



PTE YOUNG LEARNERS

Oral Test Guide

V2.0 | April 2020

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

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1. Links to resources in this guide

Pearson Test of English for Young Learners website: [pearson.com/pteyounglearners](https://www.pearson.com/pteyounglearners)

Interviewer/Assessor form: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/forms/interlocutor-assessor-application-form.html>

Request Oral Marksheet from Pearson: pqs.internationaleo@pearson.com

Guide to EOL online: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/pearson-test-of-english/pte-general-guides/guide-to-eol.pdf>

Secure file transfer (SFT) guide: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/pearson-test-of-english/administrative-forms/pearson-secure-file-transfer-user-guide.pdf>

Send the recorded audio files via SFT to this email address: [ptemarksreceipt@pearson.com.](mailto:ptemarksreceipt@pearson.com)

2. Introduction

The oral test is a compulsory part of the Pearson Test of English Young Learners. Candidates 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 ten-minute tasks. The oral accounts for 20 points.

Stages of the exam

- Five 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 assessor asks the speaker some questions about the topic.

2.1 Task one – Board game

The first task is a board game. Test takers take it in turns to throw a single die 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 assessor 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 become increasingly difficult.

Pearson Test of English Young Learners (PTE Young Learners) is an assessment solution at four different levels of English language proficiency: Firstwords (Level 1), Springboard (Level 2), Quickmarch (Level 3) and Breakthrough (Level 4).

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/pearson-test-of-english/pearson-test-of-english-young-learners/test-levels.html>

Examples of Firstwords questions:

- How many friends do you have?
- What is your family name?
- How old are you?

Examples of Springboard questions:

- What do you do on 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?

2.2 Task two – Topic Cards

In the second task, the five test takers take turns picking a topic card from a pack at random. The test taker must talk for one minute about the topic. This is followed by a further minute of questions from other test takers if necessary. 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:

- School
- Free time
- Weather

Examples of Breakthrough topics:

- Your last holiday
- A good film
- Daily routines

In order to prepare test takers for the second part of the oral test, centres and teachers should refer closely to the PTE YL guide. 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 all previous levels.

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

3. Guidance notes for assessors

3.1 Test Materials

An assessor may consult the materials no more than 90 minutes in advance to prepare for the oral test. Nothing may be removed from the premises and the materials must be locked away when s/he has finished. The oral test materials are confidential and must be kept locked in a secure place.

Required materials for Task one:

- The board game (please cut out the squares from the card provided)
- Five counters of different colours
- One die
- Large table or floor space for the game

Required materials for Task two:

- Topic cards

3.2 Test Arrangements

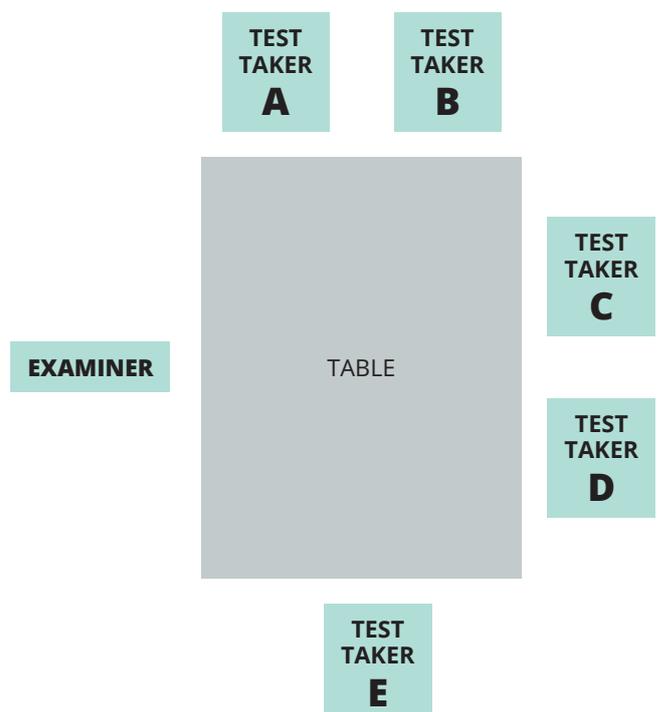
You may arrange oral tests up to two weeks before the written test. YL test takers are examined in groups of five. Where the total number of test takers is not divisible by five, it may be necessary for some groups to have fewer than five test takers. Test takers in a group do not need to know each other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

3.3 Arrangement of Test Room

Arrange the room so that the test situation is not too intimidating for the test taker. For example, the assessor 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, stand the microphone on a felt or rubber pad and record in MP3 format.

It is essential to rehearse with the equipment in each room before conducting the test.

This is a good arrangement:



3.4 Recording arrangements for oral tests

All oral tests must be recorded ideally in mp3 format and sent via Secure File Transfer (SFT).

To find out how to register and use SFT please consult the [Pearson secure file transfer guide](#) on our website

If a centre is unable to send them via SFT they can be sent on a USB to Pearson Language Tests for moderation to the following address:

PTE Marked Processing Team
Pearson Qualification Services
Lowton House,
Lowton Way
Hellaby,
S66 8SS

The assessor starts the recording for each group by giving the centre number and the candidate's name and number. The assessor then asks each test taker for confirmation of their numbers and names. The assessor should always use the test takers' names when asking questions to assist the moderator in identifying who is speaking. When the session is finished, state that this is the last test on the recording.

Mark the USB/CD on the outside to identify the centre number, test date, and the level(s) of the test. Place a list showing the centre number, test date, test taker groups (by test taker number) in order of test level, and the corresponding examiner details in the USB/CD box.

Please ensure that recordings are correctly labelled and not corrupted (if possible, run a trial test of the recordings before posting them to PTE Marked Processing Team)

3.5 Selecting assessors for the oral test

It is the responsibility of the test centre to recruit assessors to conduct the spoken test. Assessors must be approved by Pearson at the local Pearson office. To apply for approval, please complete an Interviewer/Assessor application form which can be submitted from our website via <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/forms/interlocutor-assessor-application-form.html>

To be approved, all assessors must meet the following criteria:

- Must be proficient in spoken English. Pearson may request a telephone interview with an applicant to verify their proficiency in spoken English. Please get in touch with your local Pearson representative for additional details about this.
- Must have an TEFL teaching qualification.
- Must have at least two years of experience teaching English.

Names of assessors must be sent to Pearson together with the mark sheets and the oral recordings. Refer to [this link](#) to check for deadlines for oral examiner applications.

Assessors must be trained. Training courses are primarily delivered online in advance of test sessions. In some cases, face-to-face sessions are also available. Teachers must not act as assessors for students from their own classes. If you have any concerns or questions about this, please contact your local Pearson representative.

Assessors will need to be familiar with the following:

- 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.
- Marking criteria.
- Different levels of the children's tests.
- All relevant administrative procedures.

Role of the assessor:

- Familiarise themselves with the guide of the levels they are testing.
- Facilitate the board game.
- Facilitate the individual activity.
- Assess test takers.
- Complete required forms.
- Record interviews for moderation as required.

4. 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 discuss 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:

1. Nominate one person from each level to conduct the board game and facilitate the individual activity.
2. Place the cards in a circle, a line, S-shape or other appropriate layout.
3. Establish the order of turn taking (e.g. each test taker rolls the dice and the highest scorer goes first).
4. 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).
5. The assessor directs the test taker to address the question on the card to another test taker, referred to by name (e.g. "Ask Fatima").
6. The first test taker then reads out the question on the card and the designated test taker answers it.
7. 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 then passes to the next test taker. When moving their counters, players should count the squares in English.
8. The test (game) is over when each test taker has responded to at least two questions. The game should last no longer than ten minutes for a group of five test takers.

Scores:

This task type has a weighting of **10 score points**. A maximum of 5 points are awarded for Grammar and Vocabulary Usage and 5 for Pronunciation. The scoring criteria and distribution of scores can be found in the relevant guides for each level [on page 11](#)

5. Topic Cards

This short talk task assesses the ability to speak continuously about a topic of personal interest and answer questions in relation to it.

Using the topic cards:

1. The pack of topic cards is either placed face down or held out by the assessor.
2. The first test taker turns over a card and reads the topic written on it. S/he then speaks about that topic for one minute.
3. At the end of one minute the assessor asks the test taker to stop and invites the other test takers to ask follow-up questions. This continues for one minute (giving the test taker a total turn of two minutes' duration).
4. 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.
5. The turn then passes to the next test taker.

6. Marking, results and certification

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

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.

You must attempt both the oral and the written tests to obtain a certificate

7. Procedures for conducting PTE YL

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

Conducting Tests

- An assessor conducts the oral 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.
- Oral tests can be conducted on different days or at different times if a group is too large for an examiner to assess at one time.
- The assessor awards marks to each test taker in the group using the marking criteria.
- The assessor should not be the test takers' teacher.
- All assessors should register with Pearson using the application form.

Filling in the Oral Marksheet

The assessor completes the oral marksheet for each test taker for both parts of the oral test. The completed oral marksheet must be signed by the assessor. The Oral Marksheet will be sent out by Pearson containing candidate details. Any additional candidates which are not included in the pre-populated Marksheet sent by Pearson will need to be manually added on to the Oral Marksheet by the centre.

Recording

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

The syllabus codes are as follows:

Firstwords – 4181

Springboard – 4182

Quickmarch – 4183

Breakthrough – 4184

Returning the oral tests to Pearson

Oral Marksheets are returned to Pearson electronically via secure file transfer to ptemarksreceipt@pearson.com. USB/CDs can be also posted to Pearson with the recording audio but it is important that Oral Marksheets are sent by SFT to ensure these are received on time.

8. Criteria for assessment of test performance

Award up to five points/marks for usage of grammar and vocabulary and up to five points/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</p> <p>Test taker has an 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</p> <p>Test taker has excellent pronunciation, demonstrating awareness of intonation patterns required for asking questions, as well as of sentence, word stress, and individual sounds.</p>
<p>4 marks</p> <p>Test taker has good lexical and grammatical range but there may be occasional errors. It may be that grammar or vocabulary is a little weak but that the other compensates. Errors do not impede understanding.</p>	<p>4 marks</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>There are some mispronunciations at word and sentence levels but in general listeners do not have any great problems understanding. It may be that repetition is needed on occasion.</p>
<p>2 marks</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>Although the test taker has demonstrated knowledge of individual items of vocabulary and some grammar, these are so limited that only rarely is real communication possible.</p>	<p>1 mark</p> <p>Although the test taker utterances can be recognised as English, they are so difficult to follow that communication breaks down.</p>
<p>0 mark</p> <p>No useful knowledge of grammar or vocabulary at the required level.</p>	<p>0 mark</p> <p>Pronunciation is not recognised as English discourse.</p>

Contact us

For all administration enquiries relating to the conduct of PTE Young Learners please [contact our customer service team](#).

Phone:

+44(0) 120 4770 696 Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm GMT.

Address:

Language Testing division of Pearson
Operations Team
80 Strand
London
WC2R 0RL
UK

For guidance, timetables and forms
[visit the Pearson Young Learners website](#).

[pearson.com/pteyounglearners](https://www.pearson.com/pteyounglearners)