B1 English speaking test: free sample

These are original practice questions with example answers at B1 level. They follow the style of the published formats, not any real paper. Your own answers should be true for you. Example answers are one way to answer, not the only way.

Tests covered by the format of these samples: Trinity GESE Grade 5, LanguageCert B1, IELTS Life Skills B1, PTE Home B1, PSI Skills for English B1. Results from SELT Practice are estimates. This is not immigration advice.

Practice questions and example answers

Festivals and recent personal experiences

Q. Do children enjoy festivals in your family?

A. Yes, the children love festivals because they get money and new clothes. On Eid my uncles give small envelopes to my nephews, and they are very excited. I have a daughter, and she asked me many questions about the traditions this year.

Q. What kind of presents do people give?

A. People usually give clothes, sweets or money. I think a small gift is enough. It is not very important to spend a lot, because the most important thing is to be together.

Q. What did you do last weekend?

A. Last weekend I visited my sister in Leicester. We cooked together and we watched a film in the evening. I was very tired on Monday, but I enjoyed it a lot.

Q. Did you do anything new or different?

A. I tried a new restaurant that serves food from Ethiopia. It was my first time, and I loved the bread. Next weekend I will stay at home and clean the house.

A leaving gift for a colleague

Q. What do you think we should buy?

A. I think a plant is a good idea because it is not expensive and it looks nice. Maria can put it near a window.

Q. She is moving to a small flat.

A. Yes, that is true. A small plant does not take much space, so it can be on a table or a shelf.

Q. What about the chocolates?

A. Maria is trying to eat less sugar, so I do not think chocolates are right. A plant lasts longer.

Q. OK, what about the card?

A. Good idea. Everybody can write a message in the card, and I can buy it today.

Improving the neighbourhood

Q. What should we build?

A. A community garden would be best because everyone can enjoy it.

Q. How can we raise money?

A. We could have a cake sale and ask the council for some help.

Q. How can neighbours help each other?

A. They can offer to do shopping or give a lift to the doctor.

Q. What would make your area better?

A. I think more benches and better street lights would help.

A journey I remember

Q. Talk about an interesting journey you have made.

A. The most interesting journey I have made was to my cousin's wedding in another city. I travelled by train with my husband, and the journey took about nine hours. We were tired but excited. At the station we got lost for a while, but a kind man helped us. I learned that it is always good to ask for help.

Music and recent personal experiences

Q. What traditional music do you have in your culture?

A. In my culture we have traditional music with drums and a flute. People play it at weddings and festivals, and everybody dances in a circle. My grandfather played the flute very well.

Q. Do young people still like it?

A. Young people also like it, but they mix it with modern songs. The drum is round and you hit it with two sticks. I have heard a British band use the same drum, and I was surprised.

Q. Have you met any interesting people recently?

A. I met a woman called Priya at the library last week. She is also learning English, and she lives only three streets from me. We talked about our children and about food.

Q. Will you see them again?

A. We exchanged phone numbers and we will meet again on Thursday. I think we will become good friends. I have not had a friend here since my cousin moved away.

A time you helped someone

Q. Talk about a time you helped someone.

A. Last winter I helped an old neighbour who had fallen on the ice outside her house. I was coming back from the shops when I saw her on the ground. I stayed with her and phoned for an ambulance. While we were waiting, I put my coat over her to keep her warm. She had broken her wrist, but she was fine in the end. She was very grateful and she brought me a cake the next week. I felt glad that I had been there, and I now visit her every Friday.

Q. Do you often help other people?

A. I try to, especially my neighbours, because we live close together.

Q. Is it better to give help or to ask for it?

A. I think both are important. Sometimes it is difficult to ask, but people are usually happy to help.

Health and fitness

Q. How do you keep healthy?

A. I walk to work and I try to eat fresh food, because it makes me feel better.

Q. Have you ever played any sport?

A. Yes, I've played badminton since I was a child. I play on Saturdays.

Q. What would you like to change?

A. I'd like to sleep more because I often go to bed late.

Q. What will you do about it?

A. I'll switch off my phone at ten o'clock from next week.

Planning a day out with friends

Q. You are planning a day out with friends. Tell them your plan.

A. I suggest we go to the seaside on Saturday. We can travel by coach, because it is cheaper than the train. I will bring sandwiches, fruit and a football. We can walk by the sea and play games on the beach. If it rains, we can go to the museum instead, which is free.

Means of transport and special occasions

Q. What did you think of British transport when you arrived?

A. When I first came, I was surprised that every bus has a number and a timetable. I used my phone to find the bus and I asked the driver many questions. I felt shy, but he was friendly.

Q. What do you like best now?

A. What I like best now is the tram in my city, because it is clean and fast. I have used it every day since January. My daughter thinks it is like a toy train.

Q. Have you ever celebrated an anniversary or a graduation?

A. We celebrated our tenth wedding anniversary last June. We went to a restaurant by the river and my husband gave me a necklace. I was so surprised because he usually forgets dates!

Q. How did you feel?

A. I felt very happy and a bit emotional. We took a lot of photos and we sent them to our families abroad. We have not celebrated like that for years, so it was special.

A tradition in your family

Q. Talk about a tradition in your family or community.

A. A tradition in my family is making sweets together before Diwali. Every year, about two weeks before the festival, all the women in the family meet at my grandmother's house. We make ladoos and jalebis, and the children help us. It has changed a little since I moved to the UK, because now I do it with my friends instead of my relatives. I will certainly continue it, and I will teach my children, so that they remember where they come from.

Q. Do you think traditions are important?

A. Yes, I do. They keep families together and they teach children about their culture.

Q. Will your children continue the tradition?

A. I hope so. I'm teaching them now, so that they will be able to do the same.

A person who helped you

Q. Talk about a person who has helped you in your life.

A. I'd like to talk about my neighbour, Mrs Taylor. She's a retired teacher and she lives next door to me. We met on the day I moved into my flat last year, when she brought me a cup of tea and some biscuits. At first I didn't know anything about life here, so she helped me a lot. She explained which bin is for recycling and how the buses work, and she helped me fill in some forms for my son's school. She also corrects my English, very kindly, and I've learned many new words from her. I feel very lucky, because without her my first year would have been much harder. To say thank you, I cook dinner for her once a week, and last month I gave her some flowers on her birthday.

Q. How often do you see this person now?

A. I see her almost every day, because she lives next door.

Q. What is the most important thing this person did for you?

A. She helped me with the forms for my son's school.

Q. Have you helped this person too?

A. Yes, I sometimes do her shopping when it's icy outside.

Work and study

Q. What work or studies are you doing at the moment?

A. I work as a care assistant in the mornings and I study English in the evenings.

Q. Why do some people change their jobs often?

A. I think some people want more money or a better timetable. Others get bored and want something new.

Growing vegetables in my garden

Q. Tell me about: How I started

A. I started two years ago when we moved into a house with a garden. In my country my family had a small farm, so I missed the land. I bought a few seeds in the garden centre and I started with tomatoes.

Q. Tell me about: What I grow

A. I grow tomatoes, beans, chillies and coriander. The chillies are my favourite because I can use them in the kitchen. The coriander grows very quickly in the spring.

Q. Tell me about: Problems with the weather

A. The weather here is a problem because it is often wet and cold. Last summer there was not much sun, so the tomatoes stayed green. This year I have bought a small plastic cover, which helps a lot.

Q. Tell me about: What I do with the vegetables

A. I cook the vegetables and I also give some to my neighbours. An old lady next door loves my beans, and she gave me some apples in return. We have become good friends.

School, young people, money and festivals

Q. Please spell your family name for me.

A. My family name is Hassan. H-A-S-S-A-N.

Q. Where are you from?

A. I am from Faisalabad, Pakistan.

Q. What was your favourite subject at school, and how has it helped you?

A. I loved mathematics. It has helped me with my accounts at work, and I can help my children with their homework.

Q. Do you think life is better for young people now than when you were young?

A. In some ways it is better, because they can learn from the internet. But I think they spend too much time on their phones.

Three tips

1. Always give a reason. After an opinion, add “because…” and one example from your own life. A B1 answer is usually four to six sentences.

2. Talk about experiences in the past with a little detail: when it was, who was there and how you felt. Use the past simple, and the present perfect for experiences, such as “I have lived here for six years”.

3. Use linking words to join ideas: “but”, “so”, “although”, “for example”, “on the other hand”. They make your answer sound organised.

Now practise out loud

Reading answers is not the same as speaking them. Open seltpractice.com/b1-english-test and answer each question out loud with the AI examiner, then check your estimated result.