Sample ELSA Test Questions

The following sample test includes examples of all question types on the two-hour English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA) paper. You should work through these and when you have finished, check them with the answers on page 8.

Note: The flyer ELSA: Information for Students, explains the length, structure and marking scheme of the test.

---

Section One: VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR (20 marks)

You must complete all tasks in this section.

**TASK 1** (1 mark for each correct answer) 5 items on actual ELSA

Complete each sentence below with the correct form of the verb given in brackets. Write the correct verb form in the blank space provided.

*Example:* Some students (use, never) ________ a computer before they came here last year.

*Answer:* had never used

1. My passport (stamp) ________________ at the airport when I arrived.
2. My seventy-year-old grandfather, who owns his own business, (continue, probably) ____________________ to work as long as he lives.
3. I (know) ________________ Samu since 1995. When I (meet) ________________ him, he (work) ____________ for the government.

**TASK 2** (1 mark for each correct answer) 15 items on actual ELSA

Provide ONE word for each numbered blank space in the following text. Write each word beside the same number under ANSWERS below. The first answer has been filled in as an example.

Read the whole text before you begin.

Nonverbal communication expresses meaning or feeling without words. Universal emotions, such as happiness, fear and sadness, are 1. ________________ in a similar nonverbal way throughout the world. There are, 2. ________________, nonverbal differences across cultures that may be a source 3. ________ confusion for foreigners. What is acceptable in one culture may be completely unacceptable in
4. __________. One culture may determine that snapping fingers to call a waiter is appropriate; another may consider 5. ________ gesture rude. We are often not aware of how gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and 6. ________ use of space affect communication. In order to correctly interpret 7. __________ culture’s style of communication, it is necessary to study 8. ________ “silent language” of that culture.

ANSWERS

1. expressed 3. ______________ 5. ______________ 7. ______________
2. ______________ 4. ______________ 6. ______________ 8. ______________

Section Two: READING (30 Marks)

Read the text and complete all the following tasks.

Note: On an actual ELSA paper, there are two texts in this section, each with 15 items following.

TEXT A Traditional medicine in Tahiti

Paragraph 1
In Tahiti as in other countries, the art of healing practised by the local people (ethnomedicine) is commonly termed ‘traditional medicine’. This terminology is no doubt adequate, but it also has two questionable implications. One implication is that, in contrast with modern medicine, the ethnomedicine of our islands is the only one that relies on tradition – which is obviously not true. The second is that this medicine is highly conservative and rejects innovation. It is this second possible misunderstanding that I would like to dispel with the presentation of some changes that have occurred in that field since the first contact with Europeans. Moreover, I suggest that these changes had adaptive values and have benefited the Tahitians.

Paragraph 2
Our knowledge of past Tahitian traditional medicine comes almost exclusively from navigators, missionaries or doctors from various European countries, and this limits what we can know. Some of them stayed only a short time in Tahiti, others never became familiar with the Tahitian language and culture. So, even if we can obtain information about the most visible aspects of Tahitian medicine, it is more difficult to obtain deeper insights into the actual meaning of what the Tahitians did when disease occurred. It is also difficult to know what their medical ideas or theories were, such as their own classification of diseases rather than that of the European writers.

Paragraph 3
The history of Tahitian society includes four stages which have been significant for the knowledge of Tahitians. The first stage is society as it was before contact with Europeans. The second stage is the following long period of decline. The third stage is the adaptation in which improvement began. The fourth is the stage in which Tahitian society currently is – the stage of modernization.

Paragraph 4
The precontact stage ended in 1767 when Wallis reached the shores of Tahiti. What were the medical needs of the inhabitants at that time? They had to face two kinds of situation requiring medical attention: diseases,
which were not very numerous, and wounds, fractures and dislocations resulting from accidents and wars, which were their major medical problems.

Paragraph 5
The general opinion of European navigators was that Tahitians were vigorous and healthy, and that they compared favourably with their European visitors from that point of view. Joseph Banks, for instance, observed few diseases, mostly skin-related, and thought the acute forms of diseases were very rare.

**TASK 1** (1 mark for each correct answer)

Choose the best title for paragraphs 2 and 3 in Text A, from the box below. The title should state the topic of the paragraph accurately. Write the appropriate letter in the space provided. The title for paragraph 1 is given as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph 1</th>
<th>A. Implications of the term ‘traditional medicine’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2</td>
<td>B. Historical periods of Tahitian society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3</td>
<td>C. Mistakes of European observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Sources of knowledge of past practices in Tahitian medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. The road to modernization for Tahiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TASK 2** (1 mark for each correct answer)

Each of the boxed words or phrases in Text A refers to another word or phrase in the text. In the space provided, write the exact words each boxed word or phrase refers to.

Example: it refers to …this terminology…

1. these changes refers to ..............................................................
2. them refers to ..............................................................
3. their refers to ..............................................................
TASK 3  (1 mark for each correct answer)

Below is a summary of the main points in Text A. Choose ONE word from the WORD LIST below to complete each numbered gap in the text. Write each correct word beside the same number below, under ANSWERS. The first answer has been filled in as an example.

Tahitian medical knowledge 1. _____ to the changes brought by contact with Europeans and their 2. _____ . Although our knowledge cannot be precise, it seems that Tahitians were more 3. _____ than 18th century Europeans. In the pre-contact period, health risks comprised a 4. _____ number of diseases, and 5. _____ such as wounds, fractures and dislocations.

ANSWERS

1. …….. adapted …… 2. …………………….. 3. …………………
4………………….. 5. …………………….. 6. ………………..

WORD LIST

- adapted  
- large  
- malnourished  
- injuries  
- sickly  
- problems  
- limited  
- accidents  
- changed  
- diseases  
- healthy  
- ships

TASK 4  (1 mark for each correct answer)

Do the following statements agree with the opinions expressed in TEXT A?
In the spaces provided, write one of these answers:

YES - if the statement agrees with the writer
NO - if the statement disagrees with the writer
NOT GIVEN - if it is impossible to know the writer’s opinion about the statement

Example: ‘Traditional medicine’ refers to the art of healing practised by the local people. ....YES....

1. Pre-contact Tahitian medical theories are unknown today. ..................
2. European navigators observed that Tahitians suffered from many infectious diseases. ..................
TASK 5  (1 mark for each correct answer)

Choose the word or phrase closest in meaning to the words underlined in Text A. Write (a), (b), or (c) in the space provided.

Example: innovation
(a) new methods (b) internal techniques (c) surgical procedures …(a)…

1. dispel
   (a) confirm (b) remove (c) explain ..............

2. insight
   (a) understanding (b) vision (c) interpretation ..............

3. decline
   (a) refusal (b) becoming diseased (c) becoming weaker ..............

TASK 6  (1 mark for each correct answer)

Choose one phrase from the PHRASE LIST (A – F) below to complete each sentence (1 – 3). Write the appropriate letter in the space provided. The information in the completed sentences should be accurate according to Text A.

Example: There are four distinct historical periods in Tahiti which ……X……

1. ‘Traditional medicine’ can be a misleading term if .................

2. Sources of information about past Tahitian medical practices are incomplete because .................

3. Precontact Tahitian healers mainly treated victims of accidents and wars until .................

PHRASE LIST

X show that Tahitian knowledge systems developed.

A. people assume that it is not effective.
B. Wallis arrived in Tahiti in 1767.
C. Tahitian interpretation of diseases is unknown.
D. people assume that new practices will not be adopted.
E. serious diseases were introduced by Europeans
F. European visitors did not attempt to describe medical practices.
You must complete both tasks in this section. Each task will be rated on a scale from 1 to 5. Band 3 is the minimum satisfactory score, while Bands 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory.

**Task 1**

Task 1 is to write a report of at least 150 words on information given below. The report would be part of a university assignment. You should spend about 20 to 30 minutes on this task. The report will be assessed for accuracy and range of language, accurate reporting and organisation of information.

**Task 2**

Task 2 is to write an essay of at least 250 words on the topic given on the next page. The essay would be for a university assignment. You should spend about 30 to 40 minutes on this task. The essay will be assessed for accuracy and range of language, quality of argument, organisation of information, and overall effectiveness of communication.

**TASK ONE REPORT**

The graphs below show information about global migration in 2002. Figure 1 shows the percentage of migrants living in each region of the world. Figure 2 shows the percentage of migrants in the total labour force of selected countries.

Write a report of at least 150 words, describing the significant information from both graphs.

Figure 1: Percentage of migrants living in each region of the world

![Pie chart showing percentage of migrants living in each region: Asia 28%, North America 24%, South America 4%, Europe 32%, Africa 9%, Oceania-Pacific 3%]
Write an essay of at least 250 words on the following topic:

Family attitudes towards education are most important in children’s success at school. They are more important than well-resourced schools and highly qualified teachers.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?
Support your opinion with evidence and examples from your general knowledge and personal experience.
3. the Tahitians

Task 3  
2. diseases  3. healthy  4. limited  5. injuries

Task 4  
1. YES  2. NO

Task 5  
1. b  2. a  3. c

Task 6  
1. D  2. C  3. E

Section 3

Task 1 (sample only)

Both Figures 1 and 2 show information about global migration in 2002. It is clear from the data that migrants are not evenly distributed throughout the world.

According to Figure 1, more of the world’s migrants have settled in Europe (32 per cent) than in any other of six regions. The second highest proportion (28 per cent) lives in Asia and the third highest (24 per cent) in North America. In contrast, the remaining three regions, Africa (9 per cent), South America (4 per cent) and Oceania-Pacific (3 per cent), host very small proportions of migrants.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of migrants in the total labour forces of eight selected countries. Interestingly, the country with the highest proportion of migrant workers is Australia (26 per cent). The corresponding figures for New Zealand and Canada are similar at around 22 per cent and 21 percent respectively. However, the figures for the four selected European countries are much lower, ranging from 10 per cent in Germany to around 4 per cent in Italy.

It can be seen that countries in regions where most migrants have settled may nevertheless have lower proportions of migrants in their labour forces.

Task 2 (sample only)

I agree with the statement that family attitudes towards education are most important in children’s success at school. In support, this essay will contrast the experiences of children whose parents have differing attitudes to education.

The family, especially the parents, is always the most important influence on children’s development, especially in the pre-school and primary school years. Children who are happy and secure at home, look forward to starting school, and are ready to learn. Even if parents themselves left school early, they can show how much they value education by talking with their children about their day’s lessons, giving them time and a quiet place for their homework, and by never letting them stay away from school except when they are sick. Their children will absorb their parents’ positive attitude and try harder to succeed because of their support.

In contrast, children who have been neglected or harshly treated at home, may often lack confidence and concentration at school. They often may not know how to cooperate with others and may develop behavioural problems. When parents show no interest in their children’s school work, or show no respect for the school or teachers, learning may be difficult for such children. Moreover, if the parents allow their children to stay at home when they feel like it, or even make their children stay at home to help in the parents’ work, these children may fall behind in their work, feel less confident and more unhappy at school. From my observation, they will be less likely to succeed, despite the efforts of the best teachers and resources.

The efforts of highly qualified teachers and the provision of good educational resources will help all children learn better. However, in my experience, these factors are often not enough to compensate for the lack of a loving and supportive family that values education highly.