

CertTESOL Unit 3: The Learner Profile
Diagnostic Assessment B2: Example 1

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INTRODUCTION

This pack has been compiled to support you, as a Trinity Cert TESOL trainee, in your collection of samples from your learner for the Unit 3 Learner Profile assignment. It should be used together with proformas supplied by your course provider, as these will give you guidance in how to analyse the samples collected.

The purpose of this assignment is to complete a simple linguistic profile of your learner by examining areas of strength/weakness across all four skills, as well as assessing your learner’s use of language in order to identify a suitable programme of study for them. There are other factors, beyond language and skills, which you may need to refer to and so we recommend you watch the video on diagnostic assessment at <http://tinyurl.com/TESOL-diagnostic> before beginning the project.

The tasks which follow are taken from the ISE (Integrated Skills in English) exam and is the ISE II level, suitable for B2 level learners. Further information about the ISE exam and the underlying assessment rationale, can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/diagnostic-ISE>.

READING

Learner Profile

A candidate/learner at this level can:

- read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, using appropriate reference sources selectively
- scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details
- quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile
- obtain information, ideas and opinions from specialised sources within his or her field
- use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including reading for main points and checking comprehension by using contextual clues
- summarise a range of factual and imaginative texts, commenting on and discussing contrasting points of view and the main themes
- use a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with unusual expressions
- understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints
- paraphrase and summarise ideas, opinions, arguments and discussion

Task Specification

Text length	<i>500 words (approximately), divided into five paragraphs</i>
Number of questions	<i>15</i>
Question Types	<p>Title matching (questions 1-15) <i>In this section, the learner chooses the most appropriate title for each paragraph of the text. The text has five paragraphs and there are six titles to choose from. The learner must demonstrate that he or she understands the main idea of each paragraph.</i> <i>Some useful reading sub-skills to practise for this section are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>skimming</i> - <i>scanning</i> - <i>reading for gist</i> - <i>understanding the main idea of each paragraph</i> <p>Selecting the true statements (questions 6–10) <i>In this section, the learner selects five true statements from a list of eight statements. Five statements are true, and three are false, according to the text. The learner must demonstrate that he or she understands specific, factual information at the sentence level.</i> <i>Some useful reading sub-skills to practise for this section are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>careful reading for specific information</i> - <i>comparing, evaluating and inferring</i> - <i>distinguishing principal statement from supporting examples or details</i> - <i>distinguishing fact from opinion</i> - <i>scanning</i> <p>Completing sentences (questions 11–15) <i>In this section, the learner completes sentences with an exact number, word or phrase (up to three words) taken from the text.</i> <i>The learner must demonstrate that he or she understands specific, factual information at the word and/or phrase level OR can infer and understand across paragraphs (eg writer’s attitude, line of argument).</i> <i>Some useful reading sub-skills to practise for this section are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>careful reading for comprehension</i> - <i>understanding cohesion patterns, lexis, grammar and collocation</i> - <i>deducing meaning</i> - <i>understanding across paragraphs</i>
Timing	<i>The learner should spend 20 minutes on this reading task</i>

Reading Task for Learner

Read the following text about plastic bags and answer the following questions 1-15. You should spend 20 minutes on this task.

Paragraph 1

When Swedish engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin invented the lightweight plastic shopping bag in the 1960s, he probably had no idea how controversial they would become, nor for how long the controversy would last. The fact that the bags proved so useful due to their low weight and resistance to degrading biologically made them widespread by the 1980s, but also led to environmental challenges. Millions of shopping bags end up as litter every year. This has resulted in land pollution, blocking of waterways and also to areas of sea being clogged up with plastic, harming wildlife.

Paragraph 2

Different measures have been carried out. A total ban was placed on non-biodegradable plastic bags in China, to save oil, and in some African countries like Rwanda, to reduce litter. In China this is said to have saved 4.8 million tonnes of oil and in Rwanda the ban has had a visible effect. As one visitor commented: 'The country is so much cleaner than it used to be.' The United Arab Emirates also banned all single-use bags in 2013, based on pollution caused — and danger to camels, who were eating them.

Paragraph 3

Other countries have introduced a 'bag tax', with supermarkets charging customers a small amount for each plastic bag they use. For example, Ireland introduced such a charge in 2002. Jill Burns of Plastic Bag Aware said 'Ireland's bag tax has been incredibly successful, mainly because the charge is quite high, and is increased the more plastic bags are used.' Despite fears to the contrary, customers accepted the charge, but in other countries this measure has been blocked, not by customers, but by manufacturers of plastic bags.

Paragraph 4

What's the alternative to the traditional plastic bag? I thought the answer was the bio-degradable plastic bag, but it seems not to be the case. Manufacturers and the major supermarkets claim that such bags degrade completely in under three years. However, research has shown that they do not degrade as efficiently as has been claimed. I was really taken aback by this! They need light and oxygen for the material to degrade, but in landfills both are in short supply. Another criticism has been that it is environmental madness to produce something requiring a lot of oil to make, only so that it can 'self-destruct'.

Paragraph 5

I'd always considered paper and cloth bags as an ethical alternative to plastic bags. Again, my ideas have been challenged. Both paper and cloth bags require much more energy to make, and are said to pollute air and water more in manufacture. I've used a cloth bag several times for shopping, and prided myself on protecting the environment. It seems I'm wrong. A cloth bag would have to be used 130 times before its ecological impact was as low as a plastic bag in terms of energy. I guess I have no choice but to do another 90 shopping trips or more with my cloth bag! One packaging manufacturer said 'Plastic bags are more environmentally friendly than cotton bags,' but I'm not convinced. How can something that causes so much damage be acceptable?

Questions 1-5

The text has five paragraphs (1-5). Choose the best title for each paragraph from A-F below and **write the letter (A-F) on the lines below**. There is one title you don't need.

- 1. Paragraph 1 _____
- 2. Paragraph 2 _____
- 3. Paragraph 3 _____
- 4. Paragraph 4 _____
- 5. Paragraph 5 _____

- A. The high energy use of producing alternative types of bags
- B. How the positive features of plastic bags have led to problems
- C. Other forms of plastic bags may not be the solution
- D. Benefits of forbidding the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags
- E. Consumers must be encouraged to change their way of thinking
- F. An alternative measure is accepted by consumers

Questions 6-10

Choose the **five statements** from A-H below that are **TRUE** according to the information given in the text. Write the letter of the **TRUE** statements on the lines below (in any order)

- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

- A. The inventor of the carrier bag realised his invention would cause disagreement.
- B. One of the reasons behind a ban on plastic bags was to protect wildlife.
- C. The more plastic bags shoppers in Ireland use, the more expensive they become.
- D. In some countries customers don't agree with the charge being introduced.
- E. The writer found it difficult to believe research on the breakdown of bio-degradable bags.
- F. According to researchers, one of the elements needed to break down bio-degradable bags in landfills is missing.
- G. The writer was incorrect in his belief that using a cloth bag had made him environmentally friendly.
- H. The writer feels his only option is to re-use his cloth bag at least 90 more times.

Questions 11-15

Complete sentences 11-15 with an exact number, word or phrase (maximum three words) from the text. **Write the exact number, word or phrase on the lines below**.

- 11. The lightness and durability of plastic bags meant that their use was _____
_____ twenty years after their invention.
- 12. Some countries responded directly to excessive oil use and rubbish caused by plastic bags with a _____ on them.
- 13. Instead of objecting to paying for plastic bags, Irish shoppers _____.
- 14. The research questioned the idea that bio-degradable bags take less than three years to _____.
- 15. The writer did not believe the claim made by a _____ that plastic bags are more ecological than cloths bags.

WRITING

Learner Profile

A candidate/ learner at this level can:

- synthesise and evaluate information and arguments from a number of sources
- express news and views effectively in writing and relate to the views of others
- write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his or her interests, following established conventions of the text type concerned
- write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear, connected text
- write an essay or report that develops an argument systematically, gives reasons and relevant details, and highlights key points
- explain the advantages and disadvantages of various options
- evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem
- summarise a range of factual and imaginative texts, eg news items, interviews or documentaries
- discuss and contrast points of view, arguments and the main themes
- summarise the plot and sequence of events in a film or play.

Task Specification

Task	<i>An extended writing task in which the learner responds in a prompt. There is space for planning. The learner should check his/her response when he/she has finished.</i>	
Task focus	<i>This task assess the learner's ability to productive a clear and detailed response to a prompt. The genre supplied in this sample is an article</i>	
Suggested grammar (in addition to ISE I Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Second and third conditionals</i> • <i>Simple passive</i> • <i>Used to</i> • <i>Relative clauses</i> • <i>Modals and phrases to give advice and make suggestions</i> • <i>Modals and phrases to express possibility and uncertainty</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discourse connectors, eg because of, due to</i> • <i>Present perfect continuous tense</i> • <i>Past perfect tense</i> • <i>Reported speech</i> • <i>Linking expressions, eg even though, in spite of, although</i>
Output length	<i>150-180 words, excluding headings</i>	
Timing	<i>The learner should spend 40 minutes on this writing task</i>	

Writing Task for Learner

Write an article (150-180 words) for a magazine with the title: "Someone I admire". Chose a public figure from the past or present and describe the qualities you admire in that person.

You will have 40 minutes for this task.

You should plan your article **before** you start writing. Think about what you want to say and make some notes to help you in this box:

Planning notes

Now write your article of 150 -180 words on the lines below.

LISTENING

Learner Profile

A candidate/ learner at this level can:

- understand standard spoken language on both familiar and unfamiliar topics from personal, social, academic or vocational life
- understand the main ideas of complex speech in standard English on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions
- understand extended speech and complex lines of argument on familiar topics signposted by explicit markers
- understand recordings in standard English from social, professional or academic life
- identify information content, and speaker’s viewpoints, attitudes, mood and tone
- understand most recorded audio material delivered in standard English
- use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points, and checking comprehension by using contextual clues
- understand a clearly structured lecture on a familiar subject and take notes on points he or she considers important
- summarise extracts from news items, interviews or documentaries containing opinions, argument and discussion.

Task Specification

Task format	<i>During this task, the learner listens twice to recorded monologue twice. The first time, the trainee will ask for the gist of the recording. The second time, the trainee asks a question that requires listening for detail. The trainee asks the question both before and after playing the audio recording, and the learner responds orally. The learner may take notes while he or she is listening for the second time. Notes are optional. The recording is approximately 3 minutes long.</i>
Task focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Showing ability to process and report information, including main points and supporting detail</i> • <i>Placing information in a wider context</i> • <i>Inferring information not expressed explicitly</i> • <i>Reporting speaker’s intentions</i> • <i>Inferring word meaning</i>

You can make the recording yourself from the script on the next page, or download it from one of the following two pages:

- www.trinitycollege.com/ise
- <http://tinyurl.com/TESOL-diagnostic-tests>

Listening Task for Learner

Step 1	<p>Read the following instruction for the learner:</p> <p><i>"You're going to hear a talk about truth and lies. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen Then I will ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?"</i></p>
Step 2	<p>Play the audio file "Lies" for the learner.</p> <p><i>Audio Script: The truth is important, but everyone tells lies sometimes. Even babies learn to deceive from an early age, for example pretending to cry in order to get attention. Even though lying is natural human behaviour in a sense, it's also important to be able to tell the difference between a person who is speaking honestly and one who is telling lies. You don't need a heavy piece of electronic equipment to detect dishonesty. Everyone can be their own 'lie-detector'. There are three types of signs to look out for: speech patterns, general attitude and body language. Firstly, in speech, the liar tends to use overly formal language and to distance themselves, for example by avoiding the personal pronoun 'I'. You should also look out for a person giving you too much detail, or even far too little detail, as they tell their story.</i></p> <p><i>You can also tell a lot from a person's attitude. In a conversation about a missing item, for example, an honest person will be furious throughout if they feel they are being accused. They will tend to be enthusiastic and want to help to discover who is guilty. In contrast, you may notice that a dishonest person is less involved in the conversation, becoming defensive and angry only in short outbursts. Another clue is wanting to talk about the event in strict chronological order, always starting from the beginning and never changing the order. Try asking them to relate their story in a different way and they may well get confused. Body language is perhaps the most obvious giveaway. You have probably heard that liars won't look you in the eye, but, in fact they often stare at the speaker too steadily.</i></p> <p><i>Another common belief is that people make little nervous movements when they are not telling the truth. But instead you may find that they keep their upper bodies quite still. So look out for a person moving their knee or foot. There are so many small signs, such as blinking your eyes a lot, or putting up physical barriers between yourself and the other person. A classic example of this is rubbing your nose – which effectively hides either your mouth or your eyes. But, of course, these physical reactions can happen naturally as well. Truthful people can feel just as nervous as liars. It is only when you notice a number of these things happening together that you should be suspicious.</i></p>
Step 3	<p>Ask the learner for his/her answer by saying: <i>"Now tell me in a few words what the talk is about."</i></p>
Step 4	<p>Give the learner some blank note paper and read the following instruction for the learner:</p> <p><i>"Now listen to the talk about. This time make some notes as you listen, if you</i></p>

	<i>want to. Then I'll ask you to tell what suggestions and advice the speaker gives about how to tell if someone is lying. Are you ready?"</i>
Step 5	Play the audio file "Lies" for the learner again
Step 6	<p>Ask the learner for his/her answers by saying:</p> <p><i>"Now tell me what suggestions and advice the speaker gives about how to tell if someone is lying. You have one minute to talk"</i></p> <p>Make a note (either written/audio recorded) of what the learner says. You can use the key of 'clues and example' below to tack off what the learner has said.</p>

Clues	Examples
Speech	Formal language
	Distances self
Attitude in conversation	Less involved
	Angry in flashes
	Need chronological order
Body language	Gaze too steadily
	Moving knees and feet
	Blinking
	Hiding face

SPEAKING**Learner Profile**

A candidate/ learner at this level can:

- initiate, maintain and end discourse appropriately in unprepared one-to-one conversations, using effective turn-taking
- engage and participate in extended conversation on most general topics
- communicate spontaneously with good language control without much sign of having to restrict what he or she wants to say
- use a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances
- use language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, demonstrating the relationships between ideas
- interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity with a native speaker without creating communication difficulties
- highlight the personal significance of events and experiences
- explain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments
- convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences
- outline a topical issue or a problem clearly, speculating about causes or consequences, and weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches
- give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples
- develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting his or her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples
- intervene appropriately in discussion, exploiting appropriate language to do so
- ask follow-up questions to check that he or she has understood what a speaker intended to say, and clarify ambiguous points
- paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure.

Interview Format

Part 1: The speaking sample collection is the ideal opportunity to collect information on the learner's background (cultural, social, language learning experiences) for the opening section of the assignment. On the following page, you will find some suitable questions to help you do this. This should take approximately 5 minutes.

Part 2: The second part of the interview is designed to assess the learner's knowledge of language functions appropriate to this level. It is a collaborative discussion, rather than a question-and-answer interview. Follow the rubric on the next page

Language Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>initiate and maintain the conversation</i>● <i>express and expand ideas and opinions</i>● <i>highlight advantages and disadvantages</i>● <i>speculate</i>● <i>give advice</i>● <i>express agreement and disagreement</i>● <i>elicit further information</i>● <i>establish common ground</i>

Speaking Task for Learner

Part 1: Discussion about the learner's background

Aim to spend about five minutes on this part. Remember to have your recording device set up, and in the right position. You may want to do a short test to make sure it is producing a good quality recording. Introduce this part by telling the learner that you are going to ask them some simple questions about their English learning and how long you are going to talk for.

Questions:

- What's your name?
- Where are you from?
- What is your first language?
- Can you speak any other languages?
- How long have you been learning English?
- How do you use English in your everyday life?
- Why are you learning English? Can you tell me about your ambitions for your English?
- Can you describe the perfect English lesson for you?
- Do you like working alone with with other people in your English class?
- What is difficult/easy for you in English?
- What would you like to be able to do in English that you can't do (well) now?

Part 2: Collaborative Discussion

Aim to spend about five minutes on this part. Introduce this topic by saying the following:

"For the next part, I'll tell you something and you have to ask me questions to find out more information and to make comments. You need to keep the conversation going. Are you ready?"

Read the following prompt for the learner:

"I have a friend who's studying English. He thinks the best way to improve is to watch lots of films in English. I'm not sure I agree with him."