S IN EA

Individual Component Checklist

ENGLISH VERSION



INTRODUCTION

This checklist has been designed for use as a practical tool for describing **ONE VERSION** of a particular component of a language test, for the purpose of evaluation or comparison.

General Notes

In this checklist the following terminology is used:

Component

One subtest in an examination. Usually an examination is made up of subtests in the different skills, and components are commonly called by the names of skills. This checklist concerns the listening component of an examination. Components are also often referred to as 'papers'.

• Input

The material provided by the candidate for use in order to produce an appropriate response. In a test of listening it is likely to take the form of a recorded oral text plus written items.

Item

Each testing point which is given a separate mark or marks. It may consist of, for example, one gap in a written text, or one multiple choice question with three or four options.

Response

The candidate's written or spoken response to a task. The term 'answer' is often used in this context. However, for reasons of precision, it is not used here.

Rubric

The instructions given to a candidate on how to respond to a particular input. An example, for a multiple choice cloze test, might be: Read the text below and choose the correct word for each space. Mark the letter next to the correct word -A, B, C or D – on your answer sheet.

Section

Parts of the component can be subdivided into. Each may be testing a different area of skill or usage.

Task

A task is defined precisely as a combination of rubric, input and response. For example, a reading text with several multiple choice items, all of which can be answered by referring to a single rubric, can be classified as a task. If another set of items relates to the same text, but requires a different rubric in order for a response to be produced, then that combination of text, rubric and items constitutes a different task. Thus the same text can for part of the same input for one or more tasks.

The term 'question' which is often used when referring to tasks, whether or not they are presented as grammatical questions, is avoided here because of its ambiguity.

Text

In the context of a reading component of an examination, a text is a piece of written language, used as input to a task.

Please note

Some of the questions in this checklist are to be answered with a couple of words or numbers, and some have boxes to tick 'yes' or 'no'. Others, which involve making some qualitative judgement, ask for an assessment on a scale of 1-4, where 1 represents the most negative judgement and 4 the most positive.

Instructions for Individual Questions

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

11 Weighting

Sometimes one section of a component is given more or less importance than others by weighting it differently from the others – assigning a higher or lower percentage of the total mark to it.

B PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT

7 How realistic is the presentation of the text?

If, for example, a task used in an examination paper is taken from an original magazine or newspaper article, an attempt may be made to present it in such a way as to make this source clear to the candidate, by means of headlines, setting out the text in columns etc.

D READING TEXTS AND TASKS

1 INPUT TEXTS

Most of this part of the checklist operates a the level of texts and items. As the number of texts in a test varies widely – some being composed of as few as two or three, while others consist of a large number of very short texts – text numbers have been left out of headings, and it is assumed that these pages will be photocopied when necessary, and text numbers written in.

3 Type of text

Texts for use in tests of reading are often taken from sources such newspapers, magazines and novels. These are often adapted. In this question box 1 =an unadapted text; box 2 =an adapted text; box 3 =specially written for the test.

4 Writer's overall intention

It is often the case that there may be several intentions associated with any text. However, an *overall* intention should be identified.

5 Target reader (of original text)

It would, of course, be possible to break this down much further, but for the purposes of this checklist it has been decided to give only these limited categories, with the possibility of specifying more accurately under category d).

6 Topic of the text

The likely extent of the topic areas used in tests of listening is covered by the 'notions' in **Threshold Level 1990**.

2 LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1 Main focus of testing

By this it is meant the **main focus** of what is being tested in language terms, although it may also touch on other areas. It is also taken as understood that there is a great deal of ambiguity in this area. This area of the checklist operates at item level. Again, it is assumed that this page will be photocopied and the text and item numbers written in.

Some of the categories used here need no explanation, but the following notes on some of them may be useful.

a) Skimming for overall gist

The text is read at speed, probably in order to respond to a question placed before the text, which demands an understanding of the topic and the author's attitude to it.

b) Demonstrating understanding of text as a whole

This may be done, for example, by writing a short summary of the main events or points discussed in the text.

c) Identifying the topic of the text

A short text, possibly a fragment taken from a longer text, is given. There are no titles or clues of that kind. An example would be part of a description of an object, which does not mention the object itself. The candidate then has to identify the object.

d) Identifying the function of the text

An example of a text consisting of a letter of apology from a travel agent, followed by an item which asks:

What is the writer trying to do:

- a) write a complaint
- b) offer an apology
- c) check travel arrangements
- d) blame a member of staff

f) Retrieving information by scanning text

Some questions related to specific points in the text may be placed before the text, so that the candidate responds by searching the text for the answer to each one..

g) Locating and selecting relevant factual information to perform task
An example would be a task consisting of ticking boxes on a customer
satisfaction survey sheet related to a holiday. The information required
is found in the diary entries and a postcard written during the holiday
which are given as input to the task.

j) Deducting meaning from context

An example is a reading text which discusses the problems a company had in retaining reliable shop staff, using vocabulary such as 'suffering from very high staff turnover rates' and 'absenteeism'. The reader who is not familiar with this vocabulary can deduce the meaning of 'turnover rates' and 'absenteeism' in the context of a text which describes how the problem was solved by recruiting older workers, who 'stayed in their jobs longer' and 'were more reliable'.

1) Making inferences from information given in text

A set of items dealing with factual aspects of a text sometimes includes one 'global' item, which may begin 'This article gives the impression that...' or 'This article shows young people as...' to test the overall conclusions the reader is expected to draw from the information given.

m) Recognising numbers, letters etc.

This might occur in a test of reading at a low level, probably designed for a particular target group who are also learners of a different script from that of their first language.

n) Making use of clues such as subtitles, illustrations, typography

An example occurs in an item from a test at a low level, where public notices are photographed in situ. For example, a notice saying, 'Watch your luggage at all times' is shown above bags and cases at an airport.

4 EXPECTED RESPONSE

11 To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which skills other than language ability are required in order to provide a response. An example of this would be an item which demands some type of mathematical calculation in order to get the correct answer, or an item which involves the candidate reading a map or interpreting a plan or diagram.

12 To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which testing one area of language skill also involves the candidate's ability in another area of skill. It is difficult to separate the skills completely from one another. For example, it is likely that any test of listening will also involve candidate reading instruction and rubrics, and in writing responses, and tests of structural competence and reading will also involve candidates in writing.

5 MARKING

5 What type of marking is used?

These can characterised as follows:

- a) Examiner marking: marking carried out by experts, who are often referred to as examiners. They are required to make used of professional judgement in awarding marks.
- **b)** Clerical marking: marking carried out by non-experts, who have to deal with letters, numbers or words. They are generally required to exercise only very limited judgement, of a non-expert type.
- c) Computerised marking: marking carried out by a machine such as an optical mark reader. Multiple choice tests are often marked in this way.

The term 'marking' as it is used here refers to the process of assigning a mark to an item, and not to the way in which the mark is recorded or read. Computerised marking mean that the candidate's response goes directly to the computer for the mark to be assigned, and no human marker is involved.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

NAME OF EXAMINATION	
NAME OF COMPONENT	
NAME / NUMBER OF TASK	

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION

		Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Total for component
1	Name of section (if any)				
2	Number of tasks				
3	Number of items				
4	Suggested time allocated for section				
5	Preparation time allocated (if any)				
6	Total number of marks achievable (as percentage)				100%
7	Is percentage of marks available for section indicated to candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
8	Is percentage of marks available for each task indicated to candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
9	Is suggested time allocation for each section indicated to candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
10	Is suggested time allocation for each task indicated to candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
11	Weighting				100%

B PRESENTATION & LAYOUT

	Name of component							
1	How is the component presented?	As a separate boo	oklet		As part of a b	ooklet		
2	How is the beginning of the component indicated?	by a front page by a title			by a title pag	e in a bookle	et	
3	What information is given at the beginning of the component?	title of componer candidate numbe name of institutio total number of n instructions to ex	r on narks for c	omponent	candidate nar sex of candid date of exam time allocate instructions t	late ination d		
4	How many pages long is the component?							
5	How well is the text in the booklet spaced out?	1		2	3		4	
6	How much space is allowed for the responses?	1		2	3		4	
7	How realistic is presentation of the text?	1		2	3		4	
8	What size is the booklet? (A4, A5 etc.)							
9	Is colour printing used?	Yes		No				
10	Are drawings used?	Yes		No				
11	Are photographs used?	Yes		No				

C GUIDANCE TO CANDIDATES (INSTRUCTIONS AND RUBRICS)

	Name of component					
1	How clear are instructions?	1	2	3	4	
2	How easy to understand are instructions?	1	2	3	4	
3	How adequate are instructions?	1	2	3	4	
4	How relevant are instructions?	1	2	3	4	
5	How consistent are instructions?	1	2	3	4	
6	How clear are rubrics?	1	2	3	4	
7	How easy to understand are rubrics?	1	2	3	4	
8	How adequate are rubrics?	1	2	3	4	
9	How relevant are rubrics?	1	2	3	4	
10	How consistent are rubrics?	1	2	3	4	

D READING TEXTS AND TASKS

Name of examination				
Number of texts in listening component				
	1. IN	PUT - TEXTS		
	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
1 Number of texts				

1. INPUT - TEXTS

		Text	Text	Text
2	Number of words in text			
3	Type of text	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
a)	(from) book written for young adults	a	a	a
b)	newspaper article	b	b	b
c)	magazine article	c	с	с
d)	advertisement	d	d	d
e)	novel	e	e	e
f)	technical manual	f	f	f
g)	textbook	g	g	g
h)	bureaucratic document	h	h	h
i)	instruction leaflet	i	i	i
j)	unknown	ј 🔲	ј 🔲	j
k)	other (please specify)	k	k	k

1 = unadapted text; 2 = adapted text; 3 = specially written

1. INPUT - TEXTS

			Text	Text	Text	
4		Writer's overall intention				
5	a) b) c) d) e) f) g) h) i) j) k) l) m) n)	to provide information to obtain information to explain to describe to narrate to complain to persuade / convince to argue (for / against) to instruct / teach to report back to express feelings other (please specify) unknown indeterminate Target listener (to original)	a b c d e f g h I j k l m n	a b c d e f g h I j k l m n	a b c d e f g h I j k l m n	
	a) b) c) d)	general public young learners L2 learners specialist group (please specify)	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d	

1. INPUT - TEXTS

6	Topic of text	Text	Text	Text	Text
a) b) c) d) e) f) g) h) i) j) k) l) m) n) o) p)	personal identification house and home, environment daily life free time / entertainment travel relations with other people health and body care education science and scholarship current affairs shopping food and drink services places language weather other (please specify)	a	a	a	a
7 a) b)	Is text complete? extract from longer text?	a b	a b	a b	a b
8 a) b) c) d)	What details of text source are given? none type of text (e.g. radio programme) title, name of speaker date	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d
9	Are paragraph / line markers (e.g. numbers) provided?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

2. LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

	Text					
1	Main focus of testing	Item	Item	Item	Item	Item
a)	Skimming for overall gist	a	a	a	a	a
b)	demonstrating understanding of text as a whole	b	b	b	ь	b
c)	identifying topic of text	c	c	c	c	c
d)	identifying function of text	d	d	d	d	d
e)	distinguishing main points of text from subsidiary ones	e	e	e	e	e
f)	retrieving specific information by scanning text	f	f	f	f	f
g)	locating and selecting relevant factual information to perform task	g	g	g	g	g
h)	demonstrating understanding of how text structure works	s h	h	h	h	h
i)	distinguishing fact from opinion	I	I	I	I	I
j)	deducing meanind from context	j	j	j	j	j
k)	interpreting text for author's attitude, style	k	k	k	k	k
l)	making inferences from information given in the text	1	1	1	1	1
m)	recognising numbers, letters etc.	m	m	m	m	m
n)	making use of clues such as subtitles, illustrations	n	n	n	n	n
0)	other (please specify)	o	o	o	o	о

2. LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

2	Text	Item	Item	Item	Item	Item
a)	multiple choice (discrete)	a	a	a	a	a
b)	multiple choice (text based)	b	b	b	b	b
c)	gap filling	c	c	с	c	с
d)	matching	d	d	d	d	d
e)	short answer (word / short phrase)	e	е	e	e	е
f)	short answer $(1 - 3 \text{ sentences})$	f	f	f	f	f
g)	sentence completion	g	g	g	g	g
h)	true / false	h	h	h	h	h
i)	ordering	I	I	Ι	Ι	I
j)	other (please specify)	k	k	k	k	k

3. TASKS

	Task				
1	How many tasks are there in relation to the text?				
2	How many items are there per task?				
3	How clear and unambiguous are the tasks?	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 3	1 2 3
4	Is the language of the text at an appropriate level?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 2
5	Is the language of the rubric(s) at an appropriate level?	1 2 3	1 2 1 3 4 1	1 2 3	1 2 3
6	Is the language of the items at an appropriate level?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
7	How are the items sequenced in relation to the text?				
	a) as in the textb) in a different order from the textc) apparently random	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
8	Are the items				
	a) writtenb) recorded on tape	a b	a b	a b	a b
9	Are items read				
	a) beforeb) after listening to the text?	a b	a b	a b	a b

4. EXPECTED RESPONSE

	Task Item				
1	What type of response is required?				
	a) choice from a listb) one or two word answerc) longer answer	a b	a b c	a b	a b
2	Is the type and length of response required indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
3	How limited is the acceptable list of responses?	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 2	1 2 2
4	How often is it possible to respond correctly without reference to the text?				
	a) neverb) sometimesc) always	a b	a b c	a b	a b c
5	To what extent is specialist knowledge assumed?	1 2 3	1 2 1 3 4 1	1 2 3	1 2 3

4. EXPECTED RESPONSE

	Task Item				
6	To what extent is cultural knowledge assumed?	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 2	1 2 3
7	Is information required to answer a particular item?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
	a) localised in only one are a of textb) in several areas of the textc) spread throughout the whole text	a b c c	a b c	a b c	a b c
8	Are candidates referred to specific areas of the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
9	Do the words in the item repeat exactly the words in the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
10	Can items be answered by:				
	a) taking words and phrases directly from the text?b) modifying words in text slightlyc) rephrasing text to a significant extent	a b c c	a b c	a b c	a b c
11	To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 2	1 2 4
12	To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?	1 2 2	1 2 4 III	1 2 4	1 2 1 3 4 1

5. MARKING

	Task Item					
1	How many marks are available?					
2	Is the number of marks available indicated to the candidate?	Yes No				
3	What are the criteria for marking?					
	a) correct meaningb) correct choice of optionc) accurate reproduction of phrases numbers etc.	a	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b
	d) accurate spellinge) other (please specify)	d e	d e	d e	d e	d e
4	Are marking criteria indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	YesNo	YesNo	Yes No
5	What type of marking is used?					
	a) examiner markingb) clerical markingc) computerised marking	a b	a b	a b	a b	a b c