



Griffith College Dublin

English Language Placement Test

In Griffith College Dublin we endeavour to ensure that our international students (whose first language is not English) have a sufficient level of English to enable them to join their chosen programme of study. In order to satisfy our requirements, students who do not have an internationally recognised English language test score (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS etc) are required to sit the GCD English Language Placement Test. The test consists of two main parts – Part I is a Computer Based Listening and Reading Test and Part II is a Writing Test.

Part I – Computer Based Test

INTRODUCTION

The listening test is an **adaptive computer-based test** of English language proficiency. The test is produced jointly by **Oxford University Press** and the **University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (formerly UCLES)**.

PROCEDURE OF THE TEST

The test takes approximately **15-20 minutes** to complete, during which the student answers **20-25 multiple-choice questions** on **listening, reading and grammar**. You will use **headphones** and a **computer** to conduct the test.

Depending on the answers the student gives, the **level of the test adapts to the ability of the student**. As students progress through the test, the questions are automatically adapted to their ability until a consistent level is identified.

On-screen help is available for each type of task, and a **progress indicator** shows how much of the task is left.

All the topics will be of general interest and not biased towards students of particular disciplines.

THE QUESTION TYPES

The **20-25 multiple-choice questions** will consist of;

- Multiple choice
- Sentence completion questions

1. Multiple Choice

There are **two types** of multiple choice questions in the exam

- **Listening**
- **Reading**

Listening

These questions will include a choice of **word, phrase or pictures** in the listening exam, which you have the **choice of listening to a second time** during the exam.

Example:

Listen to the conversation twice and choose the correct answer.

(1) When did John finish the book?

- A on the way to Japan
- B in Japan
- C on his way back from Japan.

Reading

These questions will show a picture in which the student must choose the correct word or phrase to describe the picture.

Example;

Choose the correct answer.

(1) What is the meaning of this sign?

Griffith College Dublin
RESTRICTED
PARKING AREA
Staff Only

- A Parking is open to the public
- B Students are allowed to park here
- C People who work in Griffith College are allowed to park here

2. Sentence completion questions

These questions require you to **complete the end of a sentence** or **insert a word or phrase in the middle of a sentence** or **one sentence may require a word in the middle and a word at the end.**

Example:

Complete the sentence below

(2) Fill in the gaps using the words from the list.

Nonviolent demonstrations often create such tensions that a community that has constantly refused to _____ its injustices is forced to correct them: the injustices can no longer be _____.

Acknowledge ignored decrease verified tolerate
accepted address

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE LISTENING EXAM

Students should prepare for the listening exam in the same way they would prepare for an IELTS or IESOL exam.

This includes;

- deal effectively with the wide range of task types used in the IELTS exam including **multiple choice** and **short-answer questions**; gap-filling, matching, classification and true/false/not given exercises; **labelling diagrams** and **identifying views and attitude**
- understand **gist**, **extract detail** and **specific information**, and **identify speakers attitudes and opinions** when listening to English in social, semi-official and academic contexts
- Make sure you are familiar with the **instructions** for the different question types so you can quickly glance at the questions and know what to do.
- Think about the type of situations you might come across living or studying in an English speaking country, such as someone asking for directions or talks on topics of general interest.
- **Listen to as wide a range of material as possible** – English language television and radio, listening sites on the Internet and films and music are all great sources.
- **Focus on the strategies and skills** you need for listening in an IELTS or IESOL exam. For example, listening for specific information, guessing meaning of words, recognising signposts, understanding lectures & talks.

Practise these strategies and skills with as much listening material as you can.

TOPICS

These are just *some* examples of the topics that may appear on the listening test

1. **Self and family** (*Example: family members, physical appearance etc*)
2. **Home** (*Example: types of accommodation, rooms, furniture, furnishings, decoration etc*)
3. **Own local area** (*Example: services, amenities etc*)
4. **Everyday life** (*Example: at home/ work, income etc*)
5. **Education** (*Example: type of school, college, subjects etc*)
6. **Free-time interests** (*Example: leisure, hobbies and interests etc*)
7. **Entertainment** (*Example: TV, radio, sporting events etc*)
8. **Travel** (*Example: public and private transport, holidays etc*)
9. **Relationships** (*Example: friends, colleagues etc*)
10. **Health and hygiene** (*Example: parts of the body, personal comforts etc*)

11. Shopping (*Example:* shopping facilities, prices, food etc)

12. Food and drink (*Example:* types of food and drink, restaurants, cafés, etc)

13. Public services (*Example:* post, banking, library etc)

14. Places (*Example:* giving directions, asking the way etc)

15. Language (*Example:* understanding foreign language, spelling and alphabet etc)

16. Weather (*Example:* weather forecast, climate etc)

17. Measures and shapes (*Example:* telephone numbers, height, length, weight etc)

18. World affairs (*Example:* environmental, political, cultural etc)

RESULTS

Students will each only receive a grade of their test; **no percentage marks will be given of any listening or written test.**

Part II – Writing Test

INTRODUCTION

In this writing test you will be asked to write 250 words on **one essay** with the choice of **three questions**.

The test is **similar** to that of **Writing task 2** in the General Training and Academic **IELTS** tests.

PROCEDURE OF THE TEST

The test takes approximately **40 minutes** to complete, during which the student answers only **one question from a choice of three**.

You are given a point of view, problem or an opinion to discuss. You need to write at **least 250 words** and you should use about **40 minutes** to do this. You have to write in a semi-formal or neutral style - not formal or informal.

In the question you need to;

- 1. give an opinion or state your position on the question**
- 2. Explain why you think this, by talking about your reasons**
- 3. Use examples and evidence to support these reasons**

You must try to write an **accurate, well-organised** answer with **lots of ideas** and **language**. Your **opinion** should be **very clear** and you should **use examples** from your **own experience** and **evidence**.

You will **only need a pen** in the exam. A4 paper will be given to each student at the beginning of the exam.

The use of dictionaries is not allowed during the exam, and any students who are found using a dictionary during the exam will be failed.

All the topics will be of general interest and not biased towards students of particular disciplines.

THE QUESTION TYPES

The **writing test questions** will consist of two types of questions;

- General
- Academic

1. General

A **General question** looks like this:

Write about the following topic

Crime is on the increase in most countries of the world. What do you think are some of the main reasons for this and how should the government address the problem?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your experience

You should write at least 250 words

2. Academic

An **Academic question** looks like this:

Present a written argument or case to an educated reader with no specialist knowledge of the following topic

Crime is on the increase in most countries of the world. What do you think are some of the main reasons for this and how should the government address the problem?

You should write at least 250 words

You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence

IN THE EXAM

Students should follow these guidelines in the exam

- **PLAN YOUR ANSWER.** Always have an idea of what you will write in your answer, and decide what your position is on the question. This will help you to find ideas and think of examples. If you try to do this when you are writing, you will find it very difficult.
- **USE PARAGRAPHS** Remember that each one must have one central idea. Don't mix them up, and don't write paragraphs which are one sentence. Leave a line between each paragraph so it is very clear. Always aim to write 3-4 paragraphs in the essay, excluding the introduction and conclusion.
- **USE EXAMPLES** from your own life or evidence that supports your ideas and make sure it is convincing and relevant to the question.
- **DON'T USE BULLET POINTS.** This is not accepted. You must write in normal full sentences.
- **ALWAYS WRITE AN INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION.** Make sure you have time to do this.
- **KEEP TO THE TOPIC.** Check the question again and again as you write to make sure you are answering it, and not going off the point.
- **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES:** Always give the positive and negative aspect of your argument or topic.
- **WORD COUNT:** Aim to write the requested 250 words, otherwise you will lose marks. **Never write more than requested**, unless necessary, the exam is designed for each student to write a designated amount of words within a sufficient timescale.
- Try to leave **FIVE MINUTES** at the end of the test to check spelling and grammar. This can make a real difference.
- **DON'T JUST SIT THERE:** If you finish writing your answer in less than 40 minutes, check it again and again for grammar and spelling mistakes. It is an exam, not a race, so make use of any extra time you have left.

Remember

- **You are writing this answer for an educated reader with no specialist knowledge.** If you have specialist knowledge you want to use then make sure it is very clear what you are talking about.
- If you **copy the question** in your answer then it will not count in your word total

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE WRITING EXAM

Students should prepare for the writing exam in the same way they would prepare for an **IELTS** or **IESOL** exam.

This includes;

- **Read as much as possible** - especially newspapers and websites - and watch programmes on TV that discuss serious issues.
- **Practise writing:** Time yourself each time to see if you can write 250 words in 40 minutes.
- **Plan your answers.** Always have an idea and plan the structure of your essay.
- **Practise writing by hand.** If you have bad handwriting, be careful! This will cause problems in the test. Try practising on an A4 page, which will be used in the exam, this will make you aware of how many lines it takes to write 250 words.

- Make sure you are **familiar with the instructions** for the different question types so you can quickly glance at the questions and know what to do.
- **Be aware of Cohesive Devices** – Always use cohesive devices in any writing exam. This includes **Word repetition, Synonyms, Pronouns and transition words**.

Practise these strategies and skills with as much written material as you can.

TOPICS

These are just *some* examples of the topics that may appear on the listening test

- 19. Self and family** (*Example: family members, physical appearance etc*)
- 20. Home** (*Example: types of accommodation, rooms, furniture, furnishings, decoration etc*)
- 21. Own local area** (*Example: services, amenities etc*)
- 22. Everyday life** (*Example: at home/ work, income etc*)
- 23. Education** (*Example: type of school, college, subjects etc*)
- 24. Free-time interests** (*Example: leisure, hobbies and interests etc*)
- 25. Entertainment** (*Example: TV, radio, sporting events etc*)
- 26. Travel** (*Example: public and private transport, holidays etc*)
- 27. Relationships** (*Example: friends, colleagues etc*)
- 28. Health and hygiene** (*Example: parts of the body, personal comforts etc*)
- 29. Shopping** (*Example: shopping facilities, prices, food etc*)
- 30. Food and drink** (*Example: types of food and drink, restaurants, cafés, etc*)
- 31. Public services** (*Example: post, banking, library etc*)
- 32. Places** (*Example: giving directions, asking the way etc*)
- 33. Language** (*Example: understanding foreign language, spelling and alphabet etc*)
- 34. Weather** (*Example: weather forecast, climate etc*)
- 35. Measures and shapes** (*Example: telephone numbers, height, length, weight etc*)
- 36. World affairs** (*Example: environmental, political, cultural etc*)

RESULTS AND MARKING

Each written exam will be marked on

- **Arguments, Ideas and Evidence** (*content of your essay*)
- **Communicative quality** (*making your self understood*)
- **Vocabulary and Sentence Structure** (*your grammar and choice of words*)

Students will each only receive a grade of their test; **no percentage marks will be given of any listening or written test.**