LANGUAGECERT®
ESOL for Schools

B1 READING

› TEACHER GUIDE

The purpose of the Teacher Guide

This guide is for teachers preparing learners for the LANGUAGECERT ESOL for Schools B1 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 B1 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 B1 Reading test from the LANGUAGECERT website.

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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 difficult because it requires the brain to work in unfamiliar ways. Instead of effortlessly understanding the text, learners must pay close 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.

KEY CHALLENGES OF READING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Limited vocabulary

When learners read in a second language, one of the biggest obstacles is a limited vocabulary. They often encounter words they don't understand, which can make even simple texts feel confusing or frustrating. Unlike native speakers, who can usually guess meanings from context, second-language learners may not have enough exposure to the language to do this easily. This can lead to constant pauses in reading, the need to look up words frequently, and ultimately a disruption in comprehension and flow.

Lack of background knowledge

Reading comprehension is not just about understanding words – it's also about understanding ideas and context. Many texts assume a shared cultural or historical background, which second-language learners might not have. For instance, references to historical events, pop culture or societal norms may be clear to native readers but confusing to others. Without this background knowledge, learners may struggle to understand the full meaning of a passage, even if they know the vocabulary.

Difficulty with grammar and sentence structure

Grammar rules vary widely between languages. When learners encounter unfamiliar sentence structures or complex grammar, it becomes harder to figure out what a sentence actually means. For example, passive voice, conditional forms or inverted word orders can be especially difficult. If the learner's native language uses a different grammatical structure, this can add another layer of challenge and make reading slow and mentally taxing.

Translation habits

Many learners try to translate every word or sentence into their native language as they read. While this can sometimes help, it usually slows down reading and can lead to misunderstandings. Languages often have different ways of expressing ideas, so direct translation doesn't always work. Instead of understanding the overall meaning, learners get stuck on individual words, making reading a slow and disjointed process.

Reading fluency

Fluency means being able to read quickly and smoothly with good comprehension. Second-language readers often lack this fluency. They may read slowly, pause often and struggle to connect ideas across a text. This not only affects their understanding but also reduces enjoyment and motivation. Without fluency, reading can feel like a chore instead of a way to learn or relax.

Motivation and confidence

Reading in a second language can feel overwhelming, especially if learners face frequent difficulties. This can lead to a loss of motivation, as they may begin to believe that they're not good at the language. Lack of confidence can become a barrier itself – if learners expect to struggle, they might avoid reading altogether, which then slows their progress.

Idiomatic and figurative language

Idioms, slang, metaphors and other figurative expressions can be especially difficult. These phrases often can't be understood by translating them literally. For example, a phrase like "hit the road" might confuse someone who thinks it means physically hitting a road, when in fact it means to set off on a journey. Such expressions are deeply tied to culture and require familiarity with how the language is used in real-life contexts, which can be especially challenging for high school learners still building their language experience.

Pronunciation and internal speech

Even during silent reading, people often "hear" the words in their heads. For second-language learners, uncertainty about how words are pronounced can interrupt this internal voice, making reading feel unnatural or jarring. This can also interfere with comprehension, especially when learners are unsure if they're recognising the word correctly or mixing it up with another similar-looking word.

Global reading skills at B1 level

At B1 level, learners are able to:

understand factual texts on topics that interest them, especially when the language is clear and uses common everyday vocabulary	They can follow the main ideas in simple articles about familiar subjects, such as school events, technology, music or sport	They are also able to understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes – like those found in personal stories, diary entries or messages from friends.

B1 Proficiency Scales

The B1 Proficiency Scales outline the reading skills learners should be able to demonstrate at B1 level, as defined by the CEFR.

At B1 level, learners can:

- **understand straightforward texts** on topics that are familiar or personally interesting.

- **find useful information** in everyday materials such as school newsletters, social media posts, classroom handouts and short emails from teachers or friends.

- **search through a longer article – or several shorter ones**, like blog posts or web pages – to find specific details they need for school projects or homework tasks.

- **follow the main points** in news stories about topics they've discussed in class (for example, the environment, education, sport) and understand the writer's main conclusion in opinion pieces, provided the arguments are clearly organised.

- **generally follow the main line of reasoning**, although they may not fully understand all the details or complex vocabulary.

- **understand the description of events, feelings and opinions** in messages from friends –such as texts, notes or emails – well enough to write back and keep a conversation going.

Getting to know the ESOL for Schools B1 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 2 hours and 10 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 the coherence and cohesion in a variety of authentic texts (testing layout, lexis, cohesive devices and coherence)	Complete five short texts, each with one gap	A three-option multiple-choice question for each text	**5**
2	Understand how meaning is developed in a text	Complete a short text with six sentences removed	A choice of seven sentences to complete six gaps in a text	**6**
3	Understand the purpose of a text 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	Answer questions about a continuous text, e.g. narrative, descriptive, explanatory, expository, biographical or instructive	Eight open-ended "Wh-" questions requiring short answers (maximum three words)	**8**

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 the Writing tests.

Helping learners prepare for the ESOL for Schools B1 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 B1 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.

Note: For less confident classes, consider breaking down activities into smaller parts (e.g. over two lessons). This can help build their confidence and make reading practice less daunting. Another approach is to begin with fewer questions than those included in the practice paper.

> **You can download free practice papers plus answer keys for the ESOL for Schools B1 Reading test from the LANGUAGECERT website.**
>
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HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING PART 1: MULTIPLE CHOICE

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

> To practise for this part, provide learners with a variety of short texts similar to those they'll encounter in the task (e.g. notices, emails, instructions, letters, questionnaires, tickets). This will help to familiarise them with the language commonly used in these types of texts. Then ask questions about these texts (e.g. about gist, detailed information, ideas or opinions expressed, or the writer's purpose).

> 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 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
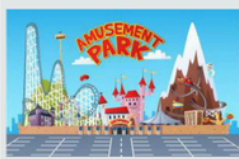
Familiarisation activity

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.

Sample taken from B1 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: five (short) texts)*

❯ How many questions does Part 1 have? *(answer:five 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

Put learners in pairs and give them a copy of the task. Ask them to read the five texts and write the correct text number next to each description in the table below. You could also draw the table on the board for reference.

Text type/message	Text number
An email/letter someone has sent	
A message after someone has visited a place	
A coupon / something you can use to get a better price	
A short article	
Information about a play	

Step 2

Ask pairs to share their answers with the class and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion.

Step 3

Provide the correct answers (see below).

Text type/message	Text number
An email/letter someone has sent	5
A message after someone has visited a place	1
A coupon / something you can use to get a better price	4
A short article	3
Information about a play	2

Step 4

Still working in their pairs, learners choose the correct answers to complete the five gapped texts.

Step 5

Ask pairs to share their answers with the class and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion. Then provide the correct answers.

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

Create a text matching task

Put learners in pairs or small groups. Give each group five short texts without titles and five titles in jumbled order to match (e.g. "A visit to the zoo", "Special offer inside"). Learners read each text, identify its type (e.g. an article, an email, a message, an advert), and then match it to a title. Groups can compare answers and explain their choices. This activity helps learners reinforce understanding of text types and improves skimming skills.

Play a game of "Who fooled me?"

Create a short, relatable story (e.g. a school trip gone wrong, a group chat drama) with one gap in the text and three options for completing it, including two believable distractors. Learners work in pairs to read the story, discuss the options and choose their answer. Ask pairs to share their answers with the class and find out how many were "fooled" into choosing one of the distractors. Ask them to explain why they chose that particular answer and guide the class to identify what made the distractor seem correct (e.g. similar wording, emotional language, tricky detail).

Set a text-type matching challenge

Place five different types of "mystery" texts (e.g. a short article, an email, a message, an advert, a notice) around the classroom. They should be numbered 1–5, but not labelled. Divide the class into teams and give each team a worksheet with five symbols on it, each representing one of the text types. Teams move around the room, reading each text, deciding what type of text it is, and matching it to a symbol by writing the text number next to it. When they have finished, elicit the correct answers from the teams and provide any additional feedback if needed.

If you want to add an extra challenge, ask learners to answer a question or solve a riddle that requires finding specific information in the texts. For example: "One of the texts talks about a discount. How much is the discount? Write the number. Another text is a message from a friend. What time does the friend want to meet? Write the number. Now add these two numbers together to complete the challenge!" This activity encourages movement, teamwork and problem-solving, while helping students practise skimming and recognising different text types.

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

Learners will be given a text with six gaps. They choose the correct sentence from the seven options (A–G) to complete the text.
There is one sentence that isn't needed.

> To familiarise learners with this part, provide them with short texts, each with six missing sentences plus a distractor sentence. Learners could discuss as a class where each missing sentence belongs and why, and which is the distractor.

> Tell learners to read the text carefully. They should look at the title and the key words/phrases/sentences either side of the gaps, which will give them clues to the correct answers.

> To help them better understand the text, draw learners' attention to cohesive devices (e.g. "and", "but", "then", "finally", "however") and to think about their function.

> Explain that one sentence will not be used (acting as a distractor).

> When they have chosen all their answers, 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.

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Reading Part 2
Read the text. Use the sentences to complete the text. Choose the correct sentence for each gap. There is one extra sentence you will not need.

Karaoke

There are many different types of popular entertainment. The most successful of these are usually very simple. **(1)** _____

Karaoke is a Japanese word which translates as 'empty orchestra.' The idea is that the music of a song is played without the words. **(2)** _____ The result may not always be of great musical quality. It is, however, usually great fun.

(3) _____ It has been around for as long as people have made music. Karaoke has basically developed a tradition which already existed. **(4)** _____ In a word – technology. Karaoke records both music and words and lets people put them together.

We don't usually know who first had the idea for any type of popular entertainment. These things seem to develop by themselves. **(5)** _____ In fact, it is generally accepted that the idea for Karaoke as we know it today belongs to someone named Daisuke Inoue. Unfortunately, he never registered the name officially and missed the chance to make a lot of money. He did win an award for 'a new way for people to tolerate each other.' **(6)** _____

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A   The idea of singing along to background music is not new.

B   With Karaoke, however, this is not the case.

C   What it has done is to use something which did not exist in earlier times.

D   Nobody knows how Karaoke became so popular.

E   People read these from a screen and sing along to the music.

F   If Karaoke has done this, it is truly priceless.

G   Karaoke is a perfect example of this type of success story.

Sample taken from B1 Reading Part 2 practice paper

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

〉 How many questions does Part 2 have? *(answer: six questions)*

〉 What kind of questions are they? *(answer:gap-fill questions)*

〉 How many sentences have been removed from the text? *(answer: six sentences)*

〉 How many sentences are provided to complete the six gaps? *(answer: seven sentences, one being a distractor)*

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity draws on learners' prior knowledge, develops their ability to predict vocabulary and content related to a specific topic, and provides practice for the Part 2 task.

Step 1

Tell learners they are going to read a text about Karaoke. To engage them with the topic, ask the class a few related questions (do not give them a copy of the task just yet):

❭ What / How much do you know about Karaoke?

❭ Have you ever done Karaoke? (Where? When?)

❭ Do you and your friends like Karaoke? Why (not)?

❭ What words related to "Karaoke" would you expect to find in the text? *(example answers: singing, music, lyrics, screen, microphone, pre-recorded songs, etc.)*

Step 2

Give each learner a copy of the task and ask them to write their answers.

Step 3

Put learners in pairs and have them compare their answers with their partner.

Step 4

Ask pairs to share their answers with the class as part of a whole-class discussion, giving reasons for their choices. Then provide the correct answers.

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

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.

Do the flow test

Read the gapped text aloud to the class, pausing dramatically at each gap. Display three sentence options for each gap (one correct answer and two distractors). Ask learners to vote on which of the three sentences flows most naturally, using hand signals or cards labelled A, B and C. After each vote, ask volunteers to explain their reasoning – what was their choice based on? Logic? Pronouns? Tone?

This activity helps learners develop a natural sense of how language fits together by focusing on cohesion, logic and tone in context. It encourages active listening, prediction and metacognitive reasoning through collaborative decision-making. Using hand signals or cards also allows for inclusive participation, even for shy or lower-level learners.

Set a gap-fill activity

Put learners in pairs and give each pair a short paragraph with a clear sequence of events. Ask them to copy the paragraph onto a separate sheet, remove one sentence of their choice, and replace it with a blank line (_____). They then write the sentence plus two distractors below the paragraph in jumbled order and letter them A–C. Pairs swap their sheets with another pair, who must complete the mini gap-fill correctly. After finishing, pairs check their answers against the original paragraph. If they chose one of the distractors, encourage them to explain to the other pair their reasoning.

This activity deepens understanding of sentence cohesion by reversing the task. It encourages creative thinking and ownership and helps learners understand what makes a correct or incorrect match.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING
PART 3: MULTIPLE MATCHING

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

❯ To familiarise learners with this part, provide them with sets of four short texts with a common theme but different purpose, similar to those they'll encounter in the task (e.g. emails, articles, adverts) and have them answer questions about the texts.

❯ 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 correct ones.

❯ 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.

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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 new Spartan's Football Stadium's opening ceremony was held yesterday and attended by guests including star footballer, Jay Ferosa. Fans then saw an excellent match in bad weather between the Spartans and the Giants. The Giants didn't play well in the rain and the Spartans defeated them 4-1. The stadium, which was built for three million euros, is now open to visitors on weekdays.

B

Parents can now send their children to the Spartan Football Academy at the famous new stadium. The two-week camps are going to take place during the summer holidays in July and August, with professional coaches and guest appearances by famous footballers. If you want your children to learn football skills and make new friends, this is the place for them. Take a friend and pay half price!

C

The Spartan's Football Stadium opening ceremony was great! I'm so happy I could be there. The building looks amazing; no wonder it cost so much. The match was fantastic despite the weather. I thought the footballers would stop playing, but they were great and didn't go off, although the wet grass seemed quite dangerous. They're organising football camps in the summer, so we could go together.

D

Rain delay and *rain stopped play* are words used to describe a sporting event which is delayed or cancelled because of rain. Sports typically stopped because of rain include golf, tennis, and cricket, where even slightly wet conditions can be dangerous for players. Football games generally continue despite the rain, although players can choose to stop the match and go off if the ground becomes too wet.

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Which text:

1. explains what usually happens in bad weather?
2. is part of a personal letter?

Which text tells you:

3. exactly how much something cost?
4. the benefits of a summer programme?
5. where a famous person went?
6. about some players who did something unexpected?
7. about sports which people don't play on wet grass?

Sample taken from B1 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 the source of different texts, enhances their critical reading skills, and provides practice for the Part 3 task.

Step 1

Give each learner a copy of the task and tell them to read the four texts. Ask them what the texts have in common.

Step 2

Put learners in pairs and have them compare their answer with their partner. Pairs then share their ideas with the class, before you provide the correct answer. *(answer: They are all about football.)*

Step 3

Tell learners that each text was written with a different purpose and is from a different source. For stronger classes, ask learners to think about where each text may have come from (e.g. a dictionary, manual, menu, etc). For weaker classes, you might want to provide the 'source' and ask learners to complete a table, such as the following:

Source (where the text may have come from)	Text
An email	
A reference book / a teenager's encyclopaedia	
A newspaper article	
An announcement	

Step 4

Ask learners to discuss their answers with their partner, thinking about which clues helped them. Then invite them to share their ideas with the class, as part of a whole-class discussion before you provide the correct answers.

(answers:
Text A: a sports article in a newspaper – clues: descriptive tone, clear sentence structure not characteristic of a spoken text
Text B: an announcement for parents from a sports club – clues: fairly formal tone)
Text C: an email – clues: friendly/informal tone and punctuation, e.g. exclamation mark, invitation to the reader to go somewhere together
Text D: a reference book / teenager's encyclopaedia – clues: definition-type information, shared/extra clarifications provided for the reader)

Step 5

Still in their pairs, ask learners to read the four texts again and answer the questions that follow. They can share their answers with the class before you provide the correct answers.

(answers: 1 D, 2 C, 3 A, 4 B, 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.

Turn learners into theme detectives

Choose four texts on the same theme but from different sources – e.g. an email, a manual, a newspaper article, an announcement – and remove the titles. Put learners in pairs and give them the four untitled texts. Ask learners to discuss the texts with their partner, identifying what they have in common and the clues in the texts that indicate this (e.g. Are the texts all related to sport? How do they know?). Invite pairs to share their ideas as part of a whole-class discussion, giving reasons for their answers and pointing out the features in the texts that helped them identify the theme. After discussing the theme, give learners a list of possible sources and ask them to match each text to its source, based on the style, tone and purpose of the text.

This activity helps learners to recognise common themes across different types of texts – a useful skill for the B1 Reading test.

Note: You can find a list of topics in the ESOL for Schools Qualification Handbook on the LANGUAGECERT website. Visit: https://www.languagecert.org/en

Organise a text-matching competition

Write four short paragraphs on the same theme (e.g. football) on the board (or project them). Divide learners into four teams and give each team a set of source cards (e.g. Email, Manual, Announcement, Article). Teams must match the source cards to the correct paragraph, looking for clues in the tone, format and content of the texts. The first team to correctly match all the source cards to the paragraphs wins the competition. To extend the activity, teams could take turns to explain the reasons for their choices to the rest of the class.

Note: Instead of writing the paragraphs on the board, you could print them on separate text cards and give a set of cards to each team.

This activity helps learners recognise different text types by looking at clues such as tone, layout and purpose. Working in teams builds confidence and encourages discussion, and the game-like format keeps learners engaged while strengthening reading and critical thinking skills.

Create a theme carousel

Prepare four short texts on different themes (e.g. football, health, technology, music), using a variety of text types (e.g. article, email, blog post, review). Then put up four blank posters around the room, each labelled with one of the themes. Divide the class into four teams and assign each team a starting theme. Give all teams the four texts. Teams begin by reading the text that matches their assigned theme and noting key vocabulary or ideas on the corresponding poster. They could nominate one team member to act as a scribe.

After five minutes, teams move on to the next poster, read the relevant text, and add their ideas to that poster. Continue until each team has visited all four posters. To finish, have teams return to their original poster. They should compare their initial notes with the additions from the other teams and discuss how the ideas developed. The movement in this activity helps keep learners engaged and can aid memory and recall.

HOW TO PREPARE LEARNERS FOR READING
PART 4: QUESTIONS WITH SHORT ANSWERS

Learners will be given a continuous text followed by eight questions. They write answers to the questions using 1–3 words.

〉 To prepare learners for this part, provide them with similar texts to those in the task (e.g. narrative, descriptive, expository, biographical) and have them practise answering "Wh-" and "How" questions about the texts. You could do this in class or set as homework.

〉 Aim to develop crucial reading strategies, particularly scanning as this part of the Reading test requires a detailed understanding of the text.

〉 Tell learners to pay attention to the title of the text as this will give them a clue as to what it is about.

〉 Advise learners to read the whole text first to gain a good understanding of it, before attempting to answer the questions.

〉 Remind learners to write short answers (1–3 words), as they won't be awarded extra marks for longer responses.

〉 If doing the paper-based test, learners should make sure their writing is legible – they could lose marks if the Examiner can't understand what they've written.

〉 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.

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Reading Part 4
Read the text and answer the questions. Use a maximum of three words for each answer.

Superman

Superman is a fictional character with amazing powers. Many people consider Superman the greatest superhero ever. He is certainly the best known. The 1978 Hollywood *Superman* movie made more money than any other film of its time and gave Superman a worldwide audience.

You have to look before 1978 for Superman's appearance in comics. The character was created in the early 1930s and in June 1938, the familiar figure was first seen by the public in *Action Comics*. Since then, he has been on radio and TV and even in a 1960s Broadway musical called *Is it a bird?*

Superman was created by American writer Jerry Siegel, and a Canadian artist colleague drew the character and designed his costume. Superman's powers included great strength, incredible speed and the ability to fly. This last power was added only in the 1940s for new cartoons.

Superman was raised by a farmer and his wife, who gave him the name Clark Kent to protect his superhero identity. The couple found Superman as a baby after his father, a scientist on the distant planet Krypton, sent him into space before the planet exploded.

Superman believed that only he escaped from Krypton. Later, he discovered that his cousin, Kara, also got away. Several super animals joined the story, but Kara was the only other person to survive the planet's destruction.

Superman was called *Man of Steel* because nothing on earth could harm him. Only kryptonite, which was rock from his home planet, could kill Superman. The one thing which protected him from its deadly rays was the common metal, lead. Superman had enemies who tried to kill him. His most famous enemy, Lex Luthor, was actually a childhood friend.

As Clark Kent, he worked as a journalist in Metropolis after his upbringing and education in his home town, Smallville. Whenever there was a crisis, he would swiftly change into his famous Superman costume which was entirely blue and red apart from the distinctive yellow letter S on his chest.

LanguageCert Achiever B1

1. In which year did Superman first appear in comics?

   _____

2. What nationality was the person who created comic book pictures of Superman?

   _____

3. What could Superman not do before 1940?

   _____

4. What was the occupation of Superman's father?

   _____

5. How many people does the text say escaped from Krypton?

   _____

6. What could protect Superman from kryptonite rays?

   _____

7. What was the relationship between Superman and Lex Luthor when they were young?

   _____

8. Where did Superman go to school?

   _____

Sample taken from B1 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: eight questions)*

❭ What kind of questions are they? *(answer: open-ended/"Wh-" questions)*

❭ How long can each answer be? (*answer: a maximum of three words*)

TEST ACTIVITY

This activity encourages learners to draw on their prior knowledge, develops their prediction skills and ability to read for specific information, and provides practice for the Part 4 task.

Step 1

Tell the class they are going to read a text about Superman. To engage learners with the topic, ask them to share with the class words or phrases they associate with Superman. You could write these words/phrases on the board. *(example answers: superhero, comic book, movie/film character, costume, fighting crime, kind, strong, able to fly).*

Step 2

Continuing the class discussion, ask learners to predict the kind of information they will read about in the text. *(example answers: why Superman is still popular, information about his appearance and character, what he does and why, etc.)*

Step 3

Put learners in pairs and give each pair a copy of the task. Ask them to briefly skim the text, identifying which of their predictions in Steps 2 and 3 were correct.

Step 4

Tell pairs to read the text again, this time reading for detail, and answer the questions which follow.

Step 5

Ask pairs to share their answers with the class and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion. Then provide the correct answers.

(answers: 1 1938, 2 Canadian, 3 fly, 4 scientist, 5 two, 6 lead, 7 friends, 8 Smallville / in his (own) town.)

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.

Lead a prediction-based reading task

To activate background knowledge, start a class discussion about other famous superheroes (e.g. Batman, Spider-Man, Wonder Woman) and have learners brainstorm a list of related words or phrases (as in Step 1 of the test activity). Then, give learners a list of facts, topics or events that might appear in the text (e.g. Superman's origin, Superman's enemies, the city Superman protects). Working in pairs, learners skim the text to see which items from your list are included and which aren't. They then discuss their findings, thinking about what these reveal about the focus of the text. Finally, ask learners to read the text in more detail and answer comprehension questions (e.g. What is Superman's weakness? Where did Superman grow up?).

This kind of activity sharpens learners' ability to anticipate text content based on context and prior knowledge.

Do the 60-second scanning challenge

Provide learners with a medium-length text (around 150–200 words) and a set of targeted questions focusing on specific details such as names, dates, numbers and facts. Then, challenge learners to find all the answers in just 60 seconds. Afterwards, lead a short class discussion to reflect on the strategies they used, asking guiding questions like "How did you search for the answers?" or "Did you read the whole text or just parts of it?".

This activity provides extensive practice in scanning for specific information under time pressure – a key skill for success in timed reading exams – and helps develop more efficient reading strategies.

Ask Who, What and Why?

Put learners in pairs and give each pair three or four short texts on the same theme (e.g. school exams) but with different tones (e.g. formal report, learner complaint, parent newsletter, social media post). For each text, ask pairs to guess who wrote it, say what the writer's attitude is (e.g. angry, neutral, enthusiastic) and what the purpose of the text is (e.g. to inform, to persuade, to entertain). They can share their ideas as part of a whole-class discussion.

This activity helps prepare learners for Part 3 of the Reading test by providing four texts with the same theme but each written for a different purpose.

B1 general reading tips

These tips provide useful strategies for tackling the different B1 Reading task types and will help learners approach the test with confidence.

> 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.

> Have learners practise reading strategies (skimming and scanning).

> Tell learners that the information in the texts will follow the same order as the questions in the task.

> 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.

> For extra language practice in class, ask learners to explain their answers, e.g. for multiple-choice tasks, they could share why they chose a particular option rather than the other two.

> Have learners practise Reading tasks using the free practice papers on the LANGUAGECERT website.

Ensuring learners are ready for the ESOL for Schools B1 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 does it comprise in total? *(answer: 26 questions)*

> What types of questions will there be in the Reading test? *(answer: multiple-choice, multiple matching and open-ended/"Wh-" questions)*

> What's the duration of the Reading and Writing test? *(answer: 2 hours 10 minutes for both the Reading and Writing tests. Note: there is no break between these two tests.)*

> How many marks are awarded for each question? *(answer: 1 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 granted at the end of the Written component. However, no extra time is provided 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 B1 test.

Handbooks provide teachers with practical tips and valuable strategies for effectively preparing learners for the test. 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's 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's Guide (Speaking)

 Additional support available:

- Books
- FAQs
- Live webinars
- Pre-recorded webinars

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

Further information

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

Appendix

Appendix: Essential language structures and functions for B1

At B1 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**
Describing places
Describing past experiences and storytelling
Describing feelings, emotions and attitudes
Expressing opinions

❯ **Discourse functions**
Initiating and closing a conversation
Checking understanding (from both a speaker's and a listener's point of view)
Managing interaction (interrupting, changing topic, resuming, or continuing)

❯ **Discourse markers**
Linkers: sequential – past time
Connecting words expressing cause and effect, contrast, etc.
Markers to structure informal spoken discourse
Contrasting opinions (on the one hand …)

❯ **Questions**
Wh- questions in the past
Complex question tags

❯ **Grammar forms**
Past continuous
used to
would expressing habit in the past
Past perfect
Future
Future time: will & going to (prediction)
Present perfect
Past simple
Present perfect continuous
Conditionals: zero, first, second and third

Passives
Reported speech (range of tenses)
Modals: might, may, will, probably (possibility)
Modals: must / can't (deduction)
Modals: must / have to, ought to, need to (obligation and necessity)
Modals: should have, might have, etc. (past)
Articles: with countable and uncountable nouns
Determiners
Broad range (e.g. all the, most, both)
Adjectives
Adverbial phrases of time, place and frequency, including word order
Adjectives vs adverbs
Adverbial phrases of degree/extent, probability
Comparative and superlative forms of adverbs
Intensifiers
Broader range of intensifiers (e.g. too, so, enough)
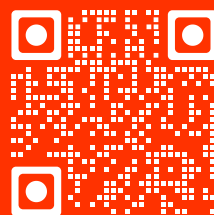Wide range (e.g. extremely, much too)
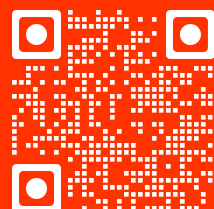
❯ **Pragmatic awareness**
Colloquial language
Lexico-grammatical features
Phrasal verbs

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