Oxford Test of English

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THE OXFORD TEST OF ENGLISH IS CERTIFIED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Your preparation journey

Building the real-world English skills you need to succeed in 7 steps



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Prepare, practise, progress!

Welcome to your step-by-step preparation guide for the Oxford Test of English. This guide brings together all the free resources to help you feel confident and ready on test day, and beyond.

Step 1: Get to know the test format

What to do:

Learn how the Oxford Test of English is organized and what types of questions you will get in each of the four modules: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

Why this helps:

Knowing what to expect helps you focus your preparation and gives you a better chance of performing well on test day.

How to do this:

1. Look at the test format overview for Speaking.



2. Make notes on:

- the number of parts in this module
- how much time you have to answer
- the task types in each part
- the language skills tested in each part

3. Hide the screen with the Speaking overview and your notes. Look at the list in 2. What can you remember about the Speaking module? Check against your notes and the overview.

4. Repeat for each of the remaining modules: Listening, Reading and Writing.



Step 2: Try the online demo test

What to do:

See how the online test looks and works.

Why this helps:

When you know the screens, the timers, how to move between questions, and how to enter or record your answers, you can stay calm and focus on the questions on test day.

How to do this:

Try the **online demo test**. You can use it as many times as you like. Find out how to:

- do the sound check
- change the volume
- change the text size and display settings
- move between questions and parts
- check your progress
- see how the timer works in each part



Note:

1. *You can choose your text size and display settings before you start your test on test day.*
2. *In the demo test, you can move between modules and parts. You cannot do this in the real test.*
3. *The demo test does not give you a score. You can find the answers to the demo test questions in the sample test answer key (see Step 4).*



Step 3: Understand how the test is marked

What to do:

Your Reading and Listening answers are marked by a computer. Your Speaking and Writing answers are marked by trained people called 'assessors'. Learn what assessors look for when they mark your Speaking and Writing answers.

Why this helps:

When you know what the assessors look for, it is easier to get the score you want.

How to do this:

SPEAKING

1. Read the **marking criteria** for Speaking. They are in Appendix 1 (p20) of the Oxford Test of English Test Specifications.



2. Answer the Speaking questions in Appendix 3 (from p23). Do this *before* you look at the example answers. Use your phone to time yourself and record your answers.

3. Now look at the example answers, the marks, and the comments.

4. Compare the example answers with your answers:

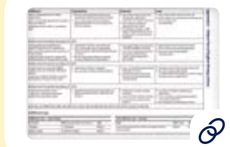
- Are your answers better?
- In what way?
- How could you make your answers better?



Use the criteria to help you.

WRITING

1. Read the **marking criteria** for Writing. They are in Appendix 2 (p22) of the Oxford Test of English Test Specifications.



2. Answer the Writing questions in Appendix 3 (from p29). Do this *before* you look at the example answers. Type your answer and check the number of words.

3. Now look at the example answers, the marks, and the comments.

4. Compare the example answers with your answers:

- Are your answers better?
- In what way?
- How could you make your answers better?

Use the criteria to help you.



Step 4: Plan your preparation

What to do:

Take the sample test. Then make a simple study plan.

Why this helps:

The sample test shows you what you can already do well, and what you need to work on. Then you can give more time to the modules and task types you find difficult. You can change your plan when you learn more about the test.

How to do this:

1. Take the **sample test**. Set a timer for each part.

Sample test, answer key and audioscripts (PDF, 1.8MB)

Audio files (ZIP, 42MB)



2. Check your answers with the answer key.

3. Ask yourself:

- Which module was the most difficult?
- Which parts were difficult?
- Did you have enough time?

4. Read the overview and tips for preparation at the start of the **Speaking Tips and Practice** (pp5-6) and **Writing Tips and Practice** (pp6-8). These pages explain what each task type requires and give general tips for preparing.





5. Write a simple plan. Decide:

- What you will work on
- When you will study
- How long you will study for

Start with the modules and tasks you find difficult.

6. Change your plan when you need to. You will learn more about the test as you prepare.

Step 5: Build your language skills and knowledge

What to do:

Work on your reading, listening, speaking and writing skills. Keep building your grammar and vocabulary.

Why this helps:

The test is for learners at CEFR A2 to B2 levels. When your English is stronger, you can understand more in the Reading and Listening modules. You can also use more grammar and vocabulary in your Speaking and Writing answers. This helps you get a better score.

How to do this:

1. Use the **free online preparation course**. Work through the skills practice and reflection activities for each module: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.



2. Work through the **Speaking and Writing Tips and Practice**. You read the tips for preparation in Step 4. Now work through each part of the guide in order.

Speaking Tips and Practice:



- Start with Part 1: Interview. Read the task description and tips, then do the practice exercises. Compare your responses with the example answers and use the tips to improve.
- Move on to Part 2 (Voicemails), Part 3 (Talk), and Part 4 (Follow-up questions), doing the same for each part.
- When you finish all four parts, use the "Tips at a Glance" summary (pp30-31) as a checklist to review before your test. The dos and don'ts page (p32) is also useful to read through before test day.

Speaking Tips and Practice Audio Files

Writing Tips and Practice:



- Start with Part 1: Email. Read the tips on how to structure your email, then do the practice exercises. Compare your responses with the example answers and use the tips to improve.
- Move on to Part 2. Read the section on choosing the right question, then work through each text type (essay, review, article), doing the same for each one.
- When you finish all the parts, use the "Tips at a Glance" summary (pp48-49) as a checklist. The dos and don'ts page (p50) is also useful to read through before test day.

3. For extra speaking and writing practice, try the iSpeaker and iWriter tools (paid) at Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.

4. Improve your vocabulary. Use the free Topic Dictionaries and the Oxford 3000 and 5000 word lists at Oxford Learner's Dictionaries to learn useful words at your level.
5. Check your vocabulary. Use the free Text Checker after you write or record an answer. It shows you if you are using a good range of vocabulary. For Speaking, record yourself and use an app to make a transcript.

Step 6: Do practice tests

What to do:

- Download and complete the free practice test PDFs.
- Take the *Online Practice Tests* under real test conditions.

Why this helps:

Doing practice tests helps you become familiar with the test and understand which skills you need to improve.
The *Online Practice Tests* use different questions from the free Practice Test PDFs and have the same task types and interface as the real test. You can also use Review mode to check your answers and learn from your mistakes. This can help you feel more confident on test day.

How to do this:

FREE PRACTICE TEST PDFs

The Oxford Test of English provides two free Practice Test PDFs at each level (A2, B1 and B2). **To select the practice tests you need, click here.**

Take Practice Test 1

1. Choose Practice Test 1 at your level (A2, B1 or B2).
2. Do one part at a time with a timer. (For timings see the test format overview in Step 1).
3. Check your answers with the answer key. If an answer is wrong, try again. Then read the explanation.
4. Do Practice Test 1 again at another time.
   - Did you improve?
   - Which task types were easier?
   - What do you still need to practise?

Take Practice Test 2

1. Do Practice Test 2 in test conditions (about 2 hours). Use the official timings for each part.
2. Check your answers and look at your mistakes.

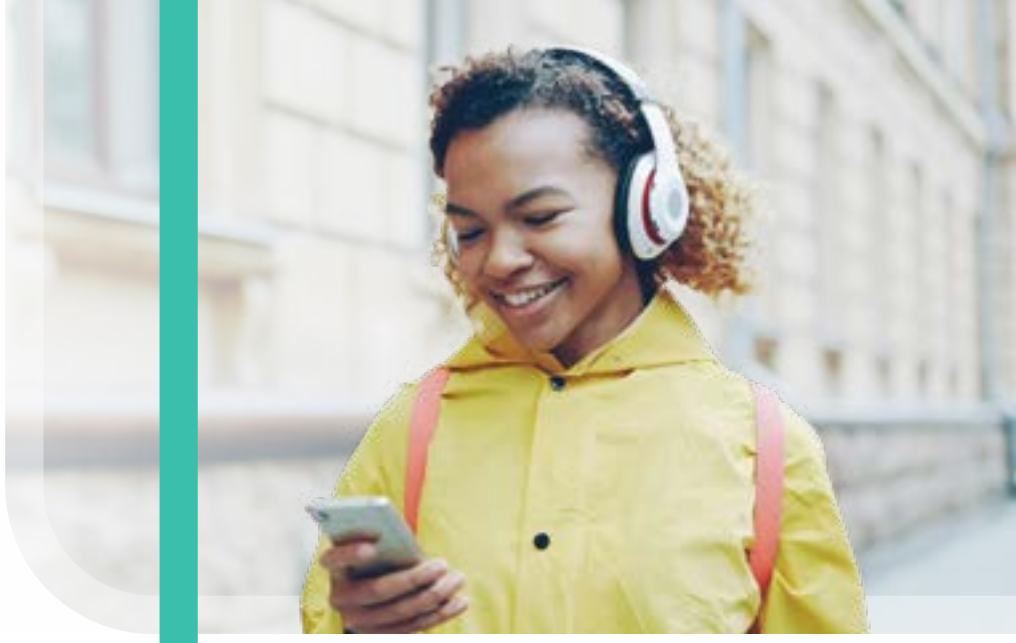
ONLINE PRACTICE TESTS

Take Online Practice Tests with the same task types, timing, and interface that you will see on test day (paid)

1. Go to **Oxford Test of English online practice tests** and choose one or more practice tests.
2. Take the practice test(s) that you buy.
3. Use **review mode** to check your results. Listening and Reading are marked automatically with explanations for each answer. Speaking and Writing include sample answers and explanations to help you understand how to improve.
4. Look at your mistakes and decide what to work on next.

Note: The content is different from the free Practice Test PDFs.

Step 7: Get ready for test day



What to do:

Make sure you:

- have registered correctly
- know where your Test Centre is and how you will get there
- know which identity documents to bring
- understand what will happen when you arrive
- review the online demo test once more before test day

Why this helps:

When you know all the practical details before test day, you can stay calm and focus on doing your best.

How to do this:

1. Watch the **'Your test experience'** video.

It shows you what to do before, during and after your test. It also explains how and when you get your results.



2. Read the Test Taker Guide

Check anything you are not sure about. If you still have questions, contact your Test Centre.



3. You can also visit www.oxfordtestofenglish.com to find all your free and paid preparation materials along with details of how to purchase.

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