

Test of English for Aviation

Guide for:

Test-takers & Teachers



**TEST OF ENGLISH
FOR AVIATION**

What is the TEA test?

- TEA is a test of your ability to communicate in English – it is not a test of your operational knowledge.
- TEA is a test of plain English in an aviation context – it is not a test of aviation phraseology
- TEA is a face-to-face interview with one examiner lasting about 20 minutes and consisting of 3 sections.

The TEA test does NOT include:

- any writing
- any reading
- any need to type or use a computer

Not a test of operational knowledge

TEA examiners are familiar with aviation and are sometimes pilots or controllers. Nevertheless there are no extra marks to be gained from talking about correct operational procedures. Equally, nothing is lost by not knowing about a particular area of operations.

TEA tests plain English, not phraseology – the ICAO language standards have been introduced to improve communication when phraseology is insufficient.

The ICAO descriptors

ICAO has developed the criteria by which your English will be judged. The full descriptors can be viewed [here](#):

A simplified version is on the next page.

ICAO Level	Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Interaction	Comprehension
5	Pronunciation rarely causes a problem for understanding.	Uses basic grammar well. Makes mistakes with complex grammar, which sometimes cause a problem for understanding.	Has enough vocabulary to talk about common, work-related topics. Can paraphrase when necessary. Uses idioms sometimes.	Can speak easily about common topics. Can use correct discourse markers.	Responds quickly, with useful and appropriate replies. Can control a conversation.	Can understand accurately about work related topics. Can understand a range of accents.
4	Pronunciation only sometimes causes a problem for understanding.	Uses basic grammar quite well. Makes mistakes with basic grammar, which sometimes cause a problem for understanding.	Usually has enough vocabulary to talk about common, work related topics. Can often paraphrase when necessary.	Can sometimes speak freely and easily. Slow speaking does not cause a problem for communication. Can sometimes use discourse markers correctly. Fillers do not cause a problem.	Usually responds quickly with useful replies. Can communicate even in surprising situations. Fixes misunderstandings by checking or confirming or clarifying.	Can understand mostly accurately about work related topics. May need to ask questions in complicated or unusual situations.
3	Pronunciation frequently causes a problem for understanding.	Makes a number of mistakes with basic grammar which frequently cause a problem for understanding.	Often has enough vocabulary to talk about common, work related topics, but often uses wrong words. Cannot paraphrase often.	Often speaks too slowly, and this may cause a problem for communication. Fillers are sometimes a problem.	Sometimes responds quickly with useful replies. Can communicate in familiar situations. Generally can not respond in surprising situations.	Can often understand accurately about work related topics. May not understand in complicated or unusual situations.
2	Pronunciation almost always causes a problem for understanding	Uses only a few memorized sentences and grammar structures	Only knows some individual words or memorized phrases	Can say some memorized phrases, but is very slow to search for expressions or to say unfamiliar words. Fillers are a big problem.	Responds slowly with replies that are not useful. Can only manage simple, routine conversations	Can only understand some phrases when they are said slowly.

Candidates are awarded a mark from 1 to 6 for each of the 6 skills: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, interactions, comprehension.

It is the LOWEST of these 6 marks which decides the overall mark.

Examples:

Listen to some pilots and controllers in the first part of the TEA test. Using the descriptors on Page 3 think about which level the candidate should be awarded in the following areas (the answers are provided at the bottom of page 9):



[Candidate 1](#)

[Candidate 2](#)

[Candidate 3](#)

[Candidate 4](#)

	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4
Pronunciation				
Vocabulary				
Structure				
Fluency				

TEA - Part 1

In this part of the test you will be asked a series of set, simple questions relating to your aviation background. There are no right or wrong answers – you should show you understand the questions by talking about your role in aviation.

Listen to this TEA candidate answering questions on Part 1. Think how you would have answered these same questions:

Questions

1. *Could you tell me about your job? Click [here](#)*
2. *Can you describe what you do at work? Click [here](#)*
3. *Is a pilot's job important? Click [here](#)*
4. *What's the difference between a pilot's role today, compared with the past? Click [here](#)*
5. *How much training is necessary to be a pilot? Click [here](#)*



Part One Tips!

1. Give full answers. Try to show your fluency.
2. Listen to the tense of the question. Should you answer in the past tense, present tense, or future?
3. Do not give irrelevant answers. If you do not understand the question, it is much better to ask!
4. Show the examiner what you know! This is not a time to be shy. You are being judged only by the English you demonstrate during the test. The worst thing is to be silent. If you are not sure about something tell the examiner what you do know and what you are not sure about.

TEA Part 2 - Interactive Comprehension

There are three parts to this section. In each section, you will listen to a series of recordings presented by international speakers of English. Recordings will be played once unless you ask for repetition. You cannot hear recordings a third time.

In the first part, there are 10 recordings in which a pilot or controller is talking in a non-routine aviation situation. After each recording, the examiner will ask: "What was the message?". You need to tell the examiner what you understand about the situation. All the information is important.

Listen to these 5 example recordings :



Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

Situation 3 - click [here](#)

Situation 4 - click [here](#)

Situation 5 - click [here](#)

Now listen to this candidate answering these same 5 recordings:



Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

Situation 3 - click [here](#)

Situation 4 - click [here](#)

Situation 5 - click [here](#)

Here is the tapescript - do you think he answered the questions well?

1. *I cannot hear what you are saying. Please say each word twice. (Yes – it is clear that the candidate understood the meaning here)*
2. *We can smell smoke from the toilets. We think a passenger has a cigarette (Yes – he passed on all the information correctly).*
3. *We've just gone through some bad turbulence. We need to check if the passengers are OK. (Half right – he understood that they had passed through turbulence, but he didn't understand the second part)*
4. *The first officer has a severe head injury. Request diversion to the nearest aerodrome. (Yes, both parts of message successfully conveyed)*
5. *There are vehicles close to the runway. Stand by for instructions. (Yes, almost perfect read-back)*

Part 2a Tips!

1. *Ask for repetition if you do not understand well. Often it is clearer the second time. The examiner will not play it a second time unless you ask!*
2. *Do not panic if you miss a recording, or do not understand. You do not need to get all 10 correct! Relax, forget about it, and think about the next one.*
3. *Give all the information that you can (from the recording). Do not fail to say something, just because it seems obvious. The examiner needs to know that you heard it and understood it!*

In the second part, there are 3 recordings in more general, non-routine situations. After each recording, you have 20 seconds to ask the speaker questions to find out more about the situation. There are no right answers, but you should show you understand the situation by asking relevant questions.

The third part is similar to the second part – there are 3 recordings in general, non-routine situations. After each recording, you have 20 seconds to give the speaker some advice. There are no right answers, but you should show you understand the situation by giving relevant advice.

Listen to these examples, and think about what questions you would ask and what advice you would give (listen to the examiner's instructions!).

Part 2b

Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

**Part 2c**

Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

Here are the transcripts:

Part 2b:

1. *We have a problem, we cannot move. (ask questions)*
2. *We have a situation, there is a man shouting at me. (ask questions)*

Part 2c:

1. *We need some help, we can't hear anything (give advice)*
2. *We need some help, the computer system has gone down (give advice)*

Now listen to what the candidate said. Do you think he understood the situation?

Part 2b

Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

**Part 2c**

Situation 1 - click [here](#)

Situation 2 - click [here](#)

Part 2b and 2c Tips!

1. *Do not pretend to understand if you do not. It is much better interaction to explain that you do not understand a particular word.*
2. *Try to give 1 or 2 pieces of useful, relevant advice or questions. You do not need to give a lot, just make sure that they are appropriate.*

1. Yes – he asks if they need a towing machine.
 2. Yes – he asks why he is shouting, and if it is possible to calm him
-
1. No – his answer is vague and general. It is not clear that he understood completely.
 2. Maybe – he advises to follow procedures and also suggests looking at the circuit breakers, showing that he understands there is an electrical fault somewhere.

TEA Part 3 - Describe, compare and discuss

You will be shown two pictures and asked to describe and compare them with as much information as possible. You will have one minute to speak. This is repeated with another set of two pictures.

Listen to the instructions - click [here](#):



Now listen to the candidate's answer - click [here](#):

Section 3 Tips!

1. *Try to describe as much as possible.. talk about what is in the background, foreground, what is happening now, what has happened before now, what will happen next.*
2. *Remember that 1 minute is not very long to describe 2 pictures, you need to keep talking.*

TEA Part 3 - Discussion

You will then take part in a discussion of general aviation topics.

Listen to the questions first:



1. click [here](#):
2. click [here](#):
3. click [here](#):

Think how you would have answered these questions.

Now listen to the candidate's answers. Do you think he gave a good, full answers?

1. click [here](#):
2. click [here](#):
3. click [here](#):



Section 3 Tips

1. *Try to say as much as possible. But remember it is a conversation, and the examiner may ask you to explain what you mean.*
2. *This is your chance to show off as much English as you know. You are free in this part to use as many structures as possible.*
3. *Long, confusing answers are not as good as short, informative ones!*

Answers to exercise on Page 4

	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4
Pronunciation	3	4	4	5
Vocabulary	2	3	4	6
Structure	2	3	4	5
Fluency	2	3	4	5

How do I book a test?

Click [here](#) to contact your nearest TEA test centre

What happens on the exam day?

You should arrive at least thirty minutes before your test time so that the administrator can take your photograph (which will appear on your certificate). Make sure you bring the passport or national identity card you registered with to the test centre – you will not be allowed to take the test without it. You do not need to bring anything else with you. Mobile phones must be left outside the test room. The test will be recorded for security reasons. If you are unhappy about any aspect of the test day procedures, you must speak to the administrator on the test day.

Your test result will not be available on the test day, so please do not ask the examiner.

What kind of results are given?

The test is scored according to the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale. You will be given a score from 1 to 6 for your performance in Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension and Interactions. The overall mark will be the lowest of these scores. All of this information is recorded on your certificate.

When will I receive my certificate?

After your test is checked for interlocution and rating standards, your certificate will be printed and posted from the UK to the TEA test centre within 10 working days of your test date.

Further information:

Visit www.TEA-test.com or email info@tea-test.com

