

Syllabus & Examination Specification Classic A1

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The examination specification for each level provides teachers, Candidates, and other stakeholders with comprehensive information about the content of the examinations.

Overview of the Topics Used Across the Levels

Topic	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Personal Details						
Family & Friends						
Hobbies & Leisure Activities						
Holidays						
Transport						
Weather						
Shopping						
Health & Exercise						
Education						
Work, Jobs & Careers						
Films, Media & Entertainment						
Books and Literature						
News, Lifestyles & Culture						
Environment						
Technology & Science						
Community and Society						
Law and Order						
Abstract topics						

At each level, the following information is provided:

- **Examinations Overview:** details of each examination’s structure, how individual skills are examined, the types of tasks the examinations consist of and how long the examinations take to complete.
- **Text Types:** details of the general text types that Candidates are expected to be familiar with and may find in their examination.
- **Language Specification:** details of the functions, grammar, discourse markers and topics that Candidates are expected to be familiar with and use and which may form part of the examination.
- **Communicative Functions and Notions:** details of the kinds of functions that Candidates are expected to be familiar with and able to perform and which may be part of the examination.
- **Key Language Items:** Further details of elements of language Candidates are expected to be familiar with and use, and which may be part of the examination.

- **Candidate Skills, Knowledge and Understanding:** the criteria against which Candidates will be assessed.
- **Examination Specification:** the breakdown of each task within each individual examination.

GA Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Classic A1)

Examinations Overview

The GA Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (A1) consists of four examinations:

Examination	No. of Tasks	Task 1 Type	Task 2 Type	Task 3 Type	Task 4 Type	Time Allowed
Speaking	4	Personal Information	Talking about the prepared topic	Reacting in 3 described situations	Conversation	Up to 15 minutes per 2 Candidates
Listening	4	6 x select the most appropriate response (ABC multiple choice)	4 x multiple choice questions (ABC) one per a short conversation	6 x multiple choice questions (ABC) about one conversation	6 x true/false questions short monologue	Approx. 20 minutes
Reading	4	6 x multiple choice (ABC gap fill)	6 x multiple choice questions (ABC)	6 x multiple choice (ABC gap fill)	6 x matching statements or questions to three texts	30 minutes
Writing	3	Candidate completes a simple form	Candidate writes a short text (minimum 40 words)	Candidate chooses one topic (of 2) to write about (minimum 40 words)	N/A	30 minutes

A1 Text Types

At this level, Candidates are expected to read and understand short texts with repeated language patterns on these familiar topics, and read and obtain information from common signs and symbols in texts such as:

- public signs and notices
- lists
- simple forms
- notes
- records
- simple narratives

The words Candidates need to read will depend on their reasons for reading, e.g. employment, college course, childcare, enjoyment. The following are examples of words a Candidate would typically be expected to be able to read at this level:

Personal Key Words

- Country of origin, e.g. *The United Arab Emirates, Brazil, Mozambique*
- Languages, e.g. *Portuguese*
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, dates

Topic-based Vocabulary

- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- Words on forms: *name, address, telephone number, date, country, signature etc.*
- Family members, e.g. *Sister, mother*
- Words on menus, e.g. *Tea, coffee*
- Everyday vocabulary, e.g. *Appointment, sale*

Social Sight Vocabulary

- Danger
- Toilets
- Exit
- Way in
- Way out
- Office
- Reception
- No Smoking
- Right, left

High-Frequency Words

A, an, the, of, to, in, on, off, out, from, with, there, is, are, am, has, have, work, live, like, want, speak, going, shopping, go, can, come, I, she, he, we, they, no, not, me, my, and, but

At this level, Candidates are expected to write to communicate information to an intended audience in documents such as:

- Forms
- Lists
- Messages
- Notes
- Records

Spelling

It is important for adult ESOL learners to be able to recognise the basic sound–symbol relationships and common letter patterns in words that are of real interest to them as individuals, working from a context. The order in which these sounds and patterns will be taught will depend on the words learners want and need to write.

Phonics (sound–letter correspondence)

- Recognise initial, middle and final consonants
- Recognise consonant digraphs *ch, sh, the*
- Recognise medial short vowel sounds in simple words, e.g. *Hat*
- Write correct initial letters in response to the letter sound, word, object or picture
- Recognise and name each letter of the alphabet and be aware of alphabetical order
- Write final consonants in simple words, e.g. *Shop*
- Write correct letter corresponding to short middle vowel sounds in simple words, e.g. *Hat*

Patterns

Some suggestions for taking common patterns from texts learners want or need to write:

“I live in Southwark. Southwark is in south London. I live in a big house.”

Other words with ou – *our, four, pour*. Learners are encouraged to group the words visually, and/or by sound.

A1 Language Specification

Functions	Grammar	Discourse markers	Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directions • Describing habits and routines • Describing people and places • Giving personal information • Greetings • Telling the time • Understanding and using numbers • Understanding and using prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives: common and demonstrative • Adverbs of frequency • Comparatives and superlatives • Going to • How much/how many and very • common uncountable nouns • I'd like • Imperatives (+/-) • Intensifiers - very basic • Modals: can/can't/could/couldn't • Past simple of "to be" • Possessive adjectives • Prepositions, common • Prepositions of place • Prepositions of time, including in/on/at • Present continuous • Present simple • Pronouns: simple, personal • Questions • There is/are • To be, including question+negatives • Verb + ing: like/hate/love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting words and, but, because 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday routines • Family life • House and neighbourhood • Food and drink • Hobbies and pastimes • Holidays • Work and jobs • Shopping • Leisure activities • Weather

A1 Communicative Functions & Notions

- Give personal information
- Ask for personal information
- Introduce family and close friends
- Tell the time/day
- Ask the time/day
- Express ability
- Enquire about ability
- Say when you do not understand
- Ask for clarification
- Check back
- Correct
- Spell words aloud
- Describe places and things
- Give information as part of a simple explanation
- Give single-step directions and instructions
- Make requests – ask for directions
- Enquire about prices and quantities
- Make requests – ask for something
- Make requests – ask someone to do something
- Respond to a request
- Express likes and dislikes
- Express feelings
- Express wishes
- Express views
- Agree and disagree
- Apologise
- Express a preference
- Express thanks
- Greet
- Respond to greetings
- Describe health and symptoms
- Invite and offer
- Accept
- Decline
- Take leave

A1 Key Language Items

Simple sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word order in simple statements, e.g.: • Subject – verb – object • Subject – verb – adverb • Subject – verb – adjective • Subject – verb – prepositional phrase • Word order in instructions • There is/are + noun (+ prepositional phrase) • Yes/no questions • Wh– questions • Question words what/who/where/how much/how many • Contracted form of auxiliary • Imperatives and negative imperatives - Do it! Don't do it!
Noun phrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and common irregular plurals of nouns • Very common uncountable nouns • Personal pronouns • Demonstratives • Determiners of quantity • Indefinite article <i>a/an</i> with singular countable nouns • Definite article <i>the</i> • Possessives: <i>my/your/his/her</i>, etc.
Verb forms and time markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple present tense of: <i>be/have/do</i>; common • Regular verbs • <i>Have got</i> – indicating possession • Present continuous of common regular verbs • Contracted forms of: subject and auxiliary; • Auxiliary and negative • Modals: <i>can</i> + bare infinitive to express ability; • <i>Would + like</i> for requests • Use of simple prepositional verbs containing prepositions <i>on, off, in, out</i>
Adjectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common adjectives after <i>be</i>
Adverbs and prepositional phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common prepositions and prepositional phrases of place • Simple adverbs of place, manner and time • Use of intensifier <i>very</i>
Discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence connectives – <i>then, next</i>

Examination Specification: A1

Overview of the A1 Speaking Examination

The total guide time for the Speaking is up to 15 minutes, including an introduction read by the Interlocutor. There are 4 tasks in total.

The Speaking examination takes place with two Candidates and the Interlocutor present.

Successful A1 Candidates will demonstrate the following competencies across the examination:

- interact in a simple way, participate in simple conversation
- initiate and respond to simple statements and questions
- produce simple mainly isolated phrases to describe people and places
- follow slow and carefully articulated speech
- show control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns
- use a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations
- pronounce a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases which can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group

Candidates' performance is assessed in two main categories:

1) Task Achievement – in other words, how well they used the language to respond to each task.

2) Overall Linguistic Competency – in other words, how well they use vocabulary, grammar, phonological control and fluency in their response to each task.

Within Task Achievement, Candidates receive a score per task based on their performance. The maximum number of marks that can be achieved in this category is 12.

Within Overall Linguistic Competency, Candidates receive a score per task based on their performance. The maximum number of marks that can be achieved in this category is 12.

Content of the A1 Speaking Examination

A1 Speaking and Listening Examination (total time: approximately 15 minutes)		
Task	Summary	Approx. Timings
Task 1: Personal Information	Each Candidate is asked five separate questions about their daily life, routines, likes and dislikes, and typical activities. They are expected to provide full sentence answers.	2 minutes for two Candidates
Task 2: Talking about the prepared topic	<p>The topics are published in advance to allow Candidates to prepare for this task.</p> <p>In turn, each Candidate talks about their topic for up to one minute. Candidates must ask and answer one question from each other and answer one question each from the interlocutor.</p> <p>Example topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My English class • Where I live • My hobby 	4 minutes for two Candidates
Task 3: Reacting in described situations	<p>The Candidates respond with one or two full sentences for each situation presented to them. Candidates respond to three situations each.</p> <p>Example situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in a shop and need to buy some bread and milk. What do you say? • Your friend wants to go to the cinema this weekend, but you have other plans. What do you say? 	3 minutes for two Candidates
Task 4: Conversation	<p>The Candidates take part in a three-way conversation, led by the interlocutor.</p> <p>Visual prompts are provided.</p> <p>Example conversation starter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really like pizza – I have it every week. How about you? 	3 minutes for two Candidates

Overview of the A1 Listening Examination

The approximate time for the Listening examination is 20 minutes. There are 4 tasks in total.

The Listening examination is completed under the supervision of an Invigilator, under controlled examination conditions. The Examination may be conducted with one or multiple Candidates at the same time.

Successful A1 Candidates will demonstrate the following competencies across the examination:

- Can understand short, simple messages
- Can understand short, simple directions and instructions
- Can understand short, simple conversations

Candidates’ performance in this examination is assessed based on the number of correct answers they chose in each task. All of the questions across the assessment tasks are equally weighted.

Content of the A1 Listening Examination

A1 Listening Examination (approximate time: 20 minutes)		
Task	Summary	Marks Available
Task 1: Responding to questions	The Candidates listen to six questions and select the most appropriate response from a choice of three options ABC.	6
Task 2: Short conversations.	The Candidates listen to four short conversations, and answer one multiple choice ABC question about each conversation.	4
Task 3: Longer conversation.	The Candidates listen to a longer conversation between two speakers and answer six multiple choice ABC questions about it.	6
Task 3: Short monologue.	The candidates listen to a short monologue and decide whether six statements about it are true or false.	6
Total Marks Available in the Reading Examination: 22		

Overview of the A1 Reading Examination

The total time allowed for the Reading examination is 30 minutes. There are 4 tasks in total.

The Reading examination is completed under the supervision of an Invigilator, under controlled examination conditions. The Examination may be conducted with one or multiple Candidates at the same time.

Successful A1 Candidates will demonstrate the following competencies across the examination:

- Can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations
- Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support
- Can understand short, simple messages

Candidates’ performance in this examination is assessed based on the number of correct answers they chose in each task. All of the questions across the assessment tasks are equally weighted.

Content of the A1 Reading Examination

A1 Reading Examination (time allowed: 30 minutes)		
Task	Summary	Marks Available
Task 1: Gap fill - sentences	The Candidates read six sentences which each contain a gap. They choose the most suitable word to complete the sentence from a choice of three options ABC.	6
Task 2: Multiple choice - short continuous text	The Candidates read a short continuous text, and answer 6 multiple choice ABC questions based on the content of the text.	6
Task 3: Gap fill – short continuous text	The Candidates read a short continuous text, and complete 6 gaps from a choice of three options ABC	6
Task 4: True / false - three short texts	The Candidates read three separate texts on the same topic and match 6 statements or questions to the most appropriate text.	6
Total Marks Available in the Reading Examination: 24		

Overview of the A1 Writing Examination

The total time allowed for the Writing examination is 30 minutes. There are 3 tasks in total.

The Writing examination is completed under the supervision of an Invigilator, under controlled examination conditions. The Examination may be conducted with one or multiple Candidates at the same time.

Successful A1 Candidates will demonstrate the following competencies across the examination:

- Can write a short simple postcard
- Can write numbers and dates, own name, nationality, address, age, date of birth or arrival in the country etc., such as on a hotel registration form
- Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.
- Can use a basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations
- Can show a limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns
- Can write in full sentences using appropriate punctuation

Candidates' performance is assessed across three categories:

1) Recording Information – in Task 1, one mark is allocated for every appropriate answer. Candidates are not penalised for spelling mistakes unless the error detracts from the message. The maximum number of marks that can be achieved in this category is 8 marks.

2) Task Achievement – Tasks 2 and 3 only - marks are allocated according to how well the Candidate addresses the objective of each task. The maximum number of marks that can be achieved in this category is 8.

3) Overall Linguistic Competency – in Tasks 2 and 3 only, marks are allocated according to how well they use vocabulary, grammar, structure, punctuation, spelling and legibility in their response to each task. The maximum number of marks that can be achieved in this category is 16.

Content of the A1 Writing Examination

A1 Writing Examination (time allowed: 30 minutes)	
Task	Summary
Task 1: Simple form	Candidates are given a simple form to complete in this task. The form will require them to record their personal details, e.g. name, address, nationality and answer one or two simple questions, e.g. 'how long will you stay?' on a hotel booking form.

Task 2: Short text	<p>Candidates are required to produce a short text, e.g. postcard, to a friend or person they are familiar with. They are given four pieces of information that need to be included in the message.</p> <p>The main purpose of this task is to assess the Candidate's ability to write a short message which covers all required points.</p> <p>Word Count: The Candidate is expected to produce a minimum of 40 words.</p>
Task 3: Short text	<p>Candidates are given a choice of two different options in this task. The Candidate must choose one option and produce a short text, typically about themselves and other people, where they live and what they do.</p> <p>Word Count: The Candidate is expected to produce a minimum of 40 words.</p>