



PTE Academic

Test Tips Speaking

This part of the test contains seven different question types. You will be tested on your Speaking skills, using English you might use in an academic environment.



Introduction to PTE Academic Test Tips for Speaking

This resource provides test tips for anyone preparing for the Speaking section of Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic.

You can use the information to help develop useful strategies to answer the seven question types in this section.

The test tips are presented in the order in which they appear in the test.

You can use the PTE Academic Question Bank or Guided Practice Tests in conjunction with this resource for even more practice.

Speaking

Read Aloud

Repeat Sentence

Describe Image

Retell Lecture

Answer Short Question

Summarize Group Discussion
(Updated test only)

Respond to a Situation
(Updated test only)

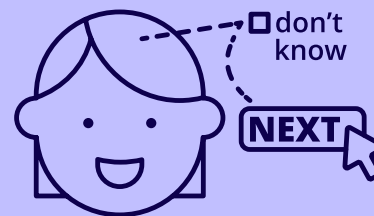
Advice for speaking



Speak at a normal pace and volume as if talking on the phone. There is no need to shout or whisper.



Make sure the microphone is placed to the side of your face and a few centimeters away from your mouth.



If you don't know an answer, try to provide a response as best as you can, or say "I don't know" and move on to the next question.

Read Aloud

Instructions

- The text length of the prompt will be up to 60 words.
- You will have 30–40 seconds to look at the prompt and prepare.
- You will have 30–40 seconds to read the prompt aloud.

Practice prompt

Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of soft robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Use the preparation time effectively. Practice reading the text quietly or in your head.
- ✓ In your preparation time, identify any tricky or long words and say them in your head a few times to get used to the pronunciation.
- ✓ Emphasize key syllables in the important text. Each sentence will have words with syllables that are more important than others (these are called stressed syllables). Emphasize these syllables by using greater stress (making these syllables sound higher, louder and longer, e.g., engineers).
- ✓ Use natural pronunciation and speak at a natural speed.
- ✓ Pay attention to punctuation. When reading use appropriate pausing within and between sentences when you come to a comma or full stop.
- ✓ Say all the words in the text/prompt.
- ✓ Finish speaking before the recording progress bar reaches the end.

Don't

- ✗ Skip or replace any words. Each replacement, omission, or insertion of a word counts as one error.
- ✗ Only say the sentences you are confident with. You need to say all the words.
- ✗ Slow down just to fill the time. It's ok to finish before the timer gets to zero.
- ✗ Repeat words or show a lot of hesitation as this will affect your score.

Read Aloud – Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of soft robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent answer for content for Read Aloud. All the words from the prompt are included in the response meaning the test taker receives the maximum mark for content for this question. The test taker has not inserted extra words and there are no replacement words.

Practice prompt

Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of soft robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.

Read Aloud – Good sample answer

Answer B

“Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in . . .”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is a good answer for content. The test taker has mentioned most of the words from the prompt. The test taker missed the word ‘soft’ before robots and also missed the final 6 words. There are no inserted words or replacements.

Practice prompt

Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of soft robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.

Read Aloud – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer C

“Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal . . . that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This answer needs significant improvement for content. The test taker has only said the first and final lines of the prompt, meaning they have only mentioned 22 of the 60 words in this prompt. This score will be very low. This test taker should try to read all the words in the prompt instead of skipping words.

Practice prompt

Robots are typically built with inflexible materials, like metal. This means their adaptability and range of motion is limited. However, engineers have developed a new generation of soft robots based on animal anatomy. Inspired by the soft tissue which gives many creatures flexibility and mobility, engineers have designed soft robots that can move in ways their rigid robot counterparts cannot.

Repeat Sentence

Instructions

- You will hear a sentence.
- Then the microphone will open.
- You will need to repeat the sentence you heard.

Practice prompt

Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world's energy requirements.

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Listen carefully. Make sure you pay attention to every word on the recording.
- ✓ Do your best to repeat all the words you hear. Your content score depends on how many words from the audio you repeat.
- ✓ Speak at a normal volume. Speaking too quietly may mean that your voice cannot be understood. Speaking too loudly can lead to the recording being distorted.
- ✓ Practice this question to improve your short-term memory and your ability to remember English words in an order.

Don't

- ✗ Take notes because you have a limited amount of time. If note-taking works for you then write down only keywords or the first initial of each word.
- ✗ Worry about copying the speaker's accent. It is not necessary to copy the accent of the speakers in the recordings.
- ✗ Rush. Speaking too quickly will reduce your score, as you will not be speaking with natural fluency.
- ✗ Correct yourself or start again if you make a mistake.
- ✗ Add in phrases or sentences which were not in the audio.

Repeat Sentence

Listen to the phrasing of the sentence as it is read aloud

You will be scored on the correct word sequences that you produce for this question type, so **the more parts of the sentence you understand, the better your reproduction will be**. For example, there are three phrases in the sentence below, separated by /, and each one carries a separate message that has its own meaning. If you listen for meaningful phrases in the sentence, you will have a better chance of repeating what you hear accurately.



Next week's tutorial / on Tuesday / has been canceled.

Copy the stress and intonation patterns of the sentence you hear

Make a mental note of the way the speaker says the sentences, i.e. their use stress and intonation. These patterns help to convey the meaning. **Speak calmly and clearly, copying this stress and intonation.** Remember, you do not need to copy the accent of the speaker.



I'm going to attend the briefing  for students .

Repeat Sentence - Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world’s energy requirements.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent answer for the content for Repeat Sentence. All the words from the audio response are repeated, meaning the test taker receives the maximum mark for content for this question. The test taker has not inserted extra words and there are no replacement words.

Practice prompt

Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world’s energy requirements.

Repeat Sentence – Good sample answer

Answer B

“Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world’s energy.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is a good answer for the content for Repeat Sentence. All words in the audio response are repeated apart from the final word – ‘requirements’. All the words are in the correct sequence, however because of the final missing word, the test taker does not receive the full content score.

Practice prompt

Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world’s energy requirements.

Repeat Sentence - Needs improvement sample answer

Answer C

“Resources errr provide small of energy”.

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This answer for content requires improvement. The answer has the words in the correct sequence but only 5 of the 12 words from the audio response. The content score for this answer is low.

Practice prompt

Renewable resources provide only a small proportion of the world's energy requirements.

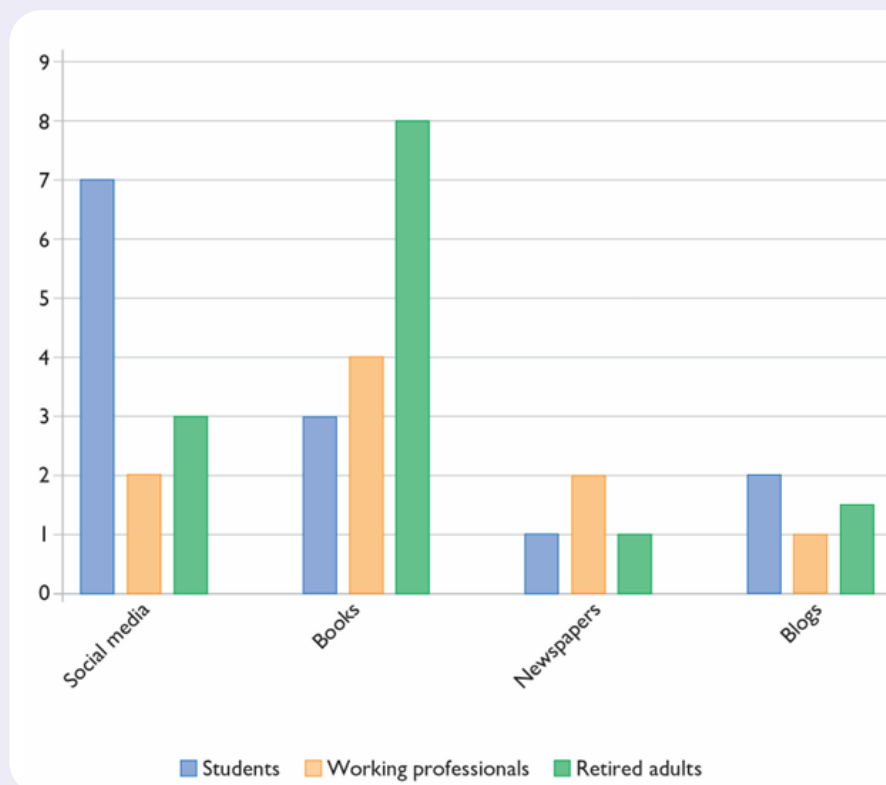
Describe Image

Instructions

- You will see an image.
- This will most likely be a graph, table or pie chart.
- You will have 25 seconds to study the image and 40 seconds to speak.
- You will need to describe the image.

Practice image

Reading habits in the city of Winstone, by average hours per week.



Describe Image

Organize your answer – option 1

By organizing what you say, it will be easier to tell the story of the image. You should organize your answer to cover the main information, any important additional details, and any conclusions.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Your response should always be an original response created on test day. It should use your own words and only refer to information that is directly relevant to the image.

Sample response

INTRODUCTION

“The table shows the reading habits in Winstone, measured in hours per week. The data is categorized by type of reading material—social media, books, newspapers, and blogs—and divided into three groups: students, working professionals, and retired adults.”

MAIN POINTS

“The data shows that books are most popular with retired adults, who read them for 8 hours per week. Students spend the most time on social media, at 7 hours per week, while working professionals have a mixed preference but spend the most time on books, at 4 hours per week.”

OTHER DETAILS

“Newspapers have the lowest reading time across all groups, ranging from 1 to 2 hours per week for students, working professionals, and retired adults.”

CONCLUSION

“Overall, books are the most popular reading format across all groups, followed by social media, while newspapers and blogs are least popular.”

Describe Image

Organize your answer – option 2

By organizing what you say, it will be easier to tell the story of the image. You should organize your answer to cover the main information, any important additional details, and any conclusions.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Your response should always be an original response created on test day. It should use your own words and only refer to information that is directly relevant to the image.

Sample response

INTRODUCTION

“The table presents the reading habits in Winstone, showing the weekly time spent on social media, books, newspapers, and blogs by students, working professionals, and retired adults.”

KEY FEATURES

“Books are most popular among retired adults, with 8 hours per week, and least popular among students, with 3 hours. Social media is most read by students, at 7 hours per week, and least read by working professionals, at 2 hours. Blogs and newspapers are read for about 1-2 hours per week across all groups.”

MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURE AND CONCLUSION

“The most significant feature is that books are the most popular reading material across all three groups, followed by social media. Blogs and newspapers are less commonly read.”

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Use your preparation time before the recording starts to identify the key trends and the most significant trend.
- ✓ Include the type of image in your response (e.g., bar chart, pie chart, line graph . . .)
- ✓ Make sure you speak for 30–40 seconds. You are unlikely to mention the key features in 20 seconds or less.
- ✓ Use numbers from the image in your spoken response.
- ✓ Compare the data in the image - which is the highest/lowest number or has anything changed over the period?
- ✓ Be specific with numbers, e.g., 257 minutes - not around 250 minutes.
- ✓ Use a variety of vocabulary and expressions – do not just repeat the same words many times (e.g., sightings).

Don't

- ✗ Use memorized responses or templated sentences. E.g., *The image is of a beautiful graph and shows various information.* If you use pre-memorized content, you are likely to get a score of 0 for your content. If your content score is 0, fluency and pronunciation will not be scored, so your overall score will be 0 for the task.
- ✗ Try to mention every feature. You need to identify the key features in the image and you only have 40 seconds to speak so you can't mention every feature.
- ✗ Spend too much time describing the labels.
- ✗ Add your own opinion when speaking. You should only describe elements you can see in the image.
- ✗ Include inaccurate details, for example books for retired adults is 5 hours per week when it's actually 8 hours per week.

Describe Image - Excellent sample answer

Answer A

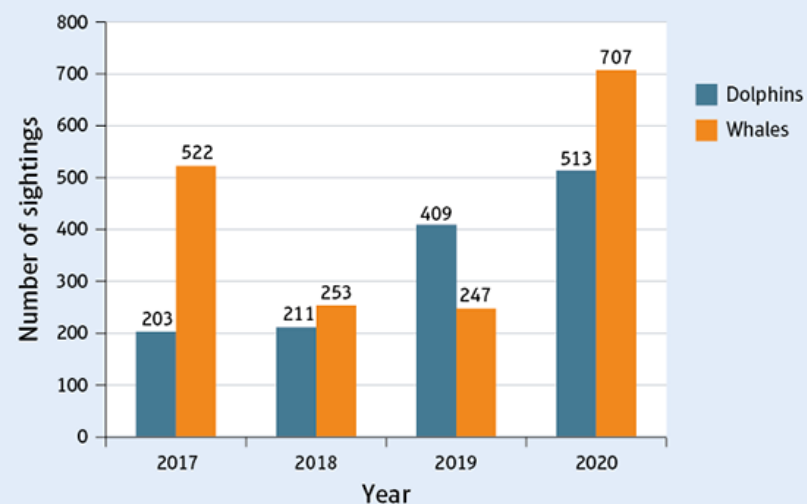
"The bar chart shows the sightings of dolphins and whales, in a bay, across the years 2017-2020. The data covers 4 years in total. We can see straightaway that the sightings of dolphins is actually increasing – from 203 to 513 across the four years. Whereas the sightings for whales has fluctuated, so it was 522 in 2017, then then the number decreased drastically to 253 and a further drop to 247 in 2019. In 2020, we saw a massive increase in sightings of whales to 707 (an increase of around 450 sightings). It seems that the sightings of these animals has increased over the period with 2020 being the year where there were the most sightings for both of these mammals."

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent response for content. The response describes the image fully and accurately and a variety of expressions and vocabulary are used appropriately with ease and precision. A listener could build a mental picture of the image from the response too.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay



Describe Image - Excellent sample answer

Answer B

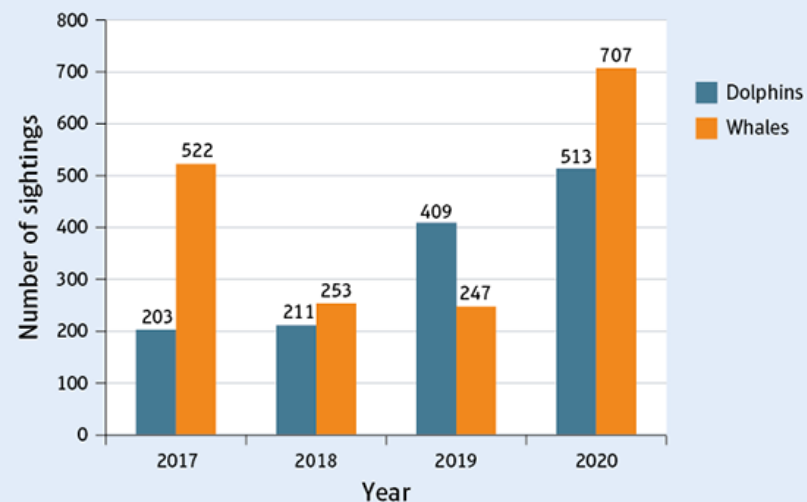
"The bar chart shows the number of sightings of dolphins and whales, in a bay from 2017-2020. There are 2 bars per year. An orange bar for whales and a blue bar for dolphins. For whales, there were 522 sightings in 2017 (the second highest) but this then dropped to 253 in 2018, 247 in 2019 (the lowest) before increasing dramatically to 707 sightings in 2020. For dolphins, there were 203 sightings in 2017, 211 in 2018 and then a significant rise in 2019 to 409 sightings and to 513 in 2020. In 3 of the 4 years, there are more whales sightings than dolphins with 2019 being the exception."

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent response for content. The response describes the image fully and accurately and a variety of expressions and vocabulary are used appropriately with ease and precision. A listener could build a mental picture of the image from the response too.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay



Describe Image - Good sample answer

Answer C

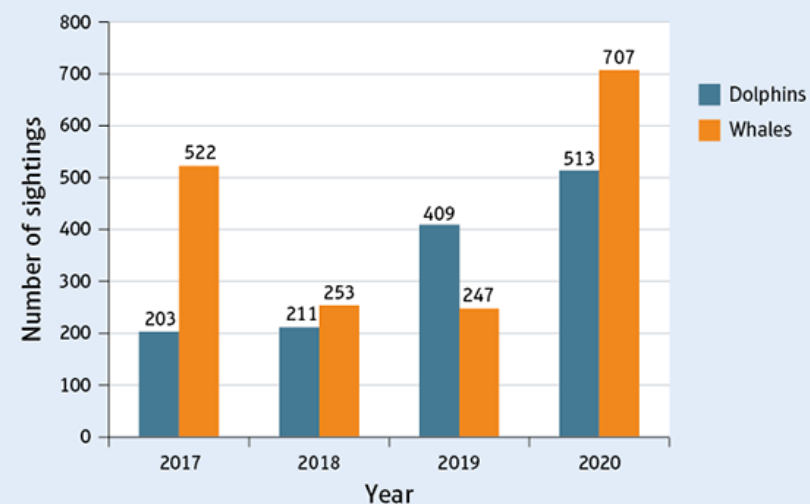
"So this graph shows us the sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay. So in for example, 2017, 522 whales were seen whereas in 2018, 253 whales were seen. However, in 2019 it was the opposite, there were more sightings of dolphins. And then in 2020 we can see that there were more sightings of whales again, with around 700 whales being seen and only 500 dolphins being seen. More whales were sighted than dolphins in 3 of the 4 years."

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response describes the main features of the image accurately and identifies some relationships without expanding on these in detail. The range of linguistic expression and vocabulary is sufficient but there is some repetition (sightings or sighted is mentioned four times). The listener could build an accurate mental picture from the response but minor details are missing.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay



Describe Image - Average sample answer

Answer D

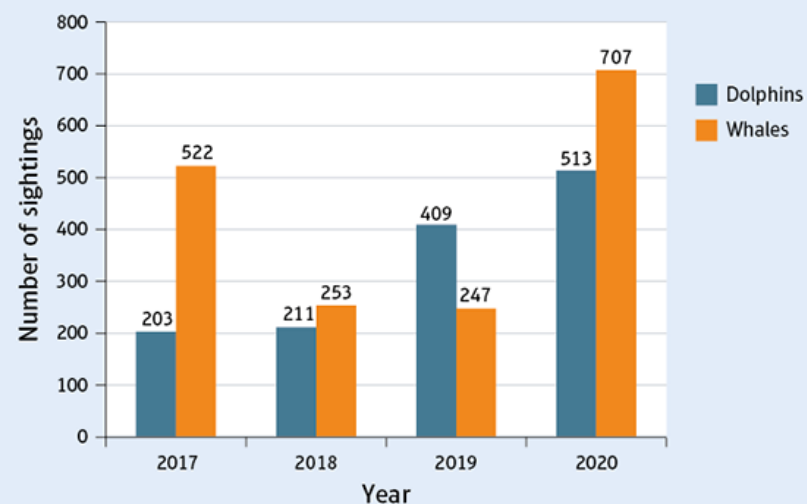
"So this graph describes sightings of dolphins and whales on the first year. On 2017 had a lot more whales, almost twice the amount 2018 less less whale, same amount of dolphins. On the year after that we saw an increase in the number of dolphins. The whales stayed the same and in 2020 there was a very large increase in both the sightings of dolphins and whales."

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response includes some accurate simple descriptions and basic relationships but does not cover all the main features of the image. The range of linguistic expressions and vocabulary is sufficient to give basic descriptions. A listener could build a basic mental picture from the response.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay



Describe Image - Needs improvement sample answer

Answer E

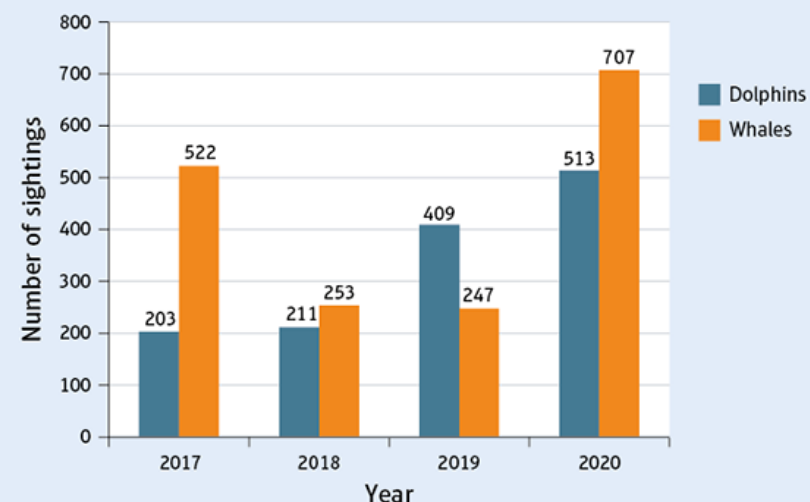
"It shows an increasing amount of spotting of dolphins throughout the the last years and the spottings of whales also."

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response includes minimal, superficial descriptions of the image. Vocabulary is limited and simple expressions dominate the response. A listener could visualise some elements of the image from the response with effort.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay



Describe Image – Needs significant improvement sample answer

Answer F

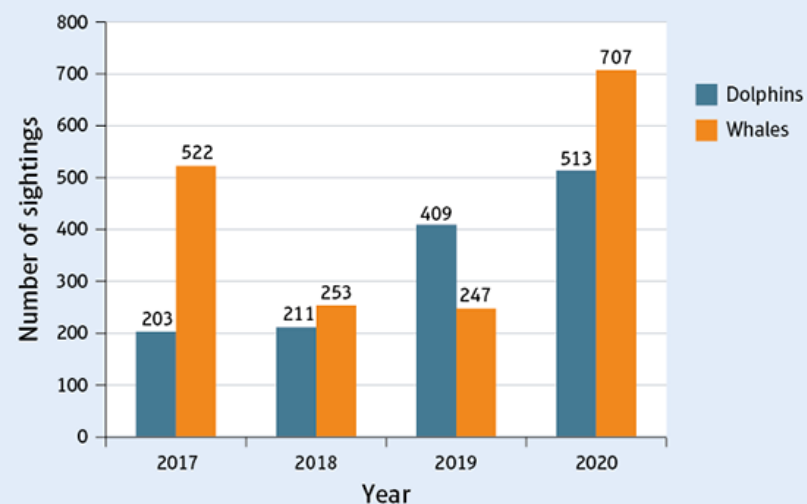
“This is a very informative and interesting picture. It shows 2017, it shows 2018, it shows 2019 and 2020. It shows number of sightings. It shows sightings of dolphins. It shows dolphins. It shows whales. It shows that the data is increasing and decreasing to different levels. That is the end of my task describing an image. Thank you very much for listening to me”.

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response is composed of disconnected elements or a list of points identified on the image without description. Vocabulary and expressions are highly restricted. A listener would struggle to visualise the image.

Practice image

Sightings of dolphins and whales in the bay

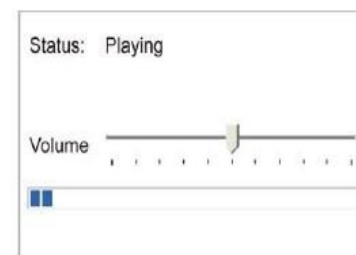


Retell Lecture

Instructions

- You will listen to an audio from an academic lecture.
- You will need to take notes as you listen to the lecture.
- After the audio ends, you have 10 seconds before the microphone opens.
- Retell the lecture in 40 seconds.

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture tips

Be prepared

When it comes to practicing Retell Lecture, the tips below will help you to be prepared and ready to retell the lecture as soon as the microphone opens.

Practice tips

- 1 Have your pen and erasable notepad ready for this question.
- 2 As soon as the listening begins start making notes about what you hear in the lecture. Don't just focus on single words, try to write phrases and make connections between the ideas.
- 3 Make notes that are clear for you to read.
- 4 Once the microphone opens, start retelling what you heard in the lecture. Focus on the key elements from the lecture and try to speak for 40 seconds as you can mention more points.

What to include in your response?

Key areas

When retelling the lecture, strong answers include the topic, the key points, characters, actions, show connections between these points and make a conclusion at the end.

Look at how these areas are included in the sample response below:

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Your response should always be an original response created on test day. It should use your own words and summarise the lecture using relevant language.

Sample response

TOPIC

“The talk was about a scientific process of making new recipes. So for chefs making cookery books or making recipes for other chefs.”

KEY POINTS

“They said attention to detail is really important and that chefs normally use a test kitchen where every single step is recorded.

CHARACTERS AND ACTIONS

“Everything needs to be carefully and precisely measured out as they go through these steps to make a recipe. Once, they’ve done it – they’ve checked everything many times like the ingredients. Then they trial the recipe, it’s trialled by someone else. Normally a competent cook, not necessarily a chef. And then that competent cook gives feedback on instructions.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

“Chefs said they don’t like creating recipes like this because they are not spontaneous.”

Important Test Tips

Do

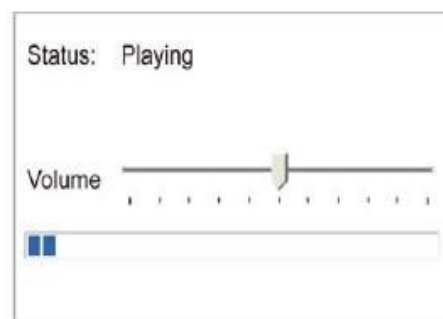
- ✓ Take notes as you listen. Write down key words and phrases in a way that you can easily read. Use punctuation such as -, =, &, +, arrows and bullet points to show connections between your ideas.
- ✓ Talk about the key points but also characters, actions, aspects and relationships between the information.
- ✓ Try to speak for up to 40 seconds. The longer you speak, the more chance you have of covering the content requirements for this question.
- ✓ Use linking words (e.g., so, then) and relative clauses (e.g., which, who, that) to connect your ideas and show relationships between them.
- ✓ Use a variety of expressions and vocabulary to retell the lecture.
- ✓ Retell the main ideas from the lecture but expand on them with detail.

Don't

- ✗ Use memorized responses or templated sentences (e.g., there is an informative picture on the screen). If there is a 'significant amount' of pre-memorized content (like the previous sentence), a score of 0 will be given and fluency and pronunciation will not be scored.
- ✗ Just mention key words from the lecture (e.g., recipe, food, cook) in a disconnected way. You need to describe characters, aspects, actions, and their relationships.
- ✗ Try to mention everything the lecture mentioned. This is not possible as the lecture is longer than the 40 seconds you have to retell the lecture.
- ✗ Add in filler words which do not connect to the lecture. (e.g., That is my answer to this question and final conclusions have been mentioned).
- ✗ Use mechanical linking words which do not connect sentences effectively (e.g., moreover, in addition, to add).
- ✗ Include inaccurate information which was not heard in the lecture.

Retell Lecture sample

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture transcript

Transcript

In today's lecture we'll consider another scientific process. That is the creation of new recipes. If a chef is aiming to produce a collection of recipes for a cookery book, or devising a recipe that needs to be followed carefully by other chefs, attention to detail is essential. Many chefs have a test kitchen, which is more like a laboratory than a kitchen. During the test procedure, everything is carefully recorded and each ingredient must be precisely measured. The process or method will need to be repeated many times to ensure aspects such as the balance of ingredients, cooking temperature and cooking times are correct. After the recipe has been developed in the test kitchen, it is then likely to be trialled by someone who is a competent cook, but not a chef, in their home kitchen. This person will then give feedback to the chef on issues such as the outcome of the recipe and whether the instructions are easy to follow. Many chefs don't enjoy the process of developing recipes as they say they are unable to be spontaneous and creative while working in the test kitchen.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This is a transcript of the listening. In the actual question, you will not see the transcript. You will hear the audio once.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Status: Playing

Volume

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 51 seconds.

Retell Lecture - Excellent sample answer

Answer A

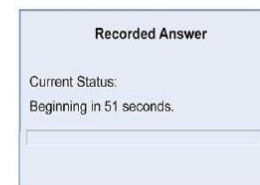
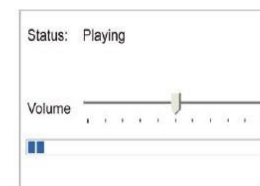
In this lecture, the scientific process of creating new recipes was examined. Chefs aiming to produce recipes for a cookery book or for other chefs must pay meticulous attention to detail. They often use a test kitchen, similar to a laboratory, where each ingredient is precisely measured, and the procedure is carefully documented. This method is repeated multiple times to ensure the accuracy of ingredient balance, cooking temperature, and times. Once developed, the recipe is tested by a competent cook at home, who provides feedback on the outcome and clarity of instructions. Many chefs find this process challenging as it restricts their spontaneity and creativity.

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response is clear, accurate and demonstrates full comprehension of the lecture by paraphrasing the main ideas seamlessly into their own words. A variety of expressions and vocabulary are used appropriately with ease and precision. The ideas in the response are well connected and organized in a logical sequence. The response flows well and is easy to follow.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture -

Good sample answer

Answer B

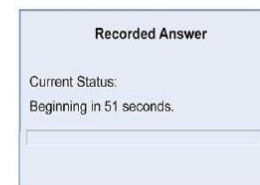
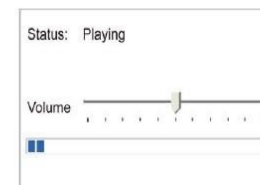
“When chefs want to develop a recipe, they do it in a special kitchen that works more like a lab, where they try to reproduce the same recipe over and over, looking for the exact same outcome of flavour and whatever. So after they they produce a recipe, usually though they go test it with someone who isn’t a chef but just a good cook and then those people can give some feedback about the recipe. Chefs usually don’t like the process of the lab recipe thing because they can’t be as creative or spontaneous.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response captures some main ideas of the lecture and some details. The range of expressions and vocabulary is sufficient to give basic descriptions. The ideas in the answer are not well connected with the overall response requiring some effort to follow.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture – Average sample answer

Answer C

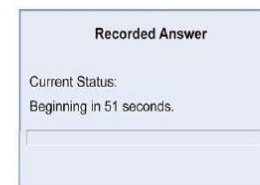
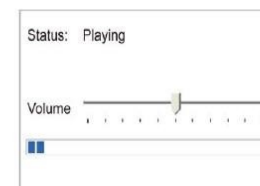
“Chefs need to create a new recipe, they often do that process like laboratory investigation. So they develop the the recipe very carefully and record all the aspects such as quantities of ingredients, cooking time or or temperature. In addition to this, they may repeat the that process many times in order to produce the that recipe and so that other people can do that process. Because after that, the that recipe is tested by staff of the kitchen. And yes, that’s all!”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response captures some ideas from the lecture but not fully accurately. The answer includes irrelevant information (“And yes, that’s all!”). The range of vocabulary is narrow and the response mainly consists of unconnected ideas.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture – Needs Improvement sample answer

Answer D

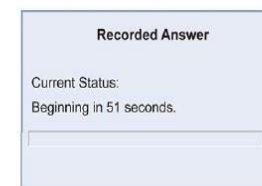
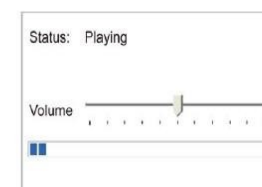
“So this is about the process of chef creating your recipe. So they basically have to repeat the process many different times to perfect it until it can be given to everyone to try out the recipe. So it's almost and then before they put out the recipe, there's someone who tries it and it gives feedback. So it's almost like a scientific experiment rather than just cooking.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response captures some ideas from the lecture but with inaccuracies. The vocabulary is limited and simple expressions dominate. The response lacks coherence and is difficult to follow.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Retell Lecture – Needs Improvement sample answer

Answer E

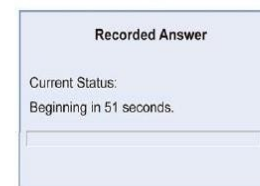
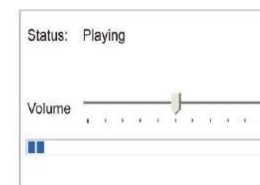
“Chefs and how they create new recipes was the main topic of the lecture. Cookery books and attention to detail was told. Test kitchens and laboratories was discussed. Test procedures and cooking time was also mentioned. Trialled and home kitchen was also highlighted. Feedback and outcome was also given. To conclude, the lecture was very informative.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response repeats isolated words and phrases from the lecture. The response does not provide adequate context or meaning. Vocabulary and expressions are highly restricted and there is no coherence among points.

Practice question

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give the response.



Answer Short Question

Do not try to give a long answer

The instructions for this question type tell you how to answer the question.

There is no point in saying more than you need to say. **Marks are awarded for a short, accurate answer.** There are no extra marks for additional words so simply provide the one response. Once you have provided your answer, you can move on to the next question.

For example, for the below question, both of the answers would score the same marks.

Example instructions

You will hear a question. Please give a simple and short answer. Often just one or a few words is enough.



Example question

‘What do you call a person who comes first in a race or competition?’

Answer

- Winner
- A winner is a person who comes first in a race or competition.

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Start speaking straight after the question is finished.
- ✓ Guess if you are not sure. The answer is likely to be a noun or an adjective. There is no penalty for saying something incorrect.
- ✓ Listen carefully to the question.
- ✓ Keep answers short. It is not necessary or helpful to give long answers to the questions – usually just a few words is enough.

Don't

- ✗ Take notes. There is no time for note-taking in this question type.
- ✗ Speak too quietly, loudly, or slowly. Your answer must be clear for the system to recognize your voice.
- ✗ Think too much about your answer. The microphone closes after detecting three seconds of silence.
- ✗ Skip this question. It's worth having a guess.

Summarize Group Discussion (For the Updated Test)

Instructions

- You will listen to a group discussion between 3 people.
- You should take notes while listening.
- The topic will be academic.
- Once the listening is over, you will have 2 minutes to speak and summarize the discussion.

Practice prompt

You will hear three people having a discussion. When you hear the beep, summarize the whole discussion. You will have 10 seconds to prepare and 2 minutes to give your response.

Summarize Group Discussion transcript

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Here is the transcript of a Summarize Group Discussion audio.
You will not see this in your actual test. You will hear the audio once.

Transcript

Speaker 1: There are a lot of challenges for us at university. It's not just doing well in the courses; we have to be able to balance the academic work with a personal life and also find time to join some extracurricular activities. I mean I don't want my years at university to be only studying and writing papers.

Speaker 2: I know. There's just so much to do. I have to get to the lectures, do all the readings and assignments, complete several projects and get ready for exams. I hardly have time to breathe.

Speaker 3: You know it's true. My biggest challenge since I started university is managing my time. I can't seem to get myself organized and I always feel stressed and exhausted and the worst thing is that I just seem to get organized and the term ends and I have to get used to a whole new schedule.

Speaker 1: I agree. That is really difficult. Each course has its own schedule, deadlines and requirements. It's so difficult to create a consistent routine so I can allocate my time effectively and everything seems to take longer than I thought.

Speaker 2: The worst part is that I often procrastinate and put off tasks until the last minute. I think to myself, oh I have lots of time for that. I have a whole week before it's due. Then all of a sudden, the due date is in two days and I'm rushed and don't do a very good job.

S1 = Speaker 1, S2 = Speaker 2, S3 = Speaker 3

Please continue transcript on following page.

Summarize Group Discussion transcript

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Here is the transcript of a Summarize Group Discussion audio.
You will not see this in your actual test. You will hear the audio once.

Transcript (cont.)

Speaker 3: That's happened to me so many times. The deadlines are weeks or months away and I have trouble with long-term planning. It's hard to plan so far ahead but you have to or you end up rushed. The problem is that you have to learn to multi-task and I was never very good at that. I like to finish one project and start on another. But that's impossible when all the projects and essays are due at the same time at the end of the term. You really have to be able to multi-task at university. You have to be able to jump from one topic to another and one type of assignment to another.

Speaker 1: Then, just when you think everything's under control, the computer crashes!

Speaker 2: If I could manage my time better, I probably wouldn't be so stressed and exhausted. I've never had to discipline myself like this before. In high school, the teachers told you what to do and when to do it. If you just did what they said, you were fine. But in university, it's up to you to prioritize what tasks are the most important and should be done first. It seems I spend too much time on less important tasks because I like them or they are easier. Then I don't have time for the more important ones.

Speaker 3: I guess not managing your time effectively means that you end up working more than you really need to and you feel so tired and sort of burnt out. I think the university offers a seminar on time management. Maybe we should all go.

S1 = Speaker 1, S2 = Speaker 2, S3 = Speaker 3

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Take effective notes. Write the topic, main ideas, S1, S2 and S3 and what they say (supporting details).
- ✓ Start with a short summary of the listening.
- ✓ Introduce main ideas from the conversation and add supporting details.
- ✓ Mention which speaker said which point.
- ✓ Use linking words to connect topics.
- ✓ Say in your response where speakers agree or disagree or hold the same or different opinions.

Don't

- ✗ Don't just list in order who said what. Remember this is a summary.
- ✗ Add information that is incorrect (every few weeks, she has a whole new schedule when it says the term ends and she needs to get used to a whole new schedule).
- ✗ Get speakers confused and say speaker 2 said something when it was speaker 1.
- ✗ Don't try to mention every single point. Summarize the main points.
- ✗ Speak for too little time. You need to summarize the entire audio.
- ✗ Jump between ideas without any flow or connection.
- ✗ Introduce each topic in a mechanical way (topic 1 is, topic 2 is, topic 3 . . .).

Effective notes – example 1

Separate your notes into topic (T), main ideas (MI), who said what and the supporting details. This will help you organize your response.

To the right is an example. S1 means Speaker 1, S2 means Speaker 2 and S3 means Speaker 3.

To the right are just some of the notes. More notes are needed on the entire audio.

My notes:

T: 3 students – time management problems at uni

MI: Balance academic work, personal and extra curricular

S1 - wants to experience more than just studying/writing

S2 -

S3 -

MI: Juggling college schedules and time

S1 - each course – own schedules, requirements – difficult to create a consistent routine

S2 - juggling reading, assignments and projects –

S3 - managing time – can't get organized – feels stressed

MI: Long-term planning

S1 -

S2 - procrastinates till the last minute. Due date creeps up on him.

S3 - Similar struggle – can't long-term plan. Must multi-task – . . .

Effective notes – example 2

Make notes on each speaker as you listen with the supporting details. In your summary, you will still need to introduce the topic, and then the main ideas with supporting details.

Topic: challenges managing time at uni

Speaker 1:

*concerns about load
no consistency - complain
length
computer crash*

Speaker 2:

*lectures, project, exam
no time!
procrastinate - deadline rush
also tired
discipline - different to high sch., comparison/autonomy
interest-driven*

Speaker 3

*mang. time
stress/exhaustion
restarting school
agrees
long-term planning, multi-tasking - challenging
seminar? Tomo?*

Summarize Group Discussion – Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“The three speakers were talking about the various challenges they face at university especially with respect to time management.

So, the first speaker talked about his concerns about his workload; he seemed very concerned and somewhat stressed. He mentioned that he had no consistency in what he does. Ah, and he had a particular concern about the length of the course and some of the workload. He also mentioned something interesting, which was around, ah, challenges with his computer crashing. That was kind of said, ah, in relation to, ah, his time management issues.

The second speaker also talked about the number of lectures and projects and exams that they have and said that they’re not very good with time management as well, especially because of procrastination. And this speaker mentioned that they have lots of... or that they rush when there’s a deadline because they tend to find themselves focusing on things that interest them rather than things that are important. This person also mentioned an issue with discipline and made a comparison with high school where teachers sort of tell you what to do, or provide your schedule, whereas at university you have greater autonomy over what you’re supposed to do.

The third speaker agreed with much of what was said. Ah, and also had an issue with procrastination – the same as speaker two. The third speaker talked about time management issues and stress, and also, ah, exhaustion – being tired. The third speaker talked about, ah, long-term planning as key, and also multi-tasking as an important attribute, but said that this is sort of challenging to, ah, achieve. In the end, the third speaker mentioned something about a seminar on time management and suggested they attend that because it might help them out.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response is clear, accurate, and demonstrates full comprehension of the discussion by paraphrasing the main ideas in their own words. They expand on the details of each speaker’s contribution with specificity, ensuring that the nuances of each perspective are captured effectively. The ideas are well connected and organized in a logical sequence, with connective devices used effectively and consistently to ensure the response flows well and is easy to follow.

Summarize Group Discussion – Good sample answer

Answer B

“The students in the conversation agree that their biggest challenge at university is managing their time. They feel overwhelmed by the many tasks they have to complete, and with each new term bringing a different schedule, it’s difficult to stay organized. One student mentions struggling to establish a consistent routine for tackling his assignments, adding that technical issues, like computer freezing make things even worse. He also talks about procrastinating. The second student points out that self-discipline is a challenge; in primary school, teachers told him what to do and when to do it, but now, he has to figure out how to prioritize tasks on his own. The third students shares that long-term planning is a major hurdle for her, and she finds it hard to juggle multiple tasks at once, a skill she feels she’s not very good at. By the end of the conversation, they all agree that attending the university’s time management seminar could help them improve their ability to manage their work more effectively.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response captures the main ideas of the discussion and some details of each speaker’s contributions. There are a few inaccurate ideas however, for example: this response says, ‘Primary School’ instead of ‘High School’ and ‘computer freezing’ when it should be ‘computer crashing’.

Summarize Group Discussion – Average sample answer

Answer C

“These students say that their biggest challenge at university is time management. They think there is so much to do and the schedule keeps changing each term so it’s hard to get organized. One student says he can’t find a routine to follow for doing the work and sometimes has computer problems too. Another student says she also has trouble with long term planning and she thinks another problem is that she has to multitask and she isn’t very good at that. The other student says that he can’t discipline himself to do the work and that he used to rely on his teachers to plan his work. Now he has to do it himself.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This response captures some ideas from the discussion but it does not capture them fully accurately. The response needs to differentiate between important points and details.

Summarize Group Discussion – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer D

“The conversation spoke about studying and projects. Also mentioned was getting organized, stress and new schedule. Another interesting point was putting off tests and routines. As well as this, deadlines and long-term planning was mentioned. They mentioned multi-tasking, computer crashing, discipline and attending seminars. Thank you for listening to my summary of this interesting group discussion task.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This response is very short and it does not include the main information. The test taker is using sentence stems and just adding in key words. This response repeats isolated words from the discussion and much of the response is not relevant to the prompt.

Respond to a Situation (For the Updated Test)

Instructions

- ④ You will read and listen to a prompt giving you instructions for the situation.
- ④ You can take notes as you listen to the prompt but you have limited time to do this.
- ④ After the audio ends, you will need to respond to the situation in 40 seconds.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Important Test Tips

Do

- ✓ Speak like you are talking to the person or people – use the first person (I . . .) not the third person (e.g., he).
- ✓ Start with an opening depending on who you are talking to (e.g., Hi..., Excuse me...).
- ✓ Cover the main points of the prompt without missing out or changing any important information.
- ✓ Understand the formality and tone of the situation. If you are talking to a colleague, friend or your professor, Are you being assertive or persuasive in what you are saying?
- ✓ Use contractions (e.g., they'll..., I'll...) because it's a spoken situation and you want to be fluent.
- ✓ Use polite language effectively depending on the context and the person/people you are talking to.

Don't

- ✗ Forget to mention all the key points from the prompt.
- ✗ Change the information (e.g., if the prompt says by the end of this week but you say Saturday, this is a content error).
- ✗ Just copy the words from the prompt.
- ✗ Use limited expressions and repetition to respond to the situation (e.g., I'd like . . . , I'd like . . . , I'd like . . .).
- ✗ Pre-memorize an answer. This will not cover the main points from the situation and this will be scored very low.
- ✗ Summarize the situation – this is not a summarize task.
- ✗ Be too polite if you have a strong request (e.g., would you possibly . . . vs I need . . .). Choose the right language for the right context to complete the task.
- ✗ Give your opinion on whether the task is reasonable or not, or make suggestions on how the situation could be improved/resolved or changed.

Respond to a Situation – Excellent sample answer

Answer A

“Hi everyone! I’m happy to create the slides for this presentation we’re giving. To be successful though, I’ll need you to each send me all the information and content you’ve gathered for our group project before this coming weekend so I’ll have enough time to complete the slides. Please send the information to my email by end of day this Friday – does that work for everyone?”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is an excellent answer for the content. It covers the main information including: 1) you are willing to design the slides, 2) you need more information and 3) you need this information before this weekend. This means the primary communication goal has been fully met. The test taker has communicated with ease and the response is fully developed. The response is polite, in the first person and also has the correct tone (being persuasive and strong enough) to request the slides.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Average sample answer

Answer B

“Hi everyone. So for this presentation, I can definitely create the slides as long you each provide me with the information that I can put into the slides. Can you make sure you send me the information by Saturday latest?”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This partially achieves the primary goal of the situation because there is one error with the response saying ‘by Saturday’ – when in fact the prompt says before the weekend. The response could also be more persuasive to achieve a higher mark – ‘Can you . . .’ is overly polite considering the importance of the request.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer C

“Hello, I am doing a group project for my class. I have been asked to prepare slides for the presentation and I am willing to do the slides but you need to give me all the information that you have before this weekend. Thank you.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The response copies the prompt too heavily and the test taker has not changed the language to meet the primary communication goal of the context. The test taker has just changed the pronouns from the prompt (you for I) and copied the information from the prompt. This response would score very low for content.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer D

“The situation is about a person and that person is doing a group project for class. They are doing some slides and they want all the information from their teammates so they can do the slides. They want the information before the weekend.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

The test taker does not understand the requirements of the task and is summarizing the situation. No primary communication goal is achieved because the test taker is not responding to the situation. This response would receive a very low score for content.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

Respond to a Situation – Needs improvement sample answer

Answer E

“Thank you so much to explain the situation that I have in this response. In this task I will explain the situation at length and provide some polite language to respond to the situation. I want to start by saying that this response is about doing a group project for the class. I want to also say that it’s about slides for a presentation and it’s also about giving you all the information before the weekend. Overall the situation is very informative and interesting.”

ANSWER EXPLANATION:

This is a very poor answer for this question. This is a pre-memorised response with large chunks of language not specific to the prompt.

Practice prompt

You are doing a group project for a class. The other members of your group have asked you to prepare the slides for the presentation. You are willing to do the slides but need them to give you all the information that you have to include before the weekend. What would you say to them?

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