

A2 READING

› **TEACHER GUIDE**

The purpose of the Teacher Guide

This guide is for teachers preparing learners for the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test. It offers valuable insights, strategies and practical tips to help learners strengthen their reading skills, build confidence and become more effective readers. It also supports you in addressing common challenges learners may encounter and helping them enhance their existing abilities.

It features a range of practice activities drawn from the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test, with follow-up tasks that can be easily tailored to your classroom needs.

You can download free practice papers plus answer keys for the ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test from the LANGUAGECERT website.

Visit: languagecert.org



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> The importance of developing reading skills

Many learners find reading a demanding task, especially when they are expected to extract specific information from a text quickly and accurately. Several factors can make reading more challenging, including complex or unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar text formats, lengthy passages and questions that require learners to understand the writer's style, intention or attitude. As a result, preparing learners for reading assessments can be a difficult process, making it essential to start building the necessary skills early on.

During the test, learners have to read under strict time limits, which can increase stress and make it harder to concentrate. The pressure to perform well, avoid mistakes and complete the test on time can distract from truly understanding and engaging with the material. Teachers play a crucial role in supporting learners through this process by selecting texts that match their language ability, introducing important vocabulary in advance and teaching effective reading strategies. By creating a positive and supportive learning environment, teachers can help learners gain the confidence to take risks, learn from their errors and steadily improve their reading skills.



The challenges of reading in a second language

Reading in a second language can be especially challenging because it requires the brain to work in unfamiliar ways. Instead of effortlessly understanding the text, learners must pay closer attention to meaning, structure and flow.

This increased mental effort can make reading feel slow and tiring. Even when the topic is interesting, readers might struggle to fully grasp the message, which can lead to confusion or frustration.

The unfamiliar sounds, patterns and logic of a new language can also make it hard to stay focused.

As a result, reading becomes not just a skill to develop, but a challenge that demands patience, persistence and support. As teachers, it is important to be aware of the specific challenges A2 learners face when engaging with reading in English.

These early-stage readers are still developing foundational language skills, and their struggles can affect not only comprehension but also motivation and confidence.

KEY CHALLENGES OF READING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE



Limited vocabulary

At A2 level, learners have a very basic vocabulary. They are likely to encounter many unfamiliar words, even in simplified texts. Unlike more advanced learners or native speakers, elementary learners often cannot guess meaning from contextual clues. As a result, reading becomes slow and learners may frequently stop to ask for help or to use a dictionary. This interrupts their comprehension and overall reading flow.



Different grammar and sentence structures

A2 learners are still developing familiarity with basic English grammar and they may struggle with sentence structures that differ from their first language. Even common grammar features such as question forms, negatives or simple tenses can pose difficulties. More complex structures like the passive voice, conditionals or unfamiliar word order are usually beyond their current level and can cause confusion.



Over-reliance on translation

Beginners often rely heavily on translating every word or sentence into their first language. While this is understandable, it can make reading a slow and fragmented process. Additionally, direct translations often don't work well due to differences in language structure and meaning.



Lack of reading fluency

A2 learners typically read word by word, with frequent pauses and uncertainty. This lack of fluency affects both comprehension and enjoyment. Reading can feel like hard work rather than a meaningful or enjoyable activity.



Lack of background knowledge

Many reading texts assume cultural or world knowledge that A2 learners may not have. References to local customs, historical events or common idioms may be unfamiliar. Even with basic vocabulary, learners can find it difficult to understand the full meaning of a passage if they don't share the cultural background.



Low motivation and confidence

Frequent reading difficulties can affect learners' confidence and motivation. A2 learners may become frustrated, feel unsuccessful or believe they are not good at English. This mindset can lead to avoidance of reading altogether.



Pronunciation and internal reading voice

Even during silent reading, learners 'hear' the words in their heads. At A2 level, they may not know how to pronounce words, especially if they've only seen them in writing. This can disrupt their internal reading voice and make it harder to understand the text.



Global reading skills at A2 level

At A2 level, learners can:



understand short and simple texts that use common words and familiar phrases



find clear and easy-to-see information in everyday materials, like adverts, school timetables, posters and brochures

A2 Proficiency Scales

The A2 Proficiency Scales outline the reading skills learners should be able to demonstrate at A2 level, as defined by the CEFR.

At A2 level, learners can:

- **understand short, straightforward texts** that contain high-frequency vocabulary, including internationally familiar words and phrases.
- **locate specific, predictable information** in everyday materials such as adverts, menus, brochures and simple schedules or timetables.
- **identify key details in familiar text types**, such as personal letters, short news items or brochures related to everyday topics.
- **follow simple written instructions related to common tools or services**, such as using a vending machine, printing a document at school or logging into a computer.
- **understand basic signs and notices encountered in public places** (e.g. *streets, schools, restaurants, transport stations or workplaces*).



Getting to know the ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test

The ESOL for Schools test assesses all four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) across two components – Written and Spoken. The Reading, Writing and Listening tests are part of the Written component.



The Reading test consists of four parts.



The overall duration of the Reading and Writing test is 1 hour and 20 minutes.



There is no break between the Reading and Writing tests.



KEY FEATURES OF THE TEST

The table below summarises the key features of the test (skill assessed / focus, tasks presented, format of each part, marks awarded).

PART	SKILL & FOCUS	TASK	FORMAT	RAW MARKS
1	Understand organisational and lexical features in a text	Complete six short texts, each with one gap	A three-option multiple-choice question for each text	6
2	Understand the structure of a short simple text	Complete a short text with six sentences removed	A choice of six sentences to complete five gaps in a text	6
3	Understand the purpose of different texts and how to locate specific information	Answer questions about four texts with a linked theme but a different purpose	Seven multiple-matching questions to identify information from the texts	7
4	Understand specific information through detailed reading	A continuous text: narrative, descriptive, explanatory, expository	Seven three-option multiple-choice questions on the text	7

HOW THE TEST IS MARKED

- › Test takers are awarded one mark per correct response for all parts of the Reading test.
- › The maximum score for all four parts is 26 marks.
- › Marks are then converted to a scaled score from 0–50.
- › There is no minimum score for the Reading test. However, in order to be successful, test takers need to attain at least 50% in the Written component, which consists of the Reading test, as well as the Listening and Writing tests.



Helping learners prepare for the ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test

Familiarising learners with the format and content of the test, as well as providing targeted practice, can significantly enhance their performance on Test Day.

In this section, you will find ideas for preparing learners for each of the four parts of the test, followed by clear, easy-to-use classroom activities drawn from A2 Reading practice papers. These activities are designed to introduce learners to the test format and provide authentic practice. Additional activities are also included to reinforce learning for each section of the test and offer opportunities for further practice.

You can download free practice papers plus answer keys for the ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test from the LANGUAGECERT website.

Visit: [languagecert.org](https://www.languagecert.org)

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING PART 1: MULTIPLE-CHOICE

Learners will be given six short texts, each with a gap. They choose the correct answers to complete the texts.

- › Provide learners with a variety of short texts similar to those they'll encounter in the task, e.g. *messages, notes, diary entries, short emails/letters, instructions*. This will help to familiarise them with the language commonly used in these types of texts.
- › Tell learners to read each text carefully and to look at the key words and phrases either side of the gap. This should give them clues to the correct answers.
- › To help with comprehension, draw learners' attention to the linking words in each text (e.g. *'and', 'but', 'or'*) and encourage them to think about their function.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.

CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE READING PART 1



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Reading test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 1 of the Reading test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

Reading Part 1
Read the texts. Choose the correct answer to complete each text.

1. Cities in the US that my classmates have visited [in alphabetical order]
• Atlanta
• Chicago
• Dallas-Fort Worth
• Houston
• Los Angeles
• _____
• New York
• Philadelphia
• Phoenix
• Washington, D.C.

a) Las Vegas
b) Miami
c) Nashville

2. **School Uniform**
We are changing the uniform for next year.
You can get a list of _____ changes from the school reception.

a) that
b) these
c) this

3. **Bikes4You**
Come and ask us about _____ a bike for next weekend!
Just £15 for Saturday AND Sunday.

a) paying
b) buying
c) renting

4. *Steve, do you want to come to town with me tomorrow morning?
I want to go to that sports shop in the centre _____ they've got some cool new trainers.*

a) because
b) when
c) so

5. Spend a wonderful week in Brighton!
Swim in the sea or have a picnic at our beautiful park, then visit our brilliant shops.
In the evening, have a meal in one of our _____ restaurants.

a) excited
b) star
c) excellent

6. **For Sale**
Skateboard
65cm long, 20cm wide
£15.00
I've had it for two years _____
I've only used it once. It looks as good as new.
Can bring to school any day.

a) but
b) so
c) or

Sample taken from A2 Reading Part 1 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › How many texts are there in Part 1? (answer: six (short) texts)
- › How many questions does Part 1 have? (answer: six questions)
- › What kind of questions are they? (answer: multiple-choice questions)
- › How many multiple-choice options are there for each question? (answer: three options)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge of text types, develops their ability to read for specific information, and provides practice for the Part 1 task.

Step 1

Draw the table (see below) on the board and have learners copy it into their notebooks. Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the task.

Tell pairs to match each description to the correct text number.

Text description	Text number
A teacher's message about the last day of school	
An invitation to a friend	
A notice about what a class will study	
An advert for something in a shop	
An announcement from a shop that needs an assistant	
Instructions for how to use something	

Step 2

Ask pairs to share their answers with the rest of the class, giving reasons for their choices, before providing the correct answers.

(answers:)

Text description	Text number
<i>A teacher's message about the last day of school</i>	2
<i>An invitation to a friend</i>	4
<i>A notice about what a class will study</i>	1
<i>An advert for something in a shop</i>	3
<i>An announcement from a shop that needs an assistant</i>	6
<i>Instructions for how to use something</i>	5

Step 3

Ask pairs to re-read the gapped texts and complete them with the right options.

Step 4

Have learners share their answers with the rest of the class as part of a whole-class discussion, before providing the correct answers.

(answers: 1 b, 2 b, 3 a, 4 a, 5 c, 6 c)

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR READING PART 1 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more reading skills.

1 Simplify the choices

Adapt the practice paper so that each question has only two options – one correct and one incorrect. (Alternatively, you can create your own task sheet, sourcing new Reading Part 1-style texts and creating two answer options – one correct and one plausible distractor.) Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the adapted task. Pairs must read the texts and decide which options fit best based on clues in the text and linking words such as ‘and’, ‘but’ or ‘or’. Following the task, lead a whole-class discussion on why the incorrect option does not work, helping learners focus on the importance of context and logical connections in the text.

By giving just two options, this activity helps to reduce cognitive overload while sharpening learners’ ability to use context clues and linking words to eliminate wrong answers – an essential skill for the Part 1 task.

2 Create a matching task

Adapt the practice paper so that it contains only the gapped texts and not the answer options. Then write the correct answers for all six questions on the board in random order. Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the adapted task. Pairs match the answers to the texts. Encourage learners to read the completed texts to ensure they make sense. When they have finished the task, have pairs share their ideas with the rest of the class, before providing the correct answers.

This activity helps to build learners’ confidence and their ability to use context and vocabulary clues to complete short texts, deepening their overall reading comprehension.

3 Play a game of ‘Pass the paper’

Divide the class into small teams of three or four. Give the first team a copy of the practice paper. They look at question 1 and try to choose the correct answer within a set time limit (e.g. 30 seconds). If they get it right, they win a point. They then pass the paper to the next team, who must answer question 2 within the same time limit. Continue until all teams have had a turn. Repeat for as many rounds as time allows. When the task is finished, add up the points to see which team scored the most and review the answers as a class.

As well as encouraging teamwork, this activity gives learners practice in making quick decisions and develops their time-management skills – helping to build confidence under test-like time pressure. Reviewing the answers as a class afterwards reinforces learning and allows for clarification.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING PART 2: GAP-FILL

Learners will be given a text with six gaps. They choose the correct answer from the seven options to complete the text. There is one option that isn't needed.

- › Tell learners to read the text carefully and to look at the key words and phrases either side of the gaps. This should give them clues to the correct answers.
- › Explain that one option will not be used (acting as a distractor).
- › When they have answered all the questions, advise them to read the completed text to ensure it makes sense.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice



CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE READING PART 2



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Reading test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 2 of the Reading test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

Reading Part 2

Read the text. Choose the correct words to complete each sentence. There is one extra word or phrase you will not need.

Hi Molly

Last weekend, I went to the local zoo, which is really interesting. I've been there several times before because they have (1) there. But I went this time (2) It's only two weeks old.

The zoo, (3), will be open late until 9.00 p.m. all through the school holidays. You should definitely visit it. In fact, I'm going again next month if (4) If you come with me, (5) If you agree, (6) when you might be free.

Tania

- A I have time
- B it isn't late
- C it will be more fun
- D just tell me
- E so many interesting animals
- F to see the new baby elephant
- G which is very big

Sample taken from A2 Reading Part 2 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › How many texts does Part 2 have? (*answer: one text*)
- › How many gaps are there in the text? (*answer: six gaps*)
- › How many options are there to complete the six gaps? (*answer: seven options, one being a distractor*)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity develops learners' skills in reading for both gist and specific information, helps them link reading to speaking, and provides practice for the Part 2 task.

Step 1

Tell learners they are going to read a text written by a girl called Emily who has just returned from an amazing trip to a village by the sea. To engage learners with the topic, ask them the following prediction questions (do not give out a copy of the task just yet):

- › Why do you think she had such a great time there?
- › What do you think she did there?

Encourage learners to share their answers with the rest of the class.

Step 2

Give learners a copy of the task and ask them to read the gapped text. Then have them compare their predictions in Step 1 with the actual information, as part of a class discussion. Invite volunteers to share whether they think Emily's trip would have been amazing for them.

Step 3

Working individually, have learners re-read the text and complete the gaps with the correct options. Remind them that one option is not needed.

Step 4

Put learners in pairs and have them compare their answers with their partner. Pairs then share their answers with the rest of the class as part of a whole-class discussion, giving reasons for their choices. Provide the correct answers.

(answers: 1 G, 2 E, 3 F, 4 C, 5 B, 6 A)

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR READING PART 2 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more reading skills.

1. Set a sentence ordering task

Prepare strips of paper, each with one gapped sentence from the text on it. Put learners in pairs or small groups and give each pair/group a complete set of gapped sentences in random order. Learners must put the sentences in the correct order, reconstructing the text's logical flow within a set time limit. When they have finished, give them the seven answer options from the bottom half of the practice paper. They read each option carefully and choose the best one to complete each gap.

This activity helps learners focus on overall text coherence and individual sentence meaning before deciding on answers. It shows that understanding the sequence supports better comprehension of context, which is crucial for gap-fill tasks with distractors.

2. Focus on meaning beyond the gaps

Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the task. They work together to complete the gaps with the correct options. Set a time limit for them to complete the task. When they have finished, ask them to write a short summary of the text's main idea or story in their own words – just a few sentences. Review the summaries to identify any misunderstandings or gaps in comprehension and plan remedial work for the next lesson if needed.

By having learners summarise the text, this activity consolidates comprehension and helps them process the text as a whole to ensure their answers make sense together.

3. Highlight contextual clues

Give learners a copy of the task. Working individually or in pairs, they skim-read the text (without looking at the options yet) and underline or highlight key words and phrases before and after each gap, e.g. *linking words, time expressions or descriptive adjectives*. Learners then use these clues to decide which option fits each gap.

This activity trains learners to use textual context effectively to eliminate distractors and select the correct word or phrase, helping them become more independent and confident readers.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING PART 3: MULTIPLE MATCHING

Learners will be given four short texts with a linked theme but different purpose. They choose a text for each of the seven questions.

- › To familiarise learners with the task, provide them with sets of four short texts with a common theme but different purpose, similar to those they'll encounter in the test. Have them practise answering questions about the texts, as in the task.
- › Before attempting the task, learners should skim-read all four texts. This will help them to establish the topic, type and purpose of each text, before reading again more carefully with the task in mind.
- › Tell learners to underline the words in the texts that provide clues to the correct answers. They could share these clues in class.
- › You could ask learners to work in pairs and then compare their answers with the rest of the class before you give the right answers.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE READING PART 3



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Reading test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 3 of the Reading test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

Reading Part 3
Read the four texts. Which text gives you the answer to each question? Choose the correct text (A-D) for each question.

A.

The school day

8:30 Doors open – children start arriving
8:45 School officially starts
8:50 Lessons begin
10:00 Assembly
10:20 Snack and play
10:45 Lessons begin
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Lessons begin
3:00 End of school

B.

St John's Primary School

Silver Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH8 7AS

Telephone: 01202 34628
Age range: 4 to 11
Number of pupils: 392
Headteacher: Mr Robert Smith

C.

Dear Mrs Parkinson

My daughter Jessica has a dental appointment today at 1.30. Can she leave school after the lunch break, please?

Thank you very much.
Sue Cutler

D.

Tuesday 15 March

Things to remember:

→ no assembly today
→ 15 children to computer room at 11.00
→ about 1.00 - send Jessica home (dentist)
→ 3.30 - staff meeting

Mark spelling tests for tomorrow!

Which text tells you:

1.	the name of Jessica's teacher?	
2.	how many children go to school?	
3.	the time pupils finish school every day?	
4.	about a change in the school timetable?	
5.	the times pupils eat at school?	
6.	what time Jessica's seeing the dentist?	
7.	when the students don't have assembly?	

Sample taken from A2 Reading Part 3 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › How many texts are there in Part 3? (*answer: four texts*)
- › How many questions does Part 3 have? (*answer: seven questions*)
- › What kind of questions are they? (*answer: multiple matching questions*)
- › What do the four texts have in common? (*answer: they are all related to the same theme*)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity helps learners identify different types of texts, enhances their critical reading skills, and provides practice for the Part 3 task.

Step 1

Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the task. Tell them to read all four texts and to discuss what they think they have in common.

Step 2

Ask pairs to share their ideas with the rest of the class before you provide the correct answer. (*answer: They are all about school.*)

Step 3

Tell learners that each text is a different type and was written for a different purpose. Draw the table (see below) on the board and have learners copy it into their notebooks. Working individually, learners match the texts A–D to the text types.

Text type	Text
A note	
An informational text	
An email	
A timetable	

Step 4

Put learners back in their pairs and have them compare their completed tables with their partner. Pairs then share their ideas with the rest of the class before you provide the correct answers.

(*answers:*)

Text type	Text
A note	<i>D</i>
An informational text	<i>B</i>
An email	<i>C</i>
A timetable	<i>A</i>

Step 5

Pairs now do the task, answering the seven questions that follow the four texts. Have them share their choices with the rest of the class before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 C, 2 B, 3 A, 4 D, 5 A, 6 C, 7 D*)

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR READING PART 3 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more reading skills.

1. Set a text-purpose matching task

Prepare sets of four short texts that share a theme but each have a different purpose, e.g. an announcement, an advert, a social media post and a review, all about music festivals. Write a list of matching purposes on the board and number them (e.g. 1 to inform, 2 to invite, 3 to complain, 4 to describe an experience). Give each learner a set of texts. Working individually or in pairs, they match each text to its purpose by writing the correct number next to it. Then have them share their answers with the class. To make this activity more engaging, you could turn it into a competition. Put learners in teams – the winner is the first team to match all the purposes to the texts correctly.

This activity helps learners recognise how purpose influences tone, structure and language in a text – an important skill when distinguishing between similar-looking texts in Part 3.

2. Organise a clue-finding activity

Give learners the bottom half of the Part 3 task with just the seven questions (do not include the four texts). Working individually or in pairs, learners underline or highlight key words in the questions and predict what kind of information they will need to look for in the texts. Then give them the top half of the Part 3 task with the four texts. Learners match each question to the correct text, using the clues they identified earlier. When they have finished, have learners share their answers with the rest of the class.

This activity trains learners to identify the focus of each question and actively search for relevant information, developing both skimming and scanning skills.

3. Lead a distractor discussion

Give learners a copy of the task. Have them complete it either individually or in pairs and set a time limit. After they have finished, go through each question with the class, providing the correct answer and asking learners why the other three texts are not correct. Learners should try to identify key phrases or clues in each text that help eliminate it as an option.

This activity focuses on eliminating distractors – a key test-taking strategy – and strengthens learners' ability to justify their choices with textual evidence.

4. Create mix-and-match questions

Prepare sets of four texts with different themes (e.g. *travel, school, sports, food*), similar to those in the test. Then write a question that relates to each text and three questions that don't match any of them – seven questions in total. Give learners a set of texts and a set of questions in random order. Working individually or in pairs, learners must identify which questions belong to which texts and which do not fit any.

This activity reinforces theme recognition and helps learners understand how questions are connected to both the content and purpose of a text.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING PART 4: MULTIPLE CHOICE

Learners will be given a continuous text followed by seven questions. They choose the correct answer for each one.

- › To prepare learners for this task, provide them with similar texts to those in the test, and practise asking 'Wh-' and 'How' questions about them. You could do this in class or set written questions as homework.
- › Remind learners to pay attention to the title of the text as this will give them a clue as to what it is about.
- › Tell learners to read through the whole text first to gain a good understanding of it, before attempting to answer the questions.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



CLASS ACTIVITIES TO PRACTISE READING PART 4



Familiarisation activity

This activity can be done before the test activity to check what learners already know about this part of the Reading test, or after the test activity to check what they can remember.

Show learners Part 4 of the Reading test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

Reading Part 4
Read the text and the questions. Choose the correct answer for each question.

Two sisters go sailing

Saturday morning was sunny with just enough wind, so Sarah and Emily decided to take out the little sailing boat that their family kept at the lake. Unfortunately, they were hurrying and forgot to ask their parents if they could go.

The sisters left the beach and decided to sail around the island in the lake. Sometimes they went camping or took a football to the island, but all they had this time were some snacks and juice as they only planned to sail for an hour.

At midday, Sarah was getting out her phone to take some photos when she saw lots of clouds. Suddenly the wind got stronger and the boat started to go faster and faster towards the island. The girls tried to turn the boat but they couldn't.

Finally, it turned. They stopped it hitting the rocks, but both girls fell into the water and the empty boat started sailing back to beach. Fortunately, the water wasn't deep and the girls were soon on the island. They tried to call home but there was no phone signal. They couldn't contact anyone.

The sisters knew there weren't any houses on the island. Nobody lived there. Emily started to climb a tree to look for other boats and then Sarah saw someone by the water, fishing. They ran over to the man and it was Harry who lived in their street!

They all jumped into Harry's boat. They were worried about their boat but when they got to the beach it was there, safe. The sisters told their parents the whole story. They knew they were wrong not to say they were going sailing and they were very sorry.

- The sisters went out in the boat because
 - it was new.
 - the weather was just right.
 - they wanted to improve at sailing.
- What did the sisters take with them in the boat?
 - a tent
 - a ball
 - food and drinks
- What happened at midday?
 - The sisters decided to stop at the island.
 - The weather changed.
 - Sarah took some photos.
- What happened to the boat?
 - It went under the water.
 - It hit the rocks.
 - It returned to the beach.
- The sisters couldn't call their parents because their phones
 - didn't work.
 - were in the boat.
 - were back at home.
- While on the island, the sisters
 - climbed a tree.
 - met a neighbour.
 - found an old house.
- When they got back home, the sisters felt bad about
 - losing their parents' boat.
 - making their parents worry.
 - going sailing without telling their parents.

Sample taken from A2 Reading Part 4 practice paper

Now hide the task and ask learners the following questions to see how much they can remember:

- › How many texts are there in Part 4? (answer: one (long) text)
- › How many questions does Part 4 have? (answer: seven questions)
- › What kind of questions are they? (answer: multiple-choice questions)
- › How many multiple-choice options are there for each question? (answer: three options)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity develops learners' skills in reading for gist and detail and provides practice for the Part 4 task.

Step 1

Tell learners they are going to read a story about two girls who went sailing. To engage them with the topic, ask the class the following questions:

- › Have you ever tried sailing? If not, would you like to? Why? / Why not?
- › Why do some people go sailing? *(example answers: sailing can be an adventure / a way to see new places or make new friends / a way to have fun)*
- › Can you think of any dangers? What could happen? *(example answers: you might get lost / fall in the water / get caught in bad weather)*

Step 2

Write the following words on the board:

sunny island clouds wind fell safe parents

Put learners in pairs and ask them to use the words to predict what happens in the story.

Step 3

Give each pair a copy of the task. Tell them to skim-read the story and identify which of their predictions in Step 2 were correct.

Step 4

Ask pairs to re-read the story and answer the questions which follow it. Pairs then share their ideas with the rest of the class as part of a whole-class discussion. Encourage learners to give reasons for their answers.

Step 4

Provide the correct answers.

(answers: 1 b, 2 c, 3 b, 4 c, 5 a, 6 b, 7 c)

MORE CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR READING PART 4 PRACTICE

Here are some additional activities that use the task content in a different way to give extra practice and build more reading skills.

1. Challenge learners to sum up in three sentences

Put learners in pairs or small groups and give them a copy of the task. Tell pairs/groups to read the text and then write a summary of it in just three sentences. Set a time limit for them to complete this task. When they have finished, read some of the questions from the task. After each question, ask 'Does your summary help answer this?' Learners refine their summary if needed.

By having learners distil key information, this activity develops gist-reading skills and shows how understanding a text's main ideas supports accurate comprehension.

2. Use context to unlock meaning

Identify six to eight key words or expressions in the text that learners need to understand to answer the questions – for example, verbs indicating emotions or actions, or adjectives describing opinions or events (e.g. *'just enough wind'*, *'all they had this time were some snacks and juice'*). Write these words/expressions on the board. Working individually or in pairs, learners read the text and use the context to guess their meanings. They then read the text again to check their guesses before sharing their ideas as part of a whole-class discussion.

This activity helps A2 learners develop strategies for understanding unfamiliar words in context – an essential skill for the Part 4 task. Learners often rely on familiar words or literal meanings and may struggle when a word appears in a new or figurative context. By predicting and checking meanings, they build vocabulary awareness, deepen comprehension and gain confidence in tackling meaning-based questions in the test.

3. Organise a timeline task

For narrative texts, give learners a copy of the task and ask them to read the story. They then create a simple timeline of the key events. (They can do this individually – at home or in class – or in pairs during class.) Learners should note what happened first, next and so on, including any problems, changes or results. Invite volunteers to share their timelines with the class. Learners then use their timelines to answer the multiple-choice questions in the task.

At A2 level, many learners find it difficult to keep track of when events happen or how different parts of a story are connected. Timelines help by visually mapping the story, making it easier to understand cause-and-effect relationships, key turning points and how characters respond to events. This is especially useful for answering questions about the order of events, reasons for actions or outcomes. Creating timelines also encourages re-reading and deeper engagement with the text, both of which strengthen understanding and test performance.



> A2 general reading tips

- > If there are words learners don't know, encourage them to guess their meaning from the context. This will improve their overall comprehension and help them to feel more confident.
- > If learners are struggling to choose the correct answer (e.g. *for multiple-choice tasks*), they can try to eliminate the wrong answers instead.
- > Remind learners that once they've finished the Reading test, they should go back and check all their answers.



Ensuring learners are ready for the ESOL for Schools A2 Reading test

When learners have finished preparing for the Reading test, it's important that they retain key information about it. On Test Day, learners often experience nerves, which can lead to forgetfulness or confusion about the procedures. Taking extra time to review test expectations and ensure learners are fully prepared can help alleviate anxiety and ensure the test process runs more smoothly.

Here's a list of questions to remind learners of what to expect in the Reading test (you may wish to add some of your own):

- › How many parts does the Reading test have? *(answer: four parts)*
- › How many questions are there in total? *(answer: 26 questions)*
- › What types of questions are they? *(answer: multiple-choice, gap-fill and multiple matching questions)*
- › How many options do multiple-choice questions have? *(answer: three options)*
- › How long is the Reading test? *(answer: 1 hour 20 minutes for both the Reading and Writing tests. Note: there is no break between these two tests.)*
- › How many marks are given for each question? *(answer: one mark)*
- › Are test takers given any extra time to record their answers on the Answer Sheet? *(answer: If taking the paper-based test, an extra 10 minutes is given at the end of the Written component. However, no extra time is given for the computer-based test or the online test with live, remote invigilation.)*

Helpful resources and contact information

At LANGUAGECERT, we're committed to providing comprehensive support for both learners and teachers.

Our website offers a wealth of free resources to help prepare for both the Written and Spoken components of the ESOL for Schools A2 test.

Handbooks provide teachers with practical tips and valuable strategies for effectively preparing learners for the tests. They also include detailed descriptions of tasks at every level. Our free downloadable practice papers are an excellent tool for helping learners become familiar with the format and content of the test.

ESOL for Schools Written component resources:

- Listening-Reading-Writing Qualification handbook
- Qualification Overview handbook
- Assessing Writing Performance handbook
- Official Practice Papers
- Sample Answer Sheets
- Teacher Guide (Listening, Reading, Writing)

ESOL for Schools Spoken component resources:

- Speaking Qualification handbook
- Preparing Learners for the ESOL Speaking Exams Guide
- Assessing Speaking Performance handbook
- Official Practice Papers
- Teacher Guide (Speaking)

Additional support available:

- Books
- FAQs
- Live and pre-recorded webinars

To access these resources, visit: www.languagecert.org/en/preparation

Further information

For more information about the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools test, visit our website www.languagecert.org or contact our Customer Services team.

Appendix

Appendix: Essential language structures and functions for A1

At A2 level (for Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking), learners are expected to be familiar with a number of structures and language functions as shown in the table below.

› Functions/notions

Advice
Describing habits and routines
Describing past experiences and storytelling
Describing people
Describing places
Describing things
Invitations
Obligations and necessity
Present continuous for arrangements
Requests
Suggestions

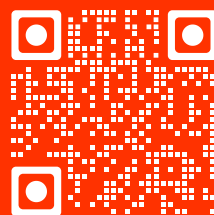
› Discourse markers

Linkers: sequential – past time

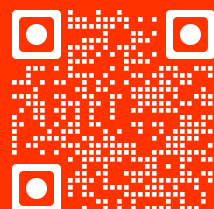
› Grammar forms

Adverbs of frequency
Articles
Basic determiners (e.g. *any, some, a lot of*)
Comparative and superlatives
Conditionals: zero and first
Future time: *will, going to*
have to
Imperatives (+/-)
Modals: can/could
Modals: obligation & necessity
Modals: possibility – *may/might*
Must/mustn't
Nouns: countable and uncountable – *much/many*
Past continuous
Past simple
Phrasal verbs, common
Possessives: 's / s'
Prepositions of time: *on/at/--in*
Prepositional phrases (place, time & movement)
Present continuous
Present continuous for the future (arrangements)
Present perfect
Present simple
should
used to
Verb forms

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