

International English for Speakers
of Other Languages

Qualification Overview



LanguageCert is an Ofqual-regulated Awarding Organisation responsible for the development and award of language qualifications. LanguageCert's mission is to offer high-quality language qualifications that are fit-for-purpose for the candidates they serve.

The aim of this handbook is to provide teachers and candidates with a practical overview of the main features of LanguageCert International ESOL exams. For more detailed information, please consult the Qualification Handbooks available online.

Qualification Overview

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Listening			Marks
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format
Part 1	Recognise simple key information in short statements.	The candidate listens to seven utterances twice and matches them to letters, words, graphics and symbols.	Three-option multiple choice for each utterance. 7
Part 2	Identify functions in short utterances typical of spoken English.	The candidate listens to seven utterances twice and chooses the best reply.	Three-option multiple choice for each utterance. 7
Part 3	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens to six short conversations twice and chooses the correct answer. The candidate identifies: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Three-option multiple choice question for each dialogue. 6
Part 4	Extract key information from a dialogue.	The candidate listens twice to a conversation with two speakers and chooses the correct answers.	A form with six headings and multiple-choice options to tick the correct information for each heading. 6
			Total: 26

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understanding of organizational and lexical features of the text.	The candidate reads six short gapped texts and chooses the correct answer that completes each text.	One three-option multiple choice for each text to complete each one correctly.	6
Part 2	Understand the structure of a short simple text.	The candidate reads a text with five gaps.	Gapped text followed by a choice of six options to complete the text correctly. One option is a distractor.	5
Part 3	Awareness of purpose of different text and ability to locate specific information.	The candidate reads the four texts, e.g. notice, letter, appointment card, with a linked theme, but with a different purpose. The candidate chooses the correct text for each of the seven questions.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Identify meaning in short texts.	The candidate reads nine notices and matches each of the eight statements to the notice with the same meaning. One statement is extra.	Match each statement to the appropriate text.	8
Total:				26

Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Communicate ideas or basic information in simple sentences.	Instructions are given to write on a given topic, eg about themselves, daily life, people, where they live, what they do etc.	Write four sentences (about 30 words) on given topic.	12
Part 2	Short simple text for an intended audience.	Instructions are given to write a short letter, card, postcard or message mentioning two content points.	A 30-word composition.	12
Total:				24

A2

Access Level

(examination duration:
listening: about **20 minutes**;
reading and writing: **1 hour and 20 minutes**)

Listening			Marks
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format
Part 1	Recognise simple key information in short statements.	The candidate listens to seven short statements to match them with pictures, numbers, spellings, plans, maps, etc. Each item contains two pieces of information.	Three-option multiple choice for each utterance.
Part 2	Identify functions in short utterances typical of spoken English.	The candidate listens to seven short utterances twice and chooses the best reply, one being formal.	Three-option multiple choice for each utterance.
Part 3	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens to six short conversations with two speakers twice to identify: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Three-option multiple choice question for each dialogue.
Part 4	Extract key information from a monologue.	The candidate listens twice to a message, announcement, etc. to identify specific information.	A note or message pad with six headings and space to write the correct information for each heading.
			Total: 26

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand the structure of a short simple text.	The candidate reads six short texts, e.g. a list, label, address, notice, each with a gap.	One three-option multiple choice for each text to complete each one correctly.	6
Part 2	Understand coherence and cohesion of short texts.	The candidate reads a text with six gaps.	Gapped text followed by a choice of seven options to complete the text correctly. One option is a distractor.	6
Part 3	Understand the purpose of text and to locate specific information.	The candidate reads four short texts, e.g. notice, letter, appointment card, with a linked theme, but with a different purpose.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Understand specific information through detailed reading in a longer text.	The candidate reads a continuous text: a narrative, descriptive, explanatory, expository text.	Seven three-option multiple choice questions on the text.	7
Total:				26

Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Respond informally to a given text.	Instructions are given to write a response to a given letter, message, email, greetings card, postcard, etc. The text includes three questions, suggestions, or requests, etc.	A 30 to 50-word composition.	12
Part 2	Write a neutral text for an intended audience.	Instructions are given to write for a particular reader in a specified way, e.g. letter, message, note, etc. Three items of content to be included.	A 30 to 50-word composition.	12
Total:				24

B1

Achiever Level

(examination duration:

listening: about **30 minutes**;

reading and writing: **2 hours and 10 minutes**)

Listening			Marks	
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand context, meaning and function of a range of utterances.	The candidate listens to seven short sentences: a statement, an explanation, a description, an instruction or a question.	Three-option multiple choice for each of the seven utterances to choose the appropriate response.	7
Part 2	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens to three conversations twice and identifies: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, roles, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Two three-option multiple choice questions for each of the three conversations.	6
Part 3	Extract key information from a monologue to complete a task.	The candidate listens twice to a radio broadcast, talk, narrative, presentation, etc. to identify specific information.	A message pad with a heading and seven prompts and space to write the correct information for each prompt. Answers are one to three words.	7
Part 4	Follow a discussion between two speakers.	The candidate listens to a conversation twice and identifies gist, examples, fact, opinion, contrast, purpose, key ideas, attitude, cause and effect.	Six three-option multiple choice questions.	6
			Total:	26

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand the coherence and cohesion of a variety of authentic texts.	The candidate reads five short texts each with one gap testing layout, lexis, cohesive devices, coherence.	Five three-option multiple choice for each text to complete.	5
Part 2	Understand how meaning is built up in a text.	The candidate reads a text with six sentences removed (e.g. topic sentence, summarising sentence, developing idea, emphasising a point, opinion, contrast, sequence, forward and back reference, transition to a new idea).	Choice of seven sentences to choose from to complete the six gaps. One sentence is provided as a distractor.	6
Part 3	Understand the purpose of text and to locate specific information.	The candidate reads four short texts (e.g. e-mail, article, advert, etc) but with different purpose and chooses the correct text for each of the questions.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Locate and obtain specific information through detailed reading.	The candidate reads a continuous text: narrative, descriptive, expository, biographical, instructive text.	Eight open-ended 'wh-' questions requiring short answers of one to three words.	8
Total:				26

Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Respond appropriately to a given text to produce a response for an intended audience.	Instructions are given to write a response to a letter, poster, diary, timetable, leaflet, etc for a specified reader and with three content points to be included.	A 70 to 100-word composition.	12
Part 2	Write an informal letter/ email to a friend.	Instructions are given to write a letter or email on a given topic of personal interest with two functions to be included, e.g. invite a friend to stay, describe what you will do.	A 100 to 120-word composition.	12
Total:				24

B2**Communicator Level**

(examination duration:

listening: about **30 minutes**;reading and writing: **2 hours and 10 minutes**)

Listening			Marks
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format
Part 1	Understand context, meaning and function in short conversations on concrete and abstract topics.	The candidate listens twice to seven unfinished conversations between two speakers.	One three-option multiple choice for each conversation to choose the appropriate completion or continuation of the conversation.
Part 2	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens twice to three conversations with two speakers to identify: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationships between speakers, roles, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Two three-option multiple choice questions for each of the three conversations.
Part 3	Extract key information from a monologue to complete a task.	The candidate listens twice to a radio broadcast, talk, narrative, presentation, etc. to identify specific information.	A message pad with a heading and seven prompts and space to write the correct information for each prompt. Answers are one to five words.
Part 4	Follow a discussion between two speakers.	The candidate listens to a conversation twice and identifies gist, examples, fact, opinion, contrast, purpose, key ideas, attitude, cause and effect.	Six three-option multiple choice questions.
			Total: 26

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand in detail information, ideas and opinions in a longer text.	The candidate reads one long text: a news story, article, review or proposal.	Six three-option multiple choice questions.	6
Part 2	Understand how meaning is built up in a text.	The candidate reads a text with six sentences removed (e.g. topic sentence, summarising sentence, developing idea, emphasising a point, opinion, contrast, sequence, forward and back reference, transition to a new idea).	Choice of seven sentences to choose from to complete the six gaps. One sentence is provided as a distractor.	6
Part 3	Understand the purpose of text and to locate specific information and awareness of writers' stance and attitude.	The candidate reads four texts, e.g. an email, article, advert, brochure, etc. with a linked theme, but with a different purpose.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Understand specific information through detailed reading.	The candidate reads a continuous text: narrative, descriptive, expository, biographical, instructive text.	Seven open-ended 'wh-' questions requiring short answers of up to five words.	7
Total:				26

Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Respond appropriately to a given text to produce a formal response for an intended public audience.	Instructions are given to the candidate to respond using a written input with three content points to be addressed; the intended reader is specified.	A 100 to 150-word composition.	12
Part 2	Produce a personal letter, a narrative or descriptive composition.	Instructions are given to write an informal piece of writing for a specified reader on a general subject not requiring specialist knowledge with two content points to be addressed.	A 150 to 200-word composition.	12
Total:				24

C1**Expert Level**

(examination duration:

listening: about **30 minutes**;reading and writing: **2 hours and 40 minutes**)

Listening			Marks	
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand context, meaning and function in short conversations on concrete and abstract topics.	The candidate listens to six unfinished conversations between two speakers. Idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, register shifts and use of stress and intonation to indicate attitude included.	One three-option multiple choice for each conversation to choose the appropriate completion or continuation of the conversation.	6
Part 2	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens to three conversations with two speakers twice and identifies: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, roles, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Two three-option multiple choice questions for each of the three conversations.	6
Part 3	Extract key information from a monologue to complete a task.	The candidate listens twice to a lecture, radio broadcast, narrative, presentation etc to identify specific information. Listening text contains dense, factual information.	A message pad with a heading and seven prompts and space to write the correct information for each prompt. Answers are one to five words.	7
Part 4	Follow a discussion to listen for specific information.	The candidate listens to a conversation twice and identifies gist, examples, fact, opinion, contrast, purpose, key ideas, attitude, cause and effect.	Seven three-option multiple choice questions.	7
			Total: 26	

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand articles, use of language and texts dense with complex structures.	The candidate reads one text including idiomatic language, narrative or academic ideas, arguments and opinions.	Five sentences to identify true and false statements about the text.	5
Part 2	Understand how meaning is built up in discourse.	The candidate reads a text with six sentences removed (e.g. a topic sentence, a summarising sentence, a developing idea, emphasising a point, an opinion, a contrast, a sequence, a forward and back reference, a transition to a new idea).	Choice of eight sentences to choose from to complete the six gaps, two of them being distractors.	6
Part 3	Understand the purpose of different authentic texts and locate specific information.	The candidate reads four texts, e.g. an e-mail, article, advert, brochure, etc. with a linked theme, but with a different purpose.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Locate and obtain specific information.	The candidate reads a continuous text: a narrative, descriptive, explanatory, expository, biographical, instructive text.	Eight open-ended 'wh-' questions requiring short answers of up to five words.	8
Total:				26

Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Respond appropriately to a given text to produce a formal response for an intended public audience.	Instructions are given to write a letter, report, argument or article using a written input and the intended reader specified expressing stance, opinion, justification, argumentation.	A 150 to 200-word composition.	12
Part 2	Produce a personal letter, a narrative or descriptive composition.	Instructions are given to write an informal piece of writing for a specified reader. Functions elicited may be: persuasion, argument, hypothesis, expressing mood, opinion, justifying, evaluating, etc.	A 250 to 300-word composition.	12
Total:				24

C2

Mastery Level

(examination duration:

listening: about **30 minutes**;

reading and writing: **2 hours and 40 minutes**)

Listening			Marks
	Skill & Focus	Task	Format
Part 1	Understand context, meaning and function in single utterances.	The candidate listens to six short sentences twice, including statements, explanations, descriptions, instructions or questions, each with a different function and context.	One three-option multiple choice for each conversation to choose the appropriate completion or continuation of the conversation.
Part 2	Identify a specific aspect of a conversation.	The candidate listens to three conversations twice, each with two speakers; the candidate identifies: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, roles, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions.	Two three-option multiple choice questions for each of the three conversations.
Part 3	Extract key information from a monologue to complete a task.	The candidate listens twice to a lecture, radio broadcast, narrative, presentation, etc. to identify specific information.	A message pad with a heading and seven prompts and space to write the correct information for each prompt. Answers are one to five words.
Part 4	Follow a discussion to listen for specific information.	The candidate listens to a discussion twice to identify gist, examples, fact, opinion, contrast, purpose, key ideas, attitude, cause and effect.	Seven three-option multiple choice questions.
			Total: 26

Reading

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Understand literary texts, use of emotive language and texts dense with complex structures.	The candidate reads a text including metaphors, similes and idiomatic language, literary narrative or academic ideas, arguments and opinions.	Five sentences to identify true and false statements about the text.	5
Part 2	Understand how meaning is built up in discourse.	The candidate reads a text with six sentences removed (e.g. a topic sentence, a summarising sentence, a developing idea, emphasising a point, an opinion, a contrast, a sequence, a forward and back reference, a transition to a new idea).	Choice of eight sentences to choose from to complete the six gaps, two of them being distractors.	6
Part 3	Understand the purpose of different authentic texts and identify specific information.	The candidate reads four texts, e.g. an e-mail, article, advert, brochure, etc. with a linked theme, but with a different purpose.	Seven questions to indicate which text provides the answer to each question.	7
Part 4	Understand text to locate specific information.	The candidate reads a continuous text: a narrative, descriptive, explanatory, expository, biographical, instructive text.	Eight open-ended 'wh-' questions requiring short answers of up to five words.	8
Total:				26

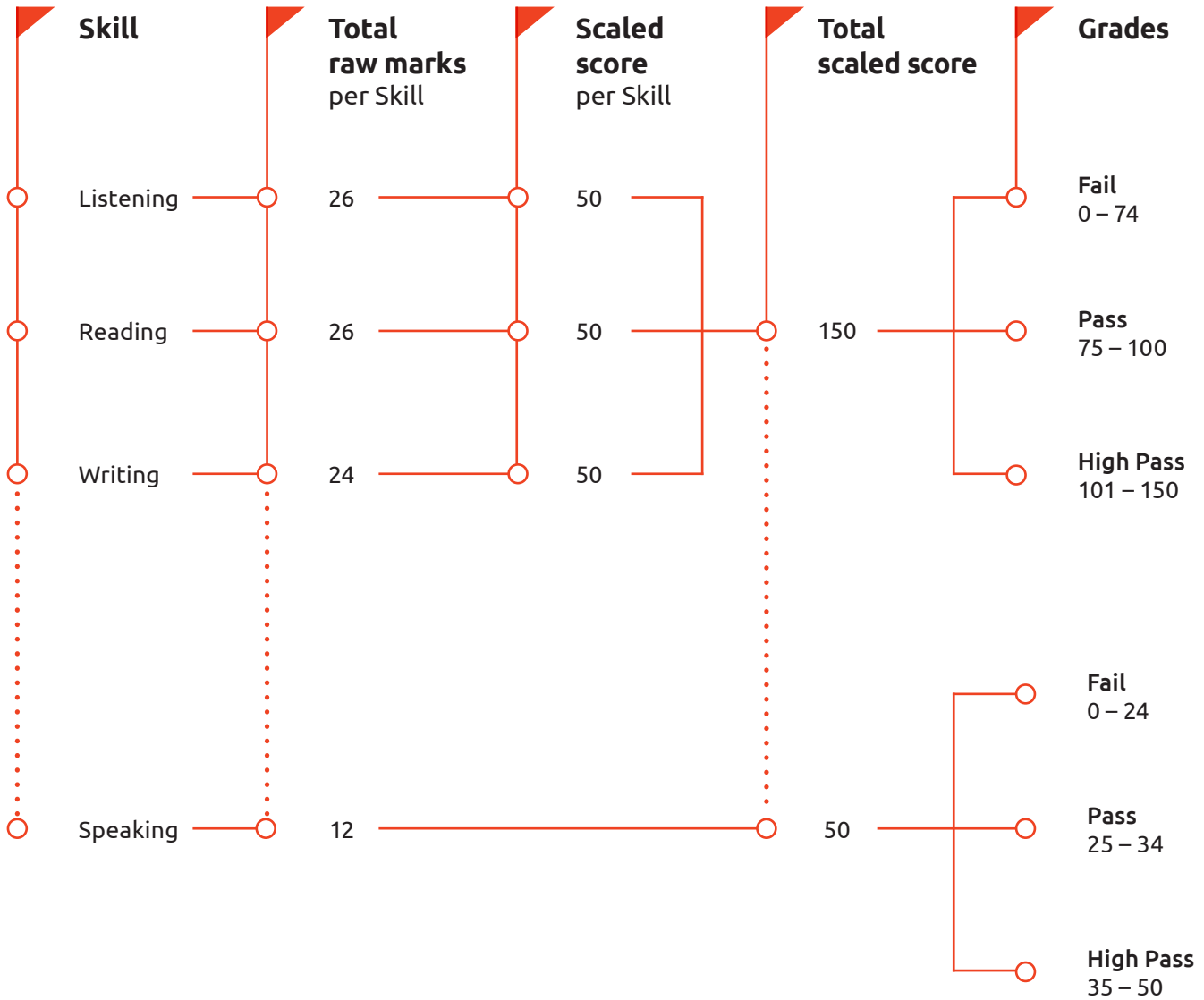
Writing

	Skill & Focus	Task	Format	
Part 1	Respond appropriately to a given text to produce a formal response for an intended public audience.	Instructions are given to write a letter, report, argument or article using a written, graphic or visual input and the intended reader specified expressing stance, opinion, justification, argumentation.	A 200 to 250-word composition.	12
Part 2	Produce a personal letter/ email, a narrative or descriptive composition(story).	Instructions are given to write an informal piece of writing for a specified reader. Instructions elicit functions: persuasion, argument, hypothesis, expressing mood, opinion, justifying, evaluating, etc.	A 250 to 300-word composition.	12
Total:				24



	Text Type / Genre	Register / Style	Text Organization
A1, A2	Postcard/card	Informal	Sentences with a salutation and a closing; no paragraphing is required.
	Message/note	Informal	Sentences with a salutation and a closing; no paragraphing is required.
A1, A2 B1, B2 C1, C2	Personal letter/email	Informal / Semi-formal / Formal	Should be suitable for a letter/email message. It should include: (a) an opening (a formal/informal greeting and a statement about the purpose of the message), (b) the main body of the message, and (c) a formal/ informal closing, which may be a short statement or a farewell remark.

	Text Type / Genre	Register / Style	Text Organization
B2	(Balanced) Article	Formal / Semi-formal	A continuous text is expected with formal paragraphing (possibly divided into 3-5 paragraphs) and a title.
C1, C2	Descriptive composition	Semi-formal	A continuous text is expected with paragraphing (possibly divided into 3-5 paragraphs).
	Narrative composition (story)	Semi-formal	A continuous text is expected with paragraphing (possibly divided into 3-5 paragraphs).
	Report	Formal	A continuous text is expected consisting of 3-5 paragraphs. Candidates' scripts may have headings above each paragraph but this is not obligatory; scripts that do not contain headings are not penalised.
	Review	Formal / Semi-formal	A continuous text is expected consisting of 3-5 paragraphs.
C1, C2	Argumentative essay	Formal	A continuous text is expected consisting of 3-5 paragraphs.



Performance Feedback

The below are standard formulations of the feedback candidates receive per skill and assessment criterion.

Listening

○	High Pass
○	Pass
*○	Standard not met

Reading

○	High Pass
○	Pass
*○	Standard not met

Writing

○	High Pass
○	Pass
*○	Grammar – standard not met
*○	Task fulfilment – standard not met
*○	Vocabulary – standard not met
*○	Organization – standard not met

Speaking

○	High Pass
○	Pass
*○	Grammar – standard not met
*○	Task fulfilment – standard not met
*○	Vocabulary – standard not met
*○	Pronunciation, intonation, fluency – standard not met

*○ The 'standard not met' performance descriptor does not necessarily imply that the candidate has failed the examination.

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