

Candidate Guide

2020



What is Aptis for Teens?

Aptis for Teens is a variant of the Aptis test developed by the British Council and designed specifically for 13-17 year olds. It can be used to assess ability in all four English skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. The content of Aptis for Teens has been adapted to reflect activities that typically occur in a teenager’s everyday life, including social media, homework and sports.

You can be tested in one skill or a combination of skills. Your teacher, school or tutor will decide which skill or mix of skills is best for you to be assessed in.

This guide will help you understand each of the five components of Aptis for Teens and what they do. The five parts are: grammar and vocabulary, reading, listening, writing and speaking.

There is also advice on how to prepare for the test including tips on what to study and things to do in the test to help you make sure you get the best results. You can also find information on how the test is marked.

If you like using apps to learn English, try the LearnEnglish apps available from here: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/apps>

How to take Aptis for Teens

Aptis for Teens is taken on a computer. Codes are used to enter different parts of the test and 'forward' and 'back' arrows and 'OK' buttons are used to move from screen to screen. Sometimes you need to 'scroll down' to see the whole of a text. Possible answers are shown using 'pull down menus'. You need to 'click' on answers and sometimes 'drag and drop' to answer questions. It will help you to get to know and practice these functions before you take the test.

You can familiarise yourself with the test platform by taking an online demo test on our website <https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/practice-materials>

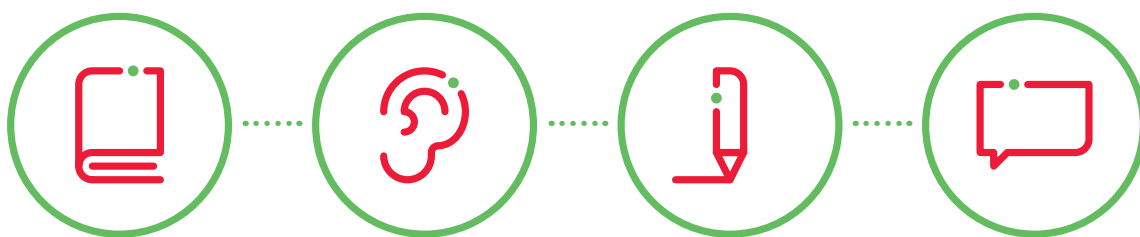


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Test structure

Aptis for Teens has five components: core (grammar and vocabulary), reading, listening, writing and speaking. Your teacher or school will decide which components you will take. You may be taking one skill component (for example, listening) or all four skill components (reading, listening, writing and speaking).



It is a good idea to take a practice test so that you fully understand what you need to do.

Grammar and vocabulary

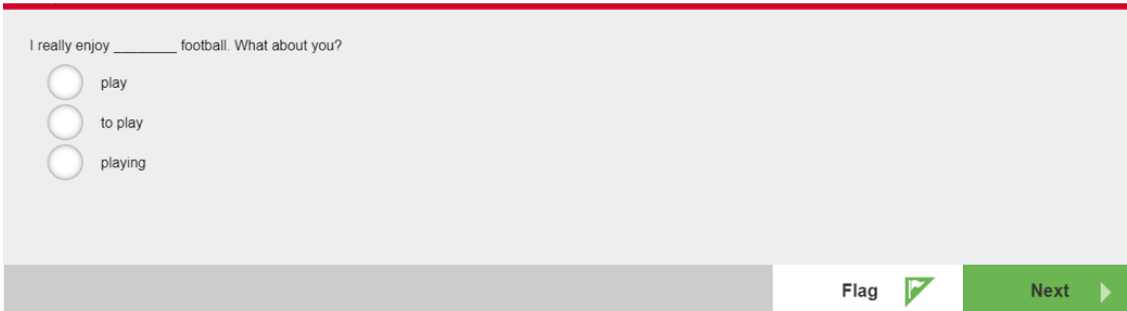
The grammar and vocabulary component has two parts. The first part assesses your knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses your knowledge of English vocabulary.

Grammar

The Grammar Test tests your knowledge of a wide variety of grammar from the simplest to the most complex. There are 25 questions and you should take about 12 minutes to complete this section.

For each question, you see a sentence with a gap with three words below it. You click on the circle next to the word which correctly goes into the gap.

This is a sample question.





I really enjoy _____ football. What about you?

play

to play

playing

Flag 

Next 

Make sure you read the sentence and all possible answers before you make your final choice. Look carefully at the whole sentence and then the words on either side of the gap to help you make your choice. Remember, sometimes only certain words will go with 'to', so looking at the words around the gap could be a lot of help. Reading the whole sentence before reading the options helps because you may already know the answer when you read it. Then all you have to do is check the options and if what you think is the answer is one of the options, you will know you are right.

Tip

During the test you can flag questions you don't know and go back to them later. Try practising on the Aptis online grammar and vocabulary practice test to learn how to do it.

Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-and-vocabulary-exams/choose-correct-option

Vocabulary

The vocabulary test tests your knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary from words that are very well known to words that aren't used so often.

There are five parts to the vocabulary section. Each part is scored out of five, giving 25 marks in total. There are four types of task. One is done twice.

1. Matching words with similar meanings

In this task you have to put together words that have the same or a similar meaning.

You see a word. You open a drop-down menu to see ten other words. One of those ten words has the same or a similar meaning to the word you first see. You click on the word with the same or similar meaning. You do this for five words. Each time the ten words you have to choose from are the same.

This is a sample question.

Select the answer from the list that has the most similar meaning to the word on the left.

Example: create = make



address =

document =

research =

force =

job =

Flag  Next 

Tip

This part is testing your knowledge of words that have nearly identical or very similar meanings. A thesaurus, ([thesaurus.com](https://www.thesaurus.com)), which you can find online or in your library can help you look up a new word and learn the words with the same meaning or even the opposite meaning. This is a great way to not only prepare for the test but also improve your range of vocabulary. Don't forget to use all these words in the writing section too, to demonstrate your range. The examiners like to see writing that has a variety of words and not just the same phrase over and over again.

○ Practice link:

learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/vocabulary-games

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/beach

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/living-room

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/places-town

2. Meaning in context – Sentence completion

In this task you have to create sentences that have meaning.

You see a sentence with a gap. You open a drop-down menu and see ten words that can complete that gap. You click on the word that completes the sentence. You do this for five sentences. Each time the ten words you see are the same ten words.

This is a sample question.

Complete each sentence using a word from the drop down list.



I grow in my garden because I like to eat them.

I can see the sun, so the is good today.

The water in the was clean and blue.

The wanted to hear more music when the singer finished.

The man lost his for the film that he wanted to see.

Flag  Next 

Tip

There will be many words you can choose from that make a grammatically correct sentence. You will have to choose the word that not only fits grammatically but also makes the most sense when reading it. Reading many different types of books, newspapers and magazines will help you improve your overall understanding of how words fit into the context of a sentence.

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-and-vocabulary-exams/what-does-it-mean

3. Matching words to definitions



In this task you have to match definitions to words.

You see a definition. You open a drop-down menu to see ten words. One of the words matches the definition. You have to click on that word. You do this for five definitions. Each time the ten words you see are the same ten words.

This is a sample question.

Choose a word from the drop down list for each definition on the left.

Wanting to know or learn something.	<input type="text"/>
Not natural or real.	<input type="text"/>
Not clear and difficult to understand or see.	<input type="text"/>
Having a flat, even surface.	<input type="text"/>
Having a lot of strong emotion.	<input type="text"/>

Flag  Next 

Tip

Since this part is matching definitions to words, it might be helpful to sign up to the Oxford Dictionary to learn new words. You can also test your friends. Why not find some new words in the dictionary and write down their definitions? Give these definitions to your friends and the new words, and see if they can guess which word matches the definition. There are lots of fun English games you can make up like this with your friends to practise. See if your teacher will help you too!

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-and-vocabulary-exams/match-words-definitions

4. Collocation matching – Word matching

In this task you have to match words that often go together.

You see a word following by a plus sign +. You open a drop-down menu and see ten words. You click on the word which most often goes with the word with the plus sign. You do this for five words. Each time the ten words you see are the same ten words.

This is a sample question.

Select a word from the list that is most often used with the word on the left.

Example: big +



abstract +

athletic +

congested +

frantic +

housework +

Flag  Next 

Tip

Collocations are words that are commonly used together. For example, it is common to say 'hard cheese' or 'soft cheese' but you don't say 'liquid cheese'. Therefore, to improve your knowledge of collocations, read and listen to as much as you can in English. When you learn new words, try and learn the words which also go with these words. You can draw a map with the new word in the middle and all words related to it around it. This also helps with prefixes and suffixes, and verbs and nouns. You can learn many new words which are related.

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-vocabulary-exams/words-go-together

Try this!

Why don't you try the examples shown here? You won't be able to see any options for the answers but you can still try and take a guess. Once you have tried them, check your answers at the end of this guide. How many did you get right?

Read these three sentences quickly and then try and guess the meaning of the underlined words from the sentence alone.

You have 30 seconds!

1. He was a very frugal man, spending money only when he really had to.
2. Although he was typically unkempt, he looked really smart in the office.
3. The pilot was surprised when the authorities revoked his license. Consequently, he couldn't fly any longer.

See answers on page 39 at the back of this guide.

Did you get them right?

Remember that you do not need to understand every word in the text. If you waste too much time trying to understand every word, you may run out of time and miss out on valuable points. Make sure you try and understand the meaning of the paragraph rather than every single word.

Tips for success

Many students ask how they can maximise their studying time to best improve their grammar and vocabulary abilities. One answer is reading. By reading literature and high-quality stories, magazine articles and news briefs, you will be exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and correctly used grammar. Even better is to read from a variety of sources. Read a lot of graded readers at your level and try some at the next level higher. If you feel comfortable at the next level, keep reading at that level until you want to try the next one above. You can also read other things, for example read the news one day and a magazine the next. Then read a story sometimes as well. Soon, you will recognise how much you have improved your English grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and you will improve your reading skills too! Don't forget that, if reading is not your favourite thing to do, you can also watch movies and put the subtitles on. Watch a favourite movie that you know really well in English so that you don't have to focus on the story and can concentrate on understanding the words instead. Try it the first time with subtitles and note down any useful phrases. The second time, challenge yourself to watch it without subtitles and see how much you understand. This is great for picking up new vocabulary in context and of course, it also helps your listening skills.

Other resources

Here are some resources to help develop your grammar and vocabulary for the test:

- **Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.**
<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar>
- **Another great site offering similar grammar and vocabulary practice is the BBC learning English site.**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish>
- **Are you interested in learning a word a day? Build your vocabulary and get a new word every day from these online dictionary websites.**
dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday and merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day



Reading test

This test assesses your reading ability. There are four parts to the reading test. Each part focuses on a different reading skill. You will have up to 30 minutes to complete all the questions.

Reading part one

This task tests understanding at the sentence level.

You read a short text of six sentences. Each sentence has a gap. You open a drop-down menu next to the gap and see three words. You click on the right word to fill the gap. The first sentence is an example with the gap completed.

This is a sample question.

Read the e-mail Max sent to Tom. Choose one word from the list for each gap. The first one is done for you.

Hi Tom,

I'm going shopping in town later to buy science books.

Could you come and help me the right books?

I think the train is too - the bus is quicker.

We can catch the bus from the station near your

My mother can give us the to buy lunch.

We can your grandmother on the way home.

See you on Saturday,

Max

Flag Next

Tip

Look at each sentence as its own question. There will be hints in the sentence to help you choose the answer. Make sure you read the full sentence before choosing your answer. Sometimes the clue is towards the end and not the beginning of the sentence.

Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/reading-exams/vocabulary-text



Reading part two

This task tests understanding of inter-sentence cohesion (how sentences connect with each other).

You read a seven-sentence text. The first sentence is in the correct place but the other six are in the wrong order. You drag and drop the sentences into the correct order to make a short clear text.

This is a sample question.

The sentences below create a story. Move them so they are in the right order. The first one is done for you.

How to Take Good Photographs

It is possible to take unforgettable pictures by following these simple instructions.

After it's free of dirt, set the camera to the highest picture quality possible.



Look at what you've taken and take another shot if necessary.

To get these great shots you have to make sure the camera is clean.

Then frame the shot, keep your hands still and press the button firmly.

Then think about what or who you want to photograph as well as the location.

That means you should avoid limited light, bright spaces and mirrors. 02

Flag  Next 

Tip

This question requires you to read across the sentences. You will have to use logic and look at the clues such as linking words, pronouns and other ways that the information from one sentence links with the next. Make sure you read the whole text once you think you have put it in the correct order, to check before you move on to the next task.

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/films-and-entertainment



Reading part three

This task tests understanding of the main ideas in short texts.

You read four short paragraphs. Each paragraph gives one person's ideas and opinions on the same topic, for example, travel. You read seven sentences each of which asks which of the four people has a particular idea or opinion, for example 'Who thinks the new train station is unnecessary?' You open a drop-down menu next to each sentence which shows you the names of the four people who have written the paragraphs. You click on the person who has that idea or opinion.

This is a sample question.

Hanna (female, 16 years old)

"It's not important that we have the same hobbies and interests – after all, I think a friend is someone who should help you try new activities. I think it's more important to have similar personalities, so you laugh at the same things and feel the same way. My best friend from school cries when I cry – and then makes me laugh afterwards!"

Jin Woo (male, 17 years old)

"I want a friend who is always with me, even if I make a mistake or do something stupid. I want a friend who will never let me down, and I think it's the most important thing in the world, to always be there for someone else. That, and having a really cool gaming computer – I really love to play games."

Kyung Eun (female, 13 years old)

"I want someone who's the complete opposite of me – I'm quite shy and I don't often go out to meet people, so I'd love to make friends with someone who's a bit more outgoing. It would be fun to hang out together, to make friends and try new activities. I'd really like to get outdoors more, you know, play more games, so that would be good too."

Jae Won (17 years old)

"I think it's got to be somebody who can help me with my homework – I'm failing a lot of subjects at the moment and I really need some help. I need someone to take the time to check my answers and tell me where I'm going wrong, and who won't call me stupid if I'm wrong. Maybe I should just pay for a tutor, but I don't have a lot of money."

Four people were interviewed for Teen Magazine about their ideal friend. Read the texts to answer the following questions.

Who ...

- ...thinks a friend should be different to him or her?
- ...likes to share emotions with a friend?
- ...thinks a friend should be reliable?
- ...has problems with school work?
- ...thinks a friend should not be critical?
- ...wants to meet new people?
- ...thinks a friend should be like-minded?

Flag Next

Tip

The exact words in the question usually won't be included in the text, so you will have to understand what each person thinks and answer the questions accordingly.

Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/phone-chat



Reading part four

This task tests your understanding of integrated ideas in longer texts.

You read a long text with eight paragraphs. There are eight boxes with numbers beside the text. Each number refers to a paragraph in the text. You open a drop-down menu and see eight sentences. Each sentence is a possible heading for that paragraph. You click on the right heading for that paragraph. There are eight possible headings and only seven paragraphs to give headings to, so there is one extra heading. Paragraph 0 already has the right heading and is an example.

This is a sample question.

Loving Sports

0. The importance of sports

0. We have all heard about the many benefits of sports, but sometimes it's difficult to get ourselves moving. Apart from the compulsory classes we have to take at school, and an occasional soccer match with our friends on Saturdays, we as teenagers seldom have enough discipline to play sports. Perhaps if we were really aware that the benefits are not just physical, we would work out more. What are some of those benefits?

1. Let's start with the obvious one: sports help our bodies function better. Many adults suffer from serious health problems such as coronary diseases and hypertension, which could have been avoided if they had practiced some sport regularly from childhood. Young people who regularly take exercise develop healthier bones and good motor skills. Working out helps them maintain optimum levels of sugar and cholesterol. Sitting in front of the TV eating carbohydrate rich foods such as pizzas or spaghetti, and drinking sugary beverages will do exactly the opposite. And the worst part is that when we become adults we'll pay for the choices we make today.

2. However, playing sports from childhood can benefit you in other ways. Did you know that some sports can help you develop team work, individual skills, and positive attitudes? Take, for example, basketball players. Of course, they need to develop individual technical skills,

Read the passage quickly. Choose a heading for each numbered paragraph (1-7) from the drop-down box. There is one more heading than you need. The heading for paragraph 0 is given as an example.

0. The importance of sports ▾

1. ▾

2. ▾

3. ▾

4. ▾

5. ▾

6. ▾

7. ▾

Flag Next

Tip

The words from the heading usually won't be in the text. Therefore, you should use your reading skills such as skimming and scanning before quickly reading through the text and choosing your answers. Make sure you read the whole text before you start trying to match the headings. You will not be able to guess the order of the headings just by reading them alone. You will need to look for clues in each paragraph to help you.



Tips for success

Make sure you read a lot of English before sitting the test and especially make sure you read in English the day before and on the day of the test. This will help in getting you thinking in English. Choose books and articles that are neither too easy nor too difficult for you to understand. Practise guessing words from the context as this is an important skill you will need to demonstrate in the exam. Remember that you can use graded readers to help you. These are famous stories that have been adapted to your level to help you improve your reading. Ask your teacher or local library or book shop about them.

While there are no easy ways to become a good reader, there are many things you can do to improve your English reading abilities. The first thing is to practise reading. Read as much as you can from different sources by different writers. This will help give you a good understanding of different styles. It can help improve your grammar, vocabulary and writing skills too!

Other resources

Here are some resources to help develop your reading skills for the test:

- **Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.**
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice
- **The British Council's Stories and Poems website for teens has many different topics at many different levels.**
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/stories-and-poems-uk
- **The LearnEnglish Teens Study Break website is another great resource. Here you will find many interesting stories of varying lengths and levels.**
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/easy-reading
- **Visit Lit2go: etc.usf.edu/lit2go/authors/. This site hosts classic literature that can be read or downloaded for free!**
- **Story of the Week is a website created by the Library of America. Here you will find many stories at different levels to practise your reading skills.**
storyoftheweek.loa.org/p/stories-sorted-by-author.html
- **Project Gutenberg in Australia also has an online database of free short stories and books that can be read online or downloaded to be read later.**
gutenberg.net.au



Listening test

In the listening test there are 22 recordings. Recordings 1 to 19 have one question each and recordings 20, 21 and 22 have two questions each. This gives a total of 25 questions. You can listen to each recording twice. You have up to 55 minutes to complete the test.

The recordings and the tasks increase with difficulty as you go through the test.

Recordings 1 to 5 test your ability to find simple factual information in an easy to understand short monologue.

Recordings 6 to 12 test your ability to find factual information in slightly more difficult monologues or two person conversations.

Recordings 13 to 19 test your ability to find information in longer more difficult monologues or two person conversations.

Recordings 20, 21 and 22 test your ability to identify opinions or recommendations in longer more complex monologues.

For recordings 1 to 19, you see one question and three possible answers. You click on the right answer.

For recordings 20, 21 and 22, you see two questions. Each question has three possible answers. You click on the right answer.

At this point we can give the example screens shots. 'Example for recordings 1 to 10'
'Example for recordings 20, 21 and 22'

This is a sample question for recordings 1 to 19.

▶ 🔊 2 of 2 plays remaining

Listen to the message from a friend. Which bus goes to her house?

1. Number 35.

2. Number 5.

3. Number 85.

Flag Next



Tip

Make sure you read the options before you try and answer the question, so you know what you are listening for.

Practice link:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening>

This is a sample questions for recordings 20, 21 and 22.

▶ 🔊 2 of 2 plays remaining

A girl calls an old friend.
What two problems has she experienced since moving?

The first problem the girl faced was...

- 1. feeling lonely.
- 2. getting lost.
- 3. being bullied.

The second problem the girl faced was...

- 1. missing old friends.
- 2. being bored.
- 3. not understanding her teachers.

Flag Next ▶

Tip

In this task, you will have to listen closely to the details since all the information in each of the possible answers will likely be discussed. However, the answer won't be directly stated, so you will have to get an overall understanding as well as understand the details in order to select the correct answers.

Practice links:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/travelling-abroad
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/ordering-food-cafe
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/work



Tips for success

During the listening test, you should listen to the whole recording before choosing your answer. It is possible that all options may be mentioned, so you will need to listen for clues, such as phrases used to say the same thing as the options given, or opinions expressed that are the opposite of those options. Read the questions carefully before listening, identify key words and understand what it is you need to listen for. Watch for synonyms – you may see a word in a question and hear a different word with a similar meaning in the audio. You should use the second listening to check or confirm your answer.

Try to listen to as much English as you can before the exam. This could be TV, music, films, or online videos. The more you hear English in the weeks before the exam, the easier it will be for you to understand what you hear during the exam. You can easily find materials online and we've created a short list below section to help guide you in finding some of the best.

Other resources

Here are some resources to help develop your reading skills for the test:

- **Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.**
<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening>
- **BBC Sounds offers live radio, podcasts and audio on demand to practise your listening skills on current events, sports, weather, travel and much more.**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds>
- **National Public Radio is another great resource with listening material covering current events, arts, life and music.**
npr.org
- **TED Talks hosts speeches and presentations about thousands of different topics and best of all, most are videos!**
ted.com



Writing test

All parts of the writing test will share a common theme. You will sign up to a forum or online social club and every task you complete will be related to the theme of the club. There are four tasks in total and you have 50 minutes to complete the test.

Writing part one

Part one tests your ability to write words or short phrases in response to simple messages.

You see a message and write a reply in the text box beside it. There are five messages.

This is an example of part one.

You want to join a club for teenagers. You have 5 messages from a member of the club. Write short answers (1-5 words) to each message.

Example: How are you?


What do you usually do in the morning?

What is your favourite place?

What is your favourite animal?

What is the weather like today?

What is your favourite time of year?

Flag  Next 

Tip

You should try to spend less than three minutes on this task. Spelling, capitalisation and grammar will not be considered in this task. You will be scored on your ability to use English to communicate successfully. Remember to fill in all the boxes. You should try to spend less than three minutes on this task.

Practice links:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/student-card-application
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/summer-jobs



Writing part two

Keeping to the same format - this is the replacement text

Part two tests your ability to write a short text (20 to 30 words) using sentences in response to a simple question.



You see a question and write an answer in the text box below it. There is one question and you need to write one text.

This is an example of Part two.

Tell other members of the club something about yourself. Fill in the form. Write in sentences. Use 20-30 words.

Teens International
What do you normally do with your friends?

0 words

Flag  Next 

Tip

This task should take less than seven minutes. Write in complete sentences and stay within the word count. You can use informal language, (contractions, informal vocabulary, colloquialisms, etc.)

○ Practice link:

At the bottom of most LearnEnglish Teens activities, there is a discussion with a short question to respond to. Try to find a topic that interests you and offer your opinion.

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org



Writing part three

Part three tests your ability to write a slightly longer and more complex text (30 – 40 words) using sentences in response to more demanding questions.

There are three questions. The questions are the kind you see on social network sites or internet forums. You have to write three replies.

You see three questions with a text box below each question. You write your answers in the text boxes.

This is an example of part three.

Someone has posted a photo on the message board. Add a comment and then reply to two comments from other members. Use 30-40 words for each comment. You have 10 minutes.

Sam: I took this photo of some of my friends doing an art project. We're painting some old buildings. What do you think about street art?

0 words

Miguel: I love street art. It's one of the reasons I like living in a city. I could never live anywhere else. How about you?

0 words

Michelle: I think it's a waste of time to study art. It's not a useful subject to study. Science is more important. What do you think?

0 words

Flag Next

Tip

You should try to spend no more than 10 minutes on this task.

Write in complete sentences with an informal tone. As this is like writing in a chat room, you can use idioms and colloquial language. However, you shouldn't use SMS language or text speak.

There are many places to practise this kind of question, most commonly at the end of a news article or activity on LearnEnglish Teens. Visit the 'What is it?' page on LearnEnglish Teens where students have a similar style chat: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/what-it. This is also a great place to practise your speculative language, which will help with the speaking tasks of the exam.

The secret to success for practising this kind of question is to get involved in as many of these chats as possible and keep the conversation going!

Practice link:

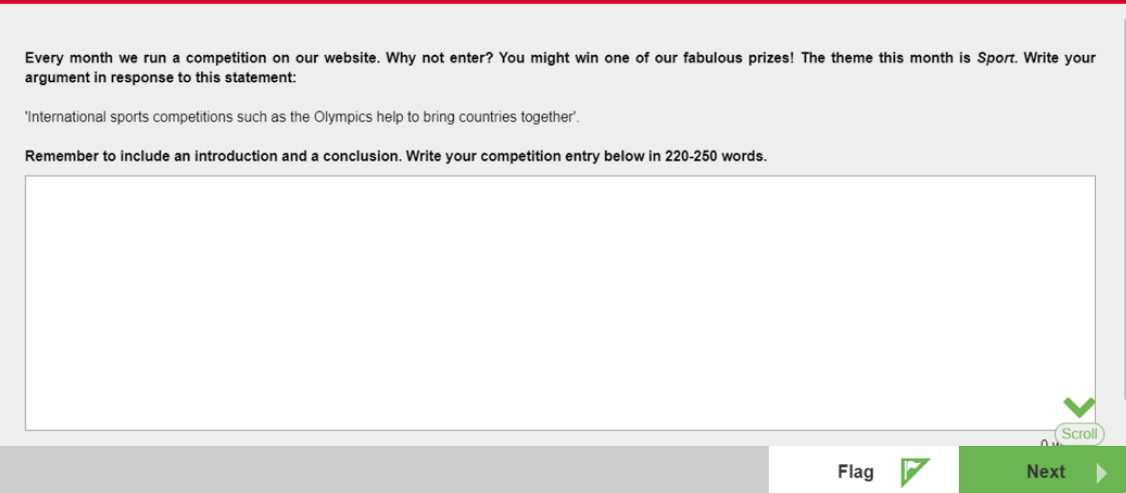
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/what-it

Writing part four

Part four tests your ability to write a longer 'for and against' style essay (220 – 250 words).

You will read a short introduction giving you the reason you are writing and the topic you need to write on. You will be given a statement or a question to respond to. You write your response in a text box below this information.

This is an example of Part four.



Every month we run a competition on our website. Why not enter? You might win one of our fabulous prizes! The theme this month is *Sport*. Write your argument in response to this statement:

'International sports competitions such as the Olympics help to bring countries together'.

Remember to include an introduction and a conclusion. Write your competition entry below in 220-250 words.

0.0

Flag

Next

Tip

If you have managed your time well in the first three parts, you should have about 30 minutes to write your essay.

Think carefully about the vocabulary you use in this task to make sure you are using appropriate language for an essay. In this situation, formal language is preferred, so idioms should not be used. Coherence and cohesion, which is the flow and linking in your writing, is important here too. Also watch your grammar, punctuation and spelling. You can practise expressing your opinion in the LearnEnglish 'Photo Caption' section. Practise your language skills supporting and disagreeing with other photo captions here: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/photo-captions

Remember that the writing tasks get more difficult as the test progresses. Think about who you are writing to: is it to friends or is it a more formal piece of writing? It is important to change your language to fit the situation. While speaking to a friend, you could write, 'why don't we go to see the new band?', whereas when you write in a formal essay, you would write 'I would recommend that schools support pupils more in choosing their future career'. Notice how formal writing tends to use more complex grammar, longer sentences and a different vocabulary. Like in the speaking test, always try to show a range in your grammar and vocabulary. So, instead of using the word 'grow' several times, you could use synonyms such as 'mature' or 'ripen' depending on what you are writing about. Remember, it is an English test and you need to show off all your skills.

Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/and-against-essay





Tips for success and common errors

Make sure you fully understand the question and respond appropriately. Take time to read the questions fully so you can plan. You get marks for being on topic so it's important to understand what you have to do to answer the question fully. Plan what you are going to write before you start.

Remember to review your writing and correct any errors before moving to the next question. You can't go back and make changes to what you have written so you need to be 100 per cent confident before you continue.

Manage your time wisely. You have 50 minutes for the full writing part of the exam, so be sure to leave plenty of time to write the essay in part four.

One strategy for improving your fluency before an exam is to write as much as you can about a topic in one minute, five minutes or ten minutes. Don't pay attention to any mistakes while you write, but write as much as you can. Then count your words at the end of the time and go back to check and fix your mistakes. Do this every day for a month and see how many more words you can write at the end of the month. This will help improve your fluency and recognition of the mistakes you commonly make in your writing.

If you need help thinking of a topic, you will be able to find one here:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice

Before writing an essay, it is helpful to consider your purpose and audience. The purpose is the reason why you are writing. Are you trying to write to convince, argue, inform, compare and contrast or something else? This will help you decide how to structure your essay and the kind of vocabulary you will want to use. The audience is the person you are writing for or the person who will read your essay. Is it your friend, family member, teacher, boss or an exam marker? Knowing this will also help you choose the tone of your essay (formal or informal).



The POWER process

When practising or writing an essay, try using the POWER process. POWER stands for Prewrite, Organise, Write, Edit and Revise. Breaking your writing down into steps can help maximise your time and the quality of your text.

Prewriting means to think of ideas. Good ideas, bad ideas and crazy ideas are all welcome in this step. Try to write down as many ideas as you can about your topic in three minutes.

Organising means to organise your ideas from the prewriting step. Look over all your ideas and decide which ones you want to keep for this writing task. It doesn't mean that the ideas you wrote down earlier were bad, it just means they might not fit the task you are trying to write now. After deciding which ideas you want to include in your writing, decide which order you want them to be in your essay.

Writing is the step where you just write. Try not to pay too much attention to grammar or sentence structures at this stage, but get the ideas you chose in the organising step into sentences and paragraphs. Try to use examples and details to develop your writing. Try to use topic sentences and closing sentences to help structure the paragraphs.

Editing is when you go back to what you just wrote and make it better. This is the step where you pay more attention to grammar and vocabulary, and try to help the sentences flow naturally from one to the other with coherence and cohesion devices.

Revising is when you put the finishing touches on the writing before submitting it to your reader. It is also an opportunity to move sentences and paragraphs around so they are in the most logical order for your reader. This is also the last opportunity to make changes to your text before submitting it to your audience, so make sure it shows off how good a writer you are!

While it may seem like it takes more time to write using the POWER process at first, after practice it can really reduce the amount of time you need when writing in an exam. It will also help you produce higher quality pieces of writing which will help you get higher marks on an exam and in school.

The best way to use the POWER writing process strategy is to start using it in school and in your other writing before using it in an exam. Then you will be more comfortable with the process and you will have had the opportunity to improve your writing style.

One of the most important tips for improving writing is to try to write in a way that you enjoy writing in. If you like listening to music, try writing songs or poetry. If you like reading textbooks, newspapers or magazines, try writing essays. If you like reading novels, try writing stories. No matter what you write, the practice will help you become a better writer!



Other resources

Here are some resources to help develop your writing practice for the test:

- **Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.**
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice
- **The LearnEnglish writing section has tutorials, videos and activities to help improve your higher-level writing skills.**
learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/writing
- **Visit Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL):** <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.
This is a free site that assists writers at all levels and abilities in improving their English writing abilities. There are even online writing tutors available to answer questions!



Speaking test

For the speaking test you will wear headphones and hear recordings giving you information and asking you questions. You speak into a microphone and your answer is recorded. The speaking test starts with a test to make sure you can hear the recordings and that your voice will be recorded.

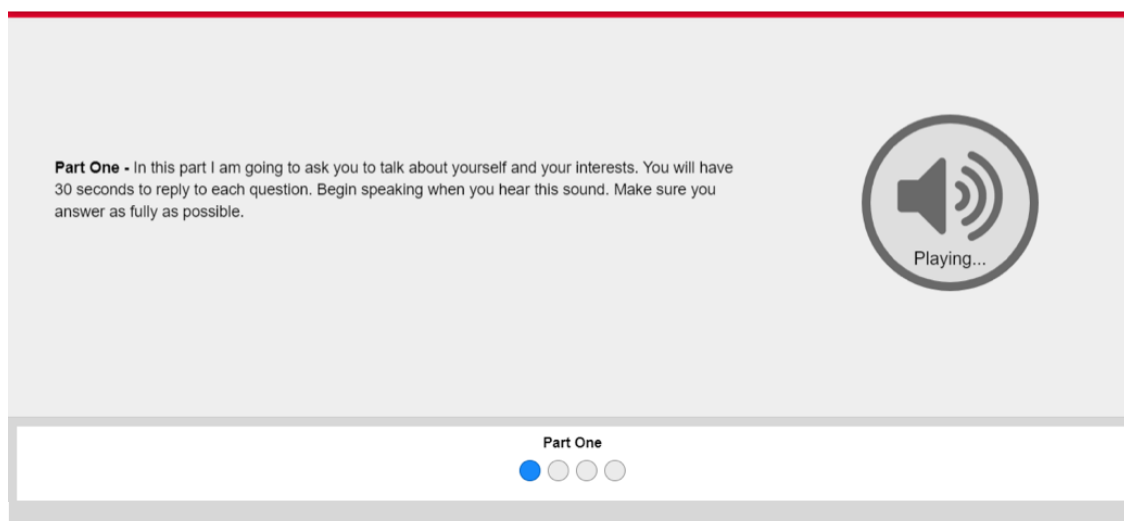
There are three questions and three tasks. Each time you give a spoken answer there is a maximum amount of time in which you can speak. You can end your answer before that time runs out by clicking on an icon that appears during your answer. If you finish early, you may not get the highest marks. The speaking test is 15 minutes long.

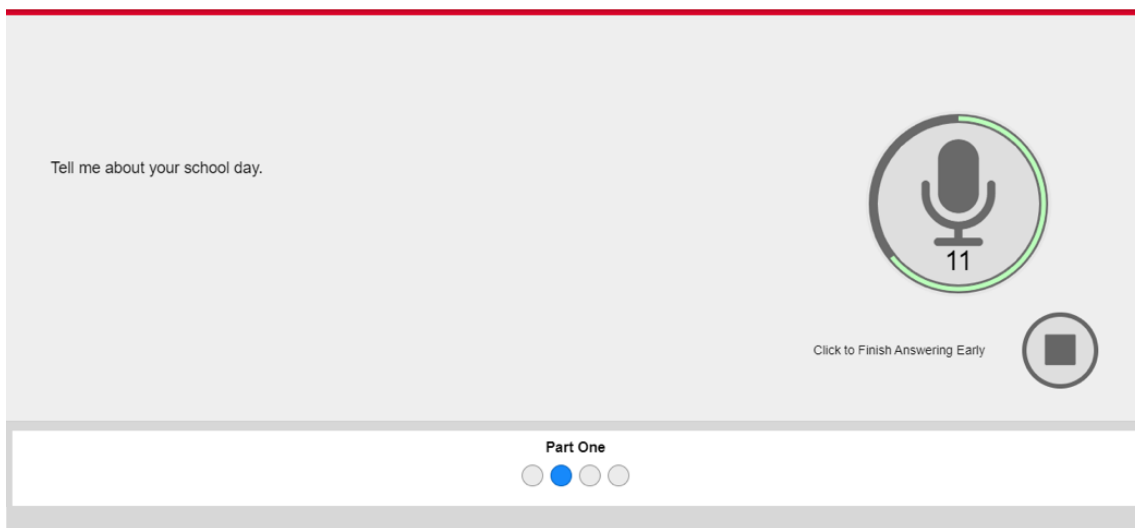
Speaking part one

These questions test your ability to give simple personal information in response to a spoken question.

You hear a recording giving you instructions and asking you a question. You speak after you hear a beep sound. You have 30 seconds to speak your answer. You hear and read a second question, hear a beep and have 30 seconds to speak your answer. You hear and read a third question, hear a beep and have 30 seconds to speak your answer.

The two screen shots below show the introduction to the three questions and an example question.





Tip

When practising for the exam, record yourself with your phone or computer and then listen to it. This will help you understand how a person marking your exam will hear you. It can help you recognise areas you need to work on. You can also ask your friends or teachers to listen and discuss what they think you can do to improve.

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/talk-about-yourself



Speaking part two


In this task, you give one description and answer two questions. This task tests your ability to describe, express opinions and provide reasons and explanations in response to spoken questions.

You hear a recording giving instructions. You then see a picture and are asked to describe it. You hear a beep sound and have 45 seconds to speak. You hear and read a question, hear another beep and have 45 seconds to speak your answer. You are asked another question, hear another beep and have 45 seconds to speak your answer.

This is a sample question.

V67


Part Two. In this part I'm going to ask you to describe what is happening in a picture. Then I will ask you two questions about it. You will have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when you hear this sound. Make sure you answer as fully as possible.




Part Two

● ○ ○ ○

V67



Describe this picture.





Part Two

○ ● ○ ○



V67


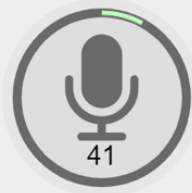



What do you usually eat for lunch on school days?

Part Two

○ ○ ● ○

V67

What advice would you give to a friend about healthy eating?

Part Two

○ ○ ○ ●

Tip

It is important to describe the photo and then expand on your discussion. Don't just list everything you see in the photo. If you spend all 45 seconds simply describing every detail in the photo, you probably won't get a very high score. Try and talk about how you think the people might feel or what it would be like to be in the photo. This will also help you with the next two questions. They will also be related to the topic.

Try to address all the questions you are asked when the photo appears. If you don't address all the questions, you won't be able to get a top mark. Make sure you talk about your own opinions in relation to the question.

There is no single correct way to describe the photos in the test, and the old saying of 'A picture is worth a thousand words' really holds true. Try to say as much as you can in the time you have available. This is your opportunity to show off all your great skills in speaking English!

○ Practice link:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/describe-photo-or-picture



Speaking part three


You answer two questions in this task. These questions test your ability to describe, compare and contrast and provide reasons and explanations in response to spoken questions.

You hear a recording giving instructions. You then see two pictures and are asked a question that gives you a chance to compare and contrast something about the picture. You hear a beep and then have 45 seconds to speak your answer. You hear and read a second question. You hear another beep and have 45 seconds to speak your answer.

This is a sample question.



V67

Part Three. In this part I'm going to ask you to look at the pictures then ask you two questions. You will have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when you hear this sound. Make sure you answer as fully as possible.



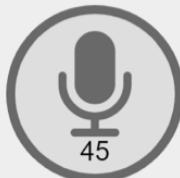
Part Three

V67






Which of these two situations would you prefer to be in, and why?

Part Three






V67



Beep!

How important is it for families to have meals together?

Part Three

Tip

In this task, you need to compare the photos. This means explaining how they are similar and how they are different. Make sure you listen to the question carefully before you answer. The questions are also on the screen so you can read them if that makes you feel more comfortable. Once again, you should not only describe them and discuss how they are similar and different, but you should try and connect the photos to your life. Have you been to a similar place or had a similar experience? If so, please talk about it. If you have never been to a place like that nor had a similar experience, talk about what you think it would be like. You should not limit yourself to what is in the photos, and you should not just give a list of what you see.

One good strategy for this task is to spend some of your time describing the photos or answering the question, and the rest of your time talking about how the photo connects to your life and experiences. If it doesn't connect to your life or experiences, you can discuss what you have heard about it from your friends or family or seen on TV or in a video. Remember, it is more important that you speak and demonstrate your range of English vocabulary and grammar and your fluency. Of course, you need to stay on topic. If you are asked a question about space travel and you talk about swimming, then you will not get many marks. So, make sure you use all the time you have to demonstrate your English skills and answer the question.

Practice link:

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/discussion>



Speaking part four

You give one two-minute talk in this part. This part tests your ability to talk for a long time, bringing together ideas on an abstract topic, giving and justifying opinions and giving advantages and disadvantages.

You see a poster giving a lot of information. You hear and read instructions. You are asked to give a presentation about the poster to your class. You are given 90 seconds to prepare your presentation using the information on the poster. At the end of the 90 seconds you are asked to give your presentation. You hear a beep and then you have two minutes to speak your presentation.

This is a sample question.

Modern Inventions

The electric light bulb

- Invented 1879
- changed the way we live and work
- Today we can see city lights from space

The aeroplane

- Invented in 1903
- First aeroplanes could only fly a few hundred metres
- Today: more than 50,000 commercial flights every day

The mobile telephone

- Invented in 1913
- First mobile phones were big and heavy
- Today more than 6 billion mobile phones in the world

The computer

- Invented in 1941
- First computer was as big as a room
- computers used in all aspects of modern life

Look at the poster. You have prepared this poster with your group. You are now going to present it to your class. You will have 90 seconds to think about your answers before you start speaking. You will have two minutes to give your presentation. Don't just repeat the words on the screen. You should use your own words to describe the information in the poster. Make your presentation as interesting and informative for your classmates as possible.

Part Four

Tip

You should give your presentation as if you were giving it to your class. Remember, you mustn't just read the words on the poster, and you must use your time wisely to prepare what you are going to say and structure your presentation well. Use the information to help you but don't forget to be creative! Try and make your presentation interesting and use the preparation time to plan what you are going to say. Make sure there is a logical structure to your presentation and remember to use appropriate signposting such as 'firstly', 'in conclusion' and so on to help you structure it. You will hear and see the instructions on the screen and then have the poster in front of you as support. Use your time wisely and make sure you speak for the full two minutes.

Practice links:

learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/oral-presentation
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/my-city
 has a poster that you could practise presenting.



Tips for success and common errors

When talking about a photo, try to connect what is in the photo to your own life or tell a story about what you think about the photo.

If you don't know what is in the photos or what is happening, it is no problem. Guess! The speaking test is not testing your knowledge about the photos; it is testing your speaking abilities. As long as the information from the photos is the theme of your discussion, you can talk about anything and you don't have to tell the truth. This is also a great opportunity to show off your abilities to use speculative language such as, I think..., I'm not really sure, but ..., I wonder if..., it could be..., it might be... and so on.

Describing a photo alone can make it difficult to show a wide range of vocabulary, sentence structures and fluency when speaking. Therefore, it will be best to spend a majority of your time:

- speaking by answering other questions than describing
- speculating on what you think about the photo
- discussing a similar experience you have had
- talking about anything related to the photo that will help you demonstrate your higher-level speaking skills.

For all the speaking test, listen to yourself while you speak and if you make an error then try to correct it. Native speakers do this all the time and use phrases such as, 'what I meant to say is', 'I'm sorry, I mean', and so on. Keep talking and don't worry if you make the odd mistake.

If you don't know a word while you are speaking, don't worry as it happens to everyone, even celebrities on camera. You can talk around it by describing what you mean, or even use hesitation strategies such as, 'what's the word', 'I can't remember the word right now, but the idea is', 'it's on the tip of my tongue' and so on.

The best way to improve your English-speaking skills is simply by practising speaking. Don't be afraid to make mistakes when you say things as that is the way we learn.

Relax. It is not a race during the speaking exam, and one of the best strategies for success is to relax, take a deep breath and just do your best.



Other resources

Here are some resources to help develop your speaking skills for the test:

- **Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.**
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/speaking-exams
- **Interested in improving your use of colloquialisms, slang and other informal English often used in speaking?**
urbandictionary.com
- **UsingEnglish's website also offers a "laundry list" of English idioms which are a great way to show off your high-level speaking abilities.**
usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/country/british+english.html

Scoring

Aptis for Teens tests English levels from A1-C on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Reading and listening are marked automatically online, while speaking and writing are marked by examiners. You will receive your results from your school or teacher within 48 hours of taking the test.

Below is a brief overview of the CEFR from the Council of Europe and a general outline of the skills considered when determining a candidate's level. This helps you identify where you are with your English. You will get a scaled score and your CEFR level per skill. Then you can see which areas you might need to improve.

Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

Proficient User

C2 Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

C1 Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

Independent User

B2 Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

B1 Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

**Basic
User**

A2 Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

A1 Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.



Aptis for all

The British Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in English language testing. We believe that the Aptis tests should be accessible to anyone who wants to take them. We also believe that each person should have the opportunity to perform to the best of his or her ability on the Aptis tests.

If you have a disability and believe that Aptis is not accessible to you, or believe that the form of the test will not allow you to show your true level of English, please contact your local British Council centre to talk about the ways in which the test can be modified for your needs.

We can make adjustments such as providing pen and paper tests, face-to-face tests, Braille and large font tests, adjusting timing, and a range of other modifications. Please discuss it with us to ensure that we can support you with a test which is both fair to you and maintains the high standards and reliability of Aptis.

About the British Council

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries.

Correct responses – Vocabulary test

Synonym matching Part 1	big	large
	study	read
	receive	get
	start	begin
	pick	choose

Meaning in context Part 2	1	abroad
	2	alert
	3	ancient
	4	articulate
	5	aggressive

Definition matching Part 3	1	wrap
	2	adjust
	3	announce
	4	arrive
	5	assemble

Collocations Part 4	aerobics	classes
	agriculture	minister
	aisle	seat
	apron	strings
	atom	bomb

Answers to Try this! (page 15)

1. Economical. The second part of the sentence describes what a 'frugal' man does.
2. Untidy. The second part contrasts with 'unkempt'.
3. Stopped. Why couldn't he fly any longer? Because the authorities stopped his license.



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