

# 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—25 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](#):

TEA candidates can score from Level 1 to Level 6 but most candidates score Level 3, 4 or 5. A simplified version of Levels 2—5 is on the next page.

ICAO Level	Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interaction
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.	Can understand accurately about work related topics. Can understand a range of accents.	Responds quickly, with useful and appropriate replies. Can control a conversation.
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.	Can understand mostly accurately about work related topics. May need to ask questions in complicated or unusual situations.	Usually responds quickly with useful replies. Can communicate even in surprising situations. Fixes misunderstandings by checking or confirming or clarifying.
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.	Can often understand accurately about work related topics. May not understand in complicated or unusual situations.	Sometimes responds quickly with useful replies. Can communicate in familiar situations. Generally can not respond in surprising 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.	Can only understand some phrases when they are said slowly.	Responds slowly with replies that are not useful. Can only manage simple, routine conversations

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

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

### 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 you can connect ideas and explain your opinions.
2. Listen to the tense of the question. Should you answer in the past tense, present tense, or future tense?
3. If you do not understand the question, it is much better to ask! Do not give irrelevant answers.
4. If you are not sure about something, tell the examiner what you do know and also what you are not sure about. You are being assessed by the English you demonstrate during the test. The worst thing is to be silent.

**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 (Part 2A) 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 demonstrated his understanding 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, he demonstrated understanding of both parts of the message.)*
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. The meaning is often clearer the second time you hear something. 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 understand all 10 recordings! Relax, forget about it, and focus on the next recording.*
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 (Part 2B), 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 (Part 2C) 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 or recording.*
2. *Try to ask 2 or 3 relevant questions or give 2 or 3 pieces of useful, relevant advice. Make sure that they are appropriate and demonstrate that you understand the recordings.*



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 given 2 connected pictures to describe and compare. You will be shown the first picture and asked to describe it with 30 seconds to speak. You will then be shown a second picture and asked some questions about it. You will then be asked some questions about both pictures. Finally, you will take part in a discussion of general aviation topics related to the pictures.



Listen to an example of examiner and candidate in this task - 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. *You will not receive preparation time—so, be ready to begin speaking, and respond to the examiners questions promptly.*



## 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 connect your ideas and explain yourself. When you do not expand on opinions or statements, the examiner may ask you to explain what you mean. Be prepared to interact with the examiner.*
2. *Long, confusing answers are not as good as short, informative ones!*
3. *If you do not understand something, demonstrate that you can clearly ask for help—and the examiner will explain anything you ask about.*

### Answers to exercise on Page 4

	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4
<b>Pronunciation</b>	3	4	4	5
<b>Vocabulary</b>	2	3	4	6
<b>Structure</b>	2	3	4	5
<b>Fluency</b>	2	3	4	5

## How do I book a test?

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

## What happens on the test 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 ID 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 and recording devices 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 Centre within 10 working days of your test date.

## Further information:

Visit [www.TEA-test.com](http://www.TEA-test.com) or email [info@tea-test.com](mailto:info@tea-test.com)

**TEA**  
TEST OF ENGLISH  
FOR AVIATION

TEA is managed and administered by Wipac College which is approved by the UK CAA to conduct English language testing. Our Aviation Authority (CAA)

*This is to certify that:*

FAMILY NAME Example  
FIRST NAME(S) A N  
PASSPORT/ID NUMBER ex12345678  
NATIONALITY Bulgarian  
DATE OF BIRTH 10-Nov-1969 SEX M

*has achieved the following:*

OVERALL TEST RESULT	5					
PRONUNCIATION	5	STRUCTURE	5	VOCABULARY	5	
FLUENCY	6	COMPREHENSION	5	INTERACTIONS	6	

EXAMINER NUMBER 8 / 8 CENTRE NUMBER 1  
CERTIFICATE NUMBER EXA008001010120114725  
DATE OF TEST 01-Jan-2011

KEY according to ICAO language proficiency requirements  
1 PRE-ELEMENTARY  
2 ELEMENTARY  
3 PRE-OPERATIONAL  
4 OPERATIONAL  
5 EXTENDED  
6 EXPERT

DIRECTOR OF TESTING, TEA

This certificate is only valid if it is signed and contains a QR code embedded stamp