

Test Centre

PTE Young Learners

oral test guide

Please read this booklet thoroughly before commencing any oral tests as it contains very important information.

1. Introduction

The oral test is a compulsory part of the Pearson Test of English Young Learners. Test takers are tested in groups of five by a trained oral examiner who acts as both facilitator and assessor. At each level the oral test lasts 20 minutes and consists of two 10-minute tasks which focus on the language of the level being tested. The oral accounts for 20 marks

Stages of the Exam

- The test takers participate in the board game
- Individual Activity: the test takers take turns picking a card from the pack of topic cards and talking about the topic written on it. After each mini-presentation the other test takers and, if needed, the examiner ask the speaker some questions about the topic.

Task One

The first task is a board game. Test takers take it in turns to throw a dice and then move their counters the relevant number of spaces around the board/the displayed cards. Each square on the board has a question written on it. When a test taker's counter lands on a square the examiner directs the test taker to address the question to another test taker, who must respond. It is then the next test taker's turn and the game continues in this way until 10 minutes have passed and/or all the test takers have responded to two questions.

The questions are based on the language of the level and always reflect the language in the syllabus. As test takers move through the levels the questions grow in difficulty.

Examples of Firstwords questions:

How many friends have you got?

What is your family name?

How old are you?

Examples of Springboard questions:

What do you do at the weekend?

How do you go to school?

Where does your family have dinner?

Examples of Quickmarch questions:

What did your best friend do last summer?

Where are you going to go for your next holiday?

Who is the oldest person in your family?

Examples of Breakthrough questions:

How long have you been at your school?

What will you do if it rains tomorrow?

Where do you go to buy clothes?

Task Two

In the second task, the 5 test takers take turns picking a topic card from a pack at random. Each card has a topic on it. The test taker has to talk for one minute about the topic. This is followed by a further minute of questions from other test takers and possibly the examiner. This continues until all test takers have had a turn.

Examples of Firstwords topic cards:

My family

My bedroom

My favourite toy

Examples of Springboard topics:

A great weekend

My favourite day

After school

Examples of Quickmarch topics:

My last holiday

My friend

Rainy days

Examples of Breakthrough topics:

An exciting experience

A good film

A beautiful place

In order to prepare test takers for the second part of the oral test, centres and teachers should refer closely to the PTE YL syllabus. The language and topics in both parts of the test will be taken from the syllabus at the level being tested. It should be noted that the language content of a given level includes that of all previous levels.

For purposes of quality assurance and moderation, oral tests will be recorded by the examiner.

2. Guidance notes for oral examiners

2.1 Test Materials

Not more than 24 hours in advance of the oral, an examiner may consult the material in order to prepare for the oral test. Nothing may be removed from the premises and the materials must be locked away when he/she has finished. The oral test materials are confidential and must be kept locked in a secure place.

Materials required for test:

For Task 1

- the board game itself (please cut out the squares from the card provided)
- 5 counters of different colours
- 1 dice
- a large table or floor space for the game

For Task 2

- topic cards

2.2 Test Arrangements

You may arrange oral tests up to two weeks before the written test.

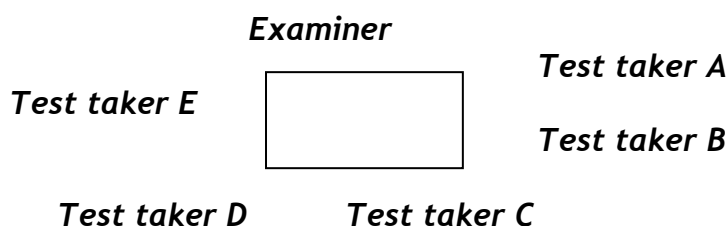
Test takers are examined in groups of five. Where the total number of test takers is not divisible by five, it may be necessary for some groups to have fewer than five test takers. Test takers in a group do not need to know each other or be of equal language ability.

2.3 Arrangement of Test Room

Arrange the room so that the test situation is not too intimidating for the test taker. For example, the examiner and test takers should sit around all sides of a table rather than at separate desks. Place the recording equipment on the same table and position the microphone(s) to ensure that each test taker can be heard clearly on the recording. For best results, use new tapes or CDs of good quality and stand the microphone on a felt or rubber pad.

It is essential to have a rehearsal with the equipment in each room to be used before the tests take place.

This is a good arrangement:



2.4 Recording Arrangements for Oral Tests

- You must record all oral tests. Use separate tapes or CDs for each level. All the recordings must be sent to Pearson Language Tests for moderation.
- It is essential that all test takers can be heard clearly on the recording.
- The examiner starts the recording for each group by giving the centre number and the examiner's name and number. The examiner then begins each test by asking for confirmation of test takers' numbers and names. The examiner should always use the test takers' names when asking questions, to assist the moderator in identifying who is speaking when s/he listens to the recording later on.
- When the session is finished, state that this is the last test on the tape/CD. If using a tape, wind it back to the beginning. Mark the tape/CD on the outside to identify the centre number, test date and the level(s) of the test. Place inside the cassette/CD box a list showing the centre number, test date, test taker groups (by test taker number) in order of test and the corresponding examiner details.

2.5 Nomination and Role of Examiners

- For each level you must nominate one person to conduct the board game and to facilitate the individual activity.
- All examiners must be highly proficient in English and should have received appropriate training. The examiners will normally be EFL teachers with professional EFL teaching qualifications.
- Teachers must not act as examiners for students from their own classes.
- Examiners must be approved by the Pearson Language Tests team. To apply for approval please complete an Interviewer/Assessor application form which can be downloaded from our website via <http://www.pearsonpte.com/TestCenters/Pages/Resources.aspx> and submit it to PLTsupport@pearson.com.
- Names of examiners must be sent to Pearson Language Tests together with the mark sheets and cassettes.

Examiners will need to be familiar with the following:

- the format and duration of the test and its stages
- their roles as facilitator and as assessor
- techniques to facilitate the smooth running of the test
- the marking criteria
- the different levels of the children's tests
- all relevant administrative procedures

Role of the Examiner:

- to familiarise themselves fully with the syllabus of the levels they are testing
- to facilitate the board game
- to facilitate the individual activity
- to assess test takers
- to complete required forms
- to record interviews for moderation as required

2.6 Task 1: the Board Game

The board game at each relevant level of the specification will only include topics and grammatical items which appear in the syllabus for that level. Similarly, the topics that the test takers will be required to talk about in the second stage of the test will be directly related to the topics in the syllabus at the relevant level. However, it must be remembered that the topics for any given level will include all those from previous levels.

Playing the Game:

- Place the cards in a circle, a line, S-shape or other appropriate layout.
- Establish the order of turn taking. (E.g. each test taker rolls the dice and the highest scorer goes first).
- The first test taker rolls the dice and moves the appropriate number of squares. (E.g. if the dice indicates 5 the test taker moves to the card representing the 5th square). The examiner directs the test taker to address the question on the card to another test taker, referred to by name (eg “Ask Fatima”). The first test taker then reads out the question on the card and the designated test taker answers it. The card is then removed from the game or turned over so it cannot be used again. (If a test taker lands on a card that has been turned over, s/he moves to the next card that has not been turned over.) The turn passes to the next test taker.
- When moving their counters, players should count the squares in **English**.
- Each test taker should respond to 2 questions.

The test is over when each test taker has responded to 2 questions. The game should last no longer than 10 minutes for a group of five test takers.

2.7 Task 2: Short Talks

The pack of topic cards is either placed face down or held out by the examiner. The first test taker turns over a card and reads the topic written on it. He or she then speaks about that topic for one minute. At the end of one minute the examiner asks the test taker to stop and invites the other test takers to ask follow-up questions, which the first test taker answers. This continues for one minute (giving the test taker a total turn of two minutes' duration). If the other test takers cannot think of any questions, or if they dry up before the minute is up, the examiner should ask questions. The turn then passes to the next test taker.

2.8 Marking

The examiners must award marks for the performance of each test taker. Final marks will be based on the examiner's marking and the decision of the moderator.

2.9 Results and Certification

There is no separate result or certificate for the oral test. Test takers who are successful overall on the written and oral test will receive a certificate for a pass, merit or distinction grade.

3. Overview of procedures for conducting PTE Young Learners

The oral test is compulsory for all levels of PTE YL examinations.

Conducting Tests

- Test takers are examined in groups of five. Where the total number of test takers is not divisible by five, it may be necessary for some groups to have fewer than five test takers.
- Oral tests can be conducted on different days or at different times if your class is too large for an examiner to assess at one time.
- An examiner conducts the oral test.
- The examiner awards marks to each test taker in the group using the marking criteria.
- The examiner *should not be the test takers' teacher*.
- All examiners should register with Pearson Language Tests using the application form.

Filling in the Assessment Sheet

The examiner completes the assessment sheet for each test taker in a group for both parts of the oral test. The completed assessment sheet must be signed by the examiner. **Please refer to the PTE YL Speaking Assessment Sheet downloadable from our website via <http://www.pearsonpte.com/TestCenters/Pages/Resources.aspx>.**

Recording

All oral tests should be recorded. Please ensure that the cassettes or CDs and assessment sheets are sent in together and that the cassettes or CDs are clearly labelled with the centre number, the test takers' information (name and test taker number), the syllabus code and the level.

Returning the Orals to Pearson Language Tests

The completed assessment sheets and recordings should be returned, with "PTE YL" marked on the envelope, to the address provided on the removable label attached to the appropriate (paper 02) attendance register.

4. Criteria for assessment of test performance

Award up to 5 marks for usage of grammar and vocabulary and up to 5 marks for pronunciation based on the criteria below. Award the number of marks given for the description which most closely fits the test taker in question. Always bear in mind the PTE YL level at which the test taker is being tested and refer to the syllabus for information regarding grammar and expected vocabulary knowledge for the level.

Grammar and vocabulary usage	Pronunciation
<p>5 marks Test taker has excellent range of both vocabulary and grammar used accurately and appropriately. Errors are rare and found only in low frequency lexis and when using more complex grammatical forms.</p>	<p>5 marks Test taker has excellent pronunciation demonstrating awareness of intonation patterns required for asking questions as well as of sentence and word stress and individual sounds.</p>
<p>4 marks Test taker has good lexical and grammatical range but there may be occasional errors. It may be that one of grammar or vocabulary is a little weak but that the other compensates for this. Errors do not impede understanding.</p>	<p>4 marks Test taker has good pronunciation which can be readily understood by listeners despite some lapses in pronouncing individual words and problems with stress and intonation.</p>
<p>3 marks Errors in both grammar and vocabulary are evident but the test taker has enough knowledge in these areas to communicate and there is little need for clarification.</p>	<p>3 marks There are some mispronunciations at word and sentence levels but in general listeners do not have any great problems. It may be that repetition is needed on occasion.</p>
<p>2 marks Despite occasional good usage, grammar and vocabulary choice is frequently incorrect and this causes problems for the listeners as well as misunderstandings.</p>	<p>2 marks Frequent errors in various aspects of pronunciation make the speaker difficult to understand/result in misunderstanding and / or make it necessary for listeners to ask for repetition.</p>
<p>1 mark Although there is knowledge of individual items of vocabulary and some grammar, these are so limited that only rarely is real communication possible.</p>	<p>1 mark Although the test taker utterances can be recognised as English, they are so difficult to follow that communication breaks down.</p>
<p>0 mark No useful knowledge of grammar or vocabulary at the required level.</p>	<p>0 mark Pronunciation not recognised as English discourse.</p>

5. Contact Us

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