

GUIDE TO TEST SELECTION

**Which test
of English
is right for
YOU?**



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GUIDE TO TEST SELECTION

WHICH TEST?

OVERVIEW AND COMPARISON

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INTRODUCTION



Introduction

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Choosing an English exam can feel overwhelming. Universities, employers, and immigration offices all have different requirements, and there are now more tests available than ever.



This guide gives you a clear overview of the most common English exams — **IELTS, PTE, Cambridge (FCE/CAE/CPE), TOEFL, TOEIC, Duolingo (DET), OET, CELPIP/CAEL, ISE, iTEP, and Kryterion** — so you can make the right decision for your study, work, or migration goals.

TESTS

IELTS	International English Language Testing System	British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia, and Cambridge English Language Assessment
PTE	Pearson Test of English	Pearson PLC
Cambridge	First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate of Advanced English (CAE), Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)	Cambridge English Language Assessment
TOEFL	Test Of English as a Foreign Language	ETS (Educational Testing Service)
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication	ETS (Educational Testing Service)
DET	Duolingo English Test	Duolingo, Inc.
OET	Occupational English Test	OET Centre (owned by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment Trust)
CAEL	Canadian Academic English Language Test	Paragon Testing Enterprises
CELPIP	Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program	Paragon Testing Enterprises
ISE	Integrated Skills in English	Trinity College London
iTEP	International Test of English Proficiency	iTEP International, LLC

TEST OVERVIEW



SUMMARY

- **IELTS** (International English Language Testing System) offers two versions, Academic (for entry into university), and General Training (commonly used for immigration), and involves a Listening, Reading, Writing, and a Speaking paper, which is a one-on-one face-to-face speaking test with an examiner. Your result is valid for two years.
- **PTE** (Pearson Test of English) is completely computer-based and uses AI scoring. Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking are tested, but many tasks are integrated. Your result is valid for two years.
- **FCE/CAE/CPE (Cambridge)** involves Listening, Reading, Writing, Use of English, and a paired Speaking test (i.e., with another candidate) with an Examiner. Test candidates receive a lifelong certificate (ie, certificates never expire); it is often used for academic/work, less common for visas. It can be paper or computer-based.
- **TOEFL iBT** is widely recognized for study (especially in the USA). It is Internet-based, and tests Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. It can be taken online at test centres or at home in some regions.
- **TOEIC** focuses on workplace English. It has 2 Modules: Listening & Reading; Speaking & Writing. TOEIC is widely used in Asia, and by employers worldwide.

SUMMARY

- **DET (Duolingo English Test)** is a 1-hour online adaptive test which tests Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing in integrated tasks. There is growing recognition of the DET for study, especially in the US and Canada.
- **OET** (Occupational English Test) is a healthcare-specific exam, as such it tests Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking in *medical contexts*. It is required for many healthcare registration boards.
- **CELP**IP / **CAEL** are Canadian-focused exams for immigration and study. CELPIP tests Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking; CAEL is Academic-focused with integrated tasks.
- **ISE** (Trinity College London) assesses Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening; each Module is graded separately (Pass, Merit, Distinction). It is accepted by some universities and for UK visas.
- **iTEP** is an online, flexible exam which tests Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. It is used for university placement and employment screening.
- **Kryterion** (varies) is a platform used for institutional or employer-specific English tests; its format and scoring vary by sponsor.

TEST COMPARISON



COMPARISON

TEST	HOURS	SKILLS	FORMAT	SCORING
IELTS	4	L,R,W,S	paper + interview	Bands 1 - 9
PTE	3	L,R,W,S (integrated)	online	10 - 90 points
FCE/CAE /CPE	4-4.5	L, R, W, S (paired)	paper	Scale 140 - 230
TOEFL	2	R, L, S, W	interview + computer	0-30 per skill; /120
TOEIC	3.5	L, R, S, W	paper / computer	10-990; 0-200
DET	1	L, R, W, S	online	10 - 160 points
OET	3	L, R, W, S	paper + interview	Grade A - E per skill; 0 - 500 points
CELP/IP/ CAEL	3	L, R, W, S	computer	1 - 12 per skill / 10 - 90
ISE	2-3	R, W, S, L	paper + interview	Pass / Merit / Distinction
iTEP	1.5	L, R, W, S	online	0 - 6 per skill; overall average
Kryterion	1-2	L, R, W, S	computer	varies by sponsor

PROS & CONS



PROS & CONS (HIGHLIGHTS)

IELTS

- ✓ Widely accepted
- ✓ Human examiner for Speaking
- ✗ Slower results

PTE

- ✓ Fast results
- ✓ 100% computer-based
- ✗ Speaking to a mic can feel awkward

TOEFL

- ✓ Strong US recognition
- ✓ Detailed feedback
- ✗ Long test time

Duolingo

- ✓ Quick, cheap, online
- ✗ Limited recognition compared to IELTS/TOEFL

Cambridge –

- ✓ Certificate never expires
- ✗ Limited for migration.

PROS & CONS (HIGHLIGHTS)

TOEIC

- ✓ Focused on workplace skills
- ✗ Not usually for migration/academic entry

OET

- ✓ Tailored for healthcare
- ✗ Only valid for medical/healthcare contexts

CELP/IP/CAEL

- ✓ Designed for Canada
- ✗ Limited global recognition

ISE (Trinity)

- ✓ Modular approach
- ✗ Limited to UK recognition

iTEP

- ✓ Flexible, affordable
- ✗ Not as globally recognized

Kryterion

- ✓ Custom exams for institutions
- ✗ Recognition depends on sponsor

CHECKLIST



WHICH TEST?

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- ✓ Need it for migration? → IELTS, PTE, or CELPIP
- ✓ Want a lifelong certificate? → Cambridge (FCE/CAE/CPE)
- ✓ Applying to a US university? → TOEFL or Duolingo.
- ✓ Healthcare professional? → OET.
- ✓ Employer-focused? → TOEIC or iTEP.
- ✓ Canadian pathway? → CELPIP/CAEL.



Check the requirements of your country or institute of choice beforehand.

WHAT NEXT?



WHAT NEXT?

Once you've chosen your test, the next step is practice.

To make it easier, download our special Exam Practice Packs — with templates, models, and tips — available individually or as bundles.

Yes, I want the practice packs!



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