

Versant by Pearson English Placement Test

Official Guide for Test-Takers

2024



Versant by Pearson English Placement Test

The Versant by Pearson English Placement Test assesses how well someone understands English on everyday topics. It measures the ability to communicate in written and spoken English at a native-like pace. Educational institutes use this test to aid decisions around admissions and class placement, to measure progress, and as an exit test. It provides an Overall score plus scores for Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.

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

The test is divided into sections (or Parts) 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 50 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 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Read Aloud (Part A) | Speaking and Reading | 2 |
| Repeat (Part B) | Speaking | 16 |
| Sentence Builds (Part C) | Speaking | 10 |
| Conversations (Part D) | Listening | 12 |
| Typing (Part E) | Typing speed and accuracy | 1 |
| Sentence Completion (Part F) | Reading | 20 |
| Dictation (Part G) | Listening | 16 |
| Passage Reconstruction (Part H) | Writing | 3 |
| Summary and Opinion (Part I) | Reading and Writing | 1 |

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 spoken and written English and respond appropriately in speaking and writing on everyday 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 a native-like manner, use accurate syntax, use words appropriately in context, as well as appropriate rhythm, phrasing, and timing. |
| Listening | Listening reflects the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday 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 reflects the ability to produce written English texts on everyday topics. 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 reflects the ability to understand written English texts on everyday topics. 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 English Placement 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 by Pearson 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 50 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 in a corner of 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).

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.

Use the timer to keep track especially for longer written answers.

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

Part A: Read Aloud

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

A

Read Aloud

Instructions

Read the passage aloud smoothly and naturally in a clear voice. You will be stopped after 30 seconds. This is not a speed reading test. You may not be able to finish reading the entire passage, but that is okay. When your time is up, you will automatically move on to the next item.

Replay

Next

Example question

A

Read Aloud

1 / 2

Read the passage out loud.

Please see the updated course information and reading material that are attached to this message. All students are requested to bring their handouts to every class. The teacher will be bringing a projector, and the classroom is equipped with a screen. Also, remember that there will be an optional film showing after the first class.

00'30"

What will you have to do?

- You will see a passage on the screen.
- You will be asked to read the text aloud.
- You must read it exactly as it appears.
- You will have 30 seconds to answer.

What skills are being tested?

- Reading fluency, pronunciation, and speaking fluency.

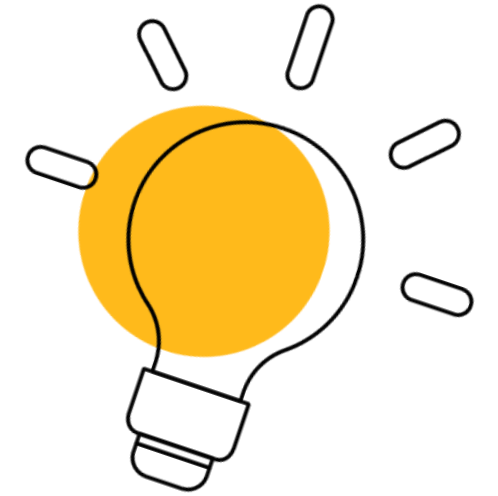
Read Aloud *tips*

Consider the overall meaning of the passage.

Think about using intonation and pauses to express the meaning.

Read out exactly what is written.

Start speaking within 10 seconds or the test will move on.



You can practice by reading the following passage out loud.



Click to hear instructions

Many offices are becoming more and more diverse in the current global market. Some companies encourage diversity in their workplace. The key to a successful work environment is to appreciate each other's background. You should also embrace diversity rather than deny differences between people.

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 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.

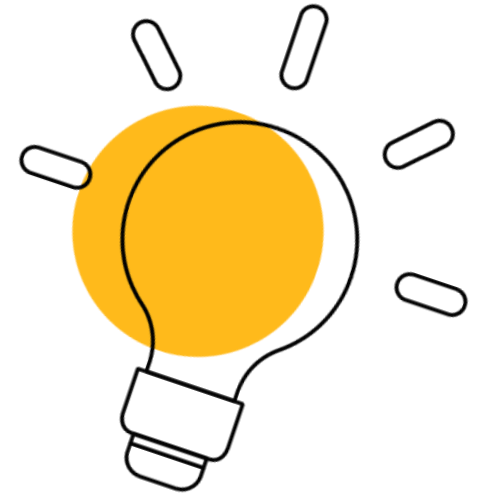
Repeat *tips*

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 C: Sentence Builds

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

C
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

C
Sentence Builds

1 / 1

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.

What skills are being tested?

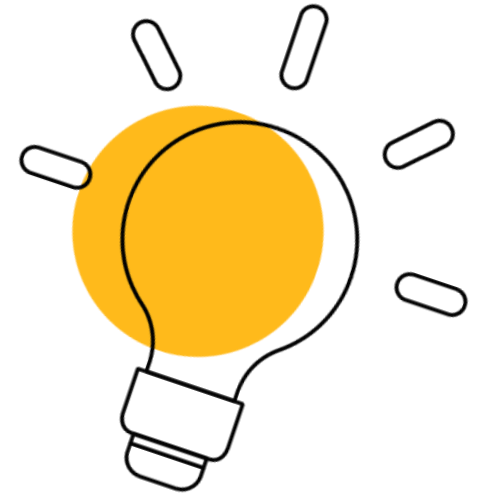
This question tests your Speaking skills including your understanding of how sentences are structured, fluency, and pronunciation.

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 D: Conversations

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

D

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

D

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.

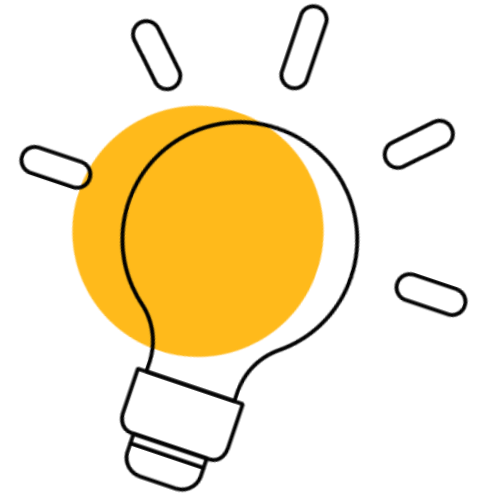
Conversations *tips*

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 E: Typing

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

E 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.

You see:

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

E 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.

Type the passage.

Please type here.

⏮
⏭
⌚ 00'56"
⊘

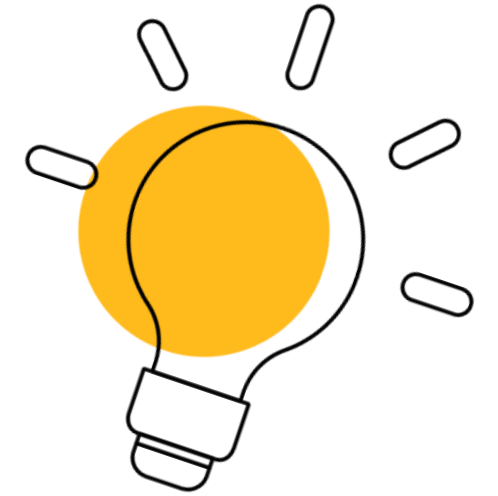
What will you have to do?

- You will see a passage on the screen.
- You will be asked to 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 you see on the screen.

Pay attention to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Type as much of the text as you can in the 60 seconds.

You can practice by typing 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 F: Sentence Completion

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

F

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

F

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

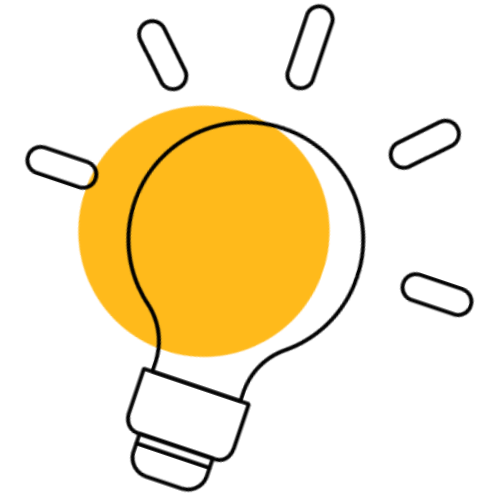
What will you have to do?

You will see a sentence or two with a missing word.
 You 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 G: Dictation

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

G 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

G Dictation
1 / 1

Type what you heard.

00'22"
 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 listening comprehension and language processing.

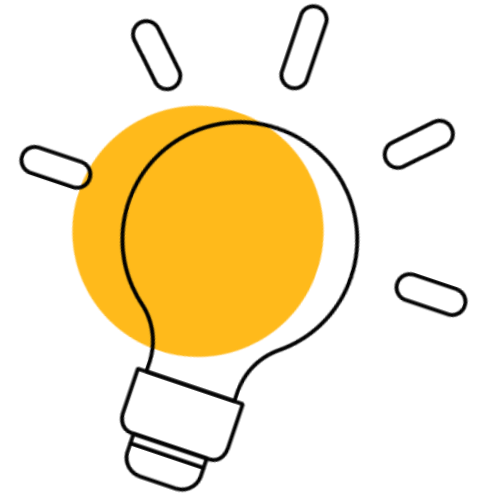
Dictation *tips*

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 H: Passage Reconstruction

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

H

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 10 job interviews. After the last interview, he finally received a job offer.

You type:

Mike went for 10 job interviews. After the last interview, he finally received a job offer.

Replay Next

Example question

H

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 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 answer.

What skills are being tested?

This question assesses the ability to reproduce key points and details in writing as well as grammar.

Passage Reconstruction *tips*

Make sure you understand the passage.

Use your own words. Do not try to memorize all the words.

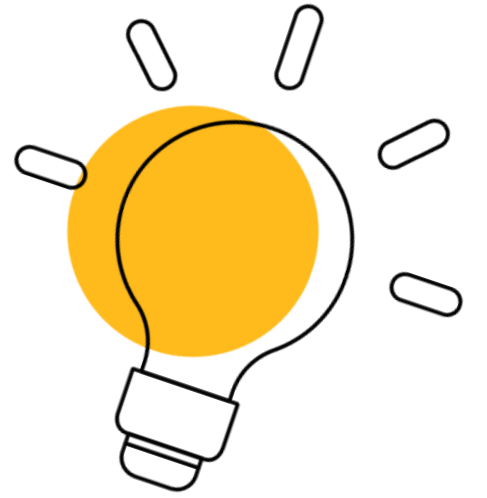
Do not write a quick summary – include all the details you can.

Pay attention to spelling and punctuation.

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.



Part I: Summary and Opinion

Instructions



Click to hear instructions

I

Summary and Opinion

Instructions

Read the passage.

Then, in the first box, write a short summary of the author's opinion in 25-50 words.

In the second box, write your opinion on the topic. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why? Try to use your own ideas. You must write at least 50 words.

You will have 18 minutes to read the passage and write both the summary and opinion. Write both the summary and the opinion before clicking, "Next". Write in complete sentences. After 18 minutes, your work will be saved automatically.

↺ Replay
 ➡ Next

Example question

I

Summary and Opinion

1 / 1

Please read the passage.

Few cities have enough money to pay for all the things they wish to do. This is especially true for transportation projects. It is important for city leaders to know what is best for their city in the long run. In planning for future growth, cities should spend more money on improving public transportation than on improving roads for private cars.

Many cities are growing more and more each year. The population is

Write a short summary of the author's opinion in 25-50 words. Do not copy.

Word Count: 0

Please type here.

Write your opinion. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why? Write at least 50 words. Try to use your own ideas.

Word Count: 0

Please type here.

↺
➡

17'36"
↺
➡

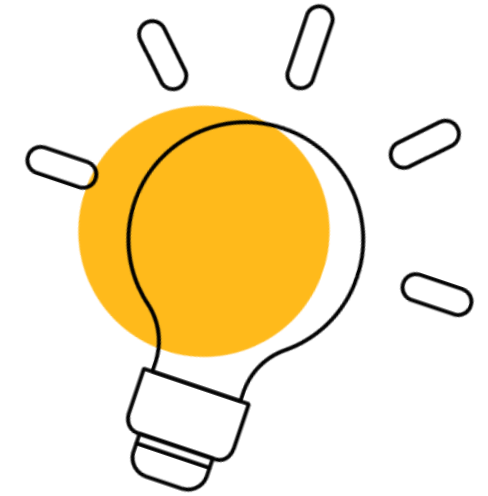
What will you have to do?

You will be asked to read a passage and answer two questions. First you must summarize the author's views, in 25 to 50 words. Next you must give your own opinion and your own ideas in at least 50 words. You have 18 minutes to complete both parts of the question.

What skills are being tested?

This item tests Reading comprehension and the ability to interpret information. It also measures the ability to summarize ideas in writing and develop your own argument.

Summary and Opinion *tips*



Read the passage carefully to make sure you understand it.

In the first box, write a summary of the author's opinion using your own words.

For the second part, decide whether or not you agree with the author and express your opinion and your own ideas.

Write in complete grammatical sentences.

Pay attention to spelling, capitalization and punctuation in both answers.

Check the timer and answer both parts of the question.

A practice question is given below.

Write a short summary of the author's opinion in 25-50 words. Do not copy.

Next

Write your opinion. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why? Write at least 50 words. Try to use your own ideas.

Today, many people communicate using e-mail and instant messaging. It is easy, fast, and convenient. Even though there are many benefits to communicating in these ways, it is still better to communicate face-to-face. Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication because people can see each other's hand gestures and facial expressions and hear changes in each other's voices. These features of communication allow speakers to say much more than just their words. For example, a facial expression could tell the listener if the speaker is serious or making a joke. Without these features of communication, misunderstandings can happen. For example, an instant message could easily be interpreted as sarcastic even though the writer meant for it to be serious. Along the same lines, an e-mail could sound rude when it was meant to be encouraging. Misunderstandings can be avoided if people talk face-to-face. Many people sit alone at a desk all day. They only communicate using e-mail. This can make them feel isolated and alone. Speaking with colleagues face-to-face can make people feel good. Humans are social creatures and enjoy interacting with one another. They enjoy being a part of a social group. It is important to spend time talking with other people throughout the day. Face-to-face communication is the best way to communicate. Today, too many people depend on e-mail and instant messaging. They forget how important is to speak with other people in person.

Score reports

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

VERSANT™
by Pearson

English Placement Test

John Doe

Test Completion Date (GMT)
19 January 2020

Test Identification Number (TIN)
12345678

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

66

CEFR: B2

Candidate easily handles a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is generally fluent, smooth and intelligible. Candidate controls appropriate language structures for speaking about complex material. Candidate understands texts from a wide variety of written genres, and can produce texts for most purposes. Writing is usually effective and clear.

Understanding the Skills Overall Score

The Overall score of the test represents the ability to understand spoken and written English and respond appropriately in speaking and writing on everyday topics, at an appropriate pace and in intelligible English. Scores are based on a weighted combination of the four skill 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 66 /90 is equivalent to Versant 61 /80

62 Speaking

77 Listening

59 Writing

60 Reading

| Skill | GSE Score |
|-----------|-----------|
| Speaking | 62 |
| Listening | 77 |
| Writing | 59 |
| Reading | 60 |

Additional Performance Indicators

Typing Speed
32 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
92% 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.

TIN: 12345678

Current Capabilities in Detail

Speaking: GSE: 62/90 Versant: 59/80 CEFR: B2

Current capabilities:
Candidate produces a range of meaningful sentences. Candidate speaks with adequate rhythm but with some inappropriate phrasing and pausing. Many vowels and consonants are produced in a clear manner.

Tips to improve:

- Practice telling a short story about something funny that happened to you, including as many details as you can.
- Practice explaining how to do something, such as making your favorite meal, giving detailed instructions.

Understanding the Skills

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 a native-like manner, use accurate syntax, use words appropriately in contexts, and use appropriate rhythm, phrasing, and timing.

Listening: GSE: 77/90 Versant: 69/80 CEFR: C1

Current capabilities:
Candidate follows most of what is said around him/her on most topics, although occasionally some information may be lost.

Tips to improve:

- Practice actively listening to spoken language delivered at fast speeds, such as TED Talks.
- Practice listening to complex podcasts and extracting the important details.

Listening
Listening reflects the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday 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: GSE: 59/90 Versant: 57/80 CEFR: B2

Current capabilities:
Candidate writes clear, connected texts on a variety of subjects using a sufficient range of grammatical structures and a good range of common English words.

Tips to improve:

- Practice writing detailed descriptions of people and places that you know.
- Practice writing advice that you would give to a friend, including reasons.

Writing
Writing reflects the ability to produce written English texts on everyday topics. 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: GSE: 60/90 Versant: 58/80 CEFR: B2

Current capabilities:
Candidate reads, understands and responds to texts on everyday topics at a functional pace. In more complex texts, specific, important details may be lost.

Tips to improve:

- Practice reading and following the exchanges on a discussion board of a website.
- Practice using an English dictionary to check the meaning of words, rather than a bilingual dictionary.

Reading
Reading reflects the ability to understand written English texts on everyday topics. The score is based on the ability to operate at functional speeds to extract meaning, infer the message, and respond appropriately.

