

Language Competence Test Specifications

English for Mariners Level A1/A2 Voc

Listening

Listening 1

Candidates listen to five one-sentence-long texts and choose from three distractors (2+1) which is closest in meaning.

The texts can be warnings, instructions, explanations, requests or advice.

Texts should be complete sentences – maximum ten words long.

For example: Candidates hear: ‘*Starboard steer one eight two*’

Candidates choose from:

a. *Steady on 182*

b. *Starboard one eight two*

c. *Steering one and two, sir*

(The correct answer is b)

Distractors should be unambiguous and though each one could be a possible response, the correct answer should be the one closest in meaning. One example should be supplied for the candidates.

Listening 2

Candidates listen to five VHF transmissions (each is one sentence long). Candidates identify the nature of each transmission according to the eight SMCP message markers (**Instruction, Advice, Warning, Information, Question, Answer, Request, Intention**)

Example: candidates hear ‘Number one. Do not cross the fairway.’

Candidates write 1. INSTRUCTION

One example should be supplied for candidates.

Listening 3

Candidates listen to a VHF exchange (dialogue) with five gaps and fill the gaps using information from the audio recording.

The exchange should be a maximum 70 words and contain:

- numbers (on the audio script these should be written in words)
- at least one SMCP message marker
- a statement
- a question
- conventional VHF vocabulary (e.g. ‘Affirmative’ / ‘Roger’ / ‘Over’ etc.)

Listening 4

Candidates listen to a moderately complex monologue and complete a record. The monologue should be maximum 90 words and contain a simple time line.

Because Listening 1, 2 and 3 are based on VHF communication, this monologue should be a radio transmission dedicated to weather information (probably a forecast).

Monologue should be no longer than ninety words and should contain meteorological vocabulary, references to compass points and METAREAs. Positions should not be given by latitude and longitude but by devices such as: ‘fifty nautical miles north west of...’ The language of the monologue should conform to the style of radio broadcasts to shipping issued by Met Offices worldwide.

Reading

Reading 1

Candidates read 5 separate sentences. They must choose the best response to each sentence from three distractors. The 5 sentences should test candidates’ knowledge of basic vocabulary. The sentences can be ‘Wh-’ questions that require an answer.

For example:

What is the name of the kitchen on a ship?

- a. cabin*
- b. head*
- c. galley*

(the correct answer is c)

It is important for test writers to remember that what is being tested here is the ability to read and understand simple questions, not just knowledge of vocabulary.

Distractors should be of equal length and no more than 3 words.
Candidates should be provided with one example.

Reading 2

Candidates read five warnings or instructions and match them with pictures.
Instructions should be one or two sentences or phrases long, for example:

High voltage. There is a danger of electrocution.

Pictures should be in sets i.e. all hazard / warning symbols.
The five sentences should be distributed between negative instructions (Do Not) with positive ones.
(For example:
Candidates are provided with one example.

Reading 3

Candidates complete a set of five similarly structured regulations. Each regulation has a gap with no more than three words taken out and presented to the students mixed up (+ 1 for the example).

All the regulations should belong to one context (for example: adapted COLREGS).

Example: *Every vessel shall at all times proceed at a safe speed so that she can stop safely.*

It should be possible for candidates to find contextual clues from within both the gap items and the sentences they belong to.

Candidates are provided with one example.

Reading 4

Candidates read short, but extended text(s) and answer five comprehension questions.

There can be up to three texts but the total number of words should not exceed 100.

It is important that the type of text is relevant to A1/2 level profile. For example:

- CVs
- Notices to crew (break times, pay, sickness, safety procedures etc)
- Advertisements (e.g. for employment)
- Sections of an operator's manual

Questions should be of a consistent style (probably What / Which / How constructions).

Writing

Writing 1

Candidates write a short note which reports on a work issue.

Input is provided in the form of information in a tabular form. Candidates' task is to use the information to write a note.

For example:

Candidates read a questionnaire detailing a faulty piece of equipment. They must then write a short report to an officer or engineer describing the fault.

Rubric should give details to candidates about what should go into the report and the first words / sentence of the note should be provided.

Writing 2

Candidates write a letter / email.

There should be less input than in Writing 1 (above) to encourage a freer style. However, simple input is possible so long as the task does not involve simply transferring the input into a different format.

Suggested tasks:

Write a letter to an employer requesting leave and giving reasons

Write instructions / information for fellow worker / different watch

Write to authorities requesting form / information / answering questions etc.

Example of writing task:

Yesterday you were fifteen minutes late for your watch. Captain Brocklehurst, your skipper, wants an explanation in writing for the company files.

Think of a reason why you were late and write a short letter to the skipper. Apologise for being late and explain why.

Speaking

Speaking 1

Candidates construct 5 single sentences from stimuli presented to them by an interlocutor.

Stimuli should all be in the same set (e.g. safety signs).

Stimuli should demand both positive and negative sentences from the candidates.

For example:

Candidates are asked to give an instruction as a response to the symbol:



Candidate says: 'You must wear gloves' / 'You should wear gloves'

Speaking 2

Candidates study a set or series of pictures and use the pictures as stimuli for talk.

Pictures should illustrate steps in procedures or a simple process.

Suggested picture series:

Entry / exit to port

Preparing for rough weather

Repairing equipment

Erecting a sail

Equipping a lifeboat

Interlocutor chooses most appropriate directions from the following:

'Describe what is happening.'

OR

'Use the pictures to give me instructions. For example; first you must contact the port authority by radio...'

Speaking 3

Examiner has information which the candidate does not have. Candidate has information which the interlocutor does not have. Candidates must complete a form and in order to do that must ask the interlocutor questions.

Candidate must ask 5 questions.

For example:

Candidate has information about a crew member in tabular form, there are two gaps in the table.

Interlocutor asks three questions and the candidate answers using the information in the table.

Candidate must then ask two questions to complete the gaps.