



# Versant 4 Skills Essential Test

Official Guide for Test-Takers

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# Versant 4 Skills Essential Test

The Versant 4 Skills Essential Test assesses the productive (speaking and writing) and passive (listening and reading) communication skills that are necessary for effective workplace communication. It is used by organizations around the world to aid recruitment. The test provides an Overall score plus scores for Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

This guide will help you understand the questions that will be asked in the test and provides tips for answering. You can use it to develop useful strategies for the test day.

The test is divided into six parts based on the question types as shown in the table. Each part starts with instructions and a sample item. Each question is timed, and the total length of the test is approximately 30 minutes.

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

Item type	Skill(s) tested	Items in test
Repeat (Part A)	Speaking	16
Sentence Builds (Part B)	Speaking	8
Conversations (Part C)	Listening	12
Sentence Completion (Part D)	Reading	18
Dictation (Part E)	Listening and Writing	14
Passage Reconstruction (Part F)	Reading and Writing	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 represents the ability to understand spoken and written English and respond appropriately in speaking and writing on everyday and workplace topics, at an appropriate pace and in intelligible English. Scores are based on a weighted combination of four sub-scores described below: Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading.
Speaking	Speaking reflects the ability to produce English phrases and clauses in complete sentences. The score is based on the ability to produce consonants, vowels, and stress in an intelligible manner, use accurate syntax, and appropriate rhythm, phrasing, and timing.
Listening	Listening measures the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday and workplace English speech. The score is based on the ability to track meaning and infer the message from English that is spoken at a conversational pace.
Writing	Writing tests the ability to produce written English texts at functional pace. The score is based on the ability to present ideas and information in a clear and logical sequence, use a wide range of appropriate words as well as a variety of sentences structures.
Reading	Reading assesses the ability to understand written English texts. The score is based on the ability to extract the meaning of the text as well as infer the message behind it at a functional speed and respond appropriately.

# Access to the test

The Versant 4 Skills Essential Test is taken online and 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 and a Test Identification Number from your test administrator.
- Access to a computer.
- A good internet connection.
- An up-to-date web browser or the [Versant Computer Delivered Testing \(CDT\) software](#) (for Windows).
- Headphones with a microphone boom connected to your computer.
- A quiet room where you can work without interruptions throughout the 30 minute 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.
- You will then be asked to go through some system checks to ensure your audio and microphone are working.
- Once the questions begin, an examiner's voice will 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, and a timer is shown on the screen.
- In some cases, the system detects when you have finished responding and presents the next item.
- If you do not complete an answer in the allowed time, your work will be saved and scored as it is.
- If you finish an answer early and have checked it, click Next to move on to the next question.
- You can only move forward – it is not possible to go back to a previous question or re-record an answer.

# General tips

- Some questions require a recorded spoken response and some a written answer.
- Answers to speaking questions are recorded so 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).
  - Consider which words need to be stressed.
  - Pay attention to punctuation (e.g., commas, and periods) as these will give you clues for pauses in your speech.
- Use the timer to keep track especially for longer written answers.

A [video](#) with tips for test takers is also available online.

# Part A: Repeat

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**A 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

**A Repeat**

1 / 16

Repeat what you heard.

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

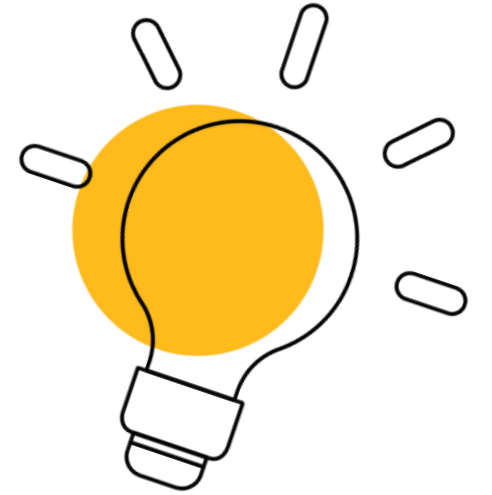
- You will hear a number of sentences
- You be asked to repeat each one.
- You must repeat it exactly as you heard it.
- You will have 15 seconds to answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This tests Speaking skills. It evaluates how well you understand and reproduce a given sentence using accurate sentence structure as well as good 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 B: Sentence Builds

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

B

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

B

Sentence Builds

1 / 8

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 must rearrange them into a sentence.
- You will have 15 seconds to answer by speaking aloud.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question tests your Speaking skills including your understanding of how sentences are structured, fluency, and pronunciation.

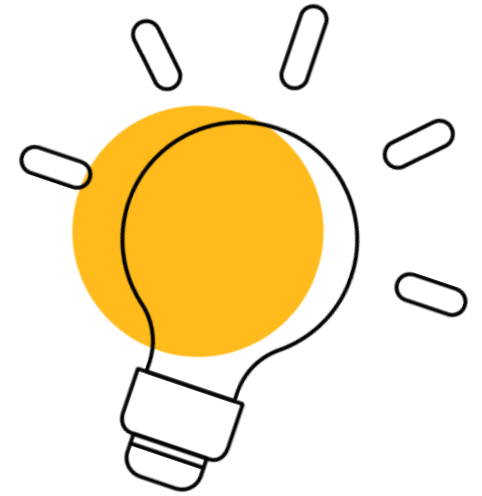
# Sentence Builds *tips*

- Listen carefully to the phrases.
- Consider what they mean and decide how they should be arranged.
- 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 C: Conversations

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**C**
**Conversations**

Instructions

You will hear a conversation between two people, followed by a question. Give a short, simple answer to the question.

**You hear:**

**Speaker 1:** "Lucy, can you come to the office early tomorrow?"

**Speaker 2:** "Sure, what time?"

**Speaker 1:** "7:30 would be great."

**Question:** "What will Lucy have to do tomorrow morning?"

**You say:**

"Go to the office early." or "She will go to the office at 7:30."

Replay

Next

## Example question

**C**
**Conversations**

1 / 12

Please listen.

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

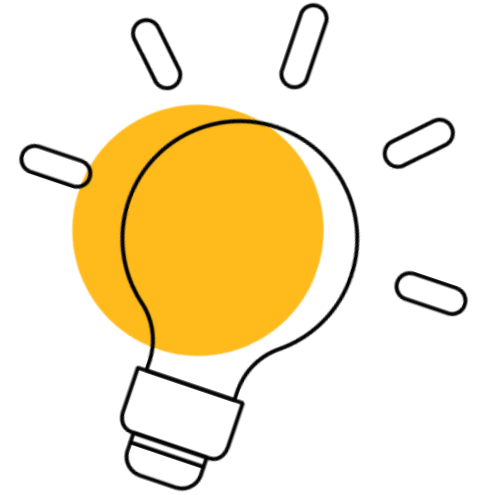
- You will hear a short conversation between two people.
- You will be asked a question about the conversation.
- You will need to answer by saying a single word or a short phrase.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This task measures Listening skills including your ability to extract information.

# Conversations *tips*

- Listen carefully to the conversation and what is being said.
- Consider what the question is asking.
- Provide a short, clear 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 question***

# Part D: Sentence Completion

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**D** Sentence Completion

Instructions


Please type one word that best fits the meaning of the sentence. Type only one word. You will have 25 seconds for each sentence. Click "Next" when you are finished.


You see:


You type:


It's \_\_\_\_ tonight. Bring your sweater.

*cold*





 Replay

 Next


## Example question


**D** Sentence Completion


1 / 18

Complete the sentence.

I had to take out a loan from the  to cover the cost of replacing the roof of my house.



 00'20"

 Next

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

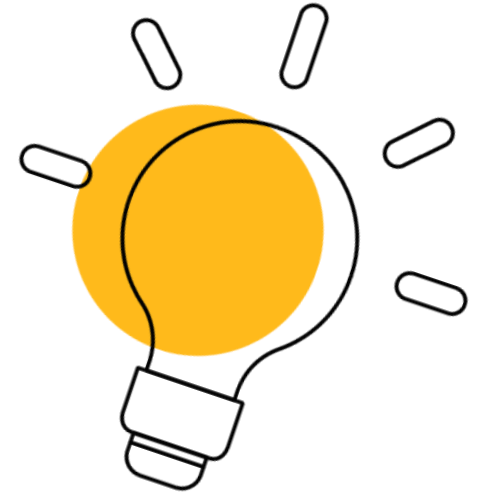
- You will see a sentence or two with a missing word.
- You must enter one word that best fits the meaning of the sentence.
- You will have 25 seconds to answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question assesses Reading skills including your overall understanding of a short sentence and vocabulary.

# Sentence Completion *tips*

- Consider the overall meaning of the sentence.
- Look at the words either side of the gap and use your knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to choose the missing word.
- Pay attention to spelling and capitalization.
- Only type one word.



**You can practice by completing the sentence below.**

We all worked hard to find a solution to the .

# Part E: Dictation

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

E

Dictation

Instructions

Please type each sentence exactly as you hear it. You will have 25 seconds for each sentence. Pay attention to spelling and punctuation. Click "Next" when you are finished. After 25 seconds, your work will be saved automatically.

You hear:

Can you work on Monday?

You type:

Can you work on Monday?

Replay

Next

## Example question

E

Dictation

1 / 14

Type what you heard.

00'21"

Next

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

- You will hear a sentence spoken aloud.
- You will need to type the sentence word-for-word.
- You will only hear the sentence once.
- You will have 25 seconds to type your answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question assesses Listening skills including how well you understood a given sentence.
- It also tests how well you write a sentence you heard using appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

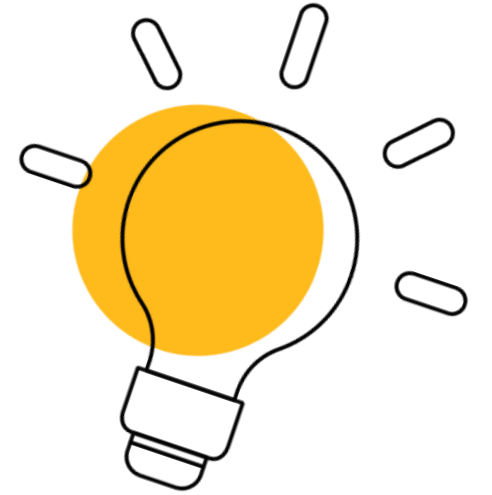
# Dictation *tips*

- Listen to the sentence before you start typing.
- Focus on the meaning of the passage to help you remember it.
- Pay attention to spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

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



***Click to hear  
the prompt***





# Part F: Passage Reconstruction

## Instructions




Click to hear instructions

**F**
**Passage Reconstruction**


Instructions



You will have 30 seconds to read a paragraph. After 30 seconds, the paragraph will disappear from the screen. Then, you will have 90 seconds to reconstruct the paragraph. Show that you understood the passage by rewriting it in your own words. Your answer will be scored for clear and accurate content, not word-for-word memorization. After 90 seconds, your work will be saved automatically.

**You read:**

Mike went for ten job interviews. At the last interview, he finally received a job offer.


**You type:**

Mike had ten job interviews. He got an offer after the final interview.


 Replay
  Next



## Example question

**F**
**Passage Reconstruction**

1 / 2

Please read the passage.

John quit his previous job a week ago. His new job will not start for another two weeks. He decided to read as many books as he can while he was not working.


00'26"
 Next

### What will you have to do?

- You will be asked to read a passage on the screen.
- You will need to rewrite it in your own words.
- The passage will disappear after 30 seconds.
- You will have 90 seconds to rewrite the passage.

### What skills are being tested?

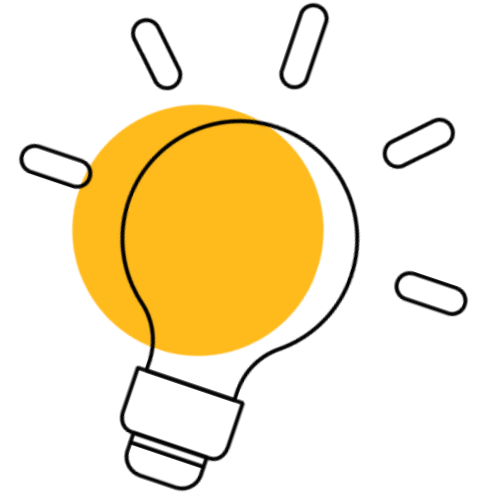
- This question tests how well you understood a given passage.
- It also assesses your ability to reproduce key points and details in writing.

# Passage Reconstruction *tips*

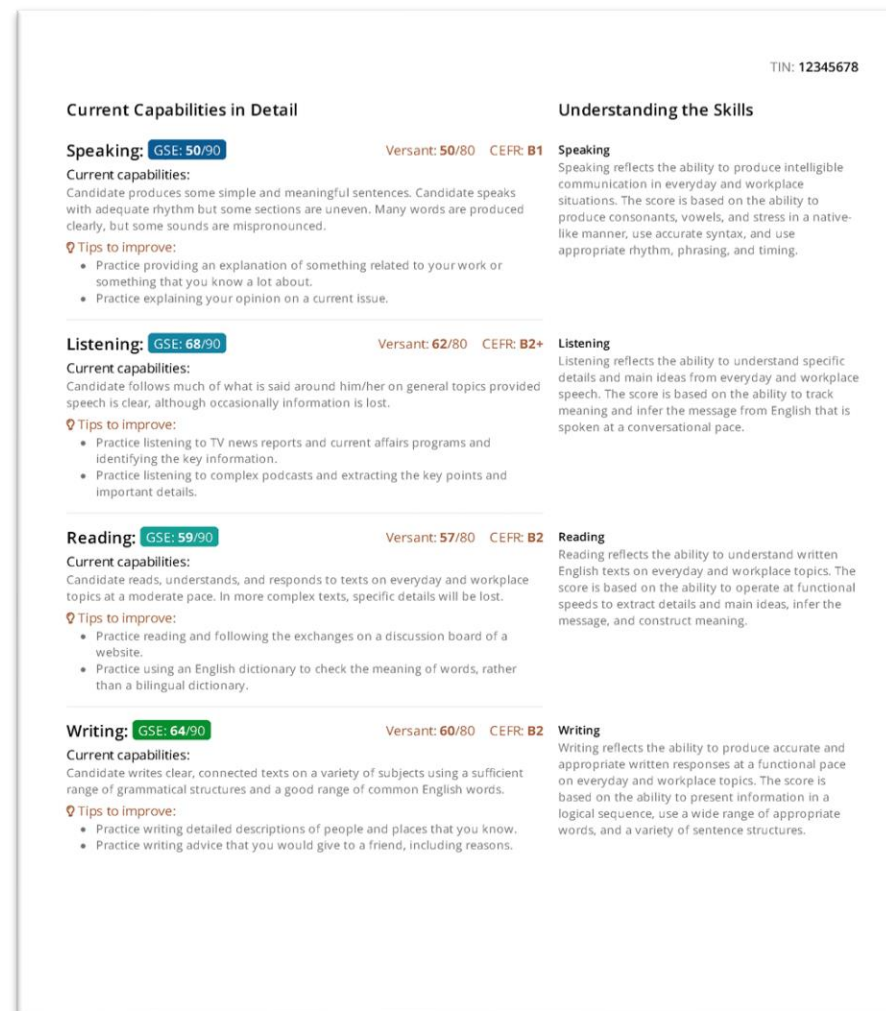
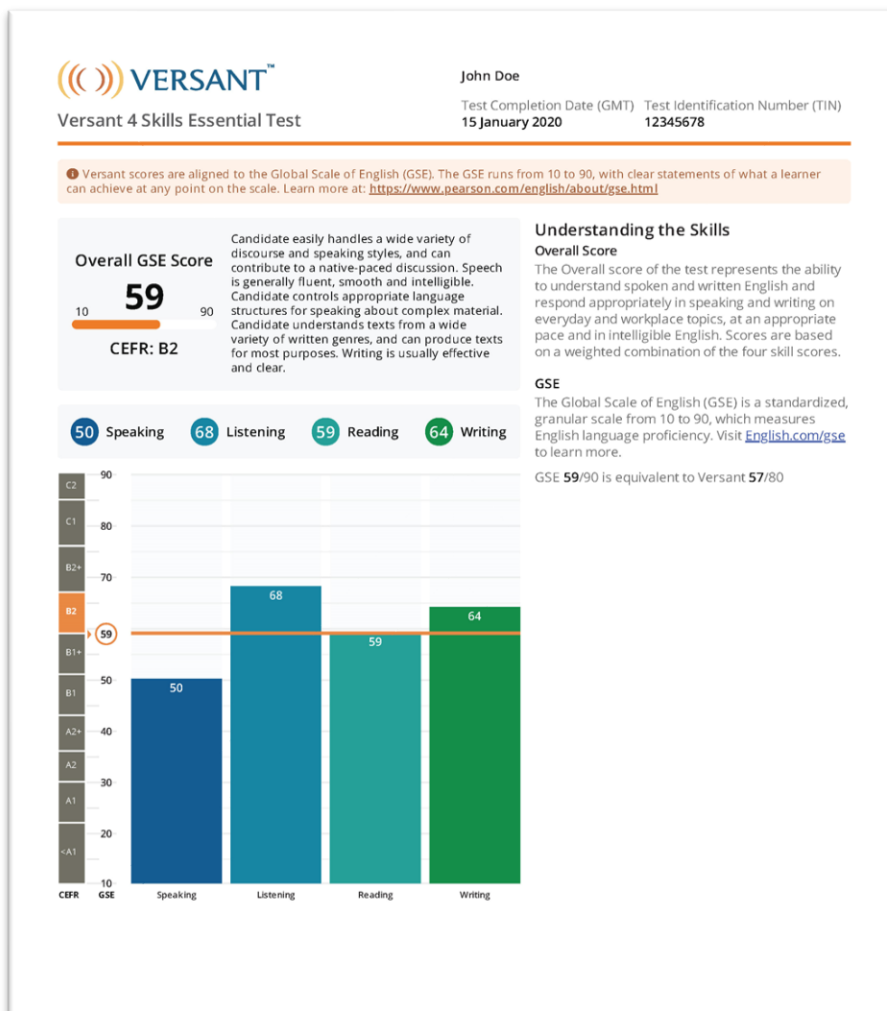
- Make sure you understand the passage.
- Use your own words. Do not try to memorize all the words on the screen.
- Do not write a quick summary – include all the details you can.
- Pay attention to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- Write in complete grammatical sentences.

**You can practice by rewriting the passage below in 90 seconds.**

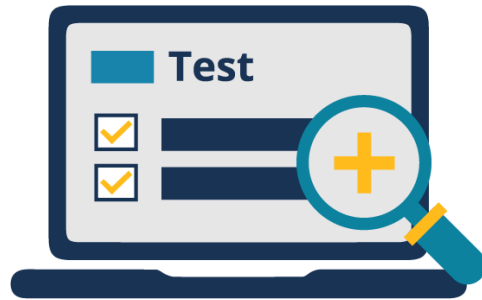
Thomas hates to clean. One day his mother asked him to help clean the house. Thomas did not want his mother to be mad at him. He decided to clean the kitchen. While he was washing the dishes, he dropped a plate. It fell on the floor and broke. He told his mother. She was upset, but she forgave Thomas.



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.



# Need more help?



Try an unscored sample test on the Versant web site.

**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**



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