Introducing the Aptis ESOL test

Aptis ESOL is an innovative English testing system from the British Council. It is a suite of assessments for adults and young adults, which can be used to assess English language ability in all four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Aptis ESOL tests 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 three variations of Aptis ESOL tests.

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

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

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

Aptis ESOL tests are taken on a computer.

Accommodations can be made for special educational needs. Information is provided in the ‘Aptis ESOL for all’ section at the end of this guide.

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare your students for the Aptis ESOL Advanced tests. An overview of each component is provided followed by detailed descriptions and advice on how your students can best prepare. You will also find tips on how your students can practise for the test and information on how the test is marked.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing the Aptis ESOL test</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test structure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced test structure</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced core test (grammar and vocabulary)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample grammar questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample vocabulary questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced Reading test</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading part 1: Opinion matching</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading part 2: Long text comprehension</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading part 3: Reading for global understanding</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading part 4: Reading across two texts</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced Listening test</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening part 1: Identifying factual information</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening part 2: Identifying opinion and attitude</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening part 3: Understanding an extended spoken text</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening part 4: Understanding an extended story</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced Writing test</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing part 1: Three written responses to questions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing part 2: Formal writing</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing part 3: Article for website publication</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptis ESOL Advanced Speaking test</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking part 1: Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking part 2: Discuss personal experience and opinion in relation to an abstract topic</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking part 3 and 4: Presentation and question on your presentation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to take a test on a computer ........................................................................................................39
Aptis ESOL for all ..................................................................................................................................44
Final checklist ........................................................................................................................................45
Useful web resources ...........................................................................................................................45
More information ....................................................................................................................................45
Test structure

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

Your students will be taking all four skill components (reading, listening, writing, speaking).

It is a good idea for them to take a practice test so that they become familiar with what they need to do.
## Aptis ESOL Advanced test structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Test design</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core</strong> 25 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong> Grammar</td>
<td>Sentence completion.</td>
<td>Three-option multiple choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong> Vocabulary</td>
<td>Word matching (similar meaning).</td>
<td>Sets of five target words with ten options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Match words to definitions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence completion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Word pairs or word combinations (words commonly used together).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong> 60 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong> Opinion matching</td>
<td>Match people’s opinions to statements.</td>
<td>Seven statements matched to four people’s opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong> Long text comprehension</td>
<td>Match headings to paragraphs.</td>
<td>Seven paragraphs and eight headings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong> Reading for global understanding</td>
<td>Select a word or phrase to complete gaps.</td>
<td>Five gaps and three options per gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong> Reading across two texts</td>
<td>Select word or phrase to complete gaps.</td>
<td>Six gaps and three options per gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong> 30 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong> Identifying factual information</td>
<td>Listen to a monologues and dialogues to identify the correct information.</td>
<td>Four-option multiple choice Listen twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong> Identifying opinion and attitude</td>
<td>Listen to a monologue to identify opinion and attitude.</td>
<td>Three-option multiple choice Two questions per monologue Listen twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong> Understanding an extended spoken text</td>
<td>Listen to a dialogue to identify which speakers express which opinions.</td>
<td>Three-option multiple choice Six questions per dialogue Listen once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong> Understanding an extended story</td>
<td>Listen to a monologue to identify information.</td>
<td>Three-option multiple choice Four questions per monologue Listen once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>Test design</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</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></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>Speaking</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></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>One minute to prepare Two 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 ESOL Advanced core test (grammar and vocabulary)

The core test consists of two parts. The first part assesses candidates' knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses their knowledge of English vocabulary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>In this part of the test, candidates will answer 25 questions.</td>
<td>To know which parts of grammar are tested, see the British Council / EAQUALS 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 three-option multiple choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>There are 25 questions in this part of the test.</td>
<td>One great way to help candidates 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></td>
<td>There are a number of question types:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word matching:</strong> candidates find a word with a meaning similar to the target word.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word definition:</strong> candidates match a definition to the correct word.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word usage:</strong> candidates complete a sentence by choosing the correct word.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Word pairs or word combinations:</strong> candidates select the most common combinations of words. They are given a target word and a list of words which may or may not be commonly used in combination with the target word, e.g. where card is the target word, birthday + card is a common combination but blue + card is not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample grammar questions

There are two question types. The first focuses on written English grammar, and the second focuses on the use of English grammar when speaking.

Here are some examples:

1. **Written grammar**
   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

2. **Spoken grammar**
   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, candidates need to match words with similar meanings from a list of options. To do this, they 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.](image)

For the next question type, candidates need to match a definition to a word. They 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.](image)
The next question type asks candidates to complete a sentence using a word from a list.

![Sentence completion example](image)

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

![Word identification example](image)

To take a full Aptis ESOL Grammar and Vocabulary practice test, please visit our [website](#).
# Aptis ESOL Advanced Reading test

The Reading test assesses candidates’ reading ability. The tasks start at B1 level and become more difficult as the test progresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td><strong>Opinion matching</strong></td>
<td>Candidates should read all four opinions before trying to answer the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In this part, candidates will match people’s opinions to statements. They will read four opinions on the same topic and seven statements. Then they need to decide how the sentences should be matched. This part tests candidates’ ability to read and understand short texts.</td>
<td>To prepare, candidates can look at the comments section in online media and practise summarising the main opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td><strong>Long text comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Candidates should read the whole text quickly and then carefully read the headings. They should look for clues to connect the headings to the paragraphs; these might be similar words, ideas or topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In this part, candidates will read a long text (about 750 words). They 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. This part is designed to test candidates’ ability to read and understand a long text. To get the correct answers they need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the headings reflect the paragraphs in different ways (sometimes using similar words, sometimes similar ideas, or by sharing a topic).</td>
<td>To prepare, candidates can read magazine articles and find the main idea for each paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td><strong>Reading for global understanding</strong></td>
<td>Candidates should make sure they read the whole text before trying to answer. This is not a grammar test so all the options can fit grammatically into the sentence. They need to understand the whole text to choose the correct one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a short text of around 300 words with missing gaps. Candidates must choose the right word or phrase from the drop-down to complete the gap.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4</td>
<td><strong>Reading across two texts</strong></td>
<td>Candidates need to read both texts before answering as all of the options are grammatically possible, so they can only choose the correct one if they have understood both texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates read two short texts on the same topic. They need to fill in the blank with the appropriate phrase.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sample reading questions

Reading part 1: Opinion matching
In this part, candidates 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, candidates must scroll through the reading text to see all of it. They can do this by clicking on the side bar and moving the bar up and down.

To complete the task, candidates need to match seven headings to the correct paragraphs in the text.

They select the appropriate heading from the drop-down list on the left-hand side.
Reading part 3: Reading for global understanding
In the third part, candidates choose the right word or phrase from the drop-down to complete the gap.

```
Read the article. Choose the correct option to fill each of the gaps from the drop-down lists below.

Singapore celebrates its 50th anniversary

Singapore is a small island-nation in Southeast Asia. It lies at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. The small country gained its independence on 9th August 1965 and is home to a Chinese majority with large minorities of people from Indian, Malay and Eurasian backgrounds. To the delight of its residents and tourists alike, the celebrations for the country’s 50th anniversary in 2015 began early. In March 2014, the festivities began by reflecting on their journey over the previous 50 years and people taking pride in their 95___.

To begin the celebrations, the proudly multi-ethnic residents honours the country’s founders and the special roles they played throughout its history. Under the leadership of the country’s founder, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore became a modern city-state. It has one of the 25___ in the world, and a truly united sense of national identity.

Over the last 50 years, Singapore has gained a reputation as a leading nation in the region. It currently has one of the highest life expectancies and per capita incomes in the world. It is also home to some of the world’s top educational institutions, and is now a 35___. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that the country boasts an important international financial district and is home to the world’s second-busiest shipping container port. The strength of the small island-nation’s industries is a source of great pride among Singaporeans.

Current prime minister Lee Hsien Loong led the anniversary celebrations under the overall theme of ‘one people’. The choice of this theme was one that was greatly appreciated by many 45___. After the official anniversary day, the focus changed to 55_ _, offering aspirations and committing to a brighter future. Many feel that it has been these collective ideals and principles that have united Singapore and made it strong. Its residents are now looking forward to achieving another 50 years of prosperity as they move forward in the 21st century.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Reading part 4: Reading across two texts
For the final part, candidates need to fill in the blank with the appropriate phrase.

```
To take a full Aptis ESOL Reading practice test, please visit our website.
Aptis ESOL Advanced Listening test

The Aptis ESOL Advanced Listening test has four parts. Candidates can choose to listen to the text once or twice in the first two parts but will only hear the text once in parts 3 and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will listen to five short recordings of monologues or dialogues and answer one question for each recording.</td>
<td>Candidates can 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>Part 2</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will listen to three recordings of monologues and they will have to answer two questions for each recording.</td>
<td>You can advise your students to use the fact that they can listen twice to their advantage here. They should read through the questions before they listen. Then, on their first listen, they should select their answers and listen a second time to confirm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will hear a discussion between a man and a woman. On the screen they will see a number of opinions. They will need to identify who expresses which opinion: the man, the woman, or both the man and the woman.</td>
<td>Candidates will only hear the recording once and they have 20 seconds to read through the options before it starts. They should make sure they know what information they are listening for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will hear two separate monologues. They will need to select the correct answers from a table.</td>
<td>Candidates 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

If candidates would like to hear a question for a second time, they can just click on the Play button (▶). The system will not allow them to listen more than twice. For part three and four they will be able to hear the recording just once.

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

![Example question](image)

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

![Example question](image)
Listening part 3: Understanding an extended spoken text
Candidates listen to short conversations with two speakers to identify the opinions of the speakers.

Listening part 4: Understanding an extended story
Candidates listen to a monologue to identify four key pieces of information.

To take a full Aptis ESOL Listening practice test, please visit our website.
Aptis ESOL Advanced Writing test

There are three parts to the Writing test. Candidates 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 human examiners.

Candidates should make sure they fully understand the questions. They should plan what they are going to write and then edit their text before clicking to the next question.

The most common mistakes include:
- not answering the questions (going off-topic)
  - candidates should read the question and understand what they need to do
- writing too much but with poor grammar, spelling and punctuation
  - candidates should keep to the word count and focus on accuracy
- not using a variety of sentence structures
- not writing in sentences or paragraphs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Three written responses to questions</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will have a social network-type interaction. They will receive three questions and need to respond.</td>
<td>Candidates should make sure they correctly answer all three questions and do not go off-topic. They should focus on accurate spelling and punctuation and write sentences that link together and make sense. It's best to keep to the word count of 30–40 words per answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Formal writing</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will read an email from an authority. They need to respond to the email in 120–150 words, using the notes provided, expressing how they feel about the situation.</td>
<td>Candidates should make sure they are on-topic and that they use the appropriate register for the situation. They should avoid text message or social media language, instead focusing on formal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Article for website publication</td>
<td>In this part, candidates will write an article for a website that is both informative and interesting. Notes about the topic are provided and they need to use the information to help write the article. The article needs to be between 180–220 words.</td>
<td>Candidates should try to make their article informative and interesting and use original text (i.e. not just copy the notes).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample writing questions

Writing part 1: Three written responses to questions
Candidates need to write responses to three questions.
Here is the marking scale:

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

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**5. B2 (or above)**  Likely to be above A2 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.
- 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
Candidates need to respond to the email in 120 –150 words, using the notes provided, expressing how they feel about the situation.

You have received the following email from your local supermarket. Read the email 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 120-150 words. Recommended time: 15 minutes.

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!

Type your answer here

Word count: 8 / 225
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>
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</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

Candidates will write an article for a website that is both informative and interesting.

Things You Should Know is a website that accepts short articles from members of the public on subjects of popular interest. You have been asked to contribute an article on the subject of Public Surveillance Systems. You have already done some research on the subject in note and diagram form. Use information from your research notes below which would help you write an article that is both informative and interesting. Write between 180-220 words. Recommended time: 20 minutes.

Notes on Public Surveillance Systems
- CCTV cameras used in public areas (museums, shops, banks)
- Increasing number of private homes installing CCTV
- Benefits: allows monitoring of public safety / can provide evidence in criminal cases
- Drawbacks: threat to individual liberty / intrusion into individual privacy

Numbers of Public CCTV Cameras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>No. of Country CCTV Cameras</th>
<th>Urban Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>8.5 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>830,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>550,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type your answer here

Words: 0 / 133
Here is the marking scale:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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).

To take a full Aptis ESOL Writing practice test, please visit our [website](#).
Aptis ESOL Advanced Speaking test

For each question, candidates are given a maximum amount of time to speak, but they can end the recording early by clicking on the 'finish recording' button. Candidates should make sure they fully respond to the question before they 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, candidates will be asked to check their microphones.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
<td>In this part, candidates are asked to compare two pictures and then to answer two questions related to the topic.</td>
<td>It's a good idea for candidates 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 that they are using the correct grammatical structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The three questions increase in complexity (from description to speculation).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates are expected to talk for 45 seconds for each question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td>In this part, candidates will be asked three questions about an abstract topic. They are given one minute to prepare an answer and can take notes.</td>
<td>A common error is to go off topic. Candidates should focus on answering each question in a clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates are expected to talk for two minutes.</td>
<td>To prepare for this part, candidates should to practise speaking for two minutes on an abstract topic (e.g. How do you feel about ________?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td>In this part, candidates need to speak on a topic for one and a half minutes. They will have one minute to prepare.</td>
<td>Candidates should structure their presentation and make sure they provide both sides of the argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and 4</td>
<td>After their presentation, they will receive an additional question about the topic and will be asked to speak for 45 seconds.</td>
<td>They should try to act like they are speaking to an audience or a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no preparation time for this additional question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speaking part 1: Describe, compare and provide reasons and explanations
In this part, candidates will see two photos and answer three questions.

Each part of the test will appear automatically. Candidates can stop recording their response before the timer runs out by tapping on the 'Finish recording' button, but we recommend that they try to speak for the full time available to maximise their score.
The areas assessed in part 1 of the Speaking test are how completely and relevantly candidates 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, candidates will answer three questions on an abstract topic.
During the preparation time, it is important for candidates to take notes, as these will help them organise and remember what they want to speak about. Rather than writing out exactly what they want to say, they should make brief notes and use these to structure their speech.

Here is the marking scale:

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

6. C2  
Likely to be above C1 level.

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 candidates 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.
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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**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.

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**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.

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**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).

To take a full Aptis ESOL Speaking practice test, please visit our website.
How to take the test on a computer

The introductory screen for every Aptis ESOL test looks like this. Candidates will need to click "Use Access Code".

Candidates then enter their personal access code and click "Sign in".
After clicking “Sign in”, candidates will be prompted to read a privacy notice. To continue with the test, candidates must accept the terms and click “Continue”.

Candidates will then be asked to complete a system check. First they will need to check their internet connection.
Once the internet connection is checked, candidates will need to check their speakers and microphone. Once that is completed, they will be able to continue with the test.
Candidates will then land on the introduction page. From here, they will need to wait for the test day invigilator to admit them into the test.

Once the invigilator grants them access, they will be able to click “Start Assessment”.

![Start Assessment button](image-url)
Test day instructions will be shown on the screen. Candidates should read the instructions and then click “Next”.

They will then be able to start the speaking test, and the rest of their Aptis ESOL test.
Aptis ESOL for all

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

If your student(s) have a disability and believe that Aptis ESOL is not accessible to them, or believe that the form of the test will not allow them to show their true level of English, please advise them to contact their test centre to talk about the ways in which the test can be modified for their 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.
Final checklist

We hope these notes will help your students prepare for their Aptis ESOL test. Here’s a checklist they can refer to to make sure they’re fully prepared.

- Visit the official British Council preparation page and take a full practice test: https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/practice-materials
- 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

- British Council | TeachingEnglish: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/
- British Council | LearnEnglish: https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/

More information

- www.britishcouncil.org/aptis
- www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/aptis-esol-english-test