



Written 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 Written exam (Listening, Reading and Writing) and provides class activities for authentic practice.

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

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.

› The  
Listening  
test



# Getting to know the Owl Listening test



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



The duration of the test is **approximately 15 minutes**.



All audio recordings are **played twice**.

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	Listen to five short, simple statements	Tick a picture to match a statement they hear
2	Listen to two speakers describing five people	Match a picture to a name and draw a line
3	Listen to a short dialogue and answer questions	Answer a question by ticking the correct picture
4	Listen to a short dialogue and answer five written questions	Write a word, a number or a simple spelling

## HOW THE LISTENING TEST IS MARKED

- › Test takers are awarded one mark per correct response for all parts of the Listening test.
- › The maximum score for all four parts is 20 marks.
- › There is no minimum score to be attained in the Listening test.



# How to prepare learners for Listening Part 1

## Listening Part 1: Multiple-choice

Learners will hear five short statements. They choose the correct picture for each one.

- › To support learners who may find the task challenging, pause the audio after each statement to give them a few extra seconds to choose their answer.
- › Encourage learners to predict the words or language they are about to hear based on the pictures.
- › Give learners plenty of practice with multiple-choice questions so they learn how to recognise subtle differences between options and have more confidence choosing the correct answers.
- › Advise learners to tick one option for every question, even if they are unsure of the correct answer.
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.








## Familiarisation activity

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

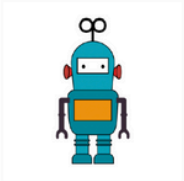
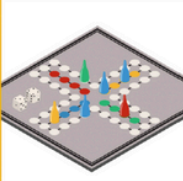
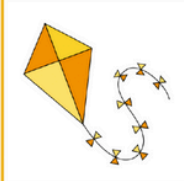
Show learners Part 1 of the Listening test from a practice paper and give them enough time to familiarise themselves with the layout, structure and format of the task.

**Listening Part 1**  
Listen and look at the pictures. Which is the right picture? Tick [✓] the box. There is one example.




**Example**

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>


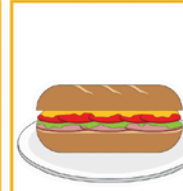
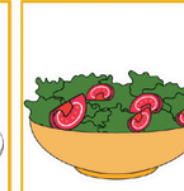
1.

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

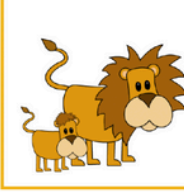

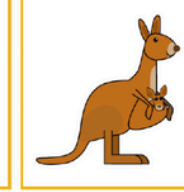
2.

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>




3.

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

4.

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

5.

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

Sample taken from Owl Listening Part 1 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 1? (answer: listen and tick the box under the correct picture)
- › How many questions are there in Part 1? (answer: five)
- › How many pictures do you choose from? (answer: three)
- › How many answers do you choose for each question? (answer: one)
- › Is there an example? (answer: yes, there is one example)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Listening Part 1 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task and ask them to look at the first three questions (not including the example) and their related options.

### Step 2

Ask learners the following:

- › In question 1, what do all three pictures show? (*answer: games and toys*)
- › In question 2, what do all three pictures show? (*answer: different times on a clock*)
- › In question 3, what do all three pictures show? (*answer: food/meals*)

### Step 3

Point to the example pictures and give learners time to look at them. Then play the audio for the example. Highlight the tick in the box under picture B and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Play the audio for the first three questions. Learners listen and tick the correct options.

### Step 5

Put learners in pairs and play the audio a second time for pairs to compare their answers.

### Step 6

Have pairs share their answers and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion, before providing the correct answers.

### Step 7

If time allows, play the rest of the audio and have learners complete the task.

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

# How to prepare learners for Listening Part 2

## Listening Part 2: Multiple matching

Learners will hear a short conversation containing descriptions of five people. They match five pictures to five names by drawing lines.

- › Ask learners to carefully read out the six names in the task (and guess their pronunciation if new to them) before they hear the audio.
- › Clarify that the information learners will hear will not be in the same order as the list of names in the task.
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Tell learners that one of the pictures will not be used (acting as a distractor).
- › Remind learners that the lines they draw between the pictures and the names should be clear.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.





## Familiarisation activity

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

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

**Listening Part 2**  
Listen and draw lines. There is one example.

The diagram shows seven small rectangular panels, each containing a different illustration of a person. To the right of these panels is a list of six names: Stephen, Peter, Eva, Sandra, Tom, and Anna. A thin black line is drawn from the top panel (a man in a blue shirt holding a book) to the name 'Stephen'.

Sample taken from Owl Listening Part 2 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What can you see on the left of the task? (answer: seven pictures)
- › What can you see on the right of the task? (answer: six names)
- › What do you have to do in Part 2? (answer: listen and draw lines from the pictures to the names)
- › How many lines should you draw? (answer: five)
- › How many pictures have a matching name? (answer: five; there is one distractor)
- › Is there an example? (answer: yes, there is one example)
- › What are the people in the pictures doing? (answer: various)

**Optional:** If learners can read the names, invite a few volunteers to say them out loud. The names are: Stephen, Peter, Eva, Sandra, Tom, Anna.

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Listening Part 2 task.

### Step 1

Tell learners they are about to hear a child talking about some photos. The photos are of some friends on a boat trip.

### Step 2

Give learners a copy of the task and have them look carefully at the pictures. Ask the class to spot someone who ...

- › is pointing at a dolphin. *(answer: 2nd picture)*
- › is fishing. *(answer: 4th picture)*
- › is putting on a sweater. *(answer: 6th picture)*
- › is waving at someone. *(answer: 7th picture)*
- › is sad. *(answer: 5th picture)*

### Step 3

Point to the example line between the first picture and the name 'Stephen'. Then play the audio for the example and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Play the rest of the audio. Learners listen and draw lines.

### Step 5

Put learners in pairs. Play the audio a second time and ask learners to compare their answers with their partner.

### Step 6

Have pairs share their answers and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion, before providing the correct answers.

*(answers: Peter – fishing, Eva – waving, Anna – pointing at a dolphin, Tom – putting on his sweater, Sandra – looking at her hat)*

# How to prepare learners for Listening Part 3

## Listening Part 3: Multiple-choice

Learners will hear a dialogue and five questions. They choose the correct picture for each question.

- › To support learners who may find the task challenging, pause the audio after each section of dialogue to give them a few extra seconds to choose their answer.
- › Encourage learners to predict the words or language they are about to hear based on the pictures.
- › Tell learners to listen until the end of each section of dialogue before ticking their answer.
- › Advise learners to tick one option for every question, even if they are unsure of the correct answer.
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.








## Familiarisation activity

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




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

**Listening Part 3**  
Listen and tick [✓] the right box. There is one example.




**Example**  
How did Iris and her mum go to town?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>


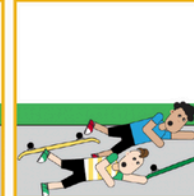

1. What did they buy?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>


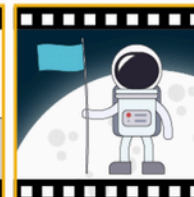
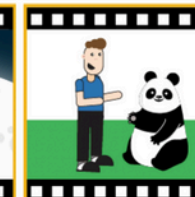
2. What did Iris have for lunch?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>



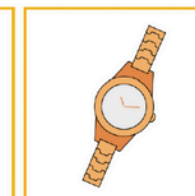
3. Which photo did Iris take?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

4. Which film did Iris and her mum see?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

5. What did Mum lose?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

Sample taken from Owl Listening Part 3 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 3? (*answer: listen and answer the questions by ticking the box under the correct picture*)
- › How many questions are there in Part 3? (*answer: five*)
- › How many pictures do you choose from for each question? (*answer: three*)
- › How many answers do you choose for each question? (*answer: one*)
- › Is there an example? (*answer: yes, there is one example*)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Listening Part 3 task.

### Step 1

Tell learners they will hear a short conversation between a girl and her dad in which the girl is telling him about a day out with her mum.

### Step 2

Give learners a copy of the task. Point out the example and read the question ('How did Iris and her mum go to town?'). Ask learners to look at the three pictures and predict what they will hear. (example answers: They went (to town) by car/bus. / They walked to town.)

### Step 3

Play the audio for the example. Highlight the tick in the box under picture B and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Repeat Step 2 for questions 1 and 2.

- › Question 1: 'What did they buy?' (example answers: They bought (a pair of) trousers / shoes / a dress)
- › Question 2: 'What did Iris have for lunch?' (example answers: She had fish and chips / a pizza / a burger)

### Step 5

Play the audio for the first two questions. Learners listen and tick the correct options.

### Step 6

Put learners in pairs and play the audio for the first two questions again for pairs to compare their answers.

### Step 7

Have pairs share their answers and give reasons for their choices as part of a whole-class discussion, before providing the correct answers.

### Step 8

If time allows, play the rest of the audio and have learners complete the task.

(answers: 1 A, 2 C, 3 B, 4 C, 5 A)

# How to prepare learners for Listening Part 4

## Listening Part 4: Short answers

Learners will hear a short dialogue. They write one word, name or number in each gap.

- › Tell learners that in Part 4 they will hear a dialogue. They listen and write a simple word, name or number in each gap.
- › Ensure learners are given plenty of practice in spelling simple words, names and numbers prior to taking the test, particularly those that are often confused (e.g. 'ship' vs 'sheep', 'his' vs 'he's', 'bus' vs 'vase').
- › Clarify that where they are asked to write numbers, they can use digits rather than words (to avoid the risk of making spelling mistakes).
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Stress to learners that their writing should be legible – the Examiner will be unable to mark their answers if they can't read them.
- › Remind learners that each answer should be one word, name or number only.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.






## Familiarisation activity

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

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

**Listening Part 4**  
Listen and write. There is one example.

**A new band**



**Example** Name of band ..... *Sharks* .....

**Questions**

1. Number of people in band .....
2. Name of best singer .....
3. The other girl plays the ..... the .....
4. Colour of the band's clothes .....
5. Days the band is on TV .....

*Sample taken from Owl Listening Part 4 Practice Paper 3*

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 4? (*answer: listen and write a word, a name or a number*)
- › How many questions are there in Part 4? (*answer: five*)
- › How long should each answer be? (*answer: one word only*)
- › Is there an example? (*answer: yes, there is one example*)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Listening Part 4 task.

### Step 1

Tell learners they are going to hear a girl talking about a music band.

### Step 2

Give learners a copy of the task and have them look at questions 1– 5.

Ask the class the following:

- › Which question is about what the band wear when they play music?  
(*answer: question 4*)
- › Which question is about how many boys or girls are in the band? (*answer: question 1*)
- › Which question is about who sings best in the band? (*answer: question 2*)
- › Which question is about when the band will be on television? (*answer: question 5*)
- › Which question is about what instrument the other girl in the band plays?  
(*answer: question 3*)

### Step 3

Point out the example and give learners time to look at it. Then play the audio for the example and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Play the rest of the audio once. Working individually , learners write their answers.

### Step 5

Play the audio a second time.

### Step 6

Have learners share their ideas, giving reasons for their choices, as part of a whole-class discussion, before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 5, 2 Alice, 3 piano, 4 white, 5 Saturday*)



# General listening tips

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

- › When practising for the Listening test, make sure learners understand exactly what they have to do in each part.
- › Reassure learners that they will have some time to look at the task before they hear the audio.
- › Explain that learners will hear each audio recording twice – if they don't manage to answer a question on the first listening, they can try the second time they hear the audio.
- › Advise learners to always look at the pictures carefully. They will help learners predict what they will hear and to answer the questions.
- › Remind learners that for multiple-choice questions, only one option is correct.
- › Explain that at least one example is always given to help guide them with the task.
- › Tell learners to provide an answer even if they are unsure if it is correct.
- › While preparing learners for their Listening test, refer to the support materials available on our website ([www.languagecert.org](http://www.languagecert.org)).

# Ensuring learners are ready for the Listening test

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

- › How many parts does the Listening test have? (*answer: four parts*)
- › How many questions does the Listening test have? (*answer: 20 questions in total*)
- › What types of questions are there in the Listening test? (*answer: multiple-choice, multiple-matching and short-answer questions*).

**Note:** Do not expect learners to know these terms – simply elicit what they need to do in each part.

- › How many times does the audio play? (*answer: twice*)
- › How many options do multiple-choice questions have? (*answer: three*)

A young child with curly hair is smiling broadly, holding a stack of colorful books. One book is held over their head like a hat. The child is wearing a white sweater with a blue collar. The background is a blurred library or bookstore. A large orange shape is on the left side of the image.

# › The Reading test

# Getting to know the Owl Reading test



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



The **overall duration** of the Reading and Writing test is **60 minutes**.



There is **no break** between the Reading and Writing tests.

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	Identify whether simple written statements about a picture are true or false	Write 'yes' or 'no' to show whether the statements are correct or incorrect
2	Read and complete the gaps in a short text	Choose the correct structural words from the options and write them in the gaps
3	Read and complete the gaps in a short text	Choose the correct lexical words from a box and write them in the gaps
4	Read a short, simple story and answer questions about it	Write one-word answers

## HOW THE READING 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 25 marks.
- › There is no minimum score to be attained in the Reading test.
- › Test takers will not be penalised for minor spelling mistakes in Part 4.



# How to prepare learners for Reading Part 1

## Reading Part 1: True or false

Learners will be given a picture and six statements. They look at the picture and decide whether each statement is true or false.

- › Tell learners that they will be asked to say whether certain statements about a picture are true or false.
- › Clarify that there are two examples: one showing what to do when a statement is true (write 'yes') and one showing what to do when a statement is false (write 'no').
- › Advise learners to check each statement against the picture carefully, paying close attention to details such as numbers, colours, actions and objects.
- › Provide plenty of practice for this type of task as it requires careful detailed reading.
- › Explain that learners do not need to correct the false statements. However, when they feel confident with the task, they could do this for extra language practice.
- › Point out to learners that there are two examples.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.





## 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**  
Look and read. Write **yes** or **no**. There are two examples.

**Examples**

It's two o'clock. no  
.....

The students are painting rainbows. yes  
.....

**Questions**

1. The windows are closed. .....
2. The boy in green shorts is standing up. .....
3. The brown monkey is thinner than the black one. .....
4. All the children are wearing glasses. .....
5. There's a school bag under the table near the white chair. .....
6. The girl showing her picture to the teacher has straight hair. .....

*Sample taken from Owl Reading Part 1 Practice Paper 3*

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 1? (*answer: look at the picture and decide whether the statements are true or false*)
- › How many statements are there in Part 1? (*answer: six, not including the two examples*)
- › What do you write for a true statement? (*answer: 'yes'*)
- › What do you write for a false sentence? (*answer: 'no'*)
- › Is there an example? (*answer: yes, there are two examples*)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Reading Part 1 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task. Tell them to look at the picture and say what they can see. (*example answers: a classroom / a desk / chairs / students / a teacher / a clock / a garden / a tree / a rainbow / monkeys*)

### Step 2

Before the lesson, prepare a few simple statements about the picture in the task.

**(Note:** Ensure these statements are different from the ones in the practice paper.)

Ask learners to look at the picture as you read out each statement. Learners respond by giving a thumbs up if they think the statement is true and a thumbs down if they think it is false.

Suggested statements:

- › It's ten o'clock (*answer: thumbs up*)
- › The teacher is sitting on a chair. (*answer: thumbs down*)
- › There's a yellow bag under the chair. (*answer: thumbs down*)
- › The teacher is wearing a yellow skirt. (*answer: thumbs up*)
- › The girl in the red T-shirt is speaking. (*answer: thumbs up*)
- › All the chairs are brown. (*answer: thumbs down*)

### Step 3

Put learners in pairs. Point out the two example answers and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Pairs complete the task. Remind them to look at the picture and the statements and to write 'yes' or 'no' depending on whether they think the statement is true or false.

### Step 5

Have pairs share their ideas with the rest of the class, before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 no, 2 yes, 3 no, 4 no, 5 yes, 6 yes*)

### Step 6

If time allows, have the class correct the false statements, e.g. *'The windows are open.'*

# How to prepare learners for Reading Part 2

## Reading Part 2: Multiple-choice

Learners will be given a short, gapped text. They choose the correct words to complete each gap.

- › Tell learners to skim read the text for gist before they attempt to complete the gaps.
- › Clarify that for each gap there are three options to choose from.
- › Advise learners to pay close attention to common problem areas, such as singular vs plural nouns and incorrect verb forms (e.g. *whether a third person singular 's' is needed or not*).
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Tell learners to read through the completed text once they have written all their answers, to ensure it makes sense.
- › Remind learners that their handwriting needs to be clear so that the Examiner can mark their responses.
- › For extra challenge, give learners similar gapped texts but without the missing words. Learners try to think of the words themselves and share their ideas as part of a whole-class discussion, giving reasons for their answers.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.






## 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 and choose. Choose the right words and write them on the lines. There is one example.

**Cold weather**



I live *in* ..... the mountains and I have fun on cold days. I'm happy when (1).....  
is snow and ice. I'm good (2)..... ice skating and I do it on a lake near my home. And I  
love (3)..... in the snow with my friends. We throw balls of snow and we run and fall  
down, but falling on snow (4)..... not hurt!  
Cold days are (5)..... exciting than hot ones!

Example	by	from	in
1.	there	they	he
2.	with	at	for
3.	play	playing	played
4.	do	did	does
5.	more	very	too

Sample taken from Owl Reading Part 2 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 2? (answer: read a short text and choose the correct words to complete the gaps)
- › How many gaps are there in the text? (answer: five)
- › How many words do you choose from for each gap? (answer: three)
- › Is there an example answer? (answer: yes, there is one example)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Reading Part 2 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task. Ask them to skim read the text and then ask them a few questions about it, e.g.:

- › Where does the boy live? (*answer: in the mountains*)
- › When is he happy? (*answer: in winter / when there is snow and ice*)
- › Is there a lake near his home? (*answer: yes, there is*)
- › Does he play with his brother and sister? (*answer: no, he plays with his friends*)
- › Does he like hot days more than cold days? (*answer: no, he doesn't*)

### Step 2

Put learners in pairs. Point to the example answer and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 3

Pairs complete the gaps with the correct words.

### Step 4

Invite pairs to share their ideas with the class, before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 there, 2 at, 3 playing, 4 does, 5 more*)

# How to prepare learners for Reading Part 3

## Reading Part 3: Gap fill

Learners will be given a short, gapped text and eight words to choose from. They complete the gaps with six of the words.

- › Tell learners to skim read the text for gist before they attempt to complete the gaps.
- › Remind learners that two of the given words will not be used (there are six gaps to be completed and eight options have been provided).
- › Advise learners to pay close attention to common problem areas, such as singular vs plural nouns and incorrect verb forms (e.g. *whether a third person singular 's' is needed or not*).
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Explain to learners that they should look at the words either side of each gap to give them clues to the answers.
- › Tell learners to read through the completed text once they have written all their answers, to ensure it makes sense.
- › Remind learners that their handwriting needs to be clear so that the Examiner can mark their responses.
- › For extra challenge, give learners similar gapped texts but without the missing words. Learners try to think of the words themselves and share their ideas as part of a whole-class discussion, giving reasons for their answers.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.






## 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 this. Choose a word from the box. Write the correct word next to numbers 1 – 6. There is one example.

**Mum's birthday**



It was Mum's birthday ..... last ..... Sunday. On Saturday, Dad and I (1)..... shopping for presents for her. Dad bought her a blue sweater and I (2)..... a book about a famous singer. We also got a beautiful plant.

The next day, when we gave Mum her presents, she was (3)..... and happy. Dad cooked lunch and I (4)..... him. It was a fantastic (5)..... ! We ate all of it because we were (6)..... . In the evening, we watched a film about a girl and a penguin. Mum said it was a brilliant birthday.

<b>Example last</b>	hungry	chose	work	surprised	meal	strong	went	helped
---------------------	--------	-------	------	-----------	------	--------	------	--------

Sample taken from Owl Reading Part 3 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 3? (answer: read a text and complete the gaps with the given words)
- › How many gaps are there in the text? (answer: six)
- › How many words do you choose from? (answer: eight)
- › How many words should you choose? (answer: six – there are two distractors).
- › Is there an example answer? (answer: yes, there is one example)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Reading Part 3 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task. Tell them to look at the picture and then ask them a few questions about it, e.g.:

- › How many people are there? (*answer: three people – a woman, a man and a girl*)
- › What's the man holding? (*answer: a present*)
- › What's the girl holding? (*answer: a plant / flowers*)
- › Why is everyone happy? (*answer: because it's Mum's birthday*)

### Step 2

After eliciting learners' responses, provide feedback if necessary (e.g. *if part of the picture has been misinterpreted*).

### Step 3

Put learners in pairs. Point to the example answer and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Pairs complete the gaps with the correct words.

### Step 5

Invite pairs to share their ideas with the class, before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 went, 2 chose, 3 surprised, 4 helped, 5 meal, 6 hungry*)

# How to prepare learners for Reading Part 4

## Reading Part 4: Short answers

Learners will read a short story. They answer questions about the story, using only one word.

- › Explain to learners that they will need to answer eight questions about a short story.
- › Ensure learners understand that they should write one-word answers only.
- › Tell learners to first look at the given picture(s) and predict what it (they) may be about.
- › Encourage learners to read for gist first. On second reading, they can focus on detail and answer the questions.
- › Remind learners that their handwriting needs to be clear so that the Examiner can mark their responses.
- › Clarify that they need to be particularly careful with their spelling, otherwise they will lose marks.
- › Tell learners that numbers written as digits or words are both acceptable.
- › Point out to learners that there is one example.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.






## 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 story and answer the questions about it. Only write **one word** for your answers. There is one example.

**A day in the jungle**



Simon and his father like walking in the jungle and taking photos. One day in the jungle, they watched four ducks: a mother duck with her three babies swimming on the river. Then they saw a crocodile with big teeth looking at the baby ducks. Simon shouted at it and Dad threw a coconut. The crocodile was frightened and went. The mother duck was very happy!

**Example**  
Where did Simon and Dad like taking photos? in the jungle

**Questions**

- How many ducks were on the river? .....
- What did Simon do when he saw the crocodile? He .....

'Let's have lunch now,' said Dad. They sat under a tree and ate some sandwiches. They gave some bread to the ducks. 'Can I have a drink, please?' said Simon. 'OK,' said Dad. But when he opened his bag, their bottle of water wasn't there. 'Oh, dear,' said Simon. 'I'm thirsty! Can I drink the water in the river?' 'No,' said Dad 'it's dirty.'

- What did they have for lunch? .....
- Who looked for a bottle of water? .....
- Why didn't they drink water from the river? It was .....

The mother duck started walking into the jungle. She stopped and looked at Simon. 'She wants us to go with her,' he said. They walked behind the duck. Then, between the trees, they saw a waterfall. 'Wow!' said Dad. 'This water is really clean! We can have a drink here. And there are your mother's favourite red flowers. I must get her some.' 'We can swim, too!' said Simon. 'What a clever duck!'

- Where did the duck take Simon and Dad? to a .....
- What did Dad get to give to Simon's mum? some .....
- What did Simon want to do after drinking? He wanted to .....

Sample taken from Owl Reading Part 4 Practice Paper 3

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

- > What do you have to do in Part 4? (answer: read a short story and answer questions about it)
- > How many paragraphs are there in the story? (answer: three)
- > How many questions are there? (answer: eight)
- > How many words should each answer be? (answer: one word only)
- > Are all the questions about the story? (answer: yes)
- > Is there an example? (answer: yes, there is one example)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Reading Part 4 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task and tell them to look at the picture. Ask them to predict what the story is about (*answer: a day in the jungle – the clue is in the title!*)

### Step 2

Ask learners some questions about the jungle, e.g.:

- › What can you see in the jungle? (*example answers: animals, trees, flowers, plants*)
- › What do people (usually) do in the jungle? (*answer: take photos, watch animals, look at plants, study animals and plants*)

### Step 3

Put learners in pairs. Point to the example answer and check learners understand what they have to do.

### Step 4

Pairs read the story and answer the questions. Remind them to write only one word each time.

### Step 5

Have pairs share their ideas with the class, before providing the correct answers.

(*answers: 1 four/4, 2 shouted, 3 sandwiches, 4 Dad, 5 dirty, 6 waterfall, 7 flowers, 8 swim*)



# General reading tips

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

- › Give learners plenty of practice in completing 'yes/no', multiple-choice, gap-fill and short-answer reading tasks. To keep learners motivated, choose practice materials with clear and attractive visuals.
- › Provide fun and motivating activities and games, such as 'spot the difference', crossword puzzles, word searches and anagrams, to review the language taught.
- › When practising for the Reading test, make sure learners understand exactly what they have to do in each part.
- › Explain that at least one example is always given to help guide them with the task.
- › Tell learners to provide an answer even if they are unsure if it is correct.
- › Remind learners that their handwriting needs to be clear so that the Examiner can mark their responses.
- › While preparing learners for their Reading test, refer to the support materials available on our website ([www.languagecert.org](http://www.languagecert.org)).

# Ensuring learners are ready for the Reading test

Here are a few 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 the Reading test have? (*answer: 25 questions in total*)
- › What types of questions are there in the Reading test? (*answer: 'yes/no', multiple-choice, gap-fill and short-answer questions*).

**Note:** Do not expect learners to know these terms – simply elicit what they need to do in each part.

- › Where do you write your answers on Test Day? (*answer: in your 'Test booklet'*)

A young girl with dark skin and her hair styled in neat braids is shown in profile, focused on writing in a notebook. She is wearing a light yellow shirt and holding a purple pen. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students in a classroom setting. A large, vibrant orange shape overlaps the left side of the image, containing the text.

# › The Writing test

# Getting to know the Owl Writing test



The Writing test consists of **two parts**.



The **overall duration** of the Reading and Writing test is **60 minutes**.



There is **no break** between the Reading and Writing tests.

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	Write sentences on a given topic about themselves or their daily lives	Write four sentences
2	Write sentences to tell a simple picture story	Write six sentences



## HOW THE WRITING TEST IS MARKED

- › Test takers are awarded a mark or a half mark based on how relevant, complete and accurate their sentences are. Some errors are acceptable provided they do not impede understanding.
- › There is no minimum score to be attained in the Writing test.
- › The maximum score for both parts is 10 marks.
- › For the total score, half marks are rounded up (e.g. 4.5 > 5).
- › For more details about how the Writing test is marked, please refer to the Handbook for Teachers on [our website](#).



# How to prepare learners for Writing Part 1

## Writing Part 1: Simple sentences about a topic

Learners will write four sentences about a given topic.

- › Remind learners that in this part of the test, they will write four sentences about themselves or their daily lives.
- › Clarify that they should write four sentences only, not a paragraph.
- › Point out that they are given an example sentence to guide them.
- › Give learners plenty of practice in writing sentences related to personal topics about everyday life, such as my home/bedroom/school/family.
- › As part of their test practice, provide learners with a model response to guide and encourage them before they start writing their own sentences.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.





## Familiarisation activity

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

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

**Writing Part 1**  
Write four sentences about a person in your class.

**Example**  
*There is a very nice person in my class.*

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

4. ....

*Sample taken from Owl Writing Part 1 Practice Paper 3*

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 1? (*answer: write sentences about personal information or daily life*)
- › How many sentences do you have to write? (*answer: four*)
- › Can you choose the topic? (*answer: no, you will be given a topic to write about*)
- › Do you write all four sentences on the same topic? (*answer: yes*)
- › Is there an example? (*answer: yes, there is one example*)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Writing Part 1 task.

### Step 1

Before the lesson, prepare information cards with pictures for two imaginary classmates, similar to those shown below.



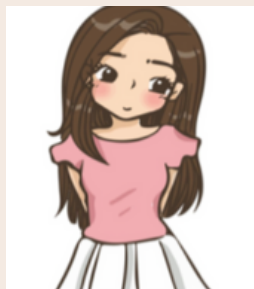
**Name:** Billy Green

**Age:** 9

**Eye colour:** brown

**Hair:** blond

**Loves:** pizza and ice cream



**Name:** Sara White

**Age:** 8

**Eye colour:** dark brown

**Hair:** brown

**Loves:** pets (cats and dogs)

### Step 2

Show the class the two information cards and ask volunteers to say four or five things about each of them.

(answers:

*His name is Billy Green. / Her name is Sara White.*

*Billy is nine years old. / Sara is eight years old.*

*Billy has got brown eyes and blond hair. / Sara has got dark brown eyes and brown hair.*

*Billy loves pizza and ice cream. / Sara loves pets / cats and dogs.)*

### Step 3

Give learners a copy of the task and tell them to read the instructions and the example. Make sure they understand what they need to do (write four sentences about the given topic).

### Step 4

Learners write their four sentences in their notebooks. Give them enough time to complete the task and be ready to guide them (e.g. write a model sentence on the board if needed).

**Note:** If some learners need extra support, have them work with a partner – ideally matching weaker learners with stronger ones.

### Step 5

Have learners share their ideas with the class before providing some example sentences.

(example sentences:

*Maria is in my class and she is my best friend.*

*She is tall and has got blue eyes.*

*She is a very good student.*

*She can play the piano, too.)*

# How to prepare learners for Writing Part 2

## Writing Part 2: : Simple sentences to tell a story

**Learners will write sentences about pictures to tell a simple story.**

- › Remind learners that in this part of the test, they will write six sentences about three pictures to tell a simple story.
- › Point out that they are given an example sentence to guide them.
- › Tell learners to look very carefully at the pictures and pay close attention to the details they may have to refer to.
- › As part of their test practice, provide learners with a model response to guide and encourage them before they start writing their own sentences.
- › Clarify that their sentences will all need to be related to the pictures.
- › Give learners plenty of practice writing sentences based on three related pictures to create simple stories.
- › Try the practice activities below to familiarise learners with the task and for targeted test practice.





## Familiarisation activity

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

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

**Writing Part 2**  
Look at the pictures. They tell a story. Write two sentences about each picture.

**Where's Mum's phone?**

**Example**  
The family are in the kitchen.

**Write two more sentences about this picture.**

1. ....

2. ....

**Write two sentences about this picture.**

3. ....

4. ....

**Write two sentences about this picture.**

5. ....

6. ....

Sample taken from Owl Writing Part 2 Practice Paper 3

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

- › What do you have to do in Part 2? (answer: write sentences about pictures to tell a simple story)
- › How many pictures are there? (answer: three)
- › How many sentences do you have to write? (answer: six)
- › Do you write all six sentences about the same picture? (answer: no, you write two sentences about each picture)
- › Is there an example? (answer: yes, there is one example)

## TEST ACTIVITY

This activity provides practice for the Writing Part 2 task.

### Step 1

Give learners a copy of the task and tell them to look at the first picture only. Ask them to say what they can see. (*example answers: a family / a kitchen / a table / a fridge / a door / a cupboard / a phone / a pizza / chairs / plates / bags*)

### Step 2

Tell learners to look at all three pictures. Write these prompts on the board and invite volunteers to say two sentences about each of the pictures:

First picture:

family / going to / lunch (*answer: The family is going to have lunch.*)

girl / bring / two pizzas (*answer: The girl is bringing two pizzas.*)

Second picture:

woman / not find / phone (*answer: The woman can't find her phone.*)

no one / see / phone (*answer: No one can see the phone.*)

Third picture:

woman / hear / phone (*answer: The woman can hear her phone.*)

phone / under / baby's bowl (*answer: The phone is under the baby's bowl.*)

### Step 3

After eliciting their responses and providing feedback, ask learners to look at the task instructions and example and check they understand what they need to do (write two sentences about each picture).

### Step 4

Learners write their sentences in their notebooks. Give them enough time to complete the task and be ready to guide them (e.g. *write a model sentence on the board if needed*).

**Note:** If some learners need extra support, have them work with a partner – ideally matching weaker learners with stronger ones.

### Step 5

Have learners share their ideas with the rest of the class, before providing some example sentences.

(*example answers:*

*First picture: The family are going to eat pizza. / Mum can't find her phone.*

*Second picture: Mum hears her phone. / The phone is under the baby's bowl.*

*Third picture: Mum is happy and speaks on her phone. / The family are enjoying their pizza.*)



# General writing tips

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

- › Tell learners that there will be two writing tasks and that both are mandatory.
- › Remind learners to write no more than two sentences for each picture (six sentences in total). They will not be awarded extra marks if they write more.
- › Provide learners with plenty of practice in forming correct sentences with nouns, adjectives and verbs, and writing single words and sentences as well as very short stories (e.g. *based on pictures*) and short descriptive texts (e.g. *about their classroom*).
- › Ensure learners know the correct spellings of frequently used words (e.g. *vocabulary about their everyday lives and everyday situations*), as well as how to use basic grammar correctly (e.g. *basic verb forms, tenses, pronouns, prepositions*).
- › Advise learners to always review what they have written and to check that their spelling and grammar are correct, as errors may cost them marks.
- › Ensure learners know how to use simple linkers (e.g. *'and', 'or', 'but'*) and basic punctuation (e.g. full stops, question marks).
- › Tell learners that their sentences will need to be complete and relevant.
- › Remind learners that their handwriting needs to be clear so that the Examiner can mark their responses.
- › While preparing learners for their Writing test, refer to the support materials available on our website ([www.languagecert.org](http://www.languagecert.org)).

# Ensuring learners are ready for the Writing test

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

- › How many parts does the Writing test have? *(answer: two parts)*
- › Do you need to do both parts? *(answer: yes, both parts are mandatory)*
- › What do you have to do in both parts? *(answer: write sentences on a given topic in Part 1 and write sentences about pictures to tell a simple story in Part 2)*
- › Where do you write your answers on Test Day? *(answer: in your 'Test booklet')*

# 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](http://www.languagecert.org/en/preparation)

## **Further information**

For more information about the LANGUAGECERT Young Learners ESOL exams, visit our website [www.languagecert.org](http://www.languagecert.org) or contact our Customer Services team.

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