What is Aptis for Teens?

Aptis for Teens is a global English test developed by the British Council for 13-17 year olds. It can be used to assess ability in all four English skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

It also allows you to develop specific English skills, with the ability to test just one skill or a combination of skills. Your teacher, school or tutor will help you decide which mix of skills is best for you to assess yourself in.

This guide will help you understand each of the five components of Aptis for Teens and what they do. The five parts are the core component – Grammar and Vocabulary, Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking.

There is also advice on how to prepare for the test including tips on what to study and things to do in the test to help you make sure you get the best results. You can also find information on how the test is marked.

If you like using apps to learn English, try the LearnEnglish app available on iTunes: https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/apps
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Test Structure

Aptis for Teens consists of five components: core (grammar and vocabulary), reading, listening, writing and speaking. Your teacher or school will decide which components are needed for their situation. You, the test-taker, will prepare for the core test (everyone takes the core test) and the skill components your teacher or school has chosen. You may be taking one skill component (for example, listening) or all four skill components (reading, listening, writing and speaking).

Reading
Listening
Writing
Speaking

It is a good idea to take a practice test so that you fully understand what you need to do.
Core Test – Grammar and Vocabulary

The grammar and vocabulary component consists of two parts. The first part assesses your knowledge of English grammar. The second part assesses your knowledge of English vocabulary.

Grammar

For the grammar section, you complete a sentence or phrase with one word. Each sentence will give you a choice of three possible answers. Select one answer for each sentence. There are 25 questions, and you have about 12 minutes to complete this section.

Make sure you read the sentence and all possible answers before you make your final choice. Look carefully at the whole sentence and then the words on either side of the gap to help you make your choice. Remember, sometimes only certain words will go with ‘to’, so looking at the words around the gap could be a lot of help. Reading the whole sentence before reading the options helps because it might be that your brain already knows the answer and will tell you when you read it. Then all you have to do is check the options and if what you think is the answer, is one of the options, you will know you are right.

This is a sample question.

Tip

During the test you can flag questions you don’t know and go back to them later. Try practising on the Aptis online grammar and vocabulary practice test to learn how to do it.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-and-vocabulary-exams/choose-correct-option
Vocabulary

There are four different parts to the vocabulary section. You have about 12 minutes to answer all the questions.

1. Synonym matching – Word matching

Synonyms are words with the same or similar meaning. For example, speak is a synonym of talk but it is not a synonym of walk. In this task, you have to match two words with the same or very similar meanings (five words to be selected from ten options). Select the word that has a similar meaning in the drop down list. Reveal the words by clicking on the green arrow.

This is a sample question.

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

Example: big

- large
- study
- receive
- start
- talk
- pick

Tip

This part is testing your knowledge of words that have nearly identical or very similar meanings. Developing a curiosity about language and finding synonyms online or in a dictionary will help you learn more vocabulary and avoid using the same old words. A thesaurus for example, (thesaurus.com) which you can find online or in your library can help you look up a new word and learn the words with the same meaning or even the opposite meaning. This is a great way to not only prepare for the test but also improve your range of vocabulary. Don’t forget to use all these words in the writing section too, to demonstrate your range. The examiners like to see creative writing with a variety of words and not just the same phrase over and over again.

Practice links:
learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/vocabulary-games
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/beach
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/living-room
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/places-town
2. **Meaning in context** – Sentence completion

Select the best word to fill a gap in a short sentence. The meaning of words can be understood from the context (five words to be selected from ten options). Select the word that fits the gap in the drop down list.

This is a sample question.

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**Tip**

There will be many words you can choose from that make a grammatically correct sentence. You will have to choose the word that not only fits grammatically but also makes the most sense when reading it. Reading many different types of books, newspapers and magazines will help you improve your overall understanding of how words fit into the context of a sentence.

**Practice link:**
learnenglish.teens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-and-vocabulary-exams/what-does-it-mean
3. **Definition matching** – Matching words to definitions

Select the word that fits the definition in the drop down list (five words to be selected from ten options).

This is a sample question.

![Dropdown list for matching words to definitions](image)

**Tip**

Since this part is matching definitions to words, it might be helpful to sign up to the Oxford Dictionary word-of-the-day to learn new words. Don’t forget that when you look up synonyms in a thesaurus, you can also see the definitions. You can also test your friends. Why not find some new words in the dictionary and write down their definitions? Give these definitions to your friends and the new words, and see if they can guess which word matches the definition. There are lots of fun English games you can make up like this with your friends to practise. See if your teacher will help you too!

Visit: [en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/word-of-the-day](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/word-of-the-day)

**Practice links:**
4. Collocation matching – Word matching

Match the words most commonly used together (choose five words from ten options). Select the word in the drop down list that matches the word on the left.

This is a sample question.

Tip

Collocations are words that are commonly used together. For example, it is common to say ‘hard or soft cheese’ but you don’t say ‘liquid cheese’. Therefore, to improve your knowledge of collocations, read and listen to as much as you can in English. When you learn new words, try and learn the words which also go with these words. You can draw a map with the new word in the middle and all words related to it around it. This also helps with prefixes and suffixes, and verbs and nouns. You can learn many new words which are related. Visit: myvocabulary.com to help you explore new words, their roots and all the different words they are related to. This isn’t useful just for the vocabulary section, it will also help you with your grammar, speaking and writing.

Why don’t you try the examples shown here? You won’t be able to see any options for the answers but you can still try and take a guess. Once you have tried them, check your answers (on page 37) at the end of this guide. How many did you get right?

Practice link:
learnenglish.teens.britishcouncil.org/exams/grammar-vocabulary-exams/words-go-together
Tips for Success

Many students ask how they can maximise their studying time to best improve their grammar and vocabulary abilities. One answer is reading. By reading literature and high quality stories, magazine articles and news briefs, you will be exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and correctly used grammar. Even better is to read from a variety of sources. Have a novel that you read on a consistent basis, and mix up your other sources of materials. For example, read the news one day and a magazine the next. Then read a story sometimes as well. Soon, you will recognise how much you have improved your English grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and you will improve your reading skills too! Don’t forget that if reading is not your favourite thing to do, you can also watch movies and put the subtitles on. Watch a favourite movie that you know really well in English so that you don’t have to focus on the story and can concentrate on understanding the words instead. Try it the first time with subtitles and note down any useful phrases. The second time, challenge yourself to watch it without subtitles and see how much you understand. This is great for picking up new vocabulary in context and of course, it also helps your listening skills.

Other Resources

Here are some resources to help develop your grammar and vocabulary practice for the test:

- Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more.
  Visit: learnenglishteen.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary and learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/quick-grammar

- Another great site offering similar grammar and vocabulary practice is the BBC learning English site.
  Visit: bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/

- Are you interested in learning a word a day? Build your vocabulary and get a new word every day from these online dictionary websites.
  Visit: dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday and merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day

- The Oxford online dictionary will email the word of the day to you.
  Visit: en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/word-of-the-day
Reading Test

This test assesses your reading ability. There are four parts to the reading test. Each part focuses on a different reading skill. You will have up to 30 minutes to complete all the questions.

Reading Part 1

Choose words to complete sentences. Your aim is to understand the sentence and not the whole text. Each sentence will give you a choice of three possible answers. Your task is to select one answer for each sentence. Select the word that fits the gap in the drop down list.

This is a sample question.

Tip

Treat each sentence as its own question. There will be hints in the sentence to help you choose the answer. Make sure you read the full sentence before choosing your answer. Sometimes the clue is towards the end and not the beginning of the sentence.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/reading-exams/vocabulary-text
Reading Part 2

Put sentences into the correct order to make a text. You will see seven sentences, and the first sentence is already done for you. The rest are jumbled up. There is only one way that the sentences can go together to form a text that makes sense. Your task is to click on the sentences and drag them to the correct position in the text.

This is a sample question.

Tip

This question requires you to read across the sentences. You will have to use logic and look at the clues such as linking words, pronouns and other ways that the information from one sentence links with the next. Make sure you read the whole text once you think you have put it in the correct order, to check before you move on to the next task.

Practice link:
learnenglish.teens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/films-and-entertainment
Reading Part 3

In this task, you read four separate paragraphs giving information about four people’s opinions on a similar topic. Your task is to match the four people with the statements. Make sure you read all four paragraphs first, then read the options and then start to match who said what. Remember, there are seven questions here and four speakers, so that means the same person can have more than one opinion. It is important that you can identify who said what by reading the details as all four people are talking about the same thing, so they may have similar views.

This is a sample question.

My Ideal Friend
Hanna (female, 18 years old)
“It’s not important that we have the same hobbies and interests – after all, I think a friend is someone who should help you try new activities. I think it’s more important to have similar personalities, so you laugh at the same things and feel the same way. My best friend from school cities when I cry – and then makes me laugh afterwards.”

Jin Woo (male, 17 years old)
“I want a friend who is always with me, even if I make a mistake or do something stupid. I want a friend who will never let me down, and I think it’s the most important thing in the world, to always be there for someone else. That, and having a really cool gaming computer – I really love to play games.”

Kyung Eun (female, 13 years old)
“I want someone who’s the complete opposite of me – I’m quite shy and I don’t often go out to meet people, so I’d love to make friends with someone who’s a bit more outgoing. It would be fun to hang out together, to make friends and try new activities. I’d really like to get outdoors more, you know, play more games, so that would be good too.”

Jae Won (male, 17 years old)
“I think it’s got to be somebody who can help me with my homework – I’m failing a lot of subjects at the moment and I really need some help. I need someone to take the time to check my answers and tell me where I’m going wrong, and who won’t call me stupid after. Maybe I should just pay for a tutor, but I don’t have a lot of money.”

Tip
The exact words in the question usually won’t be included in the text, so you will have to understand what each person thinks and answer the questions accordingly.

Practice link:
learnenglish.teens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/phone-chat
Reading Part 4

Read a longer text of about 750 words and match the headings to the paragraphs. The first one is done for you. There is always an extra heading that does not fit with any paragraph. Your task is to match the headings to seven other paragraphs in the text.

This is a sample question.

Tip

The words from the heading usually won’t be in the text. Therefore, you should use your reading skills such as skimming and scanning before quickly reading through the text and choosing your answers. Make sure you read the whole text before you start trying to match the headings. You will not be able to guess the order of the headings just by reading them alone. You will need to look for clues in each paragraph to help you.
Try this!

Read these three sentences quickly and then try and guess the meaning of the underlined words from the sentence alone.

You have 30 seconds!

1. He was a very **frugal** man, spending money only when he really had to.
2. Although he was typically **unkempt**, he looked really smart in the office.
3. The pilot was surprised when the authorities **revoked** his license. Consequently, he couldn't fly any longer.

(See answers on page 37 at the back of this guide).

**Did you get them right?**

Remember that you do not need to understand every word. Not every word is important for understanding the text. If you waste too much time trying to understand every word in the reading test, you may run out of time and miss out on valuable points. Make sure you try and understand the meaning of the paragraph rather than every single word.
**Tips for Success**

Make sure you read a lot of English before sitting the test and especially make sure you read in English the day before and the day of the test. This will help in getting you thinking in English. Choose books and articles that are neither too easy nor too difficult for you to understand. Practise guessing words from the context as this is an important skill you will need to demonstrate in the exam. Remember that you can use Penguin graded readers to help you. These are famous stories that have been adapted to your level to help you improve your reading. Ask your teacher or local library or book shop about them.

While there are no easy ways to become a good reader, there are many things you can do to improve your English reading abilities. The first thing is to practise reading. Read as much as you can from different sources by different writers. This will help give you a good understanding of different styles. It can help improve your grammar, vocabulary and writing skills too!

**Other Resources**

Here are some resources to help develop your reading skills for the test:

- Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more. Visit: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice

- Visit Lit2go: etc.usf.edu/lit2go/authors/. This site hosts classic literature that can be read or downloaded for free!

- Story of the Week is a website created by the Library of America. Here you will find many stories at different levels to practise your reading skills. Visit: storyoftheweek.loa.org/p/stories-sorted-by-author.html

- Project Gutenberg in Australia also has an online database of free short stories and books that can be read online or downloaded to be read later. Visit: gutenberg.net.au

- The British Council’s Stories and Poems website for teens has many different topics at many different levels. Visit: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/stories-and-poems-uk

- The LearnEnglish Teens Study Break website is another great resource. Here you will find many interesting stories of varying lengths and levels. Visit: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/easy-reading
Listening Test

In the listening test, there are 22 questions, with three multiple-choice answers for each question. You will have up to 55 minutes to complete all the questions.

The listening tasks get more difficult as the test progresses. In the beginning, you listen for key words in the listening text, whereas later the test moves towards the higher level skill of listening for inference. Each question is presented in the same way. You will hear the context and see the questions and then hear the text. You can listen twice.

All listening tasks look like the one below. You always have the option to listen twice and you will always see the question before you hear the text. As the test progresses, the questions will get more difficult. At first you are listening for very specific concrete information like the example below.

In this example, you listen to someone talking and choose one answer (e.g. number, time, or word). Your task is to recognise numbers and/or particular words.

This is a sample question.

Listen to the message from a friend. Which bus goes to her house?

1. Number 35.
2. Number 5.
3. Number 85.

Flag Next
To select your response, simply click the bubble to make it look like this:

Listen to the message from a friend. Which bus goes to her house?

- 1. Number 30.
- 2. Number 5.
- 3. Number 85.

Tip

Make sure you read the options before you try and answer the question, so you know what you are listening for.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/inviting-someone-cinema
As the test progresses, the tasks get more difficult and you are not just listening for one word but maybe an opinion or an idea expressed by someone. The first tasks are always monologues and as you progress through the test, you will also get dialogues. The final task is different and contains two questions for one listening text.

In this task, you listen to monologues or dialogues and choose one answer (e.g. problems, solutions or recommendations expressed by the speaker/s). There are two questions for each discussion. Your task is to identify abstract ideas that are inferred rather than directly stated.

This is a sample question.

Tip

In this task, you will have to listen closely to the details since all the information in each of the possible answers will likely be discussed. However, the answer won’t be directly stated, so you will have to get an overall understanding as well as understand the details in order to select the correct answers.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/travelling-abroad
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/ordering-food-cafe
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice/work
Success Tips

During the listening test, you should listen to the whole recording before choosing your answer. It is possible that all options may be mentioned, so you will need to listen for clues, such as phrases used to say the same thing as the options given, or opinions expressed that are the opposite of those options. Read the questions carefully before listening, identify key words and understand what it is you need to listen for. Watch for synonyms – you may see a word in a question and hear a different word with a similar meaning in the audio.

You should use the second listening to check or confirm your answer.

Try to listen to as much English as you can before the exam. This could be TV, music, films, or online videos. The more you hear English in the weeks before the exam, the easier it will be for you to understand what you hear during the exam. You can easily find materials online and we’ve created a short list below section to help guide you in finding some of the best.

Other Resources

Here are some resources to help develop your listening skills for the test:

• Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more. Visit: learnenglishteen.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening-skills-practice

• BBC World Service offers live radio, podcasts and audio on demand to practise your listening skills on current events, sports, weather, travel and much more. Visit: bbc.co.uk/worldserviceradio

• National Public Radio is another great resource with listening material covering current events, arts, life and music. Visit: npr.org

• Project Gutenberg in Australia also has an online database of free short stories and books that can be read online or downloaded to be read later. Visit: gutenberg.net.au

• TED Talks hosts speeches and presentations about thousands of different topics and best of all, most are videos! Visit: ted.com
Writing Test

All parts of the writing test will share a common theme. You will sign up to a forum or online social club and every task you complete will be related to the theme of the club. There are four tasks in total and you have 50 minutes to complete the test.

Writing Part 1

Here you will answer a series of five text messages using single words or phrases.

This is a sample question.

Tip

Spelling, capitalisation and grammar will not be considered in this task. You will be scored on your ability to use English to communicate successfully. Remember to fill in all the boxes. You should try to spend less than three minutes on this task.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/student-card-application
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/summer-jobs
Writing Part 2

Fill in a form with a short paragraph (20-30 words).

This is a sample question.

Tell other members of the club something about yourself. Fill in the form. Write in sentences. Use 20-30 words.

Teens International
What do you normally do after school?

0 words

Tip

Write in complete sentences and try to stay within the word count. This task should take less than seven minutes, and you can use informal language (contractions, informal vocabulary, colloquialisms, etc.).

Practice link:
At the bottom of most LearnEnglish Teens activities, there is a discussion with a short question to respond to. Try to find a topic that interests you and offer your opinion.
Visit: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org
Writing Part 3

Write short paragraphs to respond to three questions. The questions are the kind of questions seen on social network sites or internet forums (30-40 words per response). Make sure you answer all three questions before you move on to the next question. You can’t go back and make changes so make sure you are happy with your three answers before you move on.

This is a sample question.

Tip

Write in complete sentences with an informal tone. Since this simulates writing in a chat room, it is acceptable but not required to use idioms and colloquial language. However, you shouldn’t use SMS language or text-speak here. You should try to spend less than 12 minutes on this task.

There are many places to practise this kind of question, most commonly at the end of a news article or activity on LearnEnglish Teens. Visit the “What is it” page on LearnEnglish Teens where students have a similar style chat: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/what-it. This is also a great place to practise your speculative language, which will help with the speaking tasks of the exam.

The secret to success for practising this kind of question is to get involved in as many of these chats as possible and keep the conversation going!

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/what-it
Writing Part 4

Write a short for/against essay (220-250 words). The essay can take one point of view (for or against) or consider both sides (for and against). You will be given a topic.

This is a sample question.

Every month we run a competition on our website. Why not enter? You might win one of our fabulous prizes! The theme this month is Education. Write your argument in response to this statement:

'Everybody should learn at least one foreign language.'

Remember to include an introduction and a conclusion. Write your competition entry below in 220-250 words.

Tip

You will need to consider the vocabulary you use carefully in this task to make sure you are using appropriate language for an essay. In this situation, formal language is preferred, so idioms should not be used. Coherence and cohesion, which is the flow and linking in your writing, is important here too. Also watch your grammar, punctuation and spelling. You can practise expressing your opinion in the LearnEnglish “Photo Caption” section. Practise your language skills supporting and disagreeing with other photo captions here: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/photo-captions

If you have managed your time well in the first three parts, you should have about 25 minutes to write your essay.

Remember that the writing tasks get more difficult as the test progresses. Think about who you are writing to: is it to friends or is it a more formal piece of writing? It is important to change your language to fit the situation. While speaking to a friend, you could write, 'why don’t we go to see the new band?', whereas when you write in a formal essay, you would write 'I would recommend that schools support pupils more in choosing their future career'. Notice how formal writing tends to use more complex grammar, longer sentences and a different vocabulary. Like in the speaking test, always try to show a range in your grammar and vocabulary. So, instead of using the word ‘grow’ several times, you could use synonyms such as ‘mature’ or ‘ripen’ depending on what you are writing about. Remember, it is an English test and you need to show off all your skills.

Practice links:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice/and-against-essay
Tips for Success and Common Errors

Make sure you fully understand the question and respond appropriately. Take time to read the questions fully so you can plan. You get marks for being on topic so it’s important to understand what you have to do to answer the question fully. Plan what you are going to write before you start.

Remember to review your writing and correct any errors before moving to the next question. You can’t go back and make changes to what you have written so you need to be 100 per cent confident before you continue.

Manage your time wisely. You have 50 minutes for the full writing part of the exam, so be sure to leave plenty of time to write the essay in Part 4.

One strategy for improving your fluency before an exam is to write as much as you can about a topic in one minute, five minutes or ten minutes. Don’t pay attention to any mistakes while you write, but write as much as you can. Then count your words at the end of the time and go back to check and fix your mistakes. Do this every day for a month and see how many more words you can write at the end of the month. This will help improve your fluency and recognition of the mistakes you commonly make in your writing. If you need help thinking of a topic, you will be able to find one here: learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice

Before writing an essay, it is helpful to consider your purpose and audience. The purpose is the reason why you are writing. Are you trying to write to convince, argue, inform, compare and contrast or something else? This will help you decide how to structure your essay and the kind of vocabulary you will want to use. The audience is the person you are writing for or the person who will read your essay. Is it your friend, family member, teacher, boss or an exam marker? Knowing this will also help you choose the tone of your essay (formal or informal).

The POWER process

When practising or writing an essay, try using the POWER process. POWER stands for Prewrite, Organise, Write, Edit and Revise. Breaking your writing down into steps can help maximise your time and the quality of your text.

Prewriting means to think of ideas. Good ideas, bad ideas and crazy ideas are all welcome in this step. Try to write down as many ideas as you can about your topic in three minutes.

Organising means to organise your ideas from the prewriting step. Look over all your ideas and decide which ones you want to keep for this writing task. It doesn’t mean that the ideas you wrote down earlier were bad, it just means they might not fit the task you are trying to write now. After deciding which ideas you want to include in your writing, decide which order you want them to be in your essay.

Writing is the step where you just write. Try not to pay too much attention to grammar or sentence structures at this stage, but get the ideas you chose in the organising step into sentences and paragraphs. Try to use examples and details to develop your writing. Try to use topic sentences and closing sentences to help structure the paragraphs.

Editing is when you go back to what you just wrote and make it better. This is the step where you pay more attention to grammar and vocabulary, and try to help the sentences flow naturally from one to the other with coherence and cohesion devices.

Revising is when you put the finishing touches on the writing before submitting it to your reader. It is also an opportunity to move sentences and paragraphs around so they are in the most logical order for your reader. This is also the last opportunity to make changes to your text before submitting it to your audience, so make sure it shows off how good a writer you are!
While it may seem like it takes more time to write using the POWER process at first, after practice it can really reduce the amount of time you need when writing in an exam. It will also help you produce higher quality pieces of writing which will help you get higher marks on an exam and in school.

The best way to use the POWER writing process strategy is to start using it in school and in your other writing before using it in an exam. Then you will be more comfortable with the process and you will have had the opportunity to improve your writing style.

One of the most important tips for improving writing is to try to write in a way that you enjoy writing in. If you like listening to music, try writing songs or poetry. If you like reading textbooks, newspapers or magazines, try writing essays. If you like reading novels, try writing stories. No matter what you write, the practice will help you become a better writer!

Other Resources

Here are some resources to help develop your writing practice for the test:

• Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more. Visit: learnenglishteen.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing-skills-practice

• Visit Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/. This is a free site that assists writers at all levels and abilities in improving their English writing abilities. There are even online writing tutors available to answer questions! This is one of the leading writing lab websites on the Internet.

• The LearnEnglish writing section has tutorials, videos and activities to help improve your higher level writing skills. Visit: learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/writing
Speaking Test

There are four parts to the speaking test. Each question has a maximum amount of time to speak but you can end the recording early by clicking on the stop button. If you finish early, you may not score at the highest levels.

Speaking Part 1

In this part, you need to give personal information. Your task is to answer three questions about your everyday life. You should speak for 30 seconds to answer each question. Make sure you try and speak as much as possible and try not to be repetitive.

This is a sample question.
Tip

When practising for the exam, record yourself with your phone or computer and then listen to it. This will help you understand how a person marking your exam will hear you. It can help you recognise areas you need to work on. You can also ask your friends or teachers to listen and discuss what they think you can do to improve.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/talk-about-yourself
Speaking Part 2

In this part, you will be asked questions about a photo. Your task is to describe the photo and then answer two more questions related to the topic illustrated in the photo. You should speak for 45 seconds to answer each question.

This is a sample question.

Describe this picture.

In what ways do you keep in touch with your friends?
It is important to describe the photo and then expand on your discussion. Don’t just list everything you see in the photo. If you spend all 45 seconds simply describing every detail in the photo, you probably won’t get a very high score. Try and talk about how you think the people might feel or what it would be like to be in the photo. This will also help you with the next two questions. They will also be related to the topic.

Try to address all the questions you are asked when the photo appears. If you don’t address all the questions, you won’t be able to get a top mark. Make sure you talk about your own opinions in relation to the question.

There is no single correct way to describe the photos in the test, and the old saying of “A picture is worth a thousand words” really holds true. Try to say as much as you can in the time you have available. This is your opportunity to show off all your great skills in speaking English!

Practice link:
learnenglishteen.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/describe-photo-or-picture
Speaking Part 3

In this part, you are not describing a photo, but you must compare and contrast two photos. Your task is to compare two photographs and then answer two questions related to the topic in the photos. You will have to use your imagination to answer these last two questions. You should speak for 45 seconds to answer each question.

This is a sample question.

Which of these two sports do you think is more enjoyable, and why?

How important is it to do some kind of sport or exercise?
In this task, you need to compare the photos. This means explaining how they are similar and how they are different. Make sure you listen to the question carefully before you answer. The questions are also on the screen so you can read them if that makes you feel more comfortable. Once again, you should not only describe them and discuss how they are similar and different, but you should try and connect the photos to your life. Have you been to a similar place or had a similar experience? If so, please talk about it. If you have never been to a place like that nor had a similar experience, talk about what you think it would be like. You should not limit yourself to what is in the photos, and you should not just give a list of what you see.

One good strategy for this task is to spend some of your time describing the photos or answering the question, and the rest of your time talking about how the photo connects to your life and experiences. If it doesn’t connect to your life or experiences, you can discuss what you have heard about it from your friends or family or seen on TV or in a video. Remember, it is more important that you speak and demonstrate your range of English vocabulary and grammar and your fluency. Of course, you need to stay on topic. If you are asked a question about space travel and you talk about swimming, then you will not get many marks. So, make sure you use all the time you have to demonstrate your English skills and answer the question.

Practice links:
learnenglish teens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/discussion
Speaking Part 4

The final task is a poster presentation. Your task is to give a presentation using the information from a poster. You should speak for two minutes. You will have 90 seconds to think before speaking. The presentation will be on a familiar topic and you will be given some information to help you prepare.

This is a sample question.

Look at the poster. You have prepared this poster with your group. You are now going to present it to your class. You will have 90 seconds to think about your answers before you start speaking. You will have two minutes to give your presentation. Don’t just repeat the words on the screen. You should use your own words to describe the information in the poster. Make your presentation as interesting and informative for your classmates as possible. Begin speaking when you hear this sound. Your preparation time starts now.

Tip

You should give your presentation as if you were giving it to your class. Remember, you mustn’t just read the words on the poster, and you must use your time wisely to prepare what you are going to say and structure your presentation well. Use the information to help you but don’t forget to be creative! Try and make your presentation interesting and use the preparation time to plan what you are going to say. Make sure there is a logical structure to your presentation and remember to use appropriate signposting such as ‘firstly’, ‘in conclusion’ and so on to help you structure it. You will hear and see the instructions on the screen and then have the poster in front of you as support. Use your time wisely and make sure you speak for the full two minutes.

Practice link:
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/oral-presentation
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading-skills-practice/my-city has a poster that you could practise presenting.
**Tips for Success and Common Errors**

Remember to try to connect what is in the photo to your own life or tell a story about what you think about the photo.

If you don’t know what is in the photos or what is happening, it is no problem. Guess! The speaking test is not testing your knowledge about the photos; it is testing your speaking abilities. As long as the information from the photos is the theme of your discussion, you can talk about anything and you don’t have to tell the truth. This is also a great opportunity to show off your abilities to use speculative language such as, I think…, I’m not really sure, but …, I wonder if…, it could be…, it might be… and so on.

Describing a photo alone can make it difficult to show a wide range of vocabulary, sentence structures and fluency when speaking. Therefore, it will be best to spend a majority of your time:

- speaking by answering other questions than describing
- speculating on what you think about the photo
- discussing a similar experience you have had
- talking about anything related to the photo that will help you demonstrate your higher level speaking skills.

Listen to yourself while you speak and if you make an error then try to correct it. Native speakers do this all the time and use phrases such as, ‘what I meant to say is’, ‘I’m sorry, I mean’, and so on. Keep talking and don’t worry if you make the odd mistake.

If you don’t know a word while you are speaking, don’t worry as it happens to everyone, even celebrities on camera. You can talk around it by describing what you mean, or even use hesitation strategies such as, ‘what’s the word’, ‘I can’t remember the word right now, but the idea is’, ‘it’s on the tip of my tongue’ and so on.

The best way to improve your English speaking skills is simply by practising speaking. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes when you say things as that is the way we learn.

Relax. It is not a race during the speaking exam, and one of the best strategies for success is to relax, take a deep breath and just do your best.

**Other Resources**

Here are some resources to help develop your speaking skills for the test:

- Useful games and activities you can do at home to help you practise and learn more. Visit: learnenglish.teens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/speaking-exams

- Interested in improving your use of colloquialisms, slang and other informal English often used in speaking? Visit: urbandictionary.com

- UsingEnglish’s website also offers a “laundry list” of English idioms which are a great way to show off your high-level speaking abilities. Visit: usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/country/british+english.html
## Scoring

Aptis for Teens tests English levels from A1-C on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Reading and listening are marked automatically online, while speaking and writing are marked by examiners. You will receive your results from your school or teacher within 48 hours of taking the test.

Below is a brief overview of the CEFR from the Council of Europe and a general outline of the skills considered when determining a candidate’s level. This helps you identify where you are with your English. You will get a scaled score and your CEFR level per skill. Then you can see which areas you might need to improve. You can see an example of the score card in Table 2 on the next page.

### Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B1</strong></td>
<td>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes &amp; ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2</strong></td>
<td>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C2</strong></td>
<td>Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Key_reference/Overview_CEFRscales_EN
## Table 2 – Example results

### Candidate Report

<table>
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<th>Candidate Report:</th>
<th>Madrid Administrator</th>
<th>Test Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation:</td>
<td>British Council - Madrid</td>
<td>Test Package:</td>
<td>Aptis Listening Reading Speaking and Writing Package</td>
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### Scale Score

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<th>Skill Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>38/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>38/50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<td><strong>Final Scale Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>157/200</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Vocab</strong></td>
<td><strong>41/50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CEFR Skill Profile

- **C**
- **B2**
- **B1**
- **A2**
- **A1**
- **A0**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
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<td><strong>A0</strong></td>
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The British Council

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide.

We are on the ground in six continents and over 100 countries bringing international opportunity to life, every day. Each year we work with millions of people, connecting them with the United Kingdom, sharing our cultures and the UK’s most attractive assets: English, the arts, education and our ways of living and organising society. We have over 75 years’ experience of doing this.

In line with our Royal Charter, we aim to bring high quality English materials to every learner or teacher who wants them around the world. We work with governments to transform whole education systems to increase opportunity and employability through English. We train teachers by radio, web and broadcast in developing and post conflict countries. We also deliver English teaching and offer a wide range of exams, from English tests to school and business qualifications, in more than 90 countries worldwide.

Aptis for All

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

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 ways in which the test can be modified for your needs. We can make adjustments such as pen and paper tests, Braille and large font tests, timing, and many others.

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.

Feedback

We value your feedback, so after your test you will be given the opportunity to complete a survey. We thank you in advance for your useful comments.
Correct Responses – Vocabulary Test

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>atom</td>
<td>bomb</td>
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</table>

Answers to Try This (on page 14)

1. Economical. The second part of the sentence describes what a 'frugal' man does.
2. Untidy. The second part contrasts with 'unkempt'.
3. Stopped. Why couldn’t he fly any longer? Because the authorities stopped his license.