Aptis Advanced

Candidate Guide

June 2020

This guide is suitable for both Aptis Advanced and Aptis ESOL Advanced.
Introducing the Aptis test

Aptis is an innovative global English assessment tool from the British Council taken on a computer. It is a suite of English tests for adults and young adults, which can be used to assess English language ability in all four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Aptis tests do not test at a single level. Instead, they include a range of questions, which are designed to allow candidates to show their best ability. The test results are reported on a numerical scale (0–50) and as a level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

There are four variations of Aptis tests.

1. Aptis General
Tests from A1 to C on the CEFR and is suitable for most test-takers.

2. Aptis Advanced
Tests English language ability from B1 to C2 on the CEFR and is for higher level test-takers.

3. Aptis for Teachers
Tests from A1 to C on the CEFR and is designed for teachers.

4. Aptis for Teens
Tests from A1 to C on the CEFR and is for candidates between 13 and 17 years of age.

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for the Aptis Advanced tests. An overview of each component is provided followed by detailed descriptions and advice on how to best prepare. You’ll also find tips on how to practise for the test and information on how the test is marked. There is also a section at the end for available accommodations that can be made for test takers with special needs.
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Test structure

Aptis Advanced consists of five components: core (grammar and vocabulary), reading, listening, writing and speaking.

You may be taking one skill component (for example, listening) or all four skill components (reading, listening, writing and speaking) depending on the requirements by your organisation or institution.
## Aptis Advanced test structure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Test design</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Format</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>3-option multiple choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Sets of 5 target words with 10 options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Match words to definitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Word pairs or word combinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(words commonly used together).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Opinion matching</td>
<td>7 statements matched to 4 people's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Long text comprehension</td>
<td>people's opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Reading for global understanding</td>
<td>7 paragraphs and 8 headings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 4</td>
<td>Reading across two texts</td>
<td>5 gaps and 3 options per gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 gaps and 3 options per gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Identifying factual information</td>
<td>4-option multiple choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>Identifying opinion and attitude</td>
<td>3-option multiple choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>Understanding an extended spoken text</td>
<td>3-options: man/woman/both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 4</td>
<td>Understanding an extended story</td>
<td>3-option multiple choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Listen twice*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Test design</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Part 1 Three written responses to questions</td>
<td>Respond to written questions on a social network-type website.</td>
<td>30-40 words for each question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Part 2 Formal writing</td>
<td>Write an email in response to a short email and some notes (provided).</td>
<td>120-150 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3 Article for website publication</td>
<td>Write an informative and interesting text on a topic using notes provided.</td>
<td>180 -220 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>Part 1 Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations</td>
<td>Describe two contrasting pictures and answer two additional questions.</td>
<td>45 seconds for each response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Part 2 Discuss personal experience and opinion in relation to an abstract topic</td>
<td>Answer three questions on an abstract topic.</td>
<td>1 minute to prepare 2 minutes response time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3 Presentation</td>
<td>Select and develop points from a list of for/against ideas related to a topic.</td>
<td>60 seconds preparation 90 seconds presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 4 Question on your presentation</td>
<td>Respond to a follow-up question related to the topic in Part 3.</td>
<td>No preparation time 45 seconds to respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aptis Advanced core test (grammar and vocabulary)

The core in Aptis Advanced consists of two parts. The first part assesses your knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses your knowledge of English vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>In this part of the test, you will answer 25 questions.</td>
<td>To know which parts of grammar are tested, see the British Council / EQUALS core inventory. This is free and available online at: <a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-equals-core-inventory-general-english">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-equals-core-inventory-general-english</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All 25 questions are in the format of a 3-option multiple choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</td>
<td>One great way to prepare for the grammar test is to use the British Council’s LearnEnglish website: <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>There are 25 questions in this part of the test.</td>
<td>To help you prepare for this part of the test, the LearnEnglish website has games and activities to help you improve your vocabulary. <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>There are a number of question types:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word matching</strong>: find a word with a meaning similar to the target word.</td>
<td>Another useful tip is to take note of interesting words or word combinations when you read English texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word definition</strong>: match a definition to the correct word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word usage</strong>: complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word pairs or word combinations</strong>: select the most common combinations of words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample grammar questions

Here are some examples:

He__________me that the machine was broken.
○ told
○ spoke
○ said

My boss says that I __________ to finish the report by Friday.
○ must
○ have
○ should

My new computer works __________ faster than my old one.
○ many
○ more
○ much

I have worked for this company __________ I left university.
○ since
○ after
○ from

John: She’s French, isn’t she?
Ahmed: No, she’s __________ from Belgium.
○ exactly
○ actually
○ anyway

Zeynep: I really don’t feel like going to see that movie tonight.
Peter: Ok. __________ we can go next week instead.
○ Maybe
○ However
○ Nevertheless
Sample vocabulary questions

In the first question type, you need to match words with similar meanings from a list of options. To do this, click on the arrows and choose the similar word.

Here is an example:

Select a word from the list that has the most similar meaning to the word on the left.

Example:  big = large

- study = read
- receive = get
- start = begin
- talk = speak
- pick = choose

For the next question type, you need to match a definition to a word. Click on the arrow and choose the word that matches the definition.

Here is an example:

Complete each definition using a word from the drop down list.

- To cover with paper or material is to wrap
- To improve or change is to adjust
- To state or make public is to announce
- To get somewhere is to arrive
- To put something together is to assemble
The next question type asks you to complete a sentence using a word from a list.

Complete each sentence using a word from the drop down list.

- More and more people go **abroad** for their holidays these days.
- Drivers need to remain **alert** when in charge of a car.
- The city has many **ancient** and interesting buildings.
- She's a **articulate** person who explains things clearly.
- He's a very **aggressive** person – always getting into fights.

The final question type asks you to identify a word from a list that is commonly used with the given word.

Select a word from the list that is most often used with the word on the left.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: big +</th>
<th>house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aerobics +</td>
<td>classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture +</td>
<td>minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aisle +</td>
<td>seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apron +</td>
<td>strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atom +</td>
<td>bomb</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Aptis Advanced reading test

The test assesses your reading ability. The tasks start at B1 level and become more difficult as the test progresses. You have 60 minutes to complete the four parts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinion matching</td>
<td>In this part, you will match people’s opinions to statements. You will read four people’s opinions on the same topic. Then you need to read seven statements and decide which person’s opinion matches each statement.</td>
<td>Read all four opinions before trying to answer the questions. Remember, the same person can be used for more than one answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>This part tests your ability to read and understand short texts.</td>
<td>To prepare, look at the comments section in online media and practise summarizing the main opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long text comprehension</td>
<td>In this part, you will read a long text (about 750 words). You will also read eight headings. The task is to match seven of the headings to paragraphs in the text. There is always an extra heading that does not fit with any paragraph.</td>
<td>Read the whole text quickly. Then carefully read the headings. Do all this before starting the task. Look for clues to connect the headings to the paragraphs; these might be similar words, ideas or topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>To prepare, read magazine articles and find the main idea for each paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading for global understanding</td>
<td>This is a short text of around 300 words with missing gaps. You must choose the right word or phrase from the drop-down to complete the gap.</td>
<td>Make sure you read the whole text before trying to answer. This isn’t a grammar test so all the options can fit grammatically into the sentence. You need to understand the whole text to choose the correct one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading across two texts</td>
<td>You have two short texts on the same topic. You need to fill in the blank with the appropriate phrase.</td>
<td>You need to read both texts before answering as all of the options are grammatically possible, so you can only choose the right one if you have understood both texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample reading questions

Reading part 1: Opinion matching
In this part, you match four people’s opinions to seven statements by selecting the correct person from the drop-down list.

Reading part 2: Long text comprehension
In the second part, you match an appropriate heading to each paragraph of a single text.
Reading part 3: Reading for global understanding
In the third part, you choose the right word or phrase from the drop-down to complete the gap.

Reading part 4: Reading across two texts
For the final part, you need to fill in the blank with the appropriate phrase.
Aptis Advanced listening test

The Advanced listening test has four parts. You have **30 minutes** to complete the four parts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying factual information</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 1</td>
<td>In this part, you will listen to five short recordings of monologues or dialogues and answer one question for each recording.</td>
<td>Visit the British Council’s LearnEnglish website for lots of very useful activities, tips, apps and podcasts: <a href="http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/">http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identifying opinion and attitude</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 2</td>
<td>In this part, you will listen to three recordings of monologues and you will have to answer two questions for each recording.</td>
<td>Use the fact that you can listen twice to your advantage here. Read through the questions before you listen. Then, on your first listen, select your answers and listen a second time to confirm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding an extended spoken text</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 3</td>
<td>In this part, you will hear a discussion between a man and a woman. On the screen you will see a number of opinions. You will need to identify who expresses which opinion: the man, the woman, or both the man and the woman.</td>
<td>You will only hear the recording once and you have 20 seconds to read through the options before it starts. Make sure you know what information you are listening for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding an extended story</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 4</td>
<td>In this part, you will hear two separate monologues. You will need to select the correct answers from a table.</td>
<td>You will only hear each monologue once. The information in the monologue does not appear in the same order as the table.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample listening questions

Remember that if you’d like to hear a question for a second time, just click on the Play button (▶). The system will not allow you to listen more than twice. For part three and four you will be able to hear the recording just once.

Listening part 1: Identifying factual information
You listen to a short monologue or dialogue and identify specific information.

Listen to a woman introducing a concert. How will the concert end?

The concert will end with _____.

☐ 1. a surprise performance
☐ 2. the city’s favourite group
☐ 3. traditional music
☐ 4. some special offers

Listening part 2: Identifying opinion and attitude
You listen to three separate monologues and answer two questions for each recording.

Listen to the woman on the radio talking about the experience of moving house and answer the questions.

What difficulties did she face?

☐ 1. She didn’t know how to do the paperwork.
☐ 2. It took months to move house.
☐ 3. She couldn’t get legal assistance.

What is making her unhappy?

☐ 1. The noise made by the builders.
☐ 2. Noises from outside the house.
☐ 3. The sounds her neighbours make.
Listening part 3: Understanding an extended spoken text
You listen to short conversations with two speakers to identify the opinions of the speakers.

Listening part 4: Understanding an extended story
You listen to a monologue to identify four key pieces of information.
Aptis Advanced writing test

There are three parts to the writing test. You will interact in a social media-type written conversation, write an email and write a short article for an online publication. All writing tasks are marked by examiners.

Make sure you fully understand the questions. Plan what you are going to write and then edit your writing before clicking to the next question.

The most common mistakes include:
- not answering the questions (going off-topic)
- writing too much but with poor grammar, spelling and punctuation
- not using a variety of sentence structures
- not writing in sentences or paragraphs.

The total time allowed for the writing test is 45 minutes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three written responses to questions Part 1</td>
<td>In this part, you will have a social network-type interaction. You will receive three questions and need to respond.</td>
<td>Make sure you correctly answer all three questions and don’t go off-topic. Focus on accurate spelling and punctuation and write text that is cohesive and coherent. Keep to the word count of 30–40 words per answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal writing Part</td>
<td>In this part, you will read an email from an authority. You need to respond to the email in 120–150 words, using the notes provided, expressing how you feel about the situation.</td>
<td>Make sure you are on-topic and that you use the appropriate register for the situation. Avoid text message or social media language, instead focusing on formal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article for website publication Part 3</td>
<td>In this part, you will write an article for a website that is both informative and interesting. Notes about the topic are provided and you need to use the information to help write the article. The article needs to be between 180–220 words.</td>
<td>Try to make your article informative and interesting and use original text (i.e. don’t just copy the notes).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample writing questions

Writing part 1: Three written responses to questions
You need to write responses to three questions.

Aptis History Club Chat

Sam: Hi! Welcome to the club, I was interested in history at school and I studied it at university. What about you?

Migue: Welcome. Can you tell me something about the history of your country?

Michelle: Who is your favourite person from history, and why are you interested in him or her?
Here is the marking scale:

**Areas assessed:** task fulfilment / topic relevance, punctuation, grammatical range & accuracy, vocabulary range & accuracy, cohesion.

- **5. B2 (or above)**  Likely to be above A2 level.

- **Responses to all three questions** are on topic and show the following features:
  - Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
  - Punctuation and spelling mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding.
  - Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions.
  - Uses simple cohesive devices to organize responses as a linear sequence of sentences.

- **3. B1.1**  Responses to two questions are on topic and show the following features:
  - Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
  - Punctuation and spelling mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding.
  - Vocabulary is sufficient to respond to the questions.
  - Uses simple cohesive devices to organize responses as a linear sequence of sentences.

- **2. A2.2**  Responses to at least two questions are on topic and show the following features:
  - Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with simple structures common and sometimes impede understanding.
  - Punctuation and spelling mistakes are noticeable.
  - Vocabulary is not sufficient to respond to the question(s). Inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable and sometimes impede understanding.
  - Responses are lists of sentences and not organized as cohesive texts.

- **1. A2.1**  Response to one question is on topic and shows the following features:
  - Uses simple grammatical structures to produce writing at the sentence level. Errors with simple structures common and sometimes impede understanding.
  - Punctuation and spelling mistakes are noticeable.
  - Vocabulary is not sufficient to respond to the question(s). Inappropriate lexical choices are noticeable and sometimes impede understanding.
  - Responses are lists of sentences and not organized as cohesive texts.

- **0.**  Performance below A2, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).
Writing part 2: Email response
You need to respond to the email in 120–150 words, using the notes provided, expressing how you feel about the situation.

Dear Customer,

Thank you for shopping at our supermarket. We value your custom and would like to hear about your most recent shopping experience. Firstly, we want to know your opinion of our staff. Were they able to help you in any way? (1) We would also like to know what you think about the organisation of the store. Did you find it easy to find the products you want? (2) Finally, we would like to hear your suggestions for improving the customer shopping experience. (3)

Yours faithfully,
Customer Services

Your notes:
1. staff seem very young - don't always know about products
2. every month products are moved - difficult to find what you want
3. music plays all the time - very irritating - prefer silence!!

You have received the e-mail on the left from your local supermarket. Read the e-mail and the notes you have made. Write a reply using all the information in your notes, and express how you feel about the situation.

You should write between 120 and 150 words.
Here is the marking scale:

**Areas assessed: task fulfilment, register, grammatical range & accuracy, vocabulary range & accuracy, punctuation and spelling, cohesion.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **6. C2** | Response fully on topic and appropriate register used. Response shows the following features:  
  - Range of complex grammar constructions used accurately. No grammar errors occur.  
  - Range of vocabulary used. No awkward or inappropriate lexical choices.  
  - No more than two minor punctuation or spelling errors occur.  
  - Range of cohesive devices used to clearly indicate the links between ideas. |
| **5. C1** | Response fully on topic and appropriate register used. Response shows the following features:  
  - Range of complex grammar constructions used accurately. Minor grammar errors occur.  
  - Range of vocabulary used. Some awkward or slightly inappropriate lexical choices.  
  - Minor errors in punctuation and spelling occur.  
  - Range of cohesive devices used to clearly indicate the links between ideas. |
| **4. B2.2** | Response fully on topic and appropriate register used. Response shows the following features:  
  - Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not impede understanding.  
  - Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not impede understanding.  
  - Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.  
  - Limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas. |
| **3. B2.1** | Response partially on topic and/or appropriate register partially used. Response shows the following features:  
  - Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not impede understanding.  
  - Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not impede understanding.  
  - Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.  
  - Limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas. |
2. B1.2 Response partially on topic and/or appropriate register partially used. Response shows the following features:
• Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
• Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in parts of the text.
• Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
• Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

1. B1.1 Response not on topic and/or task not fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register. Response shows the following features:
• Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
• Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in parts of the text.
• Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
• Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

0. A1/A2 Performance below B1, or no meaningful language or the response is completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).
Writing part 3: Article for website publication
You will write an article for a website that is both informative and interesting.
Here is the marking scale:

**Areas assessed:** task fulfilment, grammatical range & accuracy, vocabulary range & accuracy, coherence and cohesion.

**6. C2**
- Response is informative and interesting. Clever use of the input with mostly original text. Response shows the following features:
  - Range of complex grammar constructions used accurately. Minor errors occur.
  - Range of vocabulary used accurately. No awkward or inappropriate lexical choices.
  - Minor errors in punctuation and spelling occur.
  - Range of cohesive devices used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.

**5. C1**
- Response is not interesting. Correct use of the input with mostly original text. Response shows the following features:
  - Range of complex grammar constructions used accurately. Minor errors occur.
  - Range of vocabulary used. Some awkward or slightly inappropriate lexical choices.
  - Minor errors in punctuation and spelling occur.
  - Range of cohesive devices used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.

**4. B2.2**
- Response is not interesting. Correct use of the input with mostly original text. Response shows the following features:
  - Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not impede understanding.
  - Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topic required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not impede understanding.
  - Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
  - Limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

**3. B2.1**
- Response is not interesting or informative. Key parts of the input are missing with mostly original text. Response shows the following features:
  - Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not impede understanding.
  - Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not impede understanding.
  - Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
  - Limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.
2. B1.2  
Response is not interesting or informative. Key parts of the input are missing with mostly original text. Response shows the following features:
  • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
  • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in parts of the text.
  • Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
  • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

1. B1.1  
Response is not interesting or information. Input is not used correctly or text is mostly copied from the input. Response shows the following features:
  • Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
  • Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in most of the text.
  • Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
  • Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

0. A1/A2  
Performance below B1, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).
Aptis Advanced speaking test

The Advanced speaking test has three parts.

The duration of the Aptis Advanced speaking test is 10 minutes. For each question, you are given a maximum amount of time to speak, but you can end the recording early by clicking on a stop button. Please make sure you fully respond to the question before you stop the recording.

The most common reasons people receive lower scores than they expect include:
- not doing a proper sound check (details on how to do this are shown below)
- not speaking clearly
- not answering the questions
- giving under-length answers – not using the full amount of time to speak
- overusing words such as ‘and’ and ‘so’
- speaking in simple sentence lists
- not using a variety of sentence structures.

Before the Speaking test begins, you’ll be asked to check your microphone.

Before we get started, let’s test your microphone.

It’s important to make sure we can hear you clearly so we can mark your response.

Start Check
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 1</td>
<td>In this part, you are asked to compare two pictures and then answer two questions related to the topic. The three questions increase in complexity (from description to speculation). You are expected to talk for 45 seconds for each question.</td>
<td>To prepare for this part, it is a good idea to practise comparing two different things (e.g. two cities or two houses). Focus on describing their advantages and disadvantages. With speculation, it is important to make sure you are using the correct grammatical structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss personal experience and opinion in relation to an abstract topic</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 2</td>
<td>In this part, you will be asked three questions about an abstract topic. You are given one minute to prepare an answer and can take notes. You are expected to talk for two minutes.</td>
<td>A common error is to go off topic. Focus on answering each question in a clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech. To prepare for this part it is a good idea to practise speaking for two minutes on an abstract topic (e.g. How do you feel about ________)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation and Question on your presentation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Part 3 and 4</td>
<td>In this part, you need to speak on a topic for one and a half minutes. You will have one minute to prepare. After your presentation, you will be asked an additional question about the topic and asked to speak for 45 seconds. There is no preparation time for this additional question.</td>
<td>Structure your presentation and make sure you provide both sides of the argument. Try to act like you are speaking to an audience or a group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speaking part 1: Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations
In this part, you will see two photos and answer three questions.

Each part of the test will appear automatically. You can stop recording your response before the timer runs out by tapping on the stop button, but we recommend that you try to speak for the full time available to maximise your score.

Part One. In this part I'm going to ask you to compare two pictures and I will then ask you two questions about them. You will have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when you hear this sound.

Tell me what you see in the two pictures.

Which of these two places would you prefer to go on holiday to? Why?

Which of these two places do you think children would prefer? Why?
The areas assessed in part 1 of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly you responded to the question, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

**Areas assessed:** task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

**5. B2 (or above)** Likely to be above the B1 level.

**4. B1.2** Responses to all **three** questions are on topic and show the following features:

- Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
- Sufficient range and control of vocabulary for the task. Errors occur when expressing complex thoughts.
- Pronunciation is intelligible but inappropriate mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener.
- Some pausing, false starts and reformulations.
- Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

**3. B1.1** Responses to **two** questions are on topic and show the following features:

- Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
- Sufficient range and control of vocabulary for the task. Errors occur when expressing complex thoughts.
- Pronunciation is intelligible but inappropriate mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener.
- Some pausing, false starts and reformulations.
- Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

**2. A1.2** Responses to at least **two** questions are on topic and show the following features:

- Uses some simple grammatical structures correctly but systematically makes basic mistakes.
- Vocabulary will be limited to concrete topics and descriptions. Inappropriate lexical choices for the task are noticeable.
- Mispronunciations are noticeable and put a strain on the listener.
- Noticeable pausing, false starts and reformulations.
- Cohesion between ideas is limited. Responses tend to be a list of points.
1. A2.1  
Response to one question is on topic and shows the following features:
- Uses some simple grammatical structures correctly but systematically makes basic mistakes.
- Vocabulary will be limited to concrete topics and descriptions. Inappropriate lexical choices for the task are noticeable.
- Mispronunciations are noticeable and put a strain on the listener.
- Noticeable pausing, false starts and reformulations.
- Cohesion between ideas is limited. Responses tend to be a list of points.

0.  
Performance below A2, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).
Speaking part 2: Discuss personal experience and opinion on an abstract topic
In this part you will answer three questions on an abstract topic.

How important is it to you that you save money regularly?
What advice would you give to someone about managing their personal finances?
Why do people think wealth brings happiness?

You now have one minute to think about your answers.
You can make notes if you wish.

How important is it to you that you save money regularly?
What advice would you give to someone about managing their personal finances?
Why do people think wealth brings happiness?
You now have two minutes to talk.
During the preparation time, it is important to take notes, as these will help you organise and remember what you want to speak about. Rather than writing out exactly what you want to say, make brief notes and use these to structure your speech.

Here is the marking scale:

**Areas assessed:** task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

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5. C1
Response addresses all three questions and is well-structured.
- Uses a range of complex grammar constructions accurately. Some minor errors occur but do not impede understanding.
- Uses a range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Some awkward usage or slightly inappropriate lexical choices.
- Pronunciation is clearly intelligible.
- Backtracking and reformulations do not fully interrupt the flow of speech.
- A range of cohesive devices are used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.

4. B2.2
Responses to all three questions are on topic and show the following features:
- Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Pronunciation is intelligible. Mispronunciations do not put a strain on the listener or lead to misunderstanding.
- Some pausing while searching for vocabulary but this does not put a strain on the listener.
- A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

3. B2.1
Responses to two questions are on topic and show the following features:
- Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Pronunciation is intelligible. Mispronunciations do not put a strain on the listener or lead to misunderstanding.
- Some pausing while searching for vocabulary but this does not put a strain on the listener.
- A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.
2. B1.2  
Responses to at least **two** questions are on topic and show the following features:
- Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
- Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task.
- Pronunciation is intelligible but occasional mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener.
- Noticeable pausing, false starts, reformulations and repetition.
- Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

1. B1.1  
Response not on topic and task not fulfilled in terms of appropriateness of register. No evidence of awareness of register. Response shows the following features:
- Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
- Punctuation and spelling is mostly accurate. Errors do not impede understanding.
- Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task. Errors impede understanding in most of the text.
- Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

0. A1/A2  
Performance below B1, or no meaningful language or the responses are completely off-topic (e.g. memorised script, guessing).
**Speaking part 3 and 4: Presentation and question on your presentation**

In these two sections you will have to select and develop points from a list of for or against ideas related to a topic and respond to a follow-up question related to the topic.

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**Part Three.** You are going to speak on a topic for one and a half minutes. You can see the topic on the screen and two lists of points - for and against - related to the topic. Choose two items from each list and give a balanced argument to represent both sides of the topic. You have one minute to prepare your argument. You will then have one and half minutes to speak. Begin speaking when you hear this sound. After you finish speaking you will be asked an additional question about the topic and asked to speak for 45 seconds.

**Topic: Higher Education Should Be Available For Everybody**

**FOR**
- Society benefits from a well educated population
- Qualifications help people find jobs
- Education is a basic human right

**AGAINST**
- If widely available, qualifications lose their value
- Universities are already overcrowded
- Potential negative impact on the job market

---

Educational standards today are lower than they were 50 years ago.

What is your response to this statement?
Here is the marking scale:

The areas assessed are task fulfilment / topic relevance, grammatical range and accuracy, vocabulary range and accuracy, pronunciation, fluency and cohesion.

6. C2

- Presentation is convincingly presented and well-structured, highlighting and expanding on points from each section.
- The follow-up question response is well-structured. There is a clear and coherent response.
- Uses a range of complex grammar constructions accurately. Some very minor errors occur but do not impede understanding.
- Uses a range of vocabulary to discuss the topic required by the task. No awkward usage or inappropriate lexical choices.
- Pronunciation is clearly intelligible.
- Backtracking and reformulations do not interrupt the flow of speech.
- A range of cohesive devices are used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.

5. C1

- Presentation is clear, highlighting points from each section. Gives reasons in support of or against particular points of view.
- The follow-up question response is coherent.
- Uses a range of complex grammar constructions accurately. Some minor errors occur but do not impede understanding.
- Uses a range of vocabulary to discuss the topic in the poster in his/her own words. Some awkward usage or slightly inappropriate lexical choices.
- Pronunciation is clearly intelligible.
- Backtracking and reformulations do not fully interrupt the flow of speech.
- A range of cohesive devices are used to clearly indicate the links between ideas.

4. B2.2

Response fully on topic and appropriate register used. Response shows the following features:
- Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not impede understanding.
- Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not impede understanding.
- Punctuation and spelling errors do not impede understanding.
- Limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

Response addresses points from each section, the follow-up question is on-topic and the response shows the features associated with B2 spoken production.
3. B2.1
Response does not address points from both sections, the follow-up question is on-topic and the response shows the features associated with B2 spoken production.

Features associated with B2 spoken production:
- Some complex grammar constructions used accurately. Errors do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Sufficient range of vocabulary to discuss the topics required by the task. Inappropriate lexical choices do not lead to misunderstanding.
- Pronunciation is intelligible. Mispronunciations do not put a strain on the listener or lead to misunderstanding.
- Some pausing while searching for vocabulary, but this does not put a strain on the listener.
- A limited number of cohesive devices are used to indicate the links between ideas.

2. B1.2
The candidate is unable to construct a coherent and sustained response, is heavily dependent on the input prompts and is not able to address the follow-up question. The response shows the features associated with B1 spoken production.

1. B1.1
The candidate is unable to construct a coherent and sustained response, reads directly from the prompts and is not able to address the follow-up question. The response shows the features associated with B1 spoken production.

Features associated with B1 spoken production:
- Control of simple grammatical structures. Errors occur when attempting complex structures.
- Limitations in vocabulary make it difficult to deal fully with the task.
- Pronunciation is intelligible but occasional mispronunciations put an occasional strain on the listener.
- Noticeable pausing, false starts, reformulations and repetition.
- Uses only simple cohesive devices. Links between ideas are not always clearly indicated.

0. A1/A2
Performance not sufficient for B1, or no meaningful language, or the responses are completely off-topic (memorised or guessing).
How to take the online test

When you start every Aptis General test, the introductory screen looks like this:

Welcome to the Aptis Grammar and Vocabulary Test.
The test consists of two sections:
Grammar: 25 questions
Vocabulary: 25 questions
Total Time: 25 minutes
When you click on the start button, the test will begin.

On screen, the questions will appear like this:

In those days, my father _____ never eat dinner after eight o’clock.

- will
- used to
- would
**Speaking test voice recording**

Make sure your test is taken in a quiet room. The following screen will appear. This allows you to check the sound recording system on your computer.

Once you click **Start Check**, the screen below appears. You will now need to record a sample of speech.
When you have finished your recording, the following screen appears. You can replay the recorded sound. If you can hear it properly, click on Yes (start my test), if not click on No (try again).

During the microphone check, make sure you say a whole sentence and not just one or two words. Assessing the quality of the microphone needs more than a few words.
Aptis for all

The British Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in English language testing. We believe that the Aptis tests should be accessible to anyone who wants to take them. We also believe that each person should have the opportunity to perform to the best of his or her ability on the Aptis tests.

If you have a disability and believe that Aptis is not accessible to you, or believe that the form of the test will not allow you to show your true level of English, please contact your local British Council centre to talk about the ways in which the test can be modified for your needs. We can make adjustments such as providing pen and paper tests, face-to-face tests, Braille and large font tests, adjusting timing, and a range of other modifications.

Please discuss it with us to ensure that we can support you with a test which is both fair to you and maintains the high standards and reliability of Aptis.
Final checklist

We hope these notes will help you prepare for your Aptis test. Here’s a checklist to make sure you’re fully prepared.

- Review the different grammar parts: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/british-council-equals-core-inventory-general-english
- Visit the LearnEnglish website to prepare for the grammar and vocabulary test: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en
- Practise your English skills at every opportunity: Listen to English radio, watch English-language television and films and read the graded readers (e.g. Cambridge, Penguin, Macmillan and Headway).
- Read the tips in this booklet on how to prepare for each test.

Useful web resources

- LearnEnglish Grammar: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar
- LearnEnglish Vocabulary: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/vocabulary

More information

- www.britishcouncil.org/aptis