

Versant by Pearson English Speaking and Listening Test

Official Guide for Test-Takers

2024



Versant by Pearson English Speaking and Listening Test

The Versant by Pearson English Speaking and Listening Test assesses the ability to understand, and communicate in, spoken English. It is used by organizations around the world to test the English proficiency of new or existing students and staff. It assesses the following: Overall Ability, Speaking, Listening, and Manner of Speaking.

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 sections 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 17 minutes.

Item type	Skill(s) tested	Items in test
Give a short answer to the question (Part A)	Listening	8
Repeat the sentence (Part B)	Listening, Speaking, Manner of Speaking	16
Answer a question about a conversation (Part C)	Listening	6
Answer questions about a passage (Part D)	Listening	6
Retell a passage (Part E)	Speaking, Listening, Manner of Speaking	2
Give your opinion (Part F)	Speaking, Manner of Speaking	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 describes your ability to consistently understand spoken English and speak it with good grammar, vocabulary, and delivery. Scores are based on a combination of Speaking and Listening scores.
Speaking	The Speaking score reflects the ability to use English grammar and expressions accurately and appropriately in both constrained and more open-ended responses. Scores also reflect speaking with English pronunciation norms, conversational fluency, and in a way that proficient English speakers find understandable.
Listening	The Listening score reflects the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday and workplace speech spoken at a conversational pace.
Manner of Speaking	The Manner of Speaking score reflects the ability to speak in a way that proficient English speakers easily find easily understandable. Performance depends on pronouncing English sounds in ways that are close to typical norms. It also reflects the ability to speak at a normal conversational pace, without too much hesitation or unusual pauses between words, phrases or sentences.

Access to the test

The English Speaking and Listening Test is taken online via mobile phone app or web browser. Your test administrator will advise on methods you can use. The test is 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 with an up-to-date web browser or a mobile phone with the Versant by Pearson app.
- A good internet connection.
- A headset with a microphone boom.
- A quiet room where you can work without interruptions throughout the 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 and that your answers are recorded.
- 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.
- If you do not start speaking within a certain time, the test will assume you're not going to answer and move on to the next question.
- If you do not complete an answer in the allowed time, your partial response will be saved and scored as it is.
- You can only move forward – it is not possible to go back to a previous question or re-record an answer.

General tips

All your answers are spoken aloud and recorded for scoring. To ensure they are recorded clearly, watch the [video on tips for Versant by Pearson test takers](#) and follow the steps below:

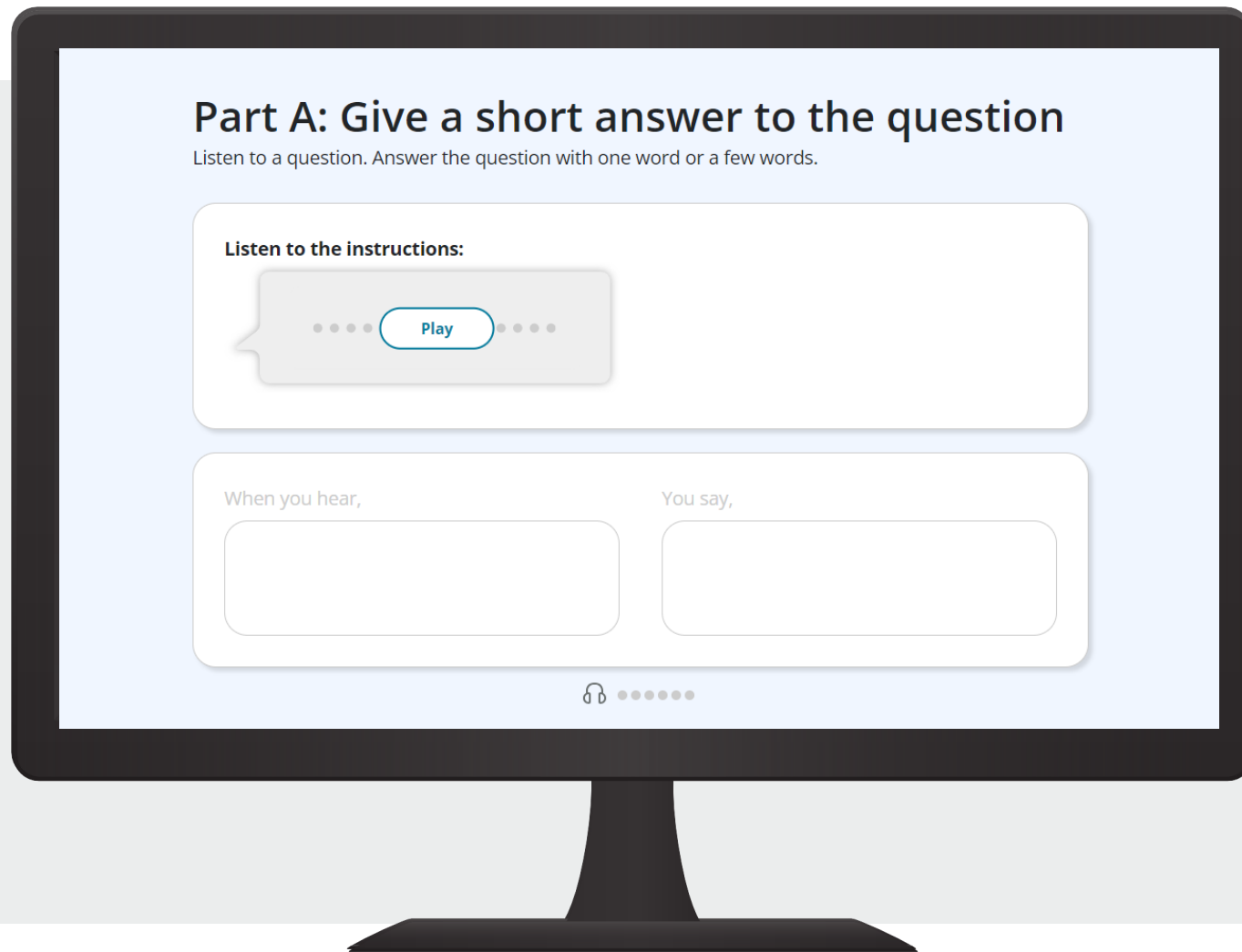
- Make sure you are in a quiet room with no background noise (even loud fans and air conditioning can cause interference).
- Ensure your headset is properly connected (to avoid static or technical issues).
- Speak clearly at a normal volume (don't shout or whisper).
- Speak at a normal speed (do not 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. You will not be able to re-record your answer.

What will you have to do?

- You will hear a short question and will be asked to answer it.
- You will need to answer with a single word or a short phrase.
- You will only hear the question once.
- You will **have 15** seconds to answer.

What skills are being tested?

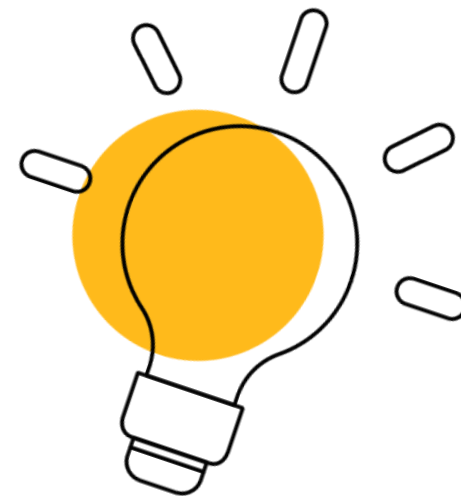
- This question tests Listening



Short Answer Questions *tips*

- Focus on the meaning or the question being asked.
- Do not give a long or detailed reply.
- Start speaking within **6 seconds** or the test will move on to the next question.

You can practice by listening to the prompt **below**.

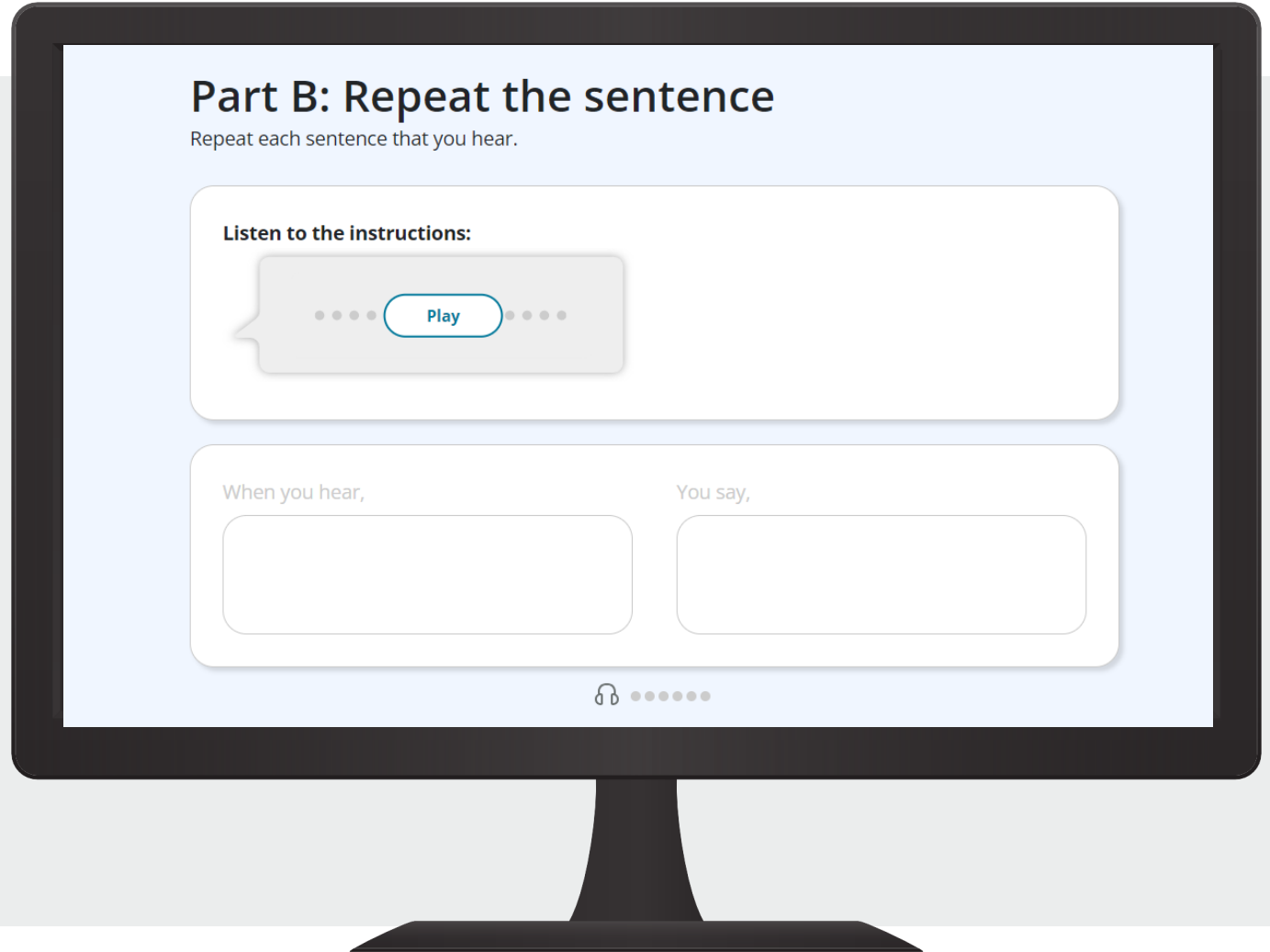


What will you have to do?

- You will hear a sentence.
- You will need to repeat the sentence.
- You will **have 15** seconds to answer.

What skills are being tested?

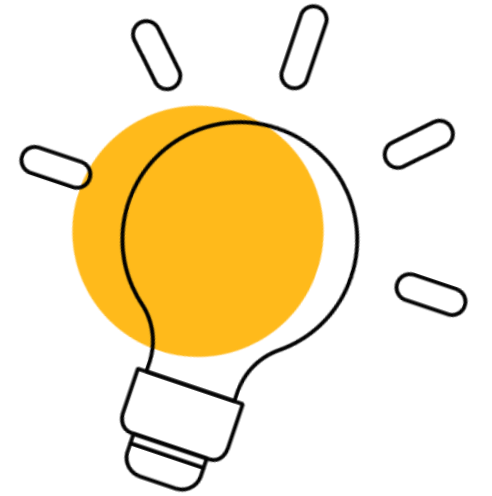
- This question tests Speaking and Listening



Repeat the Sentence *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**.



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 few words or a short sentence.

What skills are being tested?

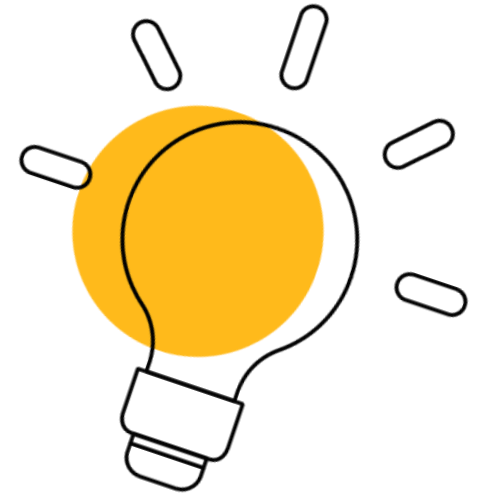
- This question tests Listening.



Answer a Question About a Conversation *tips*

- Listen carefully to the conversation and what is being said.
- Consider what the question is asking.
- Provide a short and clear answer.
- Start speaking within **8 seconds** or the test will move on to the next question.

You can practice by listening to the prompt **below**.

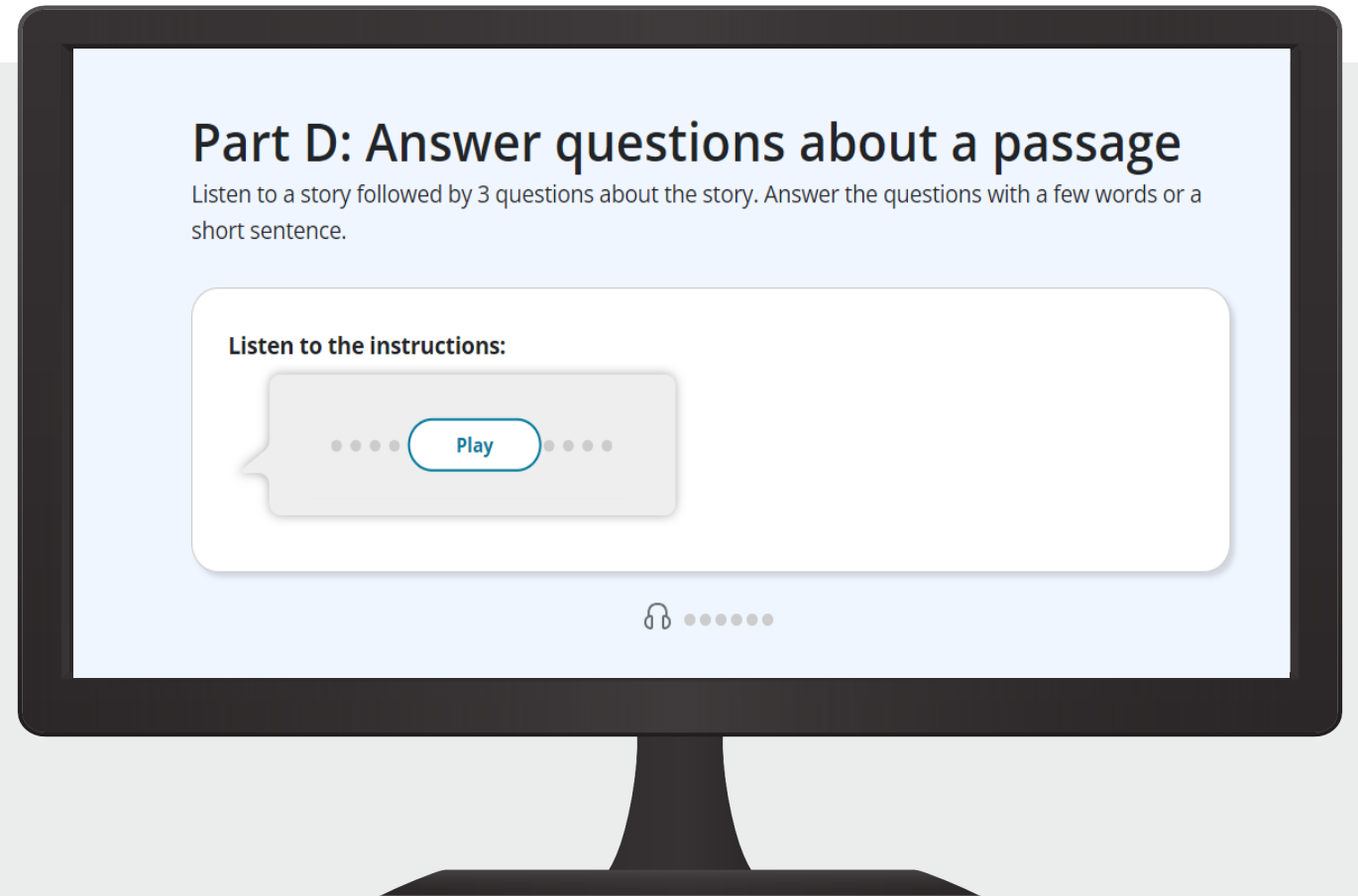


What will you have to do?

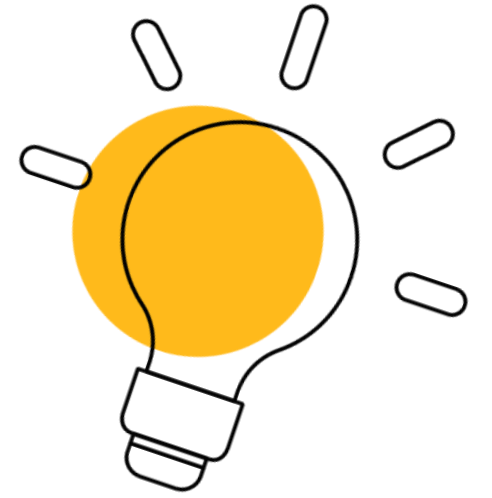
- You will hear a short story.
- You will be asked 3 questions about the story.
- You will need to answer each question by saying a few words or a short sentence.

What skills are being tested?

- This question tests Listening.



Answer Questions About a Passage *tips*



- Listen carefully to the conversation and what is being said.
- Consider what the question is asking.
- Provide a short and clear answer.
- Start speaking within **8 seconds** or the test will move on to the next question.

You can practice by listening to the prompt **below**.

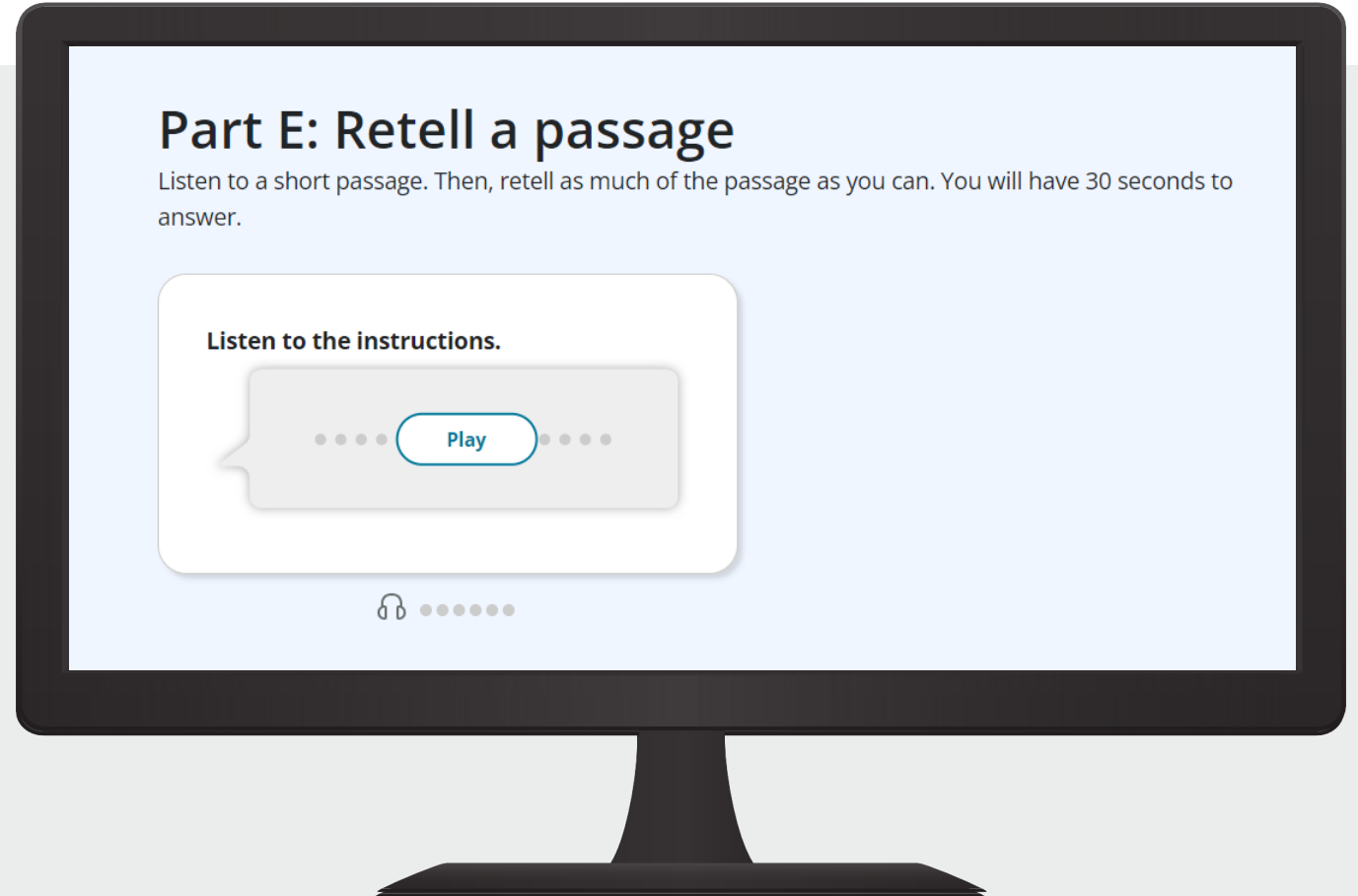


What will you have to do?

- You will hear a short story.
- You will need to retell the story in your own words.
- You will have 30 seconds to tell the story

What skills are being tested?

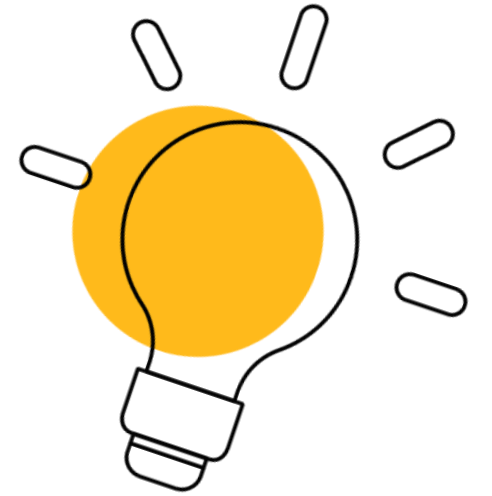
- This question tests Speaking and Listening.



Retell a Passage *tips*

- Listen carefully to the story.
- Focus and try to remember names, places and what happened.
- Plan what you will say focusing on key information including who, what, when, where and the outcome.
- Use your own words – do not repeat exactly what you heard.
- Speak clearly using complete sentences and correct grammar.

You can practice by listening to the prompt **below**.

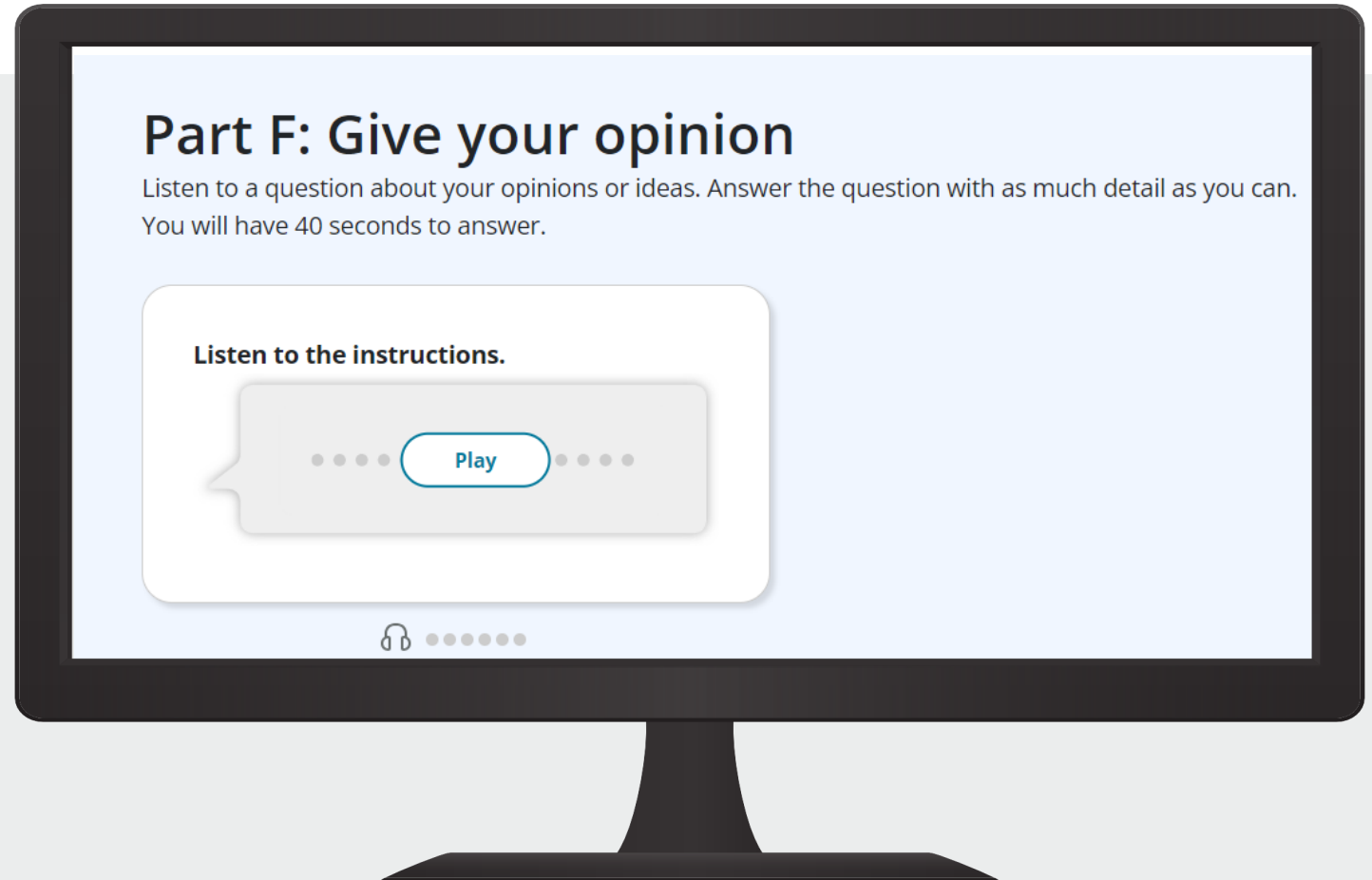


What will you have to do?

- You will be asked a question about your opinion or ideas.
- You will need to answer the question with as much detail as you can.
- You will have 40 seconds to respond.

What skills are being tested?

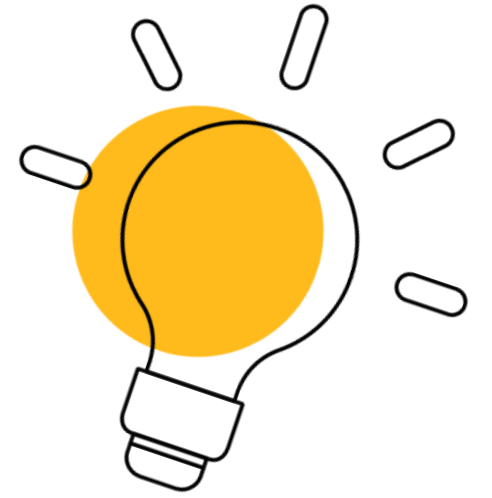
- This question tests Speaking



Give Your Opinion *tips*

- Listen to the question.
- Decide your position and then think about 1-2 arguments to support it.
- Speak clearly in complete grammatical sentences.

You can practice by listening to the prompt **below**.



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, CEFR*) and summarize your ability overall and for specific skills. They also offer tips to improve so you can perform better in future tests.

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Versant English Speaking and Listening Test

John Smith
Test Completion Date (GMT): 20 November 2023
Test Identification Number (TIN): 78256333

Overall GSE Score

73

CEFR: B2+

CEFR <A1 A1 A2 A2+ B1 B1+ B2 **B2+** C1 C2

Candidates at this level speak and comprehend at conversational speed with a little effort and can interact on many subjects with rather fluent, elaborated, and structured speech; can use diverse grammatical structures and typical English expressions; speak with good pronunciation and intelligibility.

	GSE	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	
Overall GSE Score	73										
Speaking	79										
Listening	66										

Understanding the Skills

Overall Score
The Overall score reflects the ability to consistently understand spoken English and speak it with good grammar, vocabulary, and delivery. Scores are based on a combination of Speaking and Listening scores.

GSE
The Global Scale of English (GSE) is the global standard for measuring English language proficiency in detail on a simple 10 to 90 scale. Learn more about the GSE at pearson.com/languages.

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Versant English Speaking and Listening Test

John Smith
Test Completion Date (GMT): 20 November 2023
Test Identification Number (TIN): 78256333

Speaking

GSE: 79/90

CEFR: C1

Candidates at this level can clearly speak on a range of topics with fluent, elaborated, and well-structured speech; use diverse vocabulary, English expressions, and grammatical structures appropriately. Speech is fluent and intelligible, and candidates can interact in real time with ease and confidence.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Practice talking about a recent event and how it impacted you or other people.
- Practice giving detailed advice to a friend on an important decision they need to make (e.g. changing a course of study at university or leaving a secure job), discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion.

Speaking

The Speaking score reflects the ability to use English grammar and expressions accurately and appropriately in both constrained and more open-ended responses. Performance depends on clearly and accurately producing content and confidently presenting a view on a topic and giving reasons for it. Scores also reflect speaking with English pronunciation norms, conversational fluency, and in a way that proficient English speakers find understandable.

Manner of Speaking

GSE: 84/90

CEFR: C1

Candidates at this level can be understood effortlessly by listeners; pronounce most vowels and consonants understandably although some accent may still exist; mostly use appropriate stress and rhythm; express themselves smoothly with few noticeable pauses, hesitations or repetitions.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Pick a topic that you are interested in and listen to many different recordings, videos, or interviews about the same topic. Extensive listening is one way to improve your pronunciation and fluency.
- Find a passage you would like to practice. Listen to how a native speaker reads it and try to "shadow" that person by reading it aloud with the same intonation.

Manner of Speaking

The Manner of Speaking score reflects the ability to speak in a way that proficient English speakers easily find understandable. Performance depends on pronouncing English sounds in ways that are close to typical norms without too much of an accent. It also reflects the ability to speak at a normal conversational pace, without too much hesitation or unusual pauses between words, phrases, or sentences.

Listening

GSE: 66/90

CEFR: B2

Candidates at this level can follow much of short and extended speech with a range of vocabulary, at a conversational speed. Candidates' interactions demonstrate good understanding of main points and nuances of passages and conversations in everyday workplace situations.

🔗 **Tips to improve:**

- Practice listening to linguistically complex podcasts, discussions or fast-paced conversations between fluent speakers of English.
- Watch TV programmes (e.g. documentaries and interviews) on work-related topics. Try to understand the details as much as you can.

Listening

The Listening score reflects the ability to understand specific details and main ideas from everyday and workplace speech spoken at a conversational pace.

