



Administering Part 5, 6a and 6b – Oral Assessment

These tests were developed for use with adult learners who are speakers of other languages. Designed to provide tutors with a brief, efficient measure of the learner's ability to speak and understand English.

Part 5 - Auditory Comprehension

This section is designed to assess the learner's auditory comprehension, the identification of specific vocabulary and the understanding of basic grammatical structures. You can request oral responses to the questions or have the learner indicate their answer.

Show the learner the pictures and ask the question. Record the learner's response.

Part 6a - Creating Language using Basic Vocabulary

The items in Part 6a are designed to assess the learner's ability to create language using basic vocabulary and grammatical structures. Short oral responses are necessary. The focus is on comprehension and meaningful communication.

Show the learner the pictures and ask the question. Record the learner's response.

Part 6b - Creating Language using Complex Vocabulary

The items in Part 6b are designed to assess the learner's ability to create language using more complex grammatical structures. Again, short oral responses are necessary. Learners can be encouraged to expand responses comfortably.

Optional Oral Interview

This is designed to assess a sample of the learner’s language informally. The focus of this is directed toward comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. It should be carried out after Parts 5, 6a and 6b are completed.

Talk with the learner using the suggested questions below (or create some yourself). This interview should take no more than five minutes. There is no need to ask all the questions. The goal is simply to collect a sample of freely expressed language.

Say: “You’ve done really well.”

1. “Can you tell me why you want to learn more English?”
2. “What do you like most about living in Canada?”
3. “How would you compare school, foods and shopping in your home country with those in Canada?”
4. “How do you feel about coming to this program now?”

Scoring

Comprehension

1	2	3	4
----------	----------	----------	----------

1. Learner understands a few learned phrases and basic vocabulary when used in context. Learner has great difficulty understanding conversational English even when the tester speaks slowly.
2. Learner understands a wider variety of phrases and vocabulary. He/she understands some conversational English, but only if the tester uses simple words and speaks slowly.
3. Learner understands conversational English even if some unknown words are used. Tester seldom has to repeat or speak slower than normal.
4. Learner and tester converse fairly easily with both parties understanding the language used. Learner has an understanding of descriptive, factual and abstract material when given in a familiar context.

Fluency

1	2	3	4
----------	----------	----------	----------

1. Learner communicates using gestures to assist language efforts and cannot be understood without these gestures. Even simple survival needs cannot be communicated.
2. Learner uses learned phrases to communicate survival needs. Long pauses and discontinuous speech patterns create difficulty in being understood.
3. Learner participates in conversation beyond basic survival topics and is usually understood. Speech is still marked by short pauses and gestures. Student demonstrates some knowledge of English language structure.
4. Learner maintains an extended casual conversation with few pauses. He/she maintains control over English language structures.

Pronunciation

1	2	3	4
----------	----------	----------	----------

1. Learner pronounces words in ways that make understanding impossible, thereby blocking communication.
2. Learner pronounces words in ways that make understanding difficult, but not impossible if the student repeats the word or words frequently.
3. Learner pronounces words in ways that can be understood almost always by sympathetic and/or trained native speakers. Learner repeats only occasionally and is understood most of the time.
4. Learner is almost always understood by native speakers of English.

5 Tips on Conducting an Oral Interview:

The oral interview format is an effective way to collect a language sample.

1. The trick to collecting an authentic language sample is to make it feel natural, not like part of the test to the learner.
2. The administrator must be an active listener and an interested conversation partner.
3. Seek to create a comfortable relationship.
4. Keep your interview time flexible; 3 to 5 minutes should be sufficient.
5. Be careful not to talk too much. There is a tendency for interviewers to engage in lengthy explanations of something the learner has misunderstood. It is also tempting for the tester to answer the questions themselves. Guard against this!