



# Versant Writing Test

Official Guide for Test-Takers

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# Versant Writing Test

The online Versant Writing Test assesses the ability to communicate in commonly used written workplace English. It is used by organizations around the world to support recruitment.

This guide will help you understand the types of questions that will be asked and provides tips for answering. The information can be used to help 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 about 35 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
Typing (Part A)	Typing speed and accuracy	1
Sentence Completion (Part B)	Vocabulary	20
Dictation (Part C)	Grammar	16
Passage Reconstruction (Part D)	Grammar and Reading Comprehension	4
Email Writing (Part E)	Vocabulary, Voice & Tone, Organization, Grammar, and Reading Comprehension	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
Typing Speed and Accuracy	Typing Speed is the number of words typed in one minute in the Typing task. For a valid Writing score, you should be able to type faster than 12 words per minute. Typing Accuracy refers to the percentage of words correctly typed in the Typing task. You should have at least 90% accuracy.
Overall Ability	Overall Ability represents the ability to understand English input and write accurate, appropriate texts at a functional pace for everyday and workplace purposes. Scores are based on a weighted combination of the five sub-scores described below (Grammar, Vocabulary, Organization, Voice and Tone, and Reading Comprehension).
Grammar	Grammar reflects how well you understand, anticipate and produce a variety of sentence structures in written English. The score is based on the ability to use accurate and appropriate words and phrases in meaningful sentences.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary tests your understanding and ability to produce a wide range of words in written English from every day and workplace situations. The score is based on accuracy and the appropriate use of words for the topic, purpose, and audience.
Organization	Organization measures how well you present ideas and information in written English in a clear and logical sequence. The score is based on the ability to guide your readers through written text and highlight significant points using discourse markers.
Voice and Tone	Voice and Tone reflects how well you establish an appropriate relationship with the reader by adopting a suitable style and level of formality. The score is based on your ability to address the reader's concern and to have an overall positive effect.
Reading Comprehension	Reading comprehension assesses your understanding of written English texts on every day and workplace topics. The score is based on your ability to operate at functional speeds to extract meaning, infer the message, and respond appropriately.

# Access to the test

The Versant Writing Test is taken online and autoscored using Pearson's highly trusted 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.
- A up to date web browser or the [Versant Computer Delivered Testing \(CDT\) software](#) (for Windows).
- Speakers or headphones connected to your computer.
- A quiet room where you can work without interruptions throughout.

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 before the test starts.
- 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.
- A timer is displayed in the corner of the screen to show how much time you have left.
- The number of questions in each section is displayed so you can see your progress.
- If you do not complete an answer, 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.
- A beep will sound when the section comes to an end.

# Part A: Typing

## Instructions



**Click to hear instructions**


**A**
**Typing**

Instructions

This section allows you to get used to the keyboard and also measures your typing speed. You will have 60 seconds to type as much as you can. Type quickly and accurately. Keep typing until your time is up. Your work will be saved automatically.


Text:



For over 50 years, a British car company has been making a classic English sports car. The car is mostly handmade in the company's factory in western England.



You type:

For over 50 years, a British.....




Replay

Next

## Example question

**A**
**Typing**

1 / 1



Text

Whenever you have a fantastic idea, you should always write it down. If you don't, it is quite possible that you will forget all about it. Many creative people have a pen and paper close at hand at all times. That way, whenever an interesting thought comes to them, they are already prepared to write it. Later on, when they have time, they sit down and read through their list of ideas.

You can benefit from this practice too. Keep your hand close to the keyboard.

Type the passage.

Please type here.


00'56"


### What will you have to do?

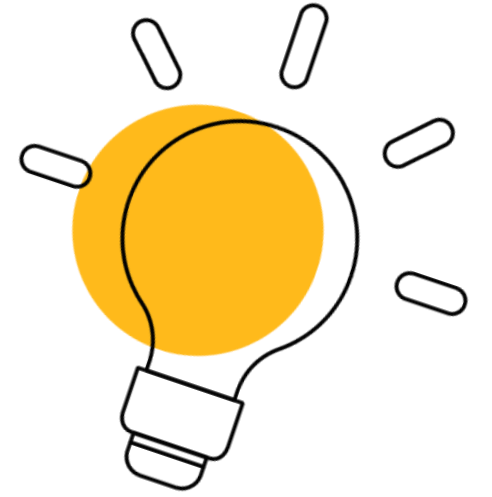
- You will see a passage on the screen.
- You must type as much of the text as you can.
- You will have 60 seconds to answer.

### What skills are being tested?

- This question assesses your typing speed and accuracy. It is not scored. Test administrators may choose to take this into account when viewing test results.

# Typing Speed and Accuracy *tips*

- Type exactly what you see on the screen.
- Pay attention to spelling and punctuation.
- Type as much of the text as you can.



**Practice by accurately typing out as much of the passage below as you can in 60 seconds.**

Leadership is a popular topic in today's organizations. After centuries of studying leaders, it would seem that there would be an agreed upon definition of leadership. However, this is not the case. There is still much debate on what makes a good leader. Most texts on leadership try to isolate simple characteristics of leaders and describe how one might attain them. The truth is that leadership is very complex and looks different in each individual. Most people are able to recognize leadership when they see it. People agree that leadership involves someone leading and others following. Recently leadership has been thought of as a process rather than a position. The more one reads about leadership, the more one discovers that there are few hard and fast rules.

# Part B: Sentence Completion

## Instructions



Click to hear instructions

B


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:

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



You type:

cold



Replay

Next

## Example question

B

Sentence Completion

1 / 20

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 will need to enter one word that best fits the meaning of the sentence.
- You will have 25 seconds to answer.

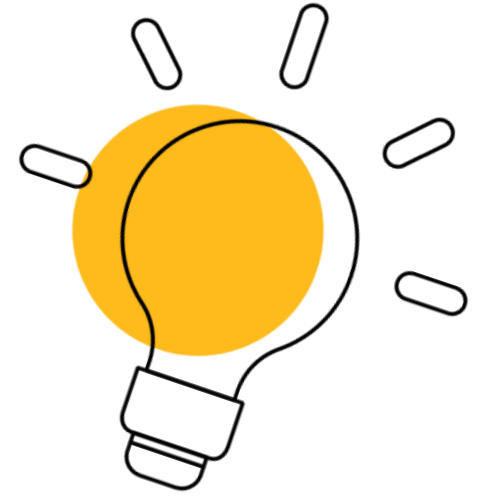
### What skills are being tested?

- This question tests your overall understanding of a short sentence and your vocabulary.



# Sentence Completion *tips*

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



**A practice question is provided below.**

We all worked hard to find a solution to the .

# Part C: Dictation

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**C 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

**C Dictation**

1 / 16

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 answer.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question assesses your English comprehension and grammar.

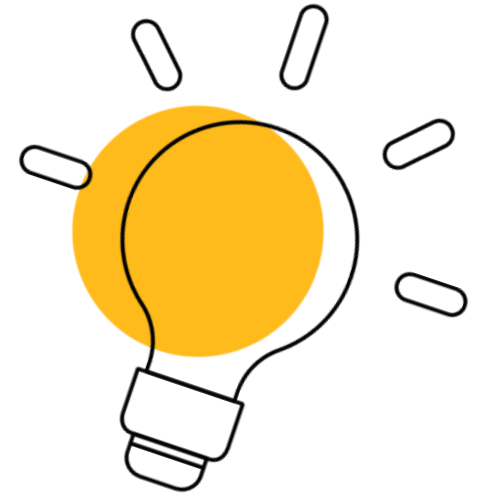
# Dictation *tips*

- You can begin typing as soon as the speaker (prompt) begins.
- Pay attention to spelling, capitalization and punctuation.
- Focus on the meaning of the passage to help you remember it.

**You can practice using the question below.**



***Click to hear  
the prompt***



# Part D: Passage Reconstruction

## Instructions




Click to hear instructions

**D**
**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

**D**
**Passage Reconstruction**

1 / 4

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.
- You will need to rewrite it in your own words.
- The passage will disappear after 30 seconds.
- You will have 90 seconds to answer.

### What skills are being tested?

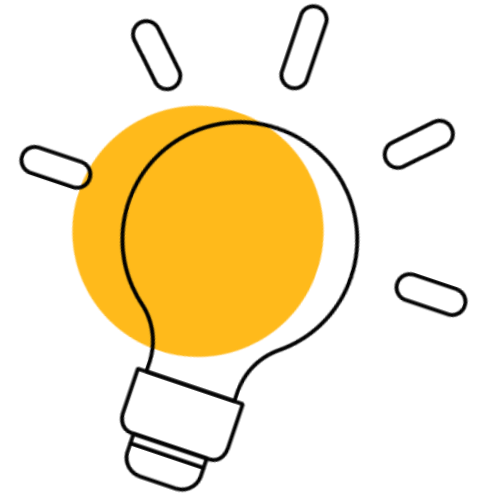
- This question assesses your grammar and reading comprehension.

# Passage Reconstruction *tips*

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

**Practice by rewriting the passage below.**

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.



# Part E: Email Writing

## Instructions



*Click to hear instructions*

**E**
**E-Mail Writing**

Instructions

Read a description of a situation and write an email addressing the issues described in the situation. You will have 9 minutes. You must write at least 100 words. You will be able to see how much time is left and how many words you have written. Write in complete sentences. If you do not finish in 9 minutes, everything you have written will be saved automatically and the next item will begin.

Replay
 Next

## Example question

**E**
**E-Mail Writing**

1 / 1

Please read the information.

You work for a restaurant. The restaurant's manager, Ms. Johnson, wants to reward her employees for working hard but can't afford to increase salaries at this time. Write an email to her suggesting three other ways she could reward her staff.

Your suggestions must come from the following three themes:

- free lunch

Type your e-mail.

Word Count: 0

Please type here.

08'52"
 Next

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

- You will be given a short scenario and be asked to write an email to a specific person.
- You must cover three specific points in your email.
- You will need to write it in your own words.
- You must write at least 100 words.
- You will have 9 minutes to read the situation and respond.

### *What skills are being tested?*

- This question assesses vocabulary, voice and tone, your ability to organize and structure text, grammar, and reading comprehension.

# Email Writing *tips*

- Pay attention to spelling and punctuation.
- Write in complete grammatical sentences.
- Read the situation carefully and address your email to the right person.
- Make sure you cover all three themes in your email. Don't forget to include details to support each idea.
- Write at least 100 words. The Word Count displays the number of words you have written.
- Don't write informally or use texting abbreviations (e.g. 'you' = 'u').

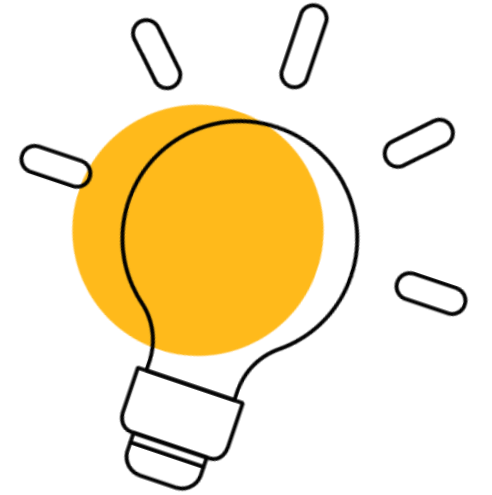
**You can practice email writing using the example below.**

You recently purchased computers for your company. You bought the computers from an overseas company, even though a local company would have been cheaper. Your supervisor, Mr. Watson, wants to know why you chose to purchase them from the more expensive, overseas company and not from the cheaper, local company. Write an email to him giving three reasons that support your decision.

Your reasons must come from the following themes:

- customer service
- warranty
- variety.

You should include all three themes. Provide supporting ideas for each of your reasons.



**VERSANT™**

Versant Writing Test

Test Completion Date (GMT) 17 April 2020  
Test Identification Number (TIN) 12345678

① 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

10 **60** 90  
CEFR: B2

Candidate understands texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce written texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear, with adequate attention to style; candidate maintains reasonable control of complex language structures.

65 Grammar 56 Vocabulary 63 Organization  
62 Voice & Tone 57 Reading Comprehension

Skill Area	GSE Score
Grammar	65
Vocabulary	56
Organization	63
Voice & Tone	62
Reading Comprehension	57
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>60</b>

## Understanding the Skills

### Overall Score

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand English input and write accurate, appropriate texts at a functional pace for everyday and workplace purposes. Scores are based on a weighted combination of five sub-scores.

### 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.pearson.com/english/about/gse.html) to learn more.

GSE 60/90 is equivalent to Versant 55/80

## Additional Performance Indicators

### Typing Speed

33 words per minute

Typing speed is the number of words typed in one minute in the Typing task. For a valid Writing score, candidates should type faster than 12 WPM.

### Typing Accuracy

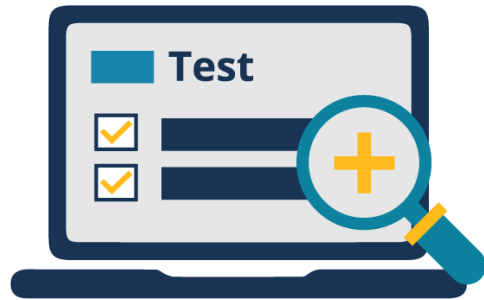
76% words typed accurately

Typing accuracy refers to the percentage correctly typed in the Typing task. For a valid Writing score, candidates should have at least 90% accuracy.

Current Capabilities in Detail	Understanding the Skills
<p><b>Grammar:</b> <span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">GSE: 65/90</span>      Versant: 58/80    CEFR: B2</p> <p><b>Current capabilities:</b> Candidate understands, anticipates and produces a sufficient range of grammatical structures in English. Errors may occur frequently but do not interfere with the writer's meaning.</p> <p>🔗 <b>Tips to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase your awareness of grammar by rereading your writing one week later, noting and correcting any errors in sentence structure.</li> <li>• Practice writing a short report for a coworker that explains in detail what you do during a typical work day.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grammar</b> Grammar reflects how well the candidate understands, anticipates and produces a variety of sentence structures in written English. The score is based on the ability to use accurate and appropriate words and phrases in meaningful sentences.</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary:</b> <span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">GSE: 56/90</span>      Versant: 52/80    CEFR: B1+</p> <p><b>Current capabilities:</b> Candidate understands and produces a good range of common English words. Word choices are mostly accurate but are not always the most effective way to convey a message.</p> <p>🔗 <b>Tips to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice reading blogs and looking up any new words in a dictionary.</li> <li>• Practice making up a short story using at least five new vocabulary items.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vocabulary</b> Vocabulary reflects how well the candidate understands and produces a wide range of words in written English from everyday and workplace situations. The score is based on accuracy and appropriacy of word use for topic, purpose, and audience.</p>
<p><b>Organization:</b> <span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">GSE: 63/90</span>      Versant: 57/80    CEFR: B2</p> <p><b>Current capabilities:</b> Candidate's writing has an organizational structure that is somewhat clear. Ideas are mostly organized; although occasional connections may be unclear, this does not cause the reader confusion.</p> <p>🔗 <b>Tips to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice reading newspaper and magazine articles and identifying useful transitional phrases and connectors.</li> <li>• Practice writing a short text about a memorable trip, clearly signaling chronological sequence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organization</b> Organization reflects how well the candidate presents ideas and information in written English in a clear and logical sequence. The score is based on the ability to guide readers through written text and highlight significant points using discourse markers.</p>
<p><b>Voice &amp; Tone:</b> <span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">GSE: 62/90</span>      Versant: 56/80    CEFR: B2</p> <p><b>Current capabilities:</b> Candidate's use of tone is generally appropriate. The candidate's writing gives a satisfactory effect on the reader; commitment to addressing the reader's concern is adequate.</p> <p>🔗 <b>Tips to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice introducing yourself in writing, both formally and informally.</li> <li>• Practice writing a positive online review of a restaurant, encouraging others to go. Then practice writing a negative, discouraging review.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Voice &amp; Tone</b> Voice and Tone reflects how well the candidate establishes an appropriate relationship with the reader by adopting an appropriate style and level of formality. The score is based on the writer's ability to address the reader's concern and have an overall positive effect.</p>
<p><b>Reading Comprehension:</b> <span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px;">GSE: 57/90</span>      Versant: 53/80    CEFR: B1+</p> <p><b>Current capabilities:</b> Candidate reads, understands and responds to texts on everyday topics and at a functional pace. In more complex texts, specific details will be lost.</p> <p>🔗 <b>Tips to improve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice scanning a web page in English to quickly identify the topic and type of text that it is.</li> <li>• Practice reading short editorial articles in newspapers and understanding the significant points.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading Comprehension</b> Reading Comprehension reflects how well the candidate understands written English texts on everyday and workplace topics. The score is based on the ability to operate at functional speeds to extract meaning, infer the message, and respond appropriately.</p>



# 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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