



## **Test of Interactive English**

### **Examiner's Handbook & Mark Scheme**

Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Test of Interactive English)

Spoken TIE: A1-B1

Written TIE: A1-B1

(RQF Levels: Entry Level 1, 2 and 3)



## 1. Examiner's Profile and Training

Examiners (sometimes referred to as Assessors or Markers) mark the examination recordings and/or scripts and make assessment decisions.

All Examiners of the Test of Interactive English (TIE) are experienced, qualified English language teachers and assessors who have undergone extensive training.

The training for all Examiners involves:

- Practical training session, led by an experienced TIE lead Examiner
- Self-study
- A probationary period

The training consists of:

- Familiarisation of the background and development of the TIE
- Familiarisation with the principles of assessment and the TIE assessment criteria
- Familiarisation with the format, tasks and procedures of the TIE examinations
- Introduction to the assessment descriptors for both Spoken and Written TIE examinations
- Practical application of the assessment criteria for both Spoken and Written TIE
- Standardisation of results for both Spoken and Written TIE

Following initial training, all TIE Examiners' assessment decisions are subject to second-line marking and moderation in line with the Gatehouse Awards *Moderation Policy*.

Confidential feedback to Examiners is provided by the Lead Moderator. Examiners are encouraged to provide feedback to Gatehouse Awards on their experience of using the assessment materials and making assessment decisions.

All Examiners must participate in annual Examiner standardisation training.

## 2. Overview of the Test of Interactive English

The Test of Interactive English is an integrated four skills test of language ability. The approach taken in the Test of Interactive English is for the Candidate to take responsibility for selecting appropriate materials for half the test, while comparability of performance is maintained by Candidates' performing standardised tasks for the other half of the test.

The A1-B1 Spoken TIE examination consists of four tasks:

Spoken TIE Examination Summary (A1 – B1)			
Step	Task	Summary	Timings
1. Introduction: Conversation (Spontaneous)	Personal introductions Exchange of personal information (All Candidates)	Candidates listen and talk to the interlocutor and each other, to introduce each other and exchange personal information	4 minutes (for two Candidates)  5-6 minutes (for three Candidates)
2. Investigation (Prepared)	Presentation and discussion of Investigation (All Candidates)	In turn, each Candidate refers to their Logbook and presents their project. Both Candidates comment on the other's project and respond to questions from the Interlocutor/each other.	5-6 minutes (for two Candidates)  8-9 minutes (for three Candidates)
3. The Book (Prepared)	Presentation <u>and</u> discussion of the book (All Candidates)	In turn, each Candidate presents their book and answers questions from the Interlocutor/the other Candidate.	5-6 minutes (for two Candidates)  8-9 minutes (for three Candidates)
4. Talking about photos (Spontaneous)	Each Candidate talks about a photo they are presented with and answers questions in relation to the photo. (All Candidates)	Candidates look at and talk about the visuals and respond to questions from the Interlocutor/each other.	3-4 minutes (for two Candidates)  5-6 minutes (for three Candidates)

The examination is expected to be approximately 20 minutes in duration (when two Candidates are present), or 30 minutes (when three Candidates are present).

All tasks are audio recorded as one continuous examination.

In some instances, Interlocutors will also act as Examiners and will make their assessment decisions immediately following the end of the examination. Where Interlocutors are not trained Gatehouse Awards Examiners, the Examiners will base their assessment decisions on the audio recordings.

**Important Note:** The Examiner must make every effort to clearly introduce all the candidates using their full names in order to enable the moderators to effectively distinguish between the candidates in the audio recording.

The A1-B1 Written TIE consists of two tasks:

Written TIE Examination Summary (A1 – B1)		
Step	Task Summary	Timings
1. Prepared Writing	Candidates are asked to complete a form, which contains some simple and more complex features. The form consists of three sections and requires single-word responses and responses requiring full sentence answers.	25 minutes
2. Spontaneous Writing	<p>Candidates are asked to produce a text, which is an informal, friendly letter/ email, postcard or note on a familiar topic of personal interest, or a short story, choosing one from a set of two options.</p> <p>Approximate Word Count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A1: 40-70 words</li> <li>• A2: 60-100 words</li> <li>• B1: 90-150 words</li> </ul>	25 minutes

The examination is expected to be 50 minutes in duration.

Tasks are completed under controlled examination conditions in one continuous examination.

Examiners will base their assessment decisions on the completed Candidate scripts.

### 3. Overview of the A1-B1 CEFR Levels

A1

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

B1

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

### 4. Approach to Descriptors and Assessment Criteria

Examiners are expected to be familiar with the level descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Descriptors for each level are contained within the *Qualification Specification (Section 5: Unit Specification)*.

For both the Spoken TIE and Written TIE, Examiners must apply the marking criteria. The criteria have been mapped to the level descriptors in the CEFR scales.

Based on the criteria, the Examiner makes an assessment decision which 'places' the Candidate on the scale from A1 to B1 against each criteria, according to their performance.

In WT1, if the Candidate selects writing Topic 1, the highest mark that can be awarded for this component is A2+. The highest mark that can be awarded for any of the remaining components, or the overall writing examination, is B1+.

### 5. Fallback Assessment

Fallback Assessment is not available in the A1-B1 Test of Interactive English.

In all instances, Candidates not achieving the level they were entered for, or the level below, will not be awarded a lower level qualification.

Please note, Candidates entered for an A1-B1 examination session cannot be awarded a qualification at any level higher than Entry Level 3 (B1).

### Assessment Categories

In the Spoken TIE, Candidates are assessed on their skills across the following categories:

- **Aural Reception / Listening:** the Candidate's ability to process the spoken input of the other speakers (i.e., listening for gist, specific information, detailed understanding, implications, etc.)
- **Interaction:** the Candidate's ability to interact with their partner and the Interlocutor
- **Communicative Effectiveness:** the Candidate's ability to convey his/her message
- **Grammatical Accuracy and Complexity:** the Candidate's grammatical and syntactical control
- **Lexical Range and Appropriacy:** the Candidate's lexical repertoire and ability to make appropriate lexical choices
- **Phonological Control:** the Candidate's ability to produce comprehensible speech at word and sentence level to fulfil the demands of the test.

In the Written TIE, Candidates are assessed on their skills across the following categories:

- **Visual Reception:** the Candidate's ability to read, understand and follow the instructions in the task
- **Production and Text Organisation:** the Candidate's ability to produce clear, structured text and control of the conventions of text layout
- **Task Achievement:** how appropriately, accurately and relevantly the Candidate responds to the tasks set
- **Grammatical Accuracy and Complexity:** the Candidate's grammatical and syntactical control
- **Lexical Range and Appropriacy:** the Candidate's lexical repertoire and ability to make appropriate lexical choices,
- **Orthographic Control and Punctuation:** the Candidate's ability to produce legible text with clear spelling and punctuation.

For each category, a grade must be allocated. Grades available are:

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| • DNF  | • A2  |
| • Fail | • A2+ |
| • A1   | • B1  |
| • A1+  | • B1+ |

The grade awarded for each category should be recorded on the Mark Grid.

## Overall Result

The overall result is calculated as an average of the Candidate's performance across all assessment categories across the two tests.

Possible overall TIE results are:

Fail	Candidate has not demonstrated ability to participate in the interactions at A1 level, or has demonstrated that the majority of skills and knowledge expected at A1 level are still emerging
DNF	Did Not Fulfil requirements of the test: tasks were not attempted and/or preparation materials were not presented.
A1	Candidate has met the requirements at A1 level - their skills, knowledge and understanding in the majority of areas are established, although in some areas may still be in the process of being refined or consolidated
A1+	Candidate has met, or exceeded, requirements at A1 level consistently across all tasks. Knowledge, skills and understanding are clearly fully established and the Candidate may even demonstrate some emerging skills at A2 level
A2	Candidate has met the requirements at A2 level - their skills, knowledge and understanding in the majority of areas are established, although in some areas may still be in the process of being refined or consolidated
A2+	Candidate has met, or exceeded, requirements at A2 level consistently across all tasks. Knowledge, skills and understanding are clearly fully established and the Candidate may even demonstrate some emerging skills at B1 level. A2+ is the highest mark that can be awarded as a component grade for candidates who selected topic 1 in WT1.
B1	Candidate has met the requirements at B1 level - their skills, knowledge and understanding in the majority of areas are established, although in some areas may still be in the process of being refined or consolidated
B1+	Candidate has met, or exceeded, requirements at B1 level consistently across all tasks. Knowledge, skills and understanding are clearly fully established and the Candidate may even demonstrate some emerging skills at B2 level

## Assessment Criteria: Spoken TIE A1-B1

Level	Aural Reception (Listening)	Interaction	Communicative Effectiveness	Grammatical Accuracy	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Phonological Control
<b>B1+</b>	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.	Can generally maintain a conversation or discussion confidently. Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.	Can express self with relative ease on topics of immediate relevance. Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and without much misunderstanding.	Can communicate with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts. Generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Uses a wide range of structures expected at this level with few mistakes present. Errors occur, but messages come across clearly.	Has a good range of vocabulary to enable expression on most topics pertinent to everyday life. Few errors of vocabulary usage.	Can express self reasonably clearly with ease, despite some problems with rhythm & intonation, & occasional pausing. Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is evident and occasional mispronunciations may still occur.
<b>B1</b>	Can understand main points of clear, standard speech about common everyday or job related topics. Minor misunderstandings may occur occasionally.	Can interact with some confidence only when dealing with familiar topics. Can intervene in such discussion using a simple phrase to get the floor.	Can convey a simple & straightforward message of immediate relevance, getting across whatever point is most important without significant misunderstanding.	Can communicate with adequate accuracy & control within the limits of frequently used patterns. Uses a range of structures expected at this level. Errors may be evident or systematic or impact on meaning, which may sometimes not be clearly expressed.	Can use a sufficient range of appropriate vocabulary related to familiar topics, with some circumlocution and hesitation. Makes inappropriate word choices in less familiar situations which however do not seriously impede communication. Vocabulary errors do not compromise communication.	Speech is generally intelligible despite occasional problems with stress and intonation and occasional pausing for grammatical and lexical planning or repair. Can keep going comprehensibly. A foreign accent is evident and some mispronunciations occur.

Level	Aural Reception (Listening)	Interaction	Communicative Effectiveness	Grammatical Accuracy	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Phonological Control
A2+	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured contexts & short conversations provided the interlocutor helps if necessary. Can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.	Can be understood in short contributions, even though pauses are very evident. More complex messages may be compromised, leading to some misunderstanding.	Can produce speech that shows good control of simple structures with few mistakes present, provided the communication takes place in routine situations. Attempts at higher level structures lead to errors which may obscure meaning.	Can deploy frequently used vocabulary generally appropriately conveying simple messages clearly.	Speech is reasonably clear enough to be understood. Mispronunciations occur but they are not distracting. There are some pauses, false starts and reformulation evident.
A2	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of his/her immediate environment provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can pass on the relevant message in a simple & direct exchange of limited information on personal & concrete matters. In other situations, s/he generally has to compromise the message.	Can produce speech that shows some control of simple structures. Makes frequent or systematic errors but the message is usually clear.	Can deploy basic vocabulary more or less appropriately that manages to convey simple messages. Some inadequate words may compromise the message, though meaning is still clear.	Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite some hesitation and incorrect use of stress. False starts, very short utterances and reformulation are evident. Repetition may be required from time to time to clarify the meaning.
A1+	Can understand very simple, everyday language provided that the other person speaks slowly and clearly.	Can interact in a simple way. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	Can generally communicate on concrete matters in predictable familiar situations. The message gets across but with difficulty.	Can produce speech that shows control of a few simple grammatical structures. Makes many errors that often impede understanding.	Can use a range of basic vocabulary expected at this level and go beyond a simple repertoire.	Can pronounce a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases comprehensibly despite a noticeable foreign accent. Hesitation and inappropriate stress are distracting and occasionally make speech unintelligible.

Level	Aural Reception (Listening)	Interaction	Communicative Effectiveness	Grammatical Accuracy	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Phonological Control
<b>A1</b>	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.	Can interact only in a simple way. Can communicate given opportunities for repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words and to repair communication. Only simple messages are communicated.	Can produce some very simple structures correctly. Sentence patterns are pre-packaged and from a memorized repertoire. Meaning and communication may be disrupted.	Can use only a very limited range of memorized words and phrases related to personal details and familiar situations. Inappropriate and incorrect word choices can often impede meaning.	Can pronounce only simple common words comprehensibly, using mainly pre-packaged utterances with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words and repair communication. The repertoire of words and phrases can be understood by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.
<b>Below A1 (Fail)</b>	Shows significant difficulty in understanding even very slow and carefully articulated speech.	Unable to sustain any interaction. Communication cannot take place.	Communication cannot take place.	Erroneous speech that is difficult to follow. Communication cannot take place.	Can use only scattered words or phrases repeatedly. Communication cannot take place.	Unintelligible speech due to pronunciation errors and excessive hesitation. Communication cannot take place.

## Assessment Criteria: Written TIE A1-B1

Level	Visual Reception	Task Achievement	Grammatical Accuracy and Complexity	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Orthographic Control and Punctuation	Production & Text Organisation (Task 2 only)
<b>B1+</b>	<p>Task 1: Displays a very high degree of comprehension of the tasks. Shows no difficulty in understanding the questions and providing relevant responses to all questions.</p> <p>Task 2: Displays a good degree of comprehension. The text is clearly and appropriately linked to task instructions.</p>	<p>Task 1: Has fully and meaningfully responded to all questions.</p> <p>Task 2: A fully appropriate text (in terms of topic and text type) that fully answers the question. Addresses the task clearly and effectively.</p>	<p>Uses a wide range of structures expected at this level with reasonable accuracy and few mistakes present. Attempts at more complex language use are more or less successful.</p>	<p>Candidate's vocabulary range is appropriate throughout, with errors only occurring when attempting vocabulary above the level.</p>	<p>There are very few or no spelling or punctuation errors</p>	<p>There are clear paragraphs including introduction, development and conclusion in a coherent and cohesive text.</p>
<b>B1</b>	<p>Task 1: Displays a good degree of comprehension. Shows little difficulty in understanding the questions and providing mostly relevant responses to all questions.</p> <p>Task 2: Displays a good degree of comprehension. The text is clearly and appropriately linked to task instructions.</p>	<p>Task 1: Has fully and meaningfully responded to most of the questions.</p> <p>Task 2: A generally appropriate text (in terms of topic and text type) that fully answers the question. Addresses the task mostly clearly and effectively.</p>	<p>A relatively good repertoire of simple structures is evident and employed appropriately. Errors are noticeable but do not seriously interfere with intended meaning. Some forms of expression are awkward.</p>	<p>Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary usually appropriately. Some lapses in word choice which do not interfere with intended meaning or compromise the communication.</p>	<p>Spelling and punctuation are accurate enough to be followed most of the time. Spelling errors rarely impede understanding.</p>	<p>Writes straightforward connected texts by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence. Paragraphing is used mostly appropriately and effectively. Uses a range of simple linking devices to link sentences to make coherent and cohesive text.</p>

Level	Visual Reception	Task Achievement	Grammatical Accuracy and Complexity	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Orthographic Control and Punctuation	Production & Text Organisation (Task 2 only)
A2+	<p>Task 1: Displays a good level of comprehension. Can understand almost all of the given questions and provide relevant responses to most questions.</p> <p>Task 2: Displays a good level of comprehension. The text is linked to task instructions.</p>	<p>Task 1: Has responded to most of the questions in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Task 2: Appropriate text that answers the question for the most part. Output is relevant.</p>	<p>Shows good control of simple structures and sentence patterns with few errors. Although there may be some errors, messages get across clearly.</p>	<p>Uses a sufficient vocabulary to deal with everyday needs involving familiar situations and topics. May also use memorised phrases and groups of words. Makes appropriate lexical selections which generally convey the intended meaning.</p>	<p>Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate in common and familiar words and phrases throughout. Spelling errors do not detract from meaning.</p>	<p>Writes a continuous text in which information is clearly organized and paragraphing is generally appropriate. Use of simple linking words to link sentences. Longer contributions may still lack coherence.</p>
A2	<p>Task 1: Displays satisfactory understanding of most questions. Can provide mostly relevant responses to most of the given questions.</p> <p>Task 2: Displays a satisfactory understanding of the task. The text is linked to task instructions.</p>	<p>Task 1: Has responded to the questions in a more or less meaningful way. More extended responses may lack comprehensibility.</p> <p>Task 2: Mostly appropriate text that generally answers the question. Output is mostly relevant.</p>	<p>Uses simple structures and sentences patterns correctly. There are errors but they usually do not impede understanding.</p>	<p>Uses a repertoire of simple vocabulary and expressions for dealing with simple routine situations, though meaning is often compromised due to limited range of words available and inappropriate lexical selections.</p>	<p>Majority of common words spelled correctly. Spelling errors occur in more advanced vocabulary which may interfere with intended meaning. Simple punctuation is accurate throughout.</p>	<p>Writes a more or less continuous text using simple phrases or complete simple sentences. Information is generally organized and there is some loose paragraphing. Use of simple connectors to link simple sentences effectively.</p>

Level	Visual Reception	Task Achievement	Grammatical Accuracy and Complexity	Lexical Range & Appropriacy	Orthographic Control and Punctuation	Production & Text Organisation (Task 2 only)
<b>A1+</b>	<p>Task 1: Can understand simple questions about personal details and those requiring very short responses (a word or sentence). Limitations in understanding questions requiring more extended answers.</p> <p>Task 2: Shows limited understanding of task instructions. The text is linked to the task and topic.</p>	<p>Task 1: Has responded to some of the questions in a meaningful way. More extended responses usually lack comprehensibility.</p> <p>Task 2: Text is more or less appropriate partly responding to the task question. Output is fully relevant to the topic.</p>	<p>Shows some control of a few simple grammatical structures and uses them accurately in simple sentences. Makes many errors, some of which may impede understanding when attempting more anything more than simple and compound sentences.</p>	<p>Has a basic range of simple everyday vocabulary related to concrete needs. Uses several words, phrases and/or expressions which are not always appropriate for the context(s) of situation.</p>	<p>Accurate spelling of all key and familiar words. Spelling errors may interfere with intended meaning when more unfamiliar words are used.</p> <p>Simple punctuation is mostly accurate.</p>	<p>Writes very short, simple texts in which information is presented logically. Use of very basic linear connectors. Paragraphing may not be clear but text demonstrates some organisation.</p>
<b>A1</b>	<p>Task 1: Displays weak understanding of the whole task. Can understand basic personal questions and provide relevant responses.</p> <p>Task 2: Displays weak understanding of the task instructions. Shows a very basic understanding of the topic.</p>	<p>Task 1: Only straightforward responses to basic personal questions convey meaning.</p> <p>Task 2: Text responds to the task in a very general manner. Output is relevant to the topic.</p>	<p>Shows limited control of basic grammatical structures. Systematically makes errors that often impede understanding when attempting anything more than very simple sentences.</p>	<p>Has a basic repertoire of vocabulary, consisting of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations. Lapses in word choice interfere with intended meaning.</p>	<p>Basic spelling errors, which often interfere with intended meaning. Capital letters and full stops are used generally accurately. Other punctuation is not attempted or still problematic.</p>	<p>Writes very simple, isolated phrases or sentences. Information is not presented in an organized manner. The text lacks paragraphing or text organisation.</p>
<b>Below A1 (Fail)</b>	<p>Tasks 1 or 2: Shows lack of understanding of test instructions and questions, or response is illegible. Communication cannot take place.</p>	<p>Tasks 1 or 2: Incomprehensible or irrelevant response to the instructions or questions, response is inappropriate or the text is incomprehensible or irrelevant. Communication cannot take place.</p>	<p>Makes many serious errors, even in basic structures which obscure meaning. Communication cannot take place.</p>	<p>Scattered words or phrases which do not have meaning. Communication cannot take place.</p>	<p>Many spelling errors pertaining to common words as well that interfere with intended meaning. Problematic or lack of punctuation throughout. Communication cannot take place.</p>	<p>Organisation and paragraphing are highly problematic impeding text comprehensibility. Communication cannot take place.</p>