culturales</b> Hidalgo 768 PTE Colonia Centro 64000 Monterrey Nuevo Leon Mexico <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	200.6 mi
<b>UNISITE</b> Av. Federalismo Sur #47 Esquina Pedro Moreno Colonia Centro 44100 Guadalajara Jalisco Mexico <a href="#">Test Center Information</a>	210.8 mi

**Image 6. Test scheduling and location tool in Pearson's 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.



# Are you ready to take the exam? Test your skills!

With the launch of Test Hub, new Readiness tests are available to help you prepare for the exam. These practice tests will give a clear indication if you can pass the computer-based Pearson English International Certificate exam. In other words, if you can pass the Readiness test at your level, you are ready for the exam!

*"It feels real, I think that is helpful to know what you are going to find in the real test." - Jhon, Bolivia, age 19*

Readiness tests are available for levels A2, B1, B2, and C1 and results are sent in minutes. The green, amber, and red traffic lights seen in Image 3 will show if you are ready to take the test or not. The readiness tests results are broken down into the four skills tested during the exam: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The results explain what skills require improvement, and suggests Pearson English coursebooks to help with study.

The screenshot shows a user interface for a Readiness Test. At the top, it says 'READINESS TEST FOR INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE'. Below that, the user's name 'Jane Doe' is displayed. Test details include 'Test taken: 11/11/2020' and 'Institution: Readiness Demo Account'. A disclaimer states: 'This report is an indication of your readiness to take the PTE General/Pearson English International Certificate; it cannot be used as a certificate of proficiency.'

The main section is titled 'B1 Readiness Test Summary'. It shows a 'Readiness Prediction' of 'Not Ready' in a red pill-shaped button. To the right, there is a legend with three categories: 'Not Ready' (red dot), 'Potentially Ready' (orange dot), and 'Ready' (green dot).

Below this is the 'B1 Skills Readiness' section, which displays four skill categories: LISTENING, READING, SPEAKING, and WRITING. Each category has a corresponding pill-shaped button: LISTENING is 'Ready' (green), READING is 'Not Ready' (red), SPEAKING is 'Ready' (green), and WRITING is 'Potentially Ready' (orange).

Image 7. Sample test results of computer-based Readiness test

*"I liked very much this kind of test. Now I can know what I need to improve. Thanks!" - Cande, Argentina, age 17*

# Scoring the test - How your performance will be measured

## 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

**Table 2.**

\*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

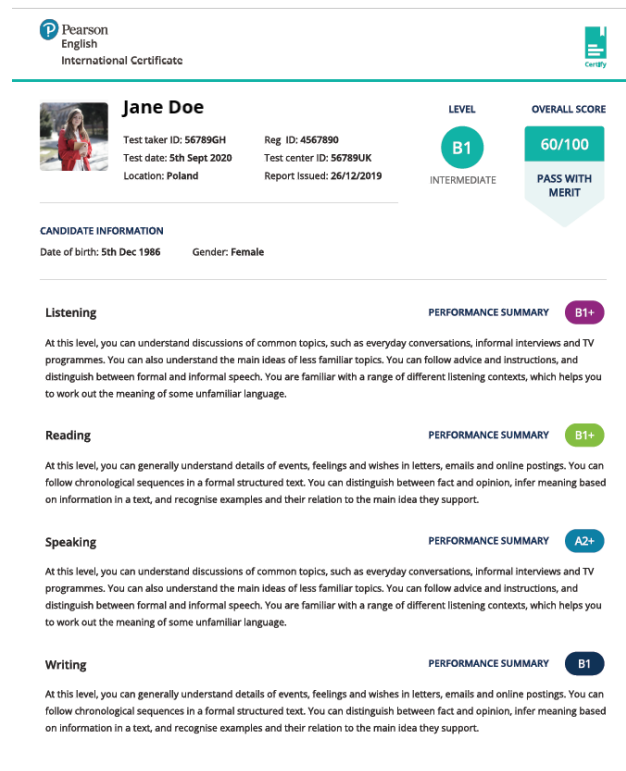
**Table 3.**

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

# Your results

The Pearson English International Certificate is scored by human experts and machines. With the introduction of the computer-based test, Pearson has enhanced the score reports, broken down by the four skills tested during the exam--reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Machine scoring helps ensure that your results are fair and consistent. You can be confident that your score is based only on a comprehensive assessment of your language performance. Machine scoring also reduces the amount of time it takes to get test results by several weeks.

Like the Readiness tests, the results shown in Images 8 and 9 below will clearly explain your communication skills in a simple, easy to read format. Whether you pass the exam or not, it will recommend specific areas to study to keep improving your skills. You can also share your test scores with your school and/or your employer right from the Test Hub.



The image shows a sample results page for the Pearson English International Certificate. At the top left is the Pearson English logo and 'International Certificate'. On the right is a 'cefy' logo. The candidate's name 'Jane Doe' is prominently displayed next to a small photo. Below the name are details: Test taker ID: 56789GH, Reg ID: 4567890, Test date: 5th Sept 2020, Test center ID: 56789UK, Location: Poland, and Report issued: 26/12/2019. To the right, the overall score is '60/100' with a 'PASS WITH MERIT' badge. The level is 'B1 INTERMEDIATE'. Below this is a 'CANDIDATE INFORMATION' section with 'Date of birth: 5th Dec 1986' and 'Gender: Female'. The main body of the page lists four skills: Listening (B1+), Reading (B1+), Speaking (A2+), and Writing (B1). Each skill has a 'PERFORMANCE SUMMARY' and a brief description of what the candidate can do at that level.

LEVEL	OVERALL SCORE
B1 INTERMEDIATE	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 8. Sample results from computer-based exam

Pearson | English | Test Hub Profile

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**INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE**

**Jane Doe**  
 Test taker ID: 56789GH    Test date: 5th Sept 2020    Test center: New York  
 Reg ID: 4567890    Report issued: 56789GH    Test center ID: 56789UK    [Download PDF](#)

**COURSE MAPPING**  
 BUSINESS PARTNER B1 Business Partner B1  
Pearson Education 2020

**Listening** B1+

**RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES**  
 To start working towards CEFR B2, you should:

- practice listening to technical advice, such as instructions for fixing problems with products or equipment
- practice inferring the meaning of new vocabulary and concepts by listening to audio and video recordings about unfamiliar topics, such as online talks, lectures and podcasts
- practice identifying the attitude, feelings and motivations of speakers without the aid of visual cues, by listening to radio programmes and podcasts

**EXERCISES**

- Unit 6.6 / p.66 / Ex.1A
- Unit 8.5 / p.86 / Ex.1A

**Reading** B1+

**RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES**  
 To start working towards CEFR B2, you should:

- build a wider range of vocabulary for understanding texts about topics from outside your areas of interest, including contemporary debates, historical accounts and argumentative writing
- practice reading texts that propose solutions to address problems
- read long and/or complex texts about unfamiliar topics to practice inferring the meaning of new words or phrases based on context
- practice reading with a purpose by skimming a text quickly and then reading it more carefully or scanning it for specific detailed information to answer questions

**EXERCISES**

- Unit 6.6 / p.66 / Ex.1A
- Unit 8.5 / p.86 / Ex.1A

**Image 9. Sample recommendations and suggested activities in score report**

## Students' frequently asked questions

### **I am not studying English with a school. Can I still take the test?**

*Yes. You are not required to attend a language school to take the Pearson English International Certificate exam. Just go to the Test Hub to register.*

### **Where can I take the test?**

*The test must be taken in testing centres that are approved, managed, and inspected by Pearson or through our secure online proctored system\*.*

*\*Online proctored delivery of tests is subject to availability in Country.*

*\*\* A parent or guardian must provide consent for all test takers under the age of 18 to take the test.*

### **How do I schedule the computer-based test?**

*Scheduling for tests at an authorized test centre or at home using OnVue can be done in Test Hub, our proficiency exam portal.*

### **Do you have practice tests that I can take prior to the real test?**

Yes. You may purchase Readiness tests in the Test Hub. Go to <https://www.pearson.com/english/catalogue/assessment/readiness-test.html>

### Do I need to bring a photo ID?

Yes. You will need a photo ID to prove your identity before you take the test. As an additional security step, your photo will also be taken when you arrive at the Pearson-approved testing centre.

### What computer skills do I need to take the test?

You need to be able to operate a keyboard, mouse, and headset with microphone. You should also be familiar with the item types in the Pearson English International Certificate exam. The Readiness tests will provide more sample items and scored practice to see how ready you are for the real test.

### How long is the test?

The length of time that it takes to complete the computer-based test varies. The lower level exams (A1 and A2 for example) take about 1.5 hours to complete. The higher-level exams (like C1 and C2) take less than 2 hours to complete. And unlike the paper-based tests or other computer-based exams, the Pearson English International Certificate exam only requires one appointment to complete the exam and assess all four skills, including speaking. Other tests require a second appointment to take the speaking section.

### When will I get my results?

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.

### Do I get a certificate when I pass the test?

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



**When will my test results expire?**

*Unlike other tests, the results of the Pearson English International Certificate will not expire. Now you don't need to pay for a new test every few years unless required by your school or employer.*

**Can I request accommodations for my test?**

*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.*

## 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)