



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وصمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of National Examinations

Subject: English Language – Grade 6

Test Specifications

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Construct

Test Purpose

To provide a reporting mechanism for schools and the ministry on the English language proficiency of pupils at the end of Cycle 2 in the Bahraini English Language National Curriculum, with reference to the English language learning goals and international level of proficiency described in the Curriculum.

As a general principle, we believe grammar, or language knowledge, is integral to performance in a second language and is a key assessment aim at this level. In particular, candidates will require sufficient knowledge of language, both lexical and structural, to enable them to respond in an informed way to the tasks on the Writing, Reading and Listening Papers. While the emphasis in every task will be on meaning and communication, students who have knowledge of how language is used to achieve effect or express meaning will be strongly placed to perform well in this examination.

Test Level

The Grade 6 examination level is designed to be comparable to the level described in the Common European Framework as Waystage, Level A2.

For example, drawing on what is expected at Grade 6, a language user at this level can:

Speaking/Listening

- identify the topic of discussion
- understand and extract the general idea and specific information from short recorded passages dealing with familiar topics
- talk about themselves, their daily needs and familiar topics in both rehearsed and spontaneous contexts

Reading

- understand and identify specific information in a range of text types such as signs and instructions, articles and stories on familiar matters
- employ the skills of skimming and scanning appropriately

Writing

- write short simple letters and emails relating personal information
- write linked sentences about familiar topics and produce a limited variety of text types such as short stories

Balance of Marks

The skills papers are equally weighted to produce a final total for each candidate.

The allocation of marks in the parts of the skills papers is shown in the table below:

Skill	Part				
	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	25%	75%			
Reading	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Listening	25%	25%	25%	25%	

Relationship with the National Curriculum

These examinations reflect the requirements of the curriculum in terms of what learning a foreign language involves as well as the expected outcomes as identified in the curriculum.

The learning outcomes to be assessed are described in the Curriculum. Language learning is seen as cumulative and these examinations are based on aspects of language which will have been learnt up and including that in Grade 6.

The use of language, topics and lexical fields targeted in the Grade 6 assessment materials are designed to be appropriate to the description in the Curriculum as well as the international standard of English as a Second Language, at this level.

Students learn language when they are involved in meaningful and purposeful activities which require them to communicate using the language. Tasks in these examinations therefore identify the intended audience where appropriate as well as a reason for completing the task, most specifically in the writing examination. The purpose of these examinations is to focus on communication and outcomes, and on what learners can do with the language rather than on what they know about the language. Therefore grammar is not tested directly but indirectly through the writing tasks as well as through the processing that the students need to do in order to successfully complete the reading and listening tasks.

Relationship with Teaching and Text Books

The subject matter of the teaching materials, and hence of the assessment materials, is designed to be in accordance with the philosophy and general aims of education in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The choice of text book for the level is made by the Curriculum Directorate.

Paper 1 Writing

Overview

Duration 45 minutes

Format Candidates read and answer on the question paper.

Skills Objectives

The language objectives have been grouped under skills headings, but it is recognised that these are interrelated.

Writing

W1 Write simple phrases and linked sentences about familiar topics and produce a limited variety of text types such as personal letters, lists, emails, cards, messages, and descriptions.

W2 Write a story set in a familiar context based on visual input.

In addition to assessing lexical and structural knowledge as a key skill in the writing tasks, the need for grammatical accuracy / range including lexical range is built into the marking criteria.

Writing Test Specification

Skill	Question	Skill Objective	Description
Writing	1	W1	Candidates write an email/letter of 20-25 words in response to written stimulus (transactional writing).
	2	W2	Candidates write a story of about 50-75 words based on four linked pictures (narrative writing).

Writing Test Format

Question	Task Type	Text length
1	Guided transactional writing	Candidates write an email/postcard of 20-25 words in response to written stimulus, e.g. a short instruction plus 3 bullet points.
2	Guided narrative writing	Candidates tell a story of 50-75 words based on four linked pictures.

Mark Schemes

Examiners mark the Writing Paper following coordination sessions which set the standard and ensure the correct application of the mark schemes. The live mark schemes may be expanded, revised or amended as required from one session to the next.

Candidate performance is to be assessed at the Grade 6 level (A2).

There is no penalty for over-length responses, but digression (or failure to address the content points) is penalised according to the mark scheme.

Question 1

5 marks are available for this task, 3 marks for content + 2 marks for language. The response is marked according to the schemes below, then the marks are added to get the total for the question.

Content marks	
3	All content points addressed
2	Two content points addressed
1	One content point addressed
0	No content points addressed No marks can be awarded for language use

Language marks	
2	Reader can easily understand the message. May have minor errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	Message may not be completely clear. Some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
0	Reader does not understand the message: includes illegibility. Numerous errors

Question 2

Marks for language are awarded according to the descriptors in the mark scheme.

The mark scheme is divided into bands. There are 3 marks available within each band. Markers should first decide which band applies to a response, then consider where to place a response within the band. Strong responses score at the top of the band, weak at the bottom.

13-15	A very good response for the level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 4 pictures addressed• Reader easily understands the story.• May have minor errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar.
10-12	A good response for the level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 4 pictures addressed• Reader can understand the story.• Some errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar.
7-9	An adequate response for the level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only 3 pictures may be addressed• Reader can understand the story with some difficulty.• Some errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar.
4-6	A weak response for the level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 or 2 pictures may be addressed• Reader can follow some sentences, but may not understand the story.• Many errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar.
1-3	A very poor response for the level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There may be only a few instances of correct spelling, punctuation or grammar.
0	No response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completely incomprehensible in relation to the task or irrelevant.

Paper 2 Reading

Overview

Duration 60 minutes

Format Candidates read and answer on the question paper.

Skills Objectives

The language objectives have been grouped under skills headings, but it is recognised that these are interrelated.

Reading

R1 Identify and understand key points and details in short texts such as signs, instructions, menus, lists, personal letters, recipes, emails, messages, postcards, timetables and advertisements.

R2 Identify and understand the main ideas and details of texts such as articles, brochures, leaflets and stories, notices and advertisements.

R3 Employ the skills of skimming, scanning and reading for detail appropriately to facilitate understanding of a text.

Grammar

G1 Recognition of the appropriate grammatical item for a given context (main focus on verbs).

G2 Recognition of the appropriate lexical-grammatical item for a given context.

Reading Test Specification

Skill	Part	Skill Objective	Description
Reading	1	R1	Signs, notices, advertisements, etc. 5 x 3-option MCQs
	2a & 2b	R2, R3	Multiple-matching task testing specific detail; questions to test scanning for required information. Seven options from which candidates match 5.
	3a & 3b	R2, R3	An email followed by 5x3-option MCQ items. Candidates select the correct information based on their reading of the text.
	4	R2, G1	Text with 5 gapped verbs (may include modals and auxiliaries). Candidates choose the verb form which fits correctly with the context from 3 options provided for each.
	5a & 5b	R2, G2	Text with 5 gaps testing lexical/grammatical items. Candidates select correct word from 3 options to fill in gap.

MCQ = multiple-choice question

Reading Test Format

Part	Task Type	Text length
1	3-option MCQs	Signs or notices
2a & 2b	Matching task testing specific detail.	Six short sentences (3-10 words) and eight short texts (5-15 words), e.g. people's likes and dislikes, advertisements, book titles, etc. One worked example included
3a & 3b	MCQ	An email of 140-170 words followed by MCQ items
4	Verb cloze (closed)	Text of about 40-60 words with 5 gapped verbs
5a & 5b	Lexical/grammatical cloze (closed)	Text of about 40-60 words with 5 gaps testing lexical/grammatical items

Paper 3 Listening

Overview

Duration	Approximately 35 minutes
Format	Candidates listen to a series of recordings and answer questions on the question paper. Each recording is heard twice.
Voices	A range of adult (including young adult) voices, styles of delivery and accents will be heard in each Listening paper to reflect the various contexts presented in the recordings, as appropriate to the level of the test takers.

Skills Objectives

The language objectives have been grouped under skills headings, but it is recognised that these are interrelated.

Listening

L1	Demonstrating general comprehension, for example, of attitude/agreement/opinion, or by identifying the topic of a conversation (informal contexts and typical daily situations).
L2	Listening for detail (informal contexts and typical daily situations) and responding through objective questions.
L3	Listening for detail and writing down information, for example names, places, numbers.

Listening Test Specification

Skill	Part	Skills Objective	Description
Listening	1	L1, L2	Five short dialogues between two different speakers (male/female) of typical daily situations in informal contexts (times, prices, days of the week, etc.) 5x3-option MCQs which may include words, numbers or visuals; 5 items plus an example
	2	L1, L2	An informal dialogue between two different speakers (male/female) Matching exercise, 5 items from 7 options, listening to identify specific information One worked example included
	3a & 3b	L1, L3	Monologue, for example an answerphone message A note-taking task with 5 items (plus one integrated example), involving listening and writing down information (may include spelled out items, names, places, numbers, etc.)
	4	L1, L2	Informal dialogue between two different speakers (male/female) 5x3-option MCQ (plus one integrated example)

Listening Test Format

Part	Task Format
1	M/F dialogues (each about 30-60 words)
2	M/F dialogue (280-300 words)
3a & 3b	M or F monologue (170-200 words)
4	M/F dialogue (250-300 words)