

 LANGUAGECERT®
Young Learners



Spoken Part

> TEACHER GUIDE

The purpose of the Teacher Guide

This guide is for teachers preparing learners for the LANGUAGECERT Young Learners ESOL Owl exam.

It aims to familiarise teachers with all parts of the Spoken exam and provides class activities for authentic practice.

In addition, it includes useful tips for each part of the exam, as well as general speaking tips.

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

You can download free Young Learners ESOL Owl practice tests from the LANGUAGECERT website.

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



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About the Young Learners ESOL Owl exam

The Young Learners ESOL Owl exam comprises a Written and a Spoken exam and is at just below A1 level.

This means that learners taking the exam:

- › will have studied English for approximately 200 guided learning hours.
- › will have a vocabulary of approximately 900 words (see the Vocabulary List on [our website](#)).
- › will be familiar with some basic English grammatical structures, e.g. '*They like ...*', '*I went ...*', '*You mustn't ...*' (see the Grammar Syllabus on [our website](#)).
- › will be able to demonstrate English language ability in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

The Owl (A1) Written exam consists of:

- › A **Listening test** (four parts), with a duration of approximately 15 minutes.
- › A **Reading test** (four parts) and a **Writing test** (two parts), with an overall duration of 60 minutes.

The Owl (A1) Spoken exam consists of:

- › A **Speaking test** (four parts), with a duration of approximately seven minutes.

Getting to know the Owl Speaking test



The Speaking test consists of **four parts**.



The overall duration of the test is **approximately seven minutes**.

The table below summarises the key features of the test (tasks presented and what the learner is required to do).

PART	TASK	WHAT THE LEARNER IS REQUIRED TO DO
1-4	Interact with an examiner and answer questions about themselves and objects find differences between two pictures and answer questions about a picture	Answer questions, follow instructions



HOW THE SPEAKING TEST IS MARKED

The Examiner uses the following four assessment criteria to evaluate the test taker's response:

- › **Task Fulfilment:** The extent to which the test taker's response addresses the task in a direct manner and provides an answer that is relevant and meaningful.
- › **Accuracy and Range of Grammar:** The extent to which the test taker's response is grammatically accurate, appropriate and adequate.
- › **Accuracy and Range of Vocabulary:** The extent to which the test taker's response is lexically accurate, appropriate and adequate.
- › **Fluency and Pronunciation:** The extent to which the test taker's responses are intelligible, with appropriate pausing and intonation.

Test takers are awarded up to 4 marks per criterion (maximum total marks = 16).

4 marks > excellent

3 marks > very good

2 marks > satisfactory

1 mark > below level

Note: If the test taker fails to provide a sufficient sample of language or attempt the tasks, no marks are awarded.

› **The
Speaking
test**



How to prepare learners for Speaking Part 1

Answering personal questions

Learners will be asked three questions about themselves.

- › Clarify that the Examiner will ask learners three questions about themselves.
- › Tell learners they should listen carefully to the questions the Examiner asks to make sure they respond appropriately.
- › Explain that the first two questions will always be the same – *'What's your name?'* and *'How old are you?'*
- › Provide learners with plenty of practice answering questions about themselves, e.g. *their age, family, school, friends, favourite animal or food.* (For a complete list of topics, see the Vocabulary List on [our website](#).)
- › Try the practice activity below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Speaking Part 1 task.

Step 1

Tell learners you will ask them a few questions about themselves, similar to those they will be asked in the test. Reassure them that if they can't remember certain words, you will be there to help.

Step 2

Ask volunteers the questions below, following up with the additional questions in brackets if they struggle to understand first time:

- › *What's your name? (Is your name ...?)*
- › *How old are you? (Are you [12]?)*
- › *How many people live in your home? (Do [four] people live in your home?)*
- › *Where's your school? (Is your school in [name of town]?)*
- › *What's your favourite lesson at school? (Is your favourite lesson [maths]?)*
- › *Where do you learn English? (Do you learn English at school?)*
- › *Who's the youngest person in your family? (Are you the youngest person in your family?)*
- › *What's your favourite sport? (Do you like sport?)*

Note: On Test Day, learners may be asked the back-up questions in brackets if they are unable to respond to the Examiner's initial questions.

Step 3

Write the following questions (and back-up questions) on the board. Put learners in pairs and have them practise asking and answering the questions with their partner. Monitor learners to ensure their answers are clear, accurate and appropriate. Be ready to provide help if necessary and make a note of any areas where they may need further support and guidance.

- › *What's your dad's/mum's name? (Is his/her name ...?)*
- › *How old is your best friend? (Is your best friend [12] years old?)*
- › *What's your favourite sport? (Is [football] your favourite sport?)*
- › *Who's the shortest person in your family? (Are you the shortest person in your family?)*
- › *Where do you watch television at home? (Do you watch television at home?)*
- › *How many windows has your bedroom got? (Has your bedroom got a window?)*
- › *Have you got a hobby? (Do you like [dancing]?)*

Note: While practising for this part of the Speaking test, there is no need to show learners a sample of Part 1 from a practice paper (the Examiner will simply ask a few questions orally and will not use any pictures or cards).

How to prepare learners for Speaking Part 2

Answering questions about objects on a picture card

Learners will be given a picture card with 12 objects on it. They answer questions about the objects.

- › Explain to learners that the Examiner will give them a card with 12 objects on it and that they will be asked questions about them.
- › Tell learners the objects fall into three different categories, and that they will only be asked questions about two of the categories.
- › Give learners plenty of practice in identifying and categorising words for objects, e.g. *food, school objects, household items*. (For a complete list of topics, see the Vocabulary List on [our website](#).)
- › Try the practice activity below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.

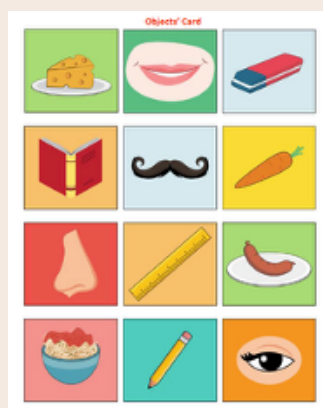


TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Speaking Part 2 task.

Step 1

Give learners a copy of the picture card from the practice paper. Ask them to identify the 12 objects, encouraging whole-class participation. (answers: *cheese / a mouth / an eraser / a book / a moustache / a carrot / a nose / a ruler / a sausage / pasta / a pencil / an eye*)



Sample taken from Owl Speaking Part 2 Practice Paper 3

Step 2

Working in pairs, tell learners to put the 12 pictures into three different categories. When they have finished, ask pairs to share their ideas with the class, before providing the correct answers.

(answers:)

1 Food / things we can eat (*cheese, carrot, sausage, pasta*)

2 Things on a school desk (*eraser, book, ruler, pencil*)

3 Parts of the face (*mouth, moustache, nose, eye*)

Step 3

Put the picture card on your desk and ask a volunteer to sit next to you, pretending to be a test taker. The rest of the class should stand around the desk. Tell the class that you will ask the volunteer questions similar to the ones they will be asked on Test Day. Ask the volunteer 'Which pictures are food?' The volunteer points to the pictures of the cheese, the carrot, the sausage and the pasta. If they don't respond, ask a back-up question, e.g. 'Is this food?', while pointing to the cheese. Then point to the carrot and ask, 'What's this?' If the volunteer doesn't respond, ask, 'Is this a carrot?'.

Step 4

Ask another volunteer to sit next to you and repeat Step 3 but with a different category, e.g.

'Which pictures show things you can see on a desk?' (The volunteer points to the eraser, the book, the ruler and the pencil.) If the learner doesn't respond, point to the eraser and ask, 'Can you see this on a desk?'. Then point to the ruler and ask, 'What's this?' If the learner doesn't respond, ask, 'Is it a ruler?'.

How to prepare learners for Speaking Part 3

Finding differences between two pictures

Learners will be given two pictures. They identify five differences between them.

- › Explain to learners that they will be asked to identify five differences between two pictures.
- › Clarify that the Examiner will tell them one of the differences and that they will have to identify the four remaining ones.
- › Tell learners that the differences could be related to colour, number, position, activity and size, and that the scene will show a situation from everyday life.
- › Give learners plenty of practice in looking for differences between two similar pictures (but limit the number of differences to five and always provide one example).
- › Try the practice activity below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.

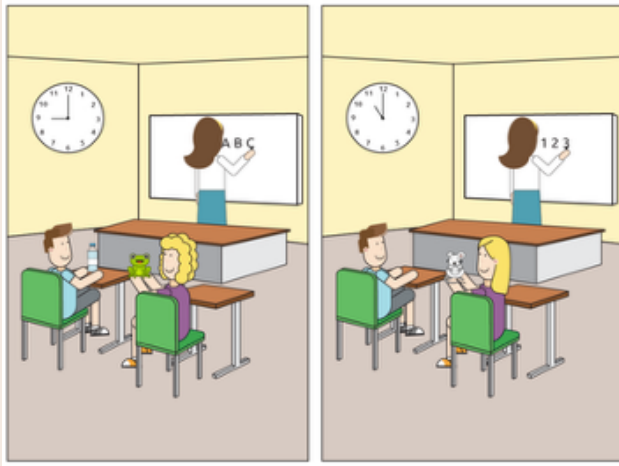


TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Speaking Part 3 task.

Step 1

Give learners a copy of the two pictures from Part 3 of a practice paper, e.g.:



Sample pictures taken from Owl Speaking Part 3 Practice Paper 3

Ask learners to focus on the picture on the left and say what they can see or what is happening in it. (example answers: *a classroom / a teacher / two students / a table / desks / a whiteboard / a clock / a toy frog; The teacher is writing on the board. / The girl is holding a toy frog.*)

Step 2

Point to the teacher in the picture on the left and say, 'Here, the teacher's writing letters on the board.' Then point to the teacher in the picture on the right and say, 'But here, she's writing numbers.' Check learners understand what they have to do.

Step 3

Put learners in pairs and give them enough time to spot the remaining four differences between the two pictures. If necessary, provide clues to help them, e.g. *9 o'clock and 11 o'clock.*

Step 4

Ask pairs to share their observations with the rest of the class, before providing the correct answers.

(answers:

The clock shows 9 o'clock. / The clock shows 11 o'clock.

There's a water bottle on the boy's desk. / There's no water bottle on the boy's desk.

The girl's holding a toy frog. / The girl's holding a toy mouse.

The girl's got curly hair. / The girl's got straight hair.)

How to prepare learners for Speaking Part 4

Answering questions about a picture

Learners will look at a picture and answer questions about it.

- › Explain to learners that they will be given a scene card and asked five questions about it.
- › Advise learners to listen carefully to the Examiner as they explain what the scene shows.
- › Give learners plenty of practice using common structures to talk about pictures (e.g. *'I can/can't see ...'*, *'There is/isn't ...'*, *'There are/aren't ...'*, *'has/hasn't got'*, *'have/haven't got'*) as well as action verbs (e.g. *'watch'*, *'read'*, *'walk'*, *'run'*) particularly in the present continuous.
- › Reassure learners that if they are having difficulty answering a question, the Examiner will ask them back-up questions to help them.
- › Provide learners with practice answering back-up questions about the picture, e.g. *'What's in/on/under ...?'*, *'What's ... like?'*, *'What is/are ... doing?'*, *'Where is ...?'*, *'What is ... [eating]?'.*
- › Try the practice activity below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.



TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Speaking Part 4 task.

Step 1

Show the class a scene card from a practice paper and ask them what they can see. (example answers: *children / trees / toys / clothes / a baby / a dog / a cat / a woman / the sun*)



Sample picture taken from Owl Speaking Part 4 Practice Paper 1

Step 2

Ask learners to look at the picture again and finish the following sentences you read out to them (example answers are in brackets):

There are two trees ... (in the garden.)

The boy ... (is kicking the ball.)

The children ... (are playing football.)

The dog ... (is sleeping.)

The teddy bear ... (is in front of the baby.)

There are toys ... (in the garden.)

There is a cat ... (near the dog.)

The girls ... (are looking at the ball.)

Step 3

Explain to learners that you will ask them questions about the picture, similar to those they will be asked on Test Day. Ask the questions below, encouraging the whole class to participate and reminding them to use complete sentences:

- › *Can you tell me some things about the children in the picture? (example answer: They're playing football.)*
- › *What can you tell me about the animals? (example answer: There's a cat and a dog in the garden.)*
- › *Now, tell me something about the toys. (example answer: I can see a doll, a teddy bear, a train, a helicopter and a ship.)*
- › *What can you tell me about the woman? (example answer: The woman's angry because the children are playing football near her.)*
- › *Can you say something about the garden? (example answer: There's grass and two trees in the garden. The garden is big.)*

If learners struggle to answer any of the questions, ask the following back-up questions to guide them:

- › *What are the children wearing? (example answer: They're wearing shorts and T-shirts.)*
- › *What are the children playing? (example answer: They're playing football.)*
- › *What animals can you see in the picture? (example answer: I can see a cat and a dog.)*
- › *What are the animals doing? (example answer: They're sleeping.)*
- › *What toys are there in the picture? (example answer: There's a teddy bear, a doll, a train, a ship and a helicopter.)*
- › *How many toys can you see? (example answer: I can see five toys.)*
- › *What has the woman got in her hand? (example answer: She's got a shirt.)*
- › *Is the woman happy? (example answer: No, she isn't.)*
- › *How many trees are there? (example answer: There are two trees.)*
- › *Is the garden big or small? (example answer: It's big.)*

Note: On Test Day, the Examiner will ask learners back-up questions if they are unable to respond to the initial question.

Step 4

End the lesson by congratulating learners on their efforts, as Part 4 of the Spoken exam is the most challenging!



General speaking tips

These tips provide useful strategies for tackling the different Speaking tasks and will help learners approach the test with confidence.

- › Remind learners that they will be tested individually, not alongside another test taker.
- › Clarify that the Speaking test has four parts.
- › Reassure learners that they only need to produce short answers for each question.
- › Practise the type of instructions learners will hear on Test Day, e.g. *'Look at ...'*, *'Find ...'*, *'Tell me ...'*.
- › Give learners practice with useful interaction language, such as *'Sorry, can you say that again, please?'*, *'I don't understand'*, *'I don't know'*, *'Can you please repeat it?'*
- › Reassure learners that they will not be penalised for asking the Examiner to repeat a question.
- › Foster a supportive atmosphere in class where learners feel comfortable and confident speaking.
- › Remember that fun speaking activities and language games can help review the language taught.
- › While preparing learners for their Speaking test, refer to the support materials available on our website (www.languagecert.org).

Ensuring learners are ready for the Speaking test

Here are a few questions to remind learners of what to expect in the Speaking test (you may wish to add some of your own).

- › How many parts does the Speaking test have? (*answer: four parts*)
- › What do you do in Part 1? (*answer: answer four simple questions about yourself*)
- › What do you do in Part 2? (*answer: answer questions about objects on a picture card*)
- › What do you do in Part 3? (*answer: identify differences between two pictures*)
- › What do you do in Part 4? (*answer: answer five questions about a picture*)

Helpful resources and contact information

Our website provides teachers and test takers with free resources to prepare for all parts of the LANGUAGECERT Young Learners ESOL Owl exam.

Written and Spoken exams resources:

- Handbook for Teachers
- Vocabulary List
- Grammar Syllabus
- Official Practice Papers
- Teacher Guide (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking)

More support provided:

- 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 Young Learners ESOL exams, visit our website www.languagecert.org or contact our Customer Services team.

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