

LanguageCert

SELT

**Preparing for your
International ESOL SELT exam:
B2 Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking**

Contents

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About your B2 exam

Exam information

- **2 components:**
 - Written (Listening, Reading, Writing)
 - Spoken (Speaking)
 - You can take these components **in any order**
 - You must take them **both within 14 days**
 - You will receive your **results 5 working days** after taking both components
 - You can book exams **online up to 24 hours** before an exam
- You take both components at a **LanguageCert SELT test centre**
- You can **choose** from **locations and dates and times** that are best for you

Exam information

- You take both components **online using a computer and headphones**
- Your Speaking component is a **short online interview** with a live LanguageCert interlocutor
- You are **examined individually**
- You complete the Listening tasks before you move on to reading and writing tasks
- Both components have topics and tasks based on **practical experience** and **everyday situations**

Written Component



Written Component



Listening

30 minutes
Hear each part twice

Listening

4 parts - 26 questions
Multiple choice/gap filling



Reading & Writing

2 hours & 10 minutes
1 uninterrupted session

Reading

4 parts – 26 questions
Multiple choice/gap filling/multiple matching

Writing

2 tasks
Formal 100-150 words | Informal 150-200 words

Spoken Component



Spoken Exam



Speaking

- 1 to 1
- 4 parts
- 13 minutes

Part 1

Personal information, ideas, opinions

Part 2

Situational roleplays

Part 3

Interactive task, exchanging info and opinions

Part 4

Long turn about a topic, chosen by Interlocutor

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Preparing for your B2 Listening

Get ready for Listening

- **Look at the IESOL Listening - Reading - Writing Qualification Handbook on our website - read all about the B2 format, features, 'can-do' Listening skills descriptions, B2 topics, functions, grammar.**
- **Get to know the Listening exam tasks- look at the samples here and the helpful information on how to prepare.**
- **Now see more examples of Listening exam tasks in the practice papers on our website.**

B2 Listening

Listening Part 1

You will hear some short conversations. You will hear each conversation twice. Choose the correct answer to complete each conversation.

1. a) The pleasure's all mine.
b) Please don't mention it.
c) I'm pleased you think so.
2. a) I have never been able to cook well.
b) I think you're wrong about the order.
c) I'm not really keen on chicken either.
3. a) Sorry. I can't hold that.
b) Thank you. I can wait.
c) Of course. I know him.
4. a) Can you upload it, please?
b) Like what, for example?
c) How can you say that?
5. a) I'll do it first thing tomorrow.
b) I'll go around there soon.
c) I'll get some more now.
6. a) Knew they would!
b) Turned out OK!
c) What a shame!
7. a) No, we haven't made up our minds yet.
b) No, we can't manage to play that music.
c) No, we are not going to reach that far.

B2 Listening

Listening Part 2

You will hear some conversations. You will hear each conversation twice. Choose the correct answers for each conversation.

Conversation 1

1. The man doesn't
 - a) have many hobbies.
 - b) understand blogs.
 - c) know Martha well.

2. The woman shouts at the man to stop him
 - a) taking something.
 - b) harming himself.
 - c) going somewhere.

B2 Listening

Listening Part 3

You will hear someone talking. You will hear the person twice. Complete the information. Write short answers of one to five words.

Social programme

1. Monday's new activity:
.....

2. Actual cost of judo class:
.....

Film Club

3. Date:
.....

4. Director's nationality:
.....

Weekend Trip

5. Where:
.....

6. Activity planned:
.....

7. Departure time:
.....

B2 Listening

Listening Part 4

You will hear a conversation. You will hear the conversation twice. Choose the correct answers.

1. Fiona believes that the typical rich business person

- a) is an expert internet user.
- b) really only cares about himself.
- c) has had lots of good business ideas.

2. Andy thinks that Tobias Gardener's ideas could

- a) affect life on Earth.
- b) predict the future.
- c) increase wages.

3. Andy mentions a money service as an example of how Gardener

- a) tends to improve existing services.
- b) comes up with exciting new ideas.
- c) only buys profitable businesses.



B2 Listening – Helpful information

Before Listening

- Look at the practice papers on our website to get to know the task types.
- Try the listening tasks under timed conditions.
- While practising, be positive and calm and fully focused.
- Read the instructions very carefully (e.g. if asked to complete gaps with a certain number of words, try to stick to the word limit).
- Read questions and answer choices to predict the context and understand the listening purpose of the task.
- Focus on key words in the questions. That'll help you remember what to focus on.
- Remember the information asked usually follows the same order as the information provided.

B2 Listening – Helpful information

During Listening

- Focus on the gist, that is to try to understand the general meaning.
- Pay attention to the speaker's stress/intonation. This might help you find the correct answer.
- Prepare for the next question. That'll make you feel ready for what will follow and make you feel more confident.
- Don't worry about unknown words. Try to guess them from the context.

After Listening

- Make sure you have answered all questions.
- If you can't decide on the right choice, eliminate the choices which seem to be irrelevant.
- Check once more if you have produced the number of words allowed.

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Preparing for your B2 Reading

Get ready for Reading

- **Look at the IESOL Listening - Reading - Writing Qualification Handbook on our website - read all about the B2 format, features, 'can-do' Reading skills descriptions, B2 topics, functions, grammar.**
- **Get to know the Reading exam tasks- look at the samples here and the helpful information on how to prepare.**
- **Now see more examples of Reading exam tasks in the practice papers on our website.**

B2 Reading

Reading Part 1 Read the text and the questions. Choose the correct answer for each question.

Egyptian pyramid mystery finally solved!

Recent research shows the ancient Egyptians may have built the pyramids using a special method to slide huge blocks of stone on wet sand across the desert.

Investigating the forces needed to pull heavy loads on wooden platforms over desert sand, Amsterdam University scientists discovered that pouring water on the sand in front of the platform makes it easier to slide the load along. The findings answer one of the longest-lasting historical mysteries: how the Egyptians built the pyramids.

The researchers made this discovery with help from the past: a wall painting dating back to about 1900 BCE and discovered in the tomb of the ancient ruler, Djehutihotep, in Deir el-Bersha. Deir el-Bersha isn't as well-known as the site of the Pyramids at Geza, but Djehutihotep's tomb, originally studied by archaeologist George Reisner in 1915, revealed loads of information. Numerous wall paintings were found, and even before Reisner's research, European travellers had visited the tomb and made precise drawings of them.

One of the paintings shows 172 men pulling an enormous statue using ropes attached to a wooden platform or sledge. A person is standing in front of the sledge, pouring water over the sand. 'We wondered about the reason', said Daniel Bonn, a physics professor at the University of Amsterdam. So, Bonn's research team recreated the situation by pulling heavy objects on cardboard sledges through trays of sand.

When dragging the sledges over dry sand, the researchers noticed small piles built up in front of the sledges, making movement harder. Adding water, however, made the sand firmer, so the laboratory sledges could slide across it more easily. Bonn explained that water creates bridges between the bits of sand, helping them stick together. It's the same reason why using wet sand to build a sandcastle at the beach is easier than using dry sand, as any child who's ever built one will know.

However, the researchers found there's a delicate balance. 'Using dry sand doesn't work, but if the sand's too wet, it doesn't work either', Bonn said. 'In that case the sledge would simply start to sink as it was dragged along in the desert. Get it right, though, and you only need half the people you'd think you'd need to pull your sledge.'

1. The Amsterdam scientists were inspired by an
 - a) ancient city.
 - b) Egyptian statue.
 - c) old decoration.
2. Some works of art were found at
 - a) a place where someone was buried years ago.
 - b) the most well-known pyramid site.
 - c) a location which Reisner first discovered.
3. To test their ideas, the scientists
 - a) ran some tests in the desert.
 - b) conducted an experiment.
 - c) studied children playing.
4. The scientists found out that
 - a) wet sand has a smoother surface than dry sand.
 - b) cardboard platforms are better than wooden ones.
 - c) desert sand is different to the sand found at the beach.
5. The success of this technique depends on having
 - a) a special design for your sledge.
 - b) an exact number of people.
 - c) the correct amount of water.
6. The writer is optimistic that scientists will
 - a) now solve other Egyptian mysteries.
 - b) make good use of the recent findings.
 - c) use sand for other purposes in the future.

B2 Reading

Reading Part 2

Read the text. Use the sentences to complete the text.
Choose the correct sentence for each gap. There is
one extra sentence you will not need.

- A They can also easily find parking spaces in this town.
- B Statistics show far fewer accidents involving children as pedestrians than as passengers.
- C Walking in these areas is so unusual that people who do so, are considered strange!
- D But health isn't the main reason why I walk.
- E If I want a change of surroundings, there are also several cafés and restaurants close by.
- F In other words, it keeps you safer and healthier, allows you to know the area where you live and reduces pollution.
- G Children who walk through their neighbourhoods get to know them better.

Why we walk

In many remote areas of the planet, walking is the only way to get anywhere. However, there are towns, especially in the USA, where people almost never walk, but either drive everywhere by car or use other means of transport. **(1)** _____ We therefore asked some of them why they act differently from their neighbours and here are their answers:

'Contrary to what most of my neighbours do, most days of the week, the only "transportation" I use is my feet. The grocery store and the yoga studio I go to regularly are near my home. **(2)** _____ If I need a longer break, the beach is only about a mile from my house', says Margaret.

Katherine explains why people may use their cars so much. 'In the small town where I live', she says, 'traffic jams don't exist, except at rush hour when people coming home from work just wait at the traffic lights for a few minutes longer than usual. Therefore, most inhabitants find it convenient to use their cars, even if they're just going round the corner to buy bread! **(3)** _____ Nevertheless, I prefer to walk because it's good for the environment and because it promotes a healthier way of life for me and my children.

Katherine mentions another advantage of walking, which is not usually considered. She says: **(4)** _____ They pay attention to their surroundings and are less likely to get lost. I like to allow my kids to take the lead and show me how to get to places.' Walking is also, perhaps surprisingly, safer for children. **(5)** _____ Car crashes are a serious problem in the United States and walking clearly helps people avoid them.

On the whole, it seems there are many reasons to consider walking to your destination rather than taking the car, but the most important are those mentioned above. **(6)** _____ The benefits are endless if we decide to make the change.

B2 Reading

Reading Part 3

Read the four texts. Which text gives you the answer to each question? Choose the correct text (A-D) for each question.

A

For the perfect fries, follow these tips: cut long, thin chips, and salt them. Pour enough good quality oil in a pan and increase the heat. Test the temperature by dropping a chip in. If it starts frying, the temperature is right. Add the potatoes to the hot oil and cover the pot for five minutes, then remove the lid and fry for another five minutes on high. Take them out and add salt if needed. If you like, add some melted cheese too.

B

Nowadays nobody can imagine life without potatoes, but they are a fairly new addition to the European diet. Sailors returning from South America brought them back, but for at least two centuries, potatoes remained a food for few. They became popular in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when the climate changed, and other products people relied on were hard to find. One of the most famous and well-liked dishes, is, of course, fried potatoes which are easy to make and always tasty if cooked properly.

C

Are you fond of potatoes? Do you enjoy well-fried chips as much as we do? Do you like your fries crispy on the outside and soft on the inside? Do you fancy different varieties of toppings and dressings with them? If you do, then, the *Happy Potato Café* is the place to visit! We specialise in making the perfect fries for every taste by cooking them at the appropriate temperature in high quality oil! Visit our historic, two-hundred-year-old café and taste the best fries since Belgian farmers first invented them!

D

Last Saturday we visited this café we'd heard so much about to try their fries. I must say they were far from delicious, so I'd not recommend it. The owners claim they make the best in the area, but obviously ours hadn't been cooked at an appropriate temperature because they were cold and soft, not at all crispy – very disappointing. There were lots of customers, though, and the owners say their café's really old – but our fries tasted as old as the first potatoes to come to Europe from America!

Which text:

1. aims to attract potential customers?
2. is an account of a personal experience?
3. gives instructions on how to do something?

Which text provides the answers to the following questions?

4. When was an eating place established?
5. What does someone advise against?
6. How can you tell when the temperature is appropriate?
7. Who introduced potatoes to Europe?

B2 Reading

Reading Part 4

Read the text and answer the questions. Use a maximum of five words for each question.

Hedy Lamarr – an actress and a genius!

Born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in Vienna in 1914, she became an actress in the 1930s. At the age of 19 she married a wealthy but extremely jealous man, Friedrich Mandl, who objected to her acting career and tried to persuade her to stay at home. Mandl had numerous business meetings with scientists and other professionals involved in military technology and always insisted that his beautiful wife accompany him. This was Hedwig's first introduction to the field of applied science and led to her realising that she had a talent for science. Hedwig's marriage to Mandl eventually ended, and she decided to change her life by moving away. She wrote in her autobiography that she disguised herself as her servant and ran off to Paris. However, rumours claimed that she persuaded her husband to let her wear all her jewellery to a party before disappearing.

In Paris she met the actor, Clark Gable, and also met an American agent looking for new talent in Europe, who soon hired her, but also persuaded her to change her name to Hedy Lamarr so that she could make a fresh start to her career when she arrived in America. Louis B. Mayer chose that surname for her as he had always admired the beautiful silent-film star, Barbara La Marr, who he described as 'the queen of Hollywood'. Upon arriving in Hollywood in 1938, Mayer began promoting Hedy Lamarr as the 'world's most beautiful woman'. As one of the most gorgeous and exotic Hollywood stars of the time, she acted in many Hollywood films together with famous actors like Spencer Tracy, and Mayer hoped she would become another Greta Garbo or Marlene Dietrich. She made 18 films from 1940 to 1949 and her biggest success was as Delilah in the film *Samson and Delilah*.

The next few films she was asked to star in, however, were not challenging enough and so she refused the parts and started inventing to keep herself busy. Lamarr's earliest inventions include a traffic light and a tablet which could be added to water to make a soft drink, but drink manufacturers were not impressed. Lamarr herself said it tasted like medicine. When the Second World War started, she was inspired to invent a more serious device, one which could protect radio signals from enemy attacks. However, as the design was technologically difficult to produce, the U.S. Navy, for whom she had designed it, didn't actually adopt it until after the war.

(...)

1. What did Lamarr discover about herself in the business meetings?

.....

2. What did Lamarr take with her to Paris, according to stories?

.....

3. What was the name of the person who employed Hedy Lamarr?

.....

4. How was Lamarr described when she arrived in America?

.....

5. Why did Lamarr turn down some roles?

.....

6. Who did Lamarr hope would use her most important invention?

.....

7. How did Lamarr get in touch with people in later life?

.....

B2 Reading – Helpful information

Before Reading

- Remember the main features of the Reading part of the exam. It helps to know what may be in the exam.
- Know the various ways that can help you understand a text (e.g. skimming, scanning, predicting and confirming predictions, guessing helped by the title).
- While preparing, be aware of linking words and of their role in the texts you read.

B2 Reading – Helpful information

During Reading

- Read the instructions very carefully and don't rush through the task.
- Start by reading the text once to get the main idea. That'll help you locate information if you roughly know where it is.
- Do not waste your time trying to understand the meaning of any new words in the text. You should be able to understand their meaning through the sentences before/after them.
- Focus on key words or key ideas. That'll help you remember which points are raised and where you can find them.
- Remember that answers do not always 'lift' words from the text. Look for paraphrases.
- Remember that information you read usually follows the same order as information requested through questions.
- Divide the time equally between your Reading and Writing tasks. Keep an eye on the time.
- In the case of a text with removed sentences, first try to understand the general meaning of the text and only then read the provided options (i.e. removed sentences).

B2 Reading – Helpful information

After Reading

- Always re-read the text and confirm your answers.
- If there are still unanswered questions, write an answer, even if you are not sure it is the right one.
- Remember there cannot be more than one correct answer to each of the multiple-choice questions.

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Preparing for your B2 Writing

Get ready for Writing

- **Look at the IESOL Listening - Reading - Writing Qualification Handbook on our website - read all about the B2 format, features, 'can-do' Writing skills descriptions, B2 topics, functions, grammar.**
- **Get to know the Writing exam tasks- look at the samples here and the helpful information on how to prepare.**
- **Now see more examples of Writing exam tasks in the practice papers on our website.**

B2 Writing

Writing Part 1

You recently visited the sports centre advertised below. Write a review about it for your English school magazine. Mention:

- quality of equipment
- the centre's general atmosphere
- ease of access.

Write between 100 and 150 words.

New sports centre!

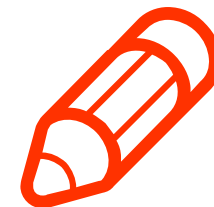
Come visit our amazing new sports centre on the outskirts of town!

We offer the first hundred visitors free membership for a month!

Enjoy a day by the pool and have fun!

Exercise in our new, modern, well-equipped gym!

Have a healthy snack and fresh juice at our lovely café!



B2 Writing

Writing Part 2

You recently had a surprising experience. Write a letter to your friend in England, explaining why you were surprised, and saying how you felt about it afterwards.

Write between 150 and 200 words.



B2 Writing – Helpful information

Before Writing

- Be aware of the text types to be produced (informal letter, email etc.) and their key features before the exam.
- Prepare for the text types by doing the writing tasks in our practice papers.
- Time yourself when you try out the writing tasks in our practice papers.
- Produce the required amount - write within the word count.

B2 Writing – Helpful information

During Writing

- Organise your text into paragraphs and remember each paragraph consists of at least 2-3 sentences.
- Remember to use a 'topic sentence' which introduces what will be discussed in the next lines and 'supporting sentences' which provide further information.
- Do not forget that a paragraph usually closes with a concluding sentence which summarises the information that has been presented.
- Use 'linking words' and know their meaning, use, position in a sentence. Try to vary them.
- Do not overuse the same ones throughout your text.
- Use a range of grammar from B2.
- Carefully read the topic and think of the B2 grammar you can use.
- Avoid generic words (e.g. 'good', 'bad', 'big'). Replace them with more specific ones (e.g. instead of 'good', how about using 'interesting', 'amazing', 'outstanding', 'terrific?').

B2 Writing – Helpful information

After Writing

- Try to finish early and have time for review.
- Try to remember the kind of mistakes you usually make and see if you've made similar ones.
- While proofreading your text, check for repetitions, if you've forgotten any words etc. and make the necessary corrections.

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Preparing for your B2 Speaking

Get ready for Speaking

- **Look at the IESOL Speaking Qualification Handbook on our website - read all about the B2 format, features, 'can-do' Speaking skills descriptions, B2 topics, functions, grammar.**
- **Get to know the Speaking exam tasks- look at the samples here and the helpful information on how to prepare.**
- **Now see more examples of Speaking exam tasks in the practice papers on our website.**



B2 Speaking

PART 1 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor asks you these questions :

Can you spell your family name for me, please?

Which country are you from?

Then Interlocutor will ask you some questions about different topics:
(up to five questions, one from each of the different topic areas below)

The area where you live

- **Describe the area where you live.**
- **What do you like or dislike about your area?**
- **What problems does your area have?**
- **What is the most beautiful place you have ever been to?**



B2 Speaking

Photography

- **A picture is worth a thousand words'. Why do some people believe this?**
- **What makes a photograph important to you?**
- **Why do people keep photos of their own lives? (etc)**

Money management

- **How good do you think you are at budgeting?**
- **Generally, what luxuries do you spend your money on?**
- **How do you decide how to spend your money? (etc)**

Personal comfort

- **When do you feel most relaxed?**
- **Which is the most comfortable room in your house and why?**
- **What sort of clothes do you wear for special occasions? (etc)**

Qualifications and examinations

- **What has been the most difficult examination you have taken?**
- **Would you prefer to be tested through course work or by an examination?**
- **How do you plan to use your English language qualification? (etc)**



B2 Speaking

PART 2 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor says: **We are going to role-play some situations. I want you to start or respond. First situation:** (Interlocutor chooses choose one situation from below)

- **I'm your work colleague. I start.**
It takes me so long to travel to work. How do you get to work?
- **I'm your new teacher. We're waiting for one of your classmates to arrive. He is late. I start.**
Is he always late?
- **We're classmates. You are trying to finish some important work. I start.**
Why do you have to finish that now?
- **We're friends. I start.**
Do you want to come camping with me?

(you answer)

Conversation continues for about 2 turns each.



B2 Speaking

PART 2 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor now says: **Second situation** (Interlocutor chooses one of these):

- **You have seen an advertisement for a job in my shop. You want more information. You start.**
- **I'm your cousin. I had a party last night but you couldn't come. You start.**
- **We're friends. You've invited me to the theatre tomorrow but I haven't answered. You start.**
- **I've just arrived at your home for a meal. I've never met your family before. You start.**

(you start)

Conversation continues for about 2 turns each.

If there is enough time, Interlocutor choose another situation.



B2 Speaking

PART 3 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor says: **In this part of the test we're going to have a discussion. All right?**

The town local authorities are planning to construct a leisure centre and have asked for our views on what should be included in it. Let's talk about what kind of leisure centre we want and make some recommendations. Take twenty seconds to think about what you want to say.

(you will see the candidate's task sheet.)

*After 20 seconds interlocutor will say: **Why don't you start?***

Interlocutor's Task Sheet

Suggested facilities for the new leisure centre

Swimming pool

Café bar

Table tennis

Sports hall

Tennis courts

Crèche (supervision of young children)

Your Task Sheet

Suggested facilities for the new leisure centre

Swimming pool

Group fitness studio

Gymnastics

Badminton

Sports hall

5-a-side football



B2 Speaking

PART 4 (4 minutes including follow-up questions)

Interlocutor says: **You are going to talk about something for two minutes. Your topic is**

(interlocutor chooses one of these topics)

Topics

A The place where you work or study

B Why other people should play your favourite sport

C Your memories of school

Interlocutor says: **You now have thirty seconds to write some notes to help you. So your topic is** *(interlocutor repeats topic).*

After 30 seconds Interlocutor says: **Please start.**

You talk for 2 minutes.

After that, Interlocutor asks you some follow up questions.



B2 Speaking

Follow-up questions Interlocutor can ask you:

The place where you work or study

- **What are good working or studying conditions?**
- **Tell me about the person you work or study next to.**
- **What makes people work hard? (etc)**

Why other people should play your favourite sport

- **What are the basic rules of this sport?**
- **How dangerous is this sport?**
- **Do you prefer to play or watch sports? (etc)**

Your memories of school

- **Tell me about a teacher who was once important to you.**
- **How have schools changed since your parents' time?**
- **What do you remember about your school building? (etc)**

B2 Speaking – Helpful information

Before Speaking

- Use the practice papers to help you get to know the timings and topics.
- While preparing for Part 4, try speaking for a short amount of time initially, and then gradually increase the duration (up to the specified duration).

During Speaking

- Signpost the direction of your thoughts (e.g. by using 'First of all ...', 'Then ...', 'Finally ...').
- Ask for clarifications if you don't really understand what you have to do or did not hear the question well.
- Avoid short answers. Always expand on what you say. Support what you say with arguments.
- Make full use of all given prompts, e.g. in Part 3 (discussion) and say as much as you can about all of them. If the Interlocutor interrupts you, that is perfectly all right. You might have said more than enough!
- Avoid generic words. Replace them with more descriptive ones.

B2 Speaking – Helpful information

During Speaking

- If you can't remember a word, say it in another way, paraphrase it.
- Avoid repetitions as far as possible. Use synonyms, paraphrase.
- Try to always speak clearly.
- Organise your thoughts before answering questions, especially in Part 2 (role play) /and Part 3 (discussion).
- Express what you have to say with reasons, evidence, personal experiences.
- Try to keep hesitations and pauses to a minimum. Resort to 'fillers' to fill in your silent gaps (e.g.: 'Well...', 'Now, let me think...', 'I mean...', 'You know...').

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What to expect on exam day

On exam day

- Arrive at the SELT Test Centre 30 minutes before the start time of your test.
- Complete the necessary sign-in procedures.
- Bring with you the same valid photo ID/Passport that you used to register for your exam.
- Leave your belongings in a locker because bags, mobile phones and other personal items are not allowed into the exam room.
- Breaks are not allowed during your exam.
- Ask the friendly Test Centre staff if you have any questions before you start the test.
- Ask the live examiner (interlocutor) if you have any questions while doing the Speaking test.

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Other useful information

LanguageCert Support on our website



Support material

- IESOL Speaking Qualification Handbook
- IESOL Listening, Reading, Writing Qualification Handbook
- Qualification Overview
- Practice Papers
- FAQs
- Other resources



- Contact our customer service team 24/7/365 if you have any questions

Contact us!



<https://selt.languagecert.org/contact>



[Email: selt@languagecert.org](mailto:selt@languagecert.org)

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**Thank you
& Good Luck**