



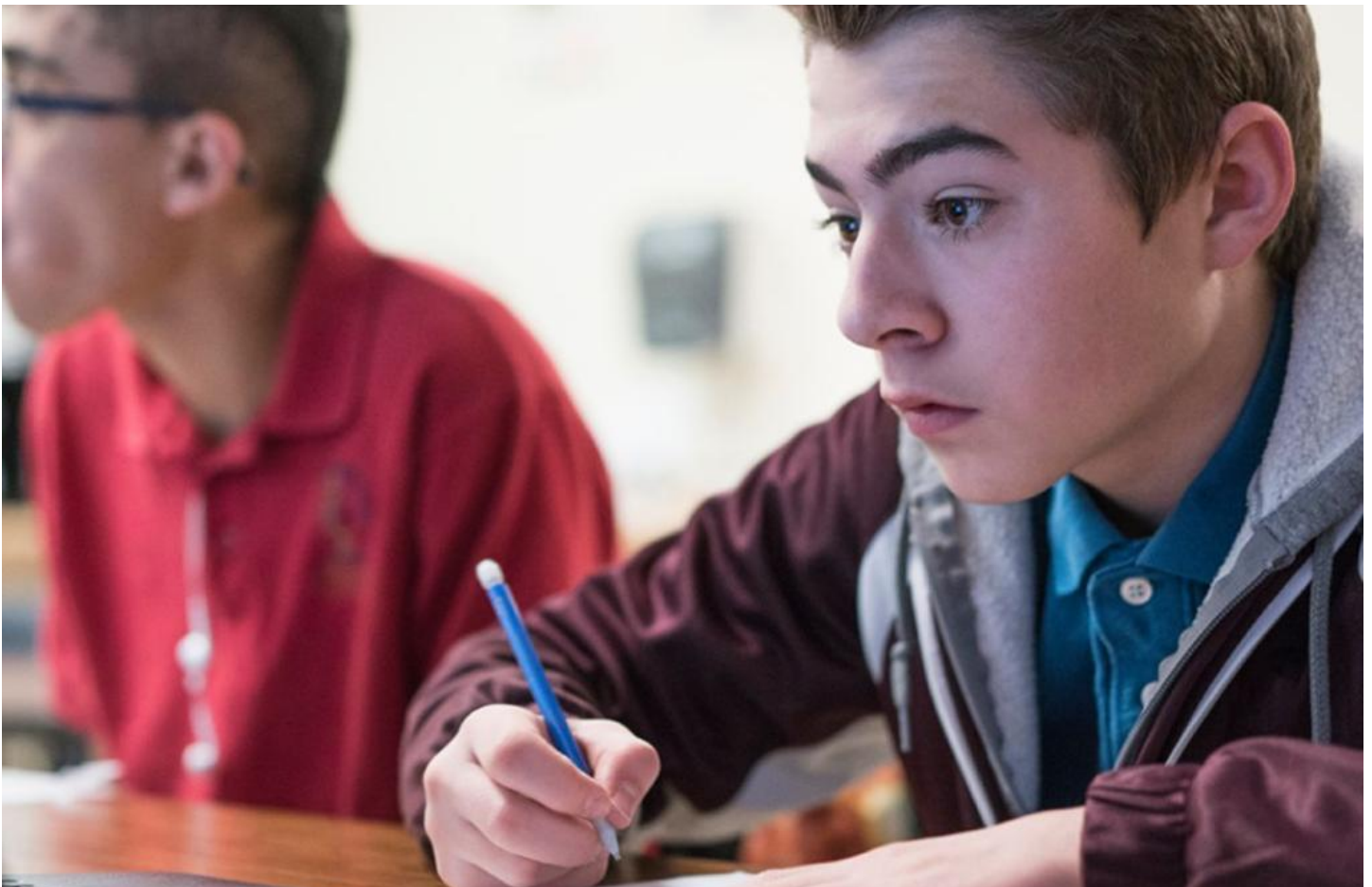
Pearson

PTE General

Invigilator-Interlocutor Handbook (Levels A1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

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

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1. Introduction

The Pearson Test of English General speaking test consists of a timed interaction between a test taker and an interlocutor.

The interaction is recorded on an audio cassette or CD which is sent to Pearson Language Tests (PLT) at the end of the testing session.

The purpose of this guide is to familiarize you with the format of the test and to describe the roles of the interlocutor (or interviewer) and the assessor.

2. Section 1: PTE General Online interlocutor training module

The purpose of this online module is to help you to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective interlocutor.

The module contains links to an external site that contains video excerpts from speaking tests, which you will need to view. The video clips require a password the first time you view each clip. The password is the same for all the clips: **ocfPTskl23** you can copy and paste this password into the password box.

These links are marked with this symbol. 

Please complete this module before attending the project-briefing meeting. The meeting is an opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

2.1. Getting to know the speaking test

The speaking test consists of a face to face conversation between the interlocutor and a single test taker. You do not have to assess the test taker's performance. That will be done by a UK-based assessor who will listen to the recording later.

At levels A1 and 1 the test has three sections. At levels 2-5 it has four sections:

- **Section 10: Sustained monologue**

The test taker speaks about matters of personal information and interest to the interlocutor.

- **Section 11: Discussion (does not apply to levels A1 and 1)**

The test taker engages in a discussion with the interlocutor on a given topic.

- **Section 12: Describe picture**

The test taker has to respond to a visual stimulus.

- **Section 13: Role play**

The test taker conducts a conversation with the interlocutor in which the test taker and interlocutor are given specific roles and a specific situation.

The time limit for each section is given in the speaking test paper. The total time limit depends on the level, as follows:

Levels	Duration
A1	5 minutes
1	5 minutes
2	7 minutes
3	7 minutes
4	8 minutes
5	8 minutes

You can view a sample test, at Level 1 (please note, this is a higher ability level than A1) by clicking here:

[View a sample test for Level 1](#) 

2.2. The role of the interlocutor

The principal function of the interlocutor is to ensure that the test takers have the opportunity to perform the various communicative tasks required by the test to the best of their ability and without undue stress, so that the assessor has a representative sample of their production on which to base a judgment. This is an important responsibility. It entails:

- Managing the interaction according to the instructions set out in the speaking test paper and according to certain general principles outlined here.
- Giving the test takers adequate opportunities to speak.
- Keeping to the time limits.

The interlocutor must also ensure that the interaction is recorded properly.

2.3. Be prepared

Read through the test paper before you start. Note that there are two alternative sections 12 and 13, A and B. Students with odd test taker numbers must do 12A and 13A, students with even test taker numbers must do 12B and 13B.

Make sure you know what the time limits are for the sections of the test.

Remind yourself of the marking criteria for each section of the test. In Section 10, for example, the assessor has to evaluate the test taker's ability to deliver a sustained monologue, so it is important that you give him or her the opportunity to do this. Decide which prompt you will use in Section 10. Rehearse mentally what you will say in the role play.

2.4. General dos and don'ts

DO use language and delivery appropriate to the level of the test (not necessarily the level of the test taker!) Broadly speaking:

- At level A1 speak slowly and clearly in short sentences emphasizing key words.
- At levels 2 and 3 speak clearly at natural speed, as appropriate when speaking to a stranger who may not speak your language fluently;
- At levels 4 and 5 speak in a completely natural way making no concessions to the fact that the test taker is not a native speaker

[View a sample of appropriate delivery for level A1](#) 

DO keep to the script as far as possible. Unless otherwise indicated you should use the exact wording given in the test paper. An exception is the role-play, in which the test paper gives an outline of the

situation and your role within it but allows you to adapt your contributions depending on the direction taken by the test taker.

DO let the test taker do the talking as much as possible. The less you intervene the more test taker talking time there will be.

DO maintain a relaxed posture so that test taker doesn't feel rushed.

DO acknowledge the test taker's contributions by nods and affirmative gestures (backchanneling), but avoid giving reinforcing messages that the test taker might interpret as evaluating their performance: "Right", "OK" and "Thank you" are permissible; not "Good!" or "Excellent!"


[View a sample of appropriate back channeling](#) 

DO, when you ask a question, give the test taker time to reply.

DON'T correct the test taker's mistakes (you are not teaching!)

DON'T suggest answers, provide vocabulary or expand on the test taker's responses. The more test taker talking time the better.

DON'T interrupt. However there are four exceptions to this general rule:

- In the discussion (Section 11), where you may need to interrupt in order to make your point and to move the discussion on;
- In the role-play if the situation requires it.
- If at any time the test taker deviates from the topic (in some cases this may be the test taker's way of introducing a favourite topic or a prepared speech).
- If the test taker has run out of time for that section and it is necessary to move on to the next section. [View an example](#) 

2.5. What to do if the test taker doesn't understand a prompt

If the test taker asks for repetition in an appropriate way ("Pardon?", "Could you say that again, please"), repeat once verbatim. Otherwise, or if they still don't understand, reformulate once in a manner appropriate for the next lowest level (e.g. in a Level 3 test reformulate the prompt in a way suitable for an Level 2 test taker). If they still don't understand move straight on to the next prompt or (if already on the last prompt in a section) the next section.

[View an example](#) 

2.6. Keeping time

- It is important to provide the assessor with a sufficient sample of the test taker's production to enable him or her to make a judgment. If necessary continue to prompt the test taker until the

time is up. On the other hand try not to overrun. If you take too much time, then your tests will get behind schedule and there will be pressure to rush later test takers.

- Try not to under- or overrun.
- If you have used all the prompts given in the test paper, or if the test taker is talking and comes to a natural pause within ten seconds of the end of a section, move on to the next section.
- If the test taker is still talking within ten seconds of the end of a section interrupt politely and move on to the next section.
- If you do overrun in a section, don't try to compensate by cutting short the following section.
- Tip: keep an alarm clock or a digital timer within your field of vision. This will be more convenient than having to glance repeatedly at a wristwatch or wall clock.

2.7. How to conduct the test, section by section

2.7.1. Sustained monologue

Greet the test taker in a friendly manner. Introduce yourself and ask the test taker to state his or her name.

After you have delivered the main prompt the test taker should speak for:

- 15 - 20 seconds at Level A1
- 20 - 30 seconds at Level 1
- 40 - 50 seconds at Level 2
- 50 - 60 seconds at Level 3
- 60 - 90 seconds at Levels 4 and 5

At level A1 there is a preliminary prompt. This normally takes the form of a simple question inviting a short answer. The purpose is to establish which form of words to use in the main prompt. For example if the preliminary prompt is "Do you live in a house or a flat?" and the answer is "in a flat" then subsequent prompts should take this into account ("Tell me something about your flat" etc.)

View an example of an opening of Section 10 at Level A1

Let the test taker speak for all of this time. Don't interrupt. If they pause, give time to resume (prompt with "Is there anything you would like to add?") Only use follow up prompts if they have finished speaking and the time allocated for this part of the test has not expired. Even when delivering the follow-up prompts, give the test taker the opportunity to speak for an extended turn if they are able to.

2.7.2. Discussion

The interaction in this section should resemble a real exchange of views rather than a sequence of questions and answers. After the first question ("What do you think?"), the objective is not to elicit the test taker's opinions but to argue against them, and to give the test taker the opportunity to defend his or her position. Always make statements. Avoid asking questions. Keep up your side as you would in a real discussion by challenging the points put forward by the test taker and by expressing your opinion politely but assertively.

If the test taker hedges at the beginning (“it depends...”), adopt one position strongly yourself.

Allow the discussion to take its course. Use the prompts selectively to sustain the discussion if a particular line of argument peters out.

If the test taker goes on too long, or wanders off the topic, interrupt politely. You should aim to produce at least three exchanges during the time given.

2.7.3. Picture

The aim of this section is to assess the ability of the test taker to speak continuously in response to a visual stimulus. At levels A1 and 1 use the prescribed follow-up prompts to sustain the interaction.

At levels 2 to 3 the interlocutor script for this section always contains two prompts: one asking the test taker to respond to the picture in a relatively straightforward way (e.g. to describe what they see), and the other to expand on their reaction in some way (e.g. to express and justify a preference, or at levels 4 and 5 to consider the appropriateness of the picture for some imagined purpose).

The test taker should be allowed up to half of the allotted time to respond to the first prompt before you move on to the second.

DON'T ask questions that the test taker can answer by simply reading out text from signs or notices in the picture. It is not a reading test!

2.7.4. Role Play

This consists of a two-way conversation in a given situation. The aim is to assess the test taker's ability to perform language functions that do not occur naturally in a face-to-face interview.

First give the test taker their role card and give him/her 15 seconds to read the instructions. Then summarize the instructions (reading from the interlocutor script) and say “I start/You start” depending on the situation.

Go into role. There is no need to overact, but make a distinct shift of tone of voice and register (if appropriate) to signal that you are no longer the examiner.

[View an example of an interlocutor going into role](#) 

At the end of the role play switch back to examiner mode, thank the test taker and signal the end of the test.

At levels A1 and 1 the test taker has simple instructions for carrying out a sequence of conversational moves. You should keep to the script as far as possible and guide the test taker if necessary.

At levels 2 to 5 the test taker is given an objective to pursue and a degree of freedom as to how to achieve it. Use the suggested prompt selectively to sustain the interaction by co-operating or challenging

the test taker, as appropriate.

At the end of the interaction

- Thank the test taker and tell them that this is the end of the test.
- Stop the tape/CD.
- The assessor, if present, will need time to record the marks for the test taker. He or she may ask your opinion about these.
- Before asking the next test taker to come in, make sure there is enough space left for their complete test on the tape/CD you have just used.
- If not, record "That was the last test on this side" and turn over or change the tape/CD.

3. Section 2: Getting started – Equipment, Centre Locations and Test Materials.

Equipment

Please ensure that you have the following equipment to help you administer the tests:

- 1 x USB Dictaphone for the speaking part of the test
- 1 x CD player or MP3 player (please ensure you have speakers/ cables if using an MP3 player) for the listening part of the written test.
- 1 x clock or watch to time the test.
- 1 x copy of this handbook to take to the sessions as a reference guide.

Centre Location and attendance at the centre on your first day:

Ensure that you have familiarised yourself with the centre location. Please arrive between 15-20 minutes before the session on your first day, to familiarise yourself with the centre and set up the materials. Introduce yourself to reception, and ensure you have the student attendance list from them, as you will need to check the student attendance and return this to Pearson UK.

In case of an Emergency

Please check with the institution reception-coordination staff regarding the location of fire exits and emergency procedures. The invigilator must take the following action in the event of an emergency, such as a fire alarm or bomb alert

- Evacuate the testing room in accordance with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Ensure that all question papers and scripts are left in the testing room.
- Ensure that the test takers are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the testing room to avoid cheating.
- After the test takers have returned to the testing room and before the test has resumed, mark the point at which the interruption occurred on the test takers' papers.
- Note the time and duration of the interruption.
- Allow the test takers the full working time prescribed for the test.
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken for direct submission to Pearson.

Test packs

Test packs, containing written and spoken test materials, have been sent to the test centre before the testing period. You should check through the contents of the shipment and ensure that they are complete. You should also test the listening CDs to ensure that they work correctly. If you encounter any problems relating to test materials for example:

- if there is a difference between the material received and the items listed in the test cover sheet instructions
- if the material is damaged
- if the packets have been opened while in transit.

- If there are any problems, then you should contact the person in charge at the test centre-

At each centre, you should have the following items:

- Sealed packets of written test papers, 1 per session. Each packet contains 10 papers.
- 2 packets of speaking test papers. These are re-used for each session.
- Return bags

Security of test papers and other test materials

What follows is a detailed explanation of how to ensure that test materials remain secure after they arrive at your test centre.

- Test packets must not be opened before the day of the tests
- CDs should be checked before the start of the session
- Materials must be locked away in a place of high security, ideally a secure safe or metal cabinet which has a lock, until the day of the test.
- If security is put at risk by fire, theft, loss, damage, unauthorized disclosure or any other circumstances, Pearson must be informed immediately.
- Papers and CDs must not be removed from the premises.
- Materials must not be opened until the time appointed for the test (except for the CDs which must be checked as soon as they arrive).
- You are not permitted to keep unused test materials after the testing period has finished. They must be returned to Pearson at the end of the testing period.

4. Section 3: Arrangements for before the Written Test paper

Please check that:

- You have the student register with you.
- Test takers are sitting in the correct places according to the seating arrangements
- Test takers do not take any bags, books, dictionaries, notepaper, tapes or recording equipment, or any other written or printed materials into the testing room.
- Test takers do all rough work (notes, draft essay workings, etc.) on the question paper itself.
- If unauthorized items have been taken into the testing room, such items are placed out of the reach of test takers before the test commences.

A test is considered to be in progress from the time the test takers enter the room, until all the scripts have been collected. Before test takers are permitted to start work, the invigilator must follow the steps outlined below (sample timing for A1 Level which is 1 hour and 15 minutes).

Example timing	Actions
3.55pm	Allow candidates to enter the room and be seated. Check they do not take any bags, books, dictionaries, notepaper, tapes or recording equipment, or any other written or printed materials into the testing room. If unauthorized items have been taken into the testing room, such items are placed out of the reach of test takers before the test commences.
4pm	Inform test takers of the regulations: Cell phones, dictionaries, pagers, MP3 players are not allowed No food or drinks (bottled water is allowed) Remind test takers to write in blue or black ink. Red ink or red ballpoint pen, pencil, correcting fluid, correcting pens, gel pens and blotting paper must not be used Remind test takers that they must not communicate with, seek assistance from, or give assistance to other test takers while they are in the testing room. Make preparations: Open the sealed packets of question papers and issue the papers to test takers. Ask the test takers to read the instructions printed on the front of the question paper. Tell test takers to write their center number and test taker number on their question papers.
4.05pm	Announce the start of the test Announce clearly in English and/or the usual language of the center that the test takers can begin to write their answers Be vigilant. Supervise the test takers at all times to prevent cheating and distractions. Ensure that no test taker leaves the testing room. Ensure that no question paper is removed from the testing room until the end of the test.
5.15pm	Prepare for the end of the test Inform the test takers they have five minutes remaining.
5.20pm	Announce the end of the test Instruct test takers to check that they have put a line through rough work or unwanted answers
5.25pm	Allow candidates to exit Collect all completed test papers as test takers leave the room and put them into a return envelope. Seal and label with the date, time and centre. Ensure that return bag and unused test materials are locked in a secure place.

5. Section 4: General considerations

Please refer to Handbook PTE 2016 (pages 34-54) so that you can check detailed instructions on:

Test Administration

Receipt of test and administration materials Attendance registers

- Test Packs
- Return envelopes

Security of test papers and other test materials

Spoken Test

- Testing room arrangements
- Recording arrangements for the spoken test

Written Test

- Identification of test takers
- Testing room arrangements
- Before the test
- During the test
- After the test

Test day rules and regulations

- Question papers, stationery, materials and other equipment
- During the test
- At the end of the test

Returning completed tests

- Packing of test materials
- Dispatch of materials
- Unused stationery
- Returning the written test
- Returning the spoken test

Special considerations

Please note that for the Spoken Test test centres (interlocutors) should record all spoken tests and send the recordings back to Pearson for marking. Ideally, you should record spoken tests digitally as mp3 files. If you do not have the facility to record digitally, you may record onto good quality cassette tape. Please contact us to discuss this further.

- Make sure recordings are clear, audible and complete: use a good quality USB dictaphone recorder.
- Position the dictaphone in the middle of the table.
- Position the microphone so as to pick up the test taker's voice, not just the interviewer's
- Make sure you press "Record" at the beginning of the interaction.
- Allow the recording to run continuously for the duration of the test.

- You may wish to conduct a trial run with co-workers or friends. Adjust the recording volume so that even a quietly-spoken test taker is clearly audible when the recording is played back.
- The interviewer must start the recording of each interview by giving the date, center number and the interviewer's name. The interviewer must then begin each interview by asking for confirmation of test taker's candidate number.
- Complete the "Attendance Register" as the spoken tests are carried out; "P" for present, "A" for absent.
- The interviewer must end the recording of the interviews by indicating that the interviews have been completed. If recording onto tape, please wind the tape back to the beginning.
- After conducting the spoken tests, please ensure that any cassettes, mp3 files or CDs are clearly labelled (refer to Handbook PTE 2016 pages 37, 38)