**Task Introduction**

- Read Aloud is an integrated skills task, found on Part 3: Reading.
- Test takers do six Read Aloud tasks at all levels.
- Read Aloud tasks assess test takers’ pronunciation and fluency. These tasks also test if the words in the text are understood and repeated accurately.
- Read Aloud tasks contribute to test takers’ score for speaking and reading.
- Test takers must read aloud a short text of 20-40 words on the A1 and A2 tests or 40-60 words for B1, B2, C1 and C2 tests.
- Test takers should speak fluently, use accurate pronunciation and read every word in the text.
- Before reading aloud, test takers have some time to read the text and prepare.
- On screen, the task will look like this:

  ![Recorded Answer](image)

- The Recording Status box on the screen displays a countdown for the preparation time until the microphone opens for test takers to begin reading aloud.
- Before recording begins, there is a short tone.
**Strategies for Success**

- Test takers should start reading aloud immediately after the tone.
- They should not start speaking before the tone, because their voice will not be recorded.
- Do not rush: test takers should speak at a steady, natural pace. Speaking too quickly will reduce test takers’ score for Fluency.
- Do not add, skip or replace any words. This will reduce test takers’ score for this task.
- Finish speaking before the recording progress bar reaches the end when the word ‘Recording’ changes to ‘Completed’. The amount of time given will vary for each text. Test takers always get enough time to read the text at a natural pace, but should keep an eye on the progress bar.
- Use preparation time effectively:
  - First, read the whole text to get an idea of the overall meaning.
  - Next, look for words that contain key information – these are usually stressed.
  - Then, practice saying key words and any unfamiliar or difficult vocabulary.
- Place emphasis on key words in the text. All words in a sentence should not be stressed in the same way. Each sentence will have words that are more important than others: test takers should highlight these key words by using greater stress and a slightly louder voice. This will improve test taker’s fluency score.
- Pay attention to punctuation. When reading, test takers should use appropriate pausing within and between sentences when they come to a comma or full stop.
- Break sentences into chunks. Longer sentences can be divided into meaningful chunks which can help test takers read more smoothly.
Read Aloud: Activities for all learners

Although the texts used in the Read Aloud tasks will vary in terms of language complexity and vocabulary level, all test takers, whichever version of the test they take, will need to do certain things: they must understand the demands of the task; they should identify key words within each text; they need to be able to read a text word-for-word without missing, replacing or adding words; and they should build their vocabulary in order to be able to understand the texts in the Read Aloud tasks.

Understanding the task

After introducing the Read Aloud task to your learners and explaining the Strategies for Success on page 1, check that they have understood using the following comprehension questions and/or gap-fill summary.

Comprehension questions

1. What skills do Read Aloud tasks assess?
2. How will you know when to begin?
3. How can a good score be achieved?
4. What should you not do?

Answers: 1) Reading, Speaking, Fluency, Pronunciation. 2) On screen countdown & Short tone. 3) Read every word smoothly with accurate pronunciation. 4) Don't rush. Don't skip, add, or replace words.

Gap-fill summary

Before reading aloud, test takers should use the (i) _________ time effectively. Try to identify (ii) _________ words, as these should be (iii) _________ when reading. Start recording immediately after the (iv) _________ . Read in a natural way without (v) _________ the text.

Options

a) changing  b) stressed  c) key  d) preparation  e) tone

Key

(i) d  (iv) e  (ii) c  (v) a  (iii) b
Read Aloud: Activities for all learners

Identifying key words

All test takers should emphasise key words as they read. In the short texts used in Read Aloud tasks, the key words are likely to be things and actions in the first sentence and words used to describe them. Have your students practice making note of key words and before emphasising these words while reading aloud to a partner. Keep in mind that, while key words are often nouns and verbs, it isn’t always possible to definitively say which words are key and which are not. Most important is that test takers read in a natural way, stressing some words in the text more than others.

Pair work

It is important to get your learners in the habit of reading texts word-for-word. Working in pairs, you could have one learner read a practice task aloud while their partner checks that they are reading every word accurately. Learners can then help their peers to improve by pointing out any mistakes and offering feedback on pronunciation and fluency. An alternative pair activity is getting one learner to read aloud while their partner tries to transcribe what they say. This can particularly help develop learner’s pronunciation ability by highlight times when their speech is not clear.

Vocabulary building

Unsure which vocabulary your learners should be studying? Use the GSE Teacher Toolkit to identify appropriate vocabulary for your learners to focus on. You can select words according to CEFR level, topic and grammatical category.
Read Aloud:
Activities for A1/A2

A1/A2 users of English need to be able to use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases to communicate about simple, routine matters. Read Aloud tasks test the ability to do this by assessing reading and speaking skills, as well as fluency and pronunciation. You can use this example A2 Read Aloud task, along with other practice tasks on page 4, to help your learners get ready for the test.

My dad is a tall, thin man with light brown hair. He has to wear a suit for work, but he always wears his old jeans at home.

Making Use of Punctuation

A1/A2 learners can sometimes sound like robots when reading aloud because they fail to pause and use their voice effectively. Focus your learners’ attention on the punctuation in the example task. Explain that English speakers pause briefly at commas and pauses longer at full-stops. Show your learners how to use rising intonation at the start of a sentence, falling towards the end of the sentence or clause. E.g..

My dad is a tall, thin\man with light brown hair/He has to wear a suit for work, but he always wears his old jeans at home.

Ask your learners to mark a) where to pause and b) rising and falling intonation on the other practice tasks on page 4. Then, ask them to read aloud ensuring they pay attention to the marks they have made.
### Read Aloud: Activities for A1/A2

**Understanding a text**

A1/A2 learners often struggle with English grammar, which can mean they struggle to understand the overall meaning of the text they must read. Build their grammatical awareness by asking them to mark, underline or highlight the nouns, adjectives, verbs and/or adverbs within the example text. E.g.

```
My dad is a tall, thin man with light brown hair
```

| n | adj. | adj. | n | adj | adj | n |

This activity, sometimes known as ‘parsing’, builds learners’ familiarity with the elements of a sentence and can help them read more smoothly.

**Building confidence**

Learners at this level may lack confidence in reading aloud, especially if they do not fully understand a Read Aloud text. Scaffold their development by first asking them to read aloud everyday texts, such as menus, advertisements and signs, before then moving on to work with full sentences.

**Developing reading speed**

Test takers at the A1/A2 level can often read aloud in a slow, staccato way, which can reduce their Fluency score. To improve learners’ reading speed, play a fun, competitive game that requires reading a text quickly. E.g. pairs of learners could race each other to read and follow instructions, such as ‘The book is under the teacher’s table’ with one student reading and the other following the instruction. Improving learners’ reading speed will help them understand a text and prepare to read aloud more effectively, but remind them that, when doing a Read Aloud task, they shouldn’t rush.
Read Aloud: Activities for B1/B2

B1/B2 users of English need to understand the main points of texts on both concrete and abstract topics, and should be able to produce clear, connected speech. Read Aloud tasks test the ability to do this by assessing reading and speaking skills, as well as fluency and pronunciation. This is an example B2 Read Aloud task. Use it and the other practice tasks on page 4 with the activities below.

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.

Pronunciation focus

B1/B2 learners often have issues with aspects of English pronunciation – these issues will often vary according to their first language. You can use Read Aloud practice tasks to develop learners’ awareness of the different sounds of English and to ensure they are producing them in an appropriate way. E.g. Ask learners to underline consonant sounds at the start of words within the text. Then, have them focus on producing each sound accurately while reading aloud.

Once you feel your learners are able to produce all consonant sounds at the start of words accurately, move on to focus on consonants in the middle and at the end of words and work on vowels sounds using the same activity. You can use practice tasks on page 4.
Read Aloud: Activities for B1/B2

Vocabulary tennis

Understanding a text is key to reading it aloud effectively. To give your learners a strong chance of understanding B1/B2 texts, you will need to build their vocabulary. To do this, you could play a game of Word Tennis, providing learners with a topic and a word class (e.g. ‘the environment’ and ‘adjectives’) and then asking them to work in pairs, taking it in turns to say one adjective that can be used to describe the environment. The winner in each pair is established when one learner can no longer say another suitable word. Before playing, give learners time to use a bilingual dictionary to look up the words to use in their ‘tennis match’.

Stress right, but don’t stress out

B1/B2 users of English often have trouble placing the correct stress on words, especially if their first language is a syllable-timed language (e.g. Spanish, Italian), unlike English, which is a stress-timed language. Poor word stress can have a negative effect on test takers’ scores for pronunciation and fluency. Make learners aware of how to stress words by reading aloud yourself or playing the example audio. Ask your learners to mark word stress using big and small circles to indicate which syllable in a word is stressed in multi-syllable words. E.g.

The amount of plastic waste is increasing at an alarming rate.
Read Aloud: Activities for C1/C2

C1/C2 users of English need to understand a wide range of complex, demanding texts and to be able to communicate fluently in a clear, coherent way. Read Aloud tasks test the ability to do this by assessing reading and speaking skills, as well as fluency and pronunciation. Use this example of a C1 Read Aloud task, and the other practice tasks on page 4, to help your higher-level learners get ready for Read Aloud tasks.

Roadworks in the northernmost part of the ring road are continuing to cause gridlock across the city. The effects are most apparent in the vicinity of the junction with the dual carriageway, which is the main artery out of the city. A number of minicab drivers claim to have suffered a severe loss in income over the last few days.

Video clip challenge

As test takers lose points for omitting, replacing or adding words, they must pay close attention to every detail when reading aloud. You can use slightly altered versions of texts, such as the example below to help them develop this eye for detail. Read the altered version to them, while they look at the original text. Ask them to spot and count the differences:

Roadworks in the northernmost parts of a ring road are continuing to cause gridlock around the city. The effects are most apparent in the vicinity of the junction with a dual carriageway, which is the main artery out of the city. A number of minicab drivers claim to have suffered a severe loss of income over the last few days.

This version has 7 mistakes for learners to spot.

Building stamina

Test takers need to complete 6 Read Aloud tasks in the test. If they are not used to doing more than one or two at a time, they are likely to perform less well on the test. To ensure that they achieve the best possible score, you should help your learners to develop their stamina for doing 6 of these tasks in a row. You can use the examples provided here, but it can also be useful to ask your C1/C2 learners to create their own tasks...
**Read Aloud:**
Activities for C1/C2

---

**Integrating skills development**

Help your learners develop their writing skills while preparing for Read Aloud tasks by having them write their own texts of 40–60 words containing around 3 compound and/or complex sentences. Ask them to include high-level vocabulary and to peer review their classmates’ work. They can then read each other’s aloud to develop their stamina for doing 6 in a row in the test.

**Diphthongs & Consonant Clusters**

Work with the example tasks to help your students perfect the trickier sounds of English. At C1/C2 level, students are most likely to struggle with diphthongs (sounds formed by a combination of two vowels in a single syllable) and consonant clusters, especially if their first language does not involve these elements (e.g. Japanese). Get them to highlight diphthongs/ consonant clusters in an example text. Then, ask them to read aloud focusing on producing these sounds accurately.

You can also help improve your learners’ pronunciation by working with minimal pairs. E.g.

- *road* /rəʊd/ (as in Roadworks)
- *rod* /rɒd/
- *part* /pɑːt/
- *pat* /pat/
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.

Some people hope to work in a large company. They want to be managers and have daily meetings with other business people.

All students should tell their teacher how many cakes they are making for the school party this weekend. Students need to bring all cakes to school on Friday morning.

This is the most beautiful garden that I have ever seen. There are so many trees and flowers and all of the different colours are wonderful.
Read Aloud: Practice Tasks B1

Audio_B1_116_2_SA

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.

Audio_B1_116_3_SA

The new transport network in the city centre means that members of the public are now able to catch different types of transport from central areas. These transport centres connect train and bus services in one location, making travelling far easier.

Audio_B1_116_11_SA

Important information! Tonight’s event, ‘Cinema under the Stars’, is cancelled due to heavy rain and strong winds. You can apply for a refund for your tickets on the website. We are very sorry but hope you can join us next month instead.

Audio_B1_116_20_SA

We are holding a spelling competition on Friday afternoon. If you are good at spelling, please go to the library and pick up an application form. You will find these on a desk opposite the librarian’s office. The winner will receive a tablet computer, but there will be prizes for everyone who takes part as well.
Police are investigating a serious security leak at one of the nation's largest banks. Although no customers' accounts have been hacked, the bank in question confirms that some of its customers' data had indeed been accessed illegally. The bank has informed the affected customers and taken extra measures to ensure that it will not happen again.

Vegan food has become increasingly popular in recent years. However, if you are interested in making a permanent switch to a vegan lifestyle, plan it carefully. For instance, giving up all sources of animal protein could have a serious impact on your health. To avoid this, you will need to find healthy alternatives, such as soy milk or pulses.

The student careers fair is primarily intended for pupils who are in their final year of school. Students will have the opportunity to find out more about university and college courses, and get guidance on the application process. Also, representatives from local companies will offer useful advice to pupils who plan to find employment immediately after leaving school.

On the whole, my experience working as a volunteer for a children's charity was positive. It was great to gain practical work experience. I was also impressed with the professionalism of everyone working for the organisation. I discovered that the charity sector has excellent job opportunities for graduates, so I am now determined to pursue a career in this field.
Read Aloud: Practice Tasks C1

Audio_C1_116_1_SA

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.

Audio_C1_116_2_SA

Recently, we decided to be extravagant and book a luxury spa day. Admittedly, it was with some trepidation because it wasn’t something we’d done before. But this also meant we had no preconceived ideas, and we had an absolutely wonderful time. In fact, it was so agreeable that we’ve already booked again for next month!

Audio_C1_116_5_SA

I generally got on well with my colleagues. We might not have too much in common on the surface, but we still manage to connect on a wide range of topics. However, the one thing I can’t understand is that some of them show a complete indifference to politics. I find this incomprehensible!

Audio_C1_116_6_SA

My intention was to surprise my family with a lavish break. I’d impulsively booked somewhere last-minute at a price that seemed too good to be true. And it was. As our animated party arrived at our mountain retreat, we gazed in astonishment at the horrendous sight that greeted us. It was far from the luxury we’d anticipated.
Be yourself in English.