

TELT SYLLABUS[©]

May 2025

A syllabus, sample questions & answers.

The Test for English Language Teachers (TELT) is a national, publicly offered examination which can be sat for in part fulfilment of the qualifications required to receive an ELT Teaching Permit. The examination has been designed to assess candidates in two main areas:

1. Language description, sensitivity and awareness
2. Language proficiency

Following from this, there are two parts to the examination, each divided into several sections. Both parts have equal weighting. Candidates must obtain at least 65% of the marks in each of the two parts to obtain a pass. The examination consists of:

PART 1: LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION, SENSITIVITY AND AWARENESS

This part assesses candidates' ability to analyse and use appropriate terminology to describe language. In particular, candidates are tested on their knowledge of terminology required to describe linguistic structures and processes covering sound patterns (phonology), word formation (morphology), phrase/sentence structure (syntax), meaning (semantics), and language use/function (pragmatics). This section also assesses candidates' awareness of and sensitivity to language patterns and relationships.

SECTION A — LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY

Aim: The focus is on the ability to analyse and use appropriate terminology to describe language. In particular, candidates are tested on their knowledge of terminology required to describe linguistic structures and processes, meaning (semantics), lexis and language use/function (pragmatics), sound (phonology).

Description: This task consists of a text from which candidates are asked to identify terms of selected language items. There are 20 multiple choice questions worth two marks each for a total of **40 marks**. There is one correct answer for each question and three distractors. The terms are chosen from the list below:

proper; abstract; common; concrete; collective; compound; countable; uncountable; noun phrase; regular; irregular

Verbs: lexical (main); auxiliary; modal auxiliary; transitive; intransitive; multi-word (separable and inseparable); phrasal; gerund; infinitive; bare infinitive; full infinitive; split infinitive; base form; finite; non-finite; present participle; past participle; -ing verb; verb phrase; interrogative; negative; affirmative; imperative; indicative; subjunctive; regular; irregular; reporting; question tag; stative meaning; dynamic meaning; tense; contraction; particle; participles

Adjectives: gradable; extreme; comparative; superlative; compound

Adverbs: time; manner; place; degree; frequency; quantity; attitude

Prepositions: place; movement; time; direction; dependent

Pronouns: subject; object; possessive; reflexive; relative; interrogative; demonstrative; indefinite; reciprocal

Determiners: articles; definite; indefinite; zero; possessive; demonstrative; quantifier; cardinal number; ordinal number

Conjunctions (linkers):	coordinating; correlative; subordinating*
Reported Speech:	direct speech; indirect speech; indirect question; reporting verb
Clauses:	main; dependent; independent; subordinate; relative; defining (identifying) relative; non-defining (non-identifying) relative; reported; conditional
Subject, object and complement; direct and indirect object; predicate	
Phrases:	noun; verb; adjective; adverbial; prepositional

*In the examination, these will be referred to collectively as 'conjunctions'

Verb Phrase:

Tenses:	present; past; future; present simple; past simple; future simple; present perfect simple; past perfect simple; future perfect simple; present continuous /progressive; past continuous/ progressive; future continuous/ progressive; present perfect continuous/ progressive; past perfect continuous/ progressive; future perfect continuous/ progressive
Aspect:	continuous/progressive; simple; perfect
Mood:	indicative; imperative; subjunctive
Voice:	active; passive
Conditional sentences:	zero; first; second; third; mixed
Modality:	hypothetical meaning; possibility, deduction/assumption/ speculation; prediction, permission, prohibition; ability, obligation; necessity; volition
LEXIS:	synonym; antonym; hyponym; superordinate; homophone; homonym; lexical set; lexical verb; affix; prefix; suffix; collocation; connotation; colloquial; fixed expressions; compound; cognate; lexical chunk; morpheme; abbreviation; acronym; word family
-Ing Words:	present participle; gerund; adjective

TASK SAMPLE:

Read the following text carefully and choose the correct answer for each of the multiple-choice questions below in its regard.

At 31, Vatankhah was born a year before Iran's Islamic revolution. In February 1978, Tehran had **nightclubs** and dancing and girls-about-town **who** dressed as fashionably as their counterparts in Europe. **A** year later, the Shah **had fled** from his Peacock Throne; Iran was reborn as an Islamic Republic and women, **many** of whom supported the overthrow, were waking up to find their lives drastically changed.

1. nightclubs in line 2 is an example of:

- a. a proper noun
- b. a compound noun
- c. an abstract noun
- d. a gerund

Correct answer: b

2. who in line 2 is an example of:

- a. a relative pronoun
- b. a preposition
- c. an adjective
- d. a synonym

Correct answer: a

3. A in line 3 is an example of:

- a. a determiner
- b. a preposition
- c. a relative pronoun
- d. a demonstrative pronoun

Correct answer: a

4. had fled in line 3 is an example of:

- a. the present perfect passive
- b. the present perfect active
- c. the past simple active
- d. the past perfect active

Correct answer: d

5. many in line 5 in relationship to few (not in text) is an example of:

- a. a homophone
- b. a synonym
- c. an affix
- d. an antonym

Correct answer: d

SECTION B - PRIMARY STRESS IDENTIFICATION

Aim: The focus is on the identification of stress in individual words.

Description: This task consists of isolated words and candidates are asked to identify the primary stress in each word. There are 15 words worth one mark each for a total of **15 marks**. Words in this section have the same primary stress in different varieties of English but some words may be frequently mispronounced.

TASK SAMPLE:

Underline the main stress syllable in each of the following words:

1. Arabic (n) Correct answer: Arabic
2. Secretarial (adj) Correct answer: Secretarial
3. Photographer (n) Correct answer: Photographer
4. Record (n) Correct answer: Record
5. Survey (v) Correct answer: Survey

SECTION C - TRANSCRIPTION OF PHONEMIC SCRIPT INTO NORMAL SPELLING

Aim: The focus is on recognition of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonemes.

Description: This task consists of words related to a particular topic written out in phonemic script (IPA) and candidates are asked to transcribe them. There are five words worth one mark each for a total of **5 marks**. Misspelled words are awarded no points. Received Pronunciation (RP) is used as the pronunciation model for these words.

TASK SAMPLE:

These words, all related to weather and the environment, are in phonemic script. Please transcribe them into normal English spelling.

/tɛmpɪtʃə/	Correct answer: temperature
/grɪːnhaʊs/	Correct answer: greenhouse
/tɔːnɛɪdəʊ/	Correct answer: tornado
/ʃɔːtɪdʒ/	Correct answer: shortage
/klaɪmət/	Correct answer: climate

SECTION D - RISING AND FALLING INTONATION

Aim: The focus is on the pattern of stressed words in sentences.

Description: This task consists of 10 sentences and candidates are asked to mark whether typically the sentence is spoken with a rising or with a falling intonation by drawing an upward arrow (↗) or a downward arrow (↘). There are ten statements worth one mark each for a total of 10 marks.

TASK SAMPLE:

Draw an upward arrow to denote a rising intonation and a downward arrow to denote a falling intonation as necessary.

1. Making a statement: 'We should meet up more often.'
2. Asking a yes-or-no question: Do you like your new teacher?
3. Expressing a condition: If it's too hot tomorrow, we'll stay at home.
4. Making a polite request: 'Could you pass the whiteboard marker please?'
5. Confirming: 'It's a beautiful day, isn't it?'

SECTION E - ODD ONE OUT

Aim: The focus is on awareness of and sensitivity towards language patterns and relationships.

Description: This task consists of four utterances and candidates are asked to describe what the utterances have in common and how one item differs from the others. The language item focused on is identified in bold for the candidates. Areas assessed are related to grammatical, lexical or functional meaning or form. There are ten sets of four utterances. Each answer is worth 2 marks for a total of **20 marks**. Solely identifying the odd one out will not be awarded any marks.

TASK SAMPLE:

One utterance in each set is different from the other utterances. The difference may have to do with grammatical, lexical or functional meaning or form. Indicate which sentence is the odd one out, briefly explain why it is different and what the other three have in common.

Question 1:

- a) He's lying in the sun.
- b) We're enjoying our holiday.
- c) She's leaving at 3.00.
- d) I'm reading a very good book at the moment.

Correct answer: Sentence (c) is the odd one out because:

All four utterances contain the present continuous. However, in 'c' the present continuous is used to refer to future time whereas in all the others it refers to an event in progress at the present time.

Question 2:

- a) You have grown since the last time I saw you.
- b) The government has become more interested in arts education.
- c) Japanese people have wonderful food.
- d) My English has really improved since I moved to Australia.

Correct answer: Sentence (c) is the odd one out because

All four utterances contain the verb 'have'. However, in 'c' 'have' is a main/lexical verb, whereas in the others, 'have' is an auxiliary verb.

Question 3:

- a) A father talking to his 18-year-old son who has just bought a new car: 'You should check your

- brakes regularly.'
- b) A car hire employee in a foreign country talking to tourists who have just hired a car: 'It's not required by law, but you really should wear a seatbelt.'
 - c) Two friends talking about another friend who has been having car problems: 'She should buy a new car.'
 - d) Two parents are talking about their child who has just gone abroad for the first time. They are discussing where she may be: 'She should be in Rome by now.'

Correct answer: Sentence (d) is different because

In all four utterances the modal verb 'should' is used. However, in 'd' it is used to show deduction, whereas in all the others it is used to give advice.

Question 4:

- a) Don't be afraid. It's just a mouse!
- b) I've just done it.
- c) They had just arrived when he phoned.
- d) What did you just say?

Correct answer: Sentence (a) is different because

In all four utterances the adverb 'just' is used. However, in 'a' it is used with the meaning 'only' whereas in all the other utterances it implies 'very recently' or 'a moment or moments ago'.

SECTION F - NAME THE COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION

Aim: The focus is on awareness of the relationship between linguistic forms and communicative functions, and that this relationship has implications for language production and comprehension.

Description: The task consists of 10 statements and candidates are asked to identify the communicative function expressed by each of the statements. This section is worth **10 marks**.

TASK SAMPLE:

FORM		Communicative FUNCTION
1.	Make a left turn at the bottom of the hill, and you will reach the bus terminus.	Giving directions.
2.	Could I use your phone to send a message please?	Making a request.
3.	I had nothing to do with the theft; I wasn't even at work that day.	Denying an accusation.
4.	No, that's not the right way; you'll only make it worse.	Expressing disagreement.
5.	I'm not planning to apply for a job just yet.	Expression intention.

PART 2: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

This part assesses candidates' ability to manipulate a range of grammatical and lexical forms. The writing section assesses candidates' ability to express themselves fluently and accurately.

SECTION A - IDENTIFYING AND CORRECTING ERRORS

Aim: The focus is on the identification and correction of grammatical, lexical, spelling and punctuation errors.

Description: This task is made up of 20 utterances, sentences or parts of sentences, some of which include a mistake while others do not. Candidates are required to identify correct sentences with a tick (✓). In the incorrect utterances, the mistake should be identified and corrected. Each answer is worth 1 mark for a total of **20 marks**. No marks are awarded for wrongly identifying and/or wrongly correcting a mistake. There is only one mistake in any incorrect utterance.

TASK SAMPLE:

Read the utterances below carefully checking for mistakes. If an utterance contains no mistakes, put a tick (✓) on the line under the utterance. If an utterance contains a mistake, underline the mistake and write the correction on the line below the utterance. Each correct answer carries 1 mark.

Here are some examples:

1. I'm looking forward to see you.

Candidate version: I'm looking forward to see you.

seeing

2. He was under deep pressure to finish the work by the end of the day.

Candidate version: He was under deep pressure to finish the work by the end of the day.

heavy / a great deal of / intense / a lot of _ (only one answer is necessary)

3. I try to keep meat sepearte from other foods in the fridge.

Candidate version: I try to keep meat seperate from other foods in the fridge.

separate

4 Peru which is a very poor country is known as the homeland of the Incas.

Candidate version: Peru which is a very poor country is known as the homeland of the Incas.

Peru, which is a very poor country,

5. The picnic was cancelled due to rain.

Candidate version: ✓

SECTION B - WORD FORMATION

Aim: The focus is on vocabulary, specifically on word formation.

Description: This task consists of a short text containing ten gaps and ten words in capital letters. Candidates are required to form a word from the given stem word to fill the gap. Each correct answer carries 1 mark for a total of **10 marks**. No marks are given for incorrectly spelt words.

TASK SAMPLE:

Tony: You ate so fast I'm surprised you didn't get 1. _____ (DIGEST).

Anna: That's because of your mum's usual 2. _____ (GENEROUS). The meals she prepares for us are huge! It's as if every dinner needs to be a 3. _____ (MEMORY) one!

Tony: Yeah, I know, and it's just 4. _____ (PRICE) how she pretends it's normal-sized helpings!

Anna: I didn't hear you complaining about the trifle. You were 5. _____ (STOP) and kept shovelling spoonfuls into your mouth!

Tony: Hey, that's 6. _____ (FAIR), I was only trying to be 7. _____ (COMPLIMENT) to mum.

1. indigestion
2. generosity
3. memorable
4. priceless
5. unstoppable
6. unfair
7. complimentary

SECTION C - SELECTIVE DELETION

Aim: The focus is on grammatical and lexical resources and the ability to follow the cohesive and coherent features of a text.

Description: This task consists of a text from which words have been selectively deleted from the third sentence onwards. In each case, the deleted word is indicated by a gap. Candidates are required to supply a single appropriate word for each gap. Candidates do not lose marks for punctuation (e.g. use or misuse of capital letters, apostrophes). However, spelling must be correct. Each word is worth 1 mark for a total of **10 marks**.

TASK SAMPLE:

The following is taken from BBC News.

Eight community heroes from across Surrey and Sussex have been honoured at a BBC awards event. The full list of winners by category:

Bravery: Chris Waller set 1. _____ a weekly 'walk and talk' group. The group 2. _____ a safe space for men to 3. _____ their feelings as well as a listening ear to others who may 4. _____ support, while walking through the Epsom Downs.

Fundraiser: Lilly-Isabella Porter swam a total of 267km between 2021 and 2023 to 5. _____ money for a number of charities. She also 6. _____ money to individual children battling cancer or enduring long 7. _____ in hospitals.

Correct answers:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|------------|
| 1. up | 2. provides | 3. share |
| 4. need | 5. raise | 6. donates |
| 7. stays | | |

SECTION D - SENTENCE TRANSFORMATIONS

Aim: The focus is lexical and grammatical, and a range of structures is tested. Candidates are required to demonstrate an ability to express a message in different ways and show flexibility and resource in the use of language.

Description: This section consists of ten items, each containing three parts: a lead-in sentence, a key word and a second sentence of which only the beginning and/or the end are given. Candidates are required to fill the gap in the second sentence so that the completed sentence is similar in meaning to the lead-in sentence. The gap must be filled with between three and six words, one of which must be the key word. The key word must not be changed in any way. Each correct answer is worth 1 mark for a total of **10 marks**.

TASK SAMPLE:

Please complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

1. I can't finish this crossword. Can I ask you as your vocabulary is really good?

BRAIN

I can't finish this crossword. Can I as your vocabulary is really good?

Correct answer: Can I pick your brain as your vocabulary is really good?

2. They'll certainly invent a thinking robot one of these days.

BOUND

A thinking robot one of these days.

Correct answer: A thinking robot is bound to be invented one of these days.

3. He said that I was a liar.

ACCUSED

He a liar.

Correct answer: He accused me of being a liar.

4. I've been very busy at work all day.

EYES

I've been in work all day.

Correct answer: I've been up to my eyes in work all day.

5. I regret not going to the party last weekend.

WISH

..... to the party last weekend.

Correct answer: I wish I had gone to the party last weekend.

SECTION E - WRITING

Aim: This task assesses candidates' ability to write in English. It focuses on their range of lexical and grammatical resources, their ability to write cohesively, coherently, and accurately, using correct spelling and appropriate register and style. The candidates must demonstrate awareness of the target reader and the purpose for writing. It is in the candidates' interest to write legibly.

Description: This section consists of two parts. The first is a short compulsory writing task. The second is a long writing task chosen from two options. A pass in this section is required for candidates to pass PART 2.

For the short writing tasks, candidates will be asked to respond to a given situation (100 - 120 words). In the response, functions such as persuading, explaining, describing, enquiring, proposing, suggesting, apologising, requesting, inviting, expressing sympathy, advising, etc. will be assessed.

For the long writing task (280 - 300 words) candidates will be asked to choose one of two writing tasks. The tasks could be any of the following:

an article for a newspaper or magazine; a discursive essay (e.g. a 'for and against' essay); a competition entry (e.g. the writer nominates themselves or somebody else for a prize, a grant, an award, etc.); an information sheet; a letter (e.g. a reference letter, an application letter, a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, a letter of complaint to a company or authority, a letter to a friend); a proposal (to a superior, or a peer group); a report (to a superior or a peer group); a review (e.g. of a book, a film, a TV series, a holiday, an app, a restaurant, a festival, a concert, an art exhibition, for a magazine, newspaper or website); a fictional or true narrative (e.g. for a magazine or competition); a travel brochure; a blog; a tribute; a biographical piece; a covering letter for a job application.

TASK SAMPLE:

A. Short writing task

A student complained to your Director of Studies that you were using your mobile phone during the lesson. Your DoS requires a written statement from you. Your DoS is Ms Aquilina, and your name is Terry Dimech. The names do not count towards the word count.

Dear Ms Aquilina,

Thank you for the opportunity to explain myself. The student is correct in saying that I was using my mobile phone during the lesson, but he had no way of knowing what I was using it for. The fact is that I was uncertain how to spell the verb 'to practise'; it was going to come up in a gap fill exercise and though I had prepared the answers on my material, I started to doubt myself. So, while the students were busy on some work, I fished out my phone to check. I'm not sure how else I could have handled that situation, and I can understand that it looked bad. Your guidance on this would be appreciated.

*Kind regards,
Terry Dimech*

TASK SAMPLE:

B. Long writing task

Write your answer to one of the two tasks below. Write 280 – 300 words in the appropriate style on the following lined pages. Marks are awarded for range of structure, vocabulary and expression, ability to organise content; ability to write effectively and accurately, addressing all aspects of the task and use of format and register appropriate to the purpose and audience. It is in your interest to write legibly.

1. Your Local Council is exploring the possibility of introducing parking for residents only on the streets in your town centre. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, agreeing or disagreeing with this proposal.

2. An important international travel company which caters for tourists over the age of 65 is exploring the idea of marketing Malta as a possible destination for their clients. They have commissioned you to write a report on issues which would be of relevance to this particular kind of tourist. Include information on facilities and services, accommodation, places of interest, activities, recommended seasons for visiting and any other information which you think is relevant. Finally, make a recommendation as to whether the company should choose Malta as a destination for its clients. Write the report.

ANALYTICAL RATING SCALE TO BE USED FOR THE WRITING SUBMISSIONS

Adapted from 'Assessing writing for Cambridge English Qualifications: A guide for teachers.'

https://assets.cambridgeenglish.org/schools/CER_6647_V1d_JUL20_Teacher-Guide-for-Writing-C1_Advanced.pdf

SHORT TASK	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language	LONG TASK
Band 5 18 – 20	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.	Band 5 27 – 30
15 – 17	Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.				23 – 26
Band 3 12 – 14	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.	Band 3 19 – 22
7 – 11	Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.				14 – 18
Band 1 4 – 6	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.	Band 1 9 – 13
0 – 3	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	Performance below Band 1.			0 – 8

RESULTS FOR THE TELT PARTS 1 & 2

Candidates' marks will be tabulated and a result issued based on the combined marks of the Written parts (Parts 1 & 2). The percentage of correct answers qualifying candidates for each result along with descriptors are in the following table:

DISTINCTION 95-100	The candidate has shown excellent language skills in all areas and has demonstrated an exceptional command of the language itself, as well as in-depth metalanguage awareness.
PASS WITH MERIT 80-94	The candidate has shown excellent language description skills, language sensitivity and language awareness. Strong language proficiency. A superior performance.
PASS 65-79	The candidate has shown competent language description skills, language sensitivity and language awareness. Good language proficiency. A competent performance.
NARROW FAIL 55-64	The candidate has shown incomplete language description skills, language sensitivity and language awareness and/or language proficiency. A fair performance but one which does not yet demonstrate a level of language description ability, sensitivity and awareness and/or language proficiency appropriate to a teacher of EFL.
FAIL 30-54	The candidate has shown inadequate language description skills, language sensitivity and language awareness and/or language proficiency. An unsatisfactory performance.
UNCLASSIFIED 0-29	The candidate has shown poor language description skills, language sensitivity and language awareness and/or language proficiency and/or did not complete some or all of the tasks. A very weak performance.

CERTIFICATES

As the awarding body, the ELT Council will issue certificates to the successful candidates. The certificate will include the following statement:

"This certificate shall remain valid for a period of two years from the date of issuance. An ELT Permit will be granted only if the certificate is valid at the time of application."