

PTE Academic

Speaking

Section 2 of the speaking and writing part of PTE Academic (Part 1) tests your ability to produce spoken English in an academic environment.

Part 1: Speaking and writing		
Section	Item type	Time allowed
Section 1	Personal introduction	1 minute
Section 2	Read aloud	30–35 minutes
	Repeat sentence	
	Describe image	
	Re-tell lecture	
	Answer short question	
Sections 3–4	Summarize written text	20 minutes
Section 5	Summarize written text or Write essay	10 or 20 minutes
Section 6	Write essay	20 minutes

Speaking skills

The speaking skills tested in PTE Academic include the following:

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- reading a text aloud
- supporting an opinion with details, examples and explanations
- organizing an oral presentation in a logical way
- developing complex ideas within a spoken discourse
- using words and phrases appropriate to the context
- using correct grammar
- speaking at a natural rate
- producing fluent speech
- using correct intonation
- using correct pronunciation
- using correct stress
- speaking under timed conditions

Overview

General speaking instructions are presented before Section 2 (speaking).

The screenshot shows the 'Speaking Instructions' screen in the PTE Academic interface. At the top, it says 'Pearson Test of English Academic - Katherine Marie Garcia' and 'Time Remaining 01:30 Item 2 of 2'. The main heading is 'Speaking Instructions' with the subtext 'Some questions require you to first listen to an audio clip and then record your answer by speaking clearly into the microphone.'

There are two main sections: 'Listening' and 'Speaking'. Each has a 'Current Status' box and a 'Recorded Answer' box. The 'Listening' section includes a 'Volume' slider and a 'Current Status: Listening' box. The 'Speaking' section includes a 'Current Status: Recording' box and a 'Recorded Answer' box. The 'Recording' box has a progress bar and a 'Current Status: Completed' box. The 'Recorded Answer' box has a 'Current Status: Recording' box and a 'Recorded Answer' box. The 'Recording' box has a 'Current Status: Completed' box. The 'Recorded Answer' box has a 'Current Status: Recording' box and a 'Recorded Answer' box.

Annotations with arrows point to specific elements:

- volume control**: Points to the volume slider in the 'Listening' section.
- audio status box**: Points to the 'Current Status: Completed' box in the 'Listening' section.
- recording status box**: Points to the 'Current Status: Completed' box in the 'Speaking' section.

At the bottom, there is a 'Next' button and a note: 'The next screen will present the first speaking task'.

There are one or two status boxes on screen, depending on whether the item type involves listening. The audio status box shows how long until the audio or video recording starts and the progress of the recording while you are listening and/or watching. You can adjust the volume of the recording by moving the slider on the volume control. The recording status box lets you know when to start recording and when to complete your response. You are not able to re-record your

response. In addition, if you remain silent for more than three seconds, the microphone will close automatically.

Speaking item types require you to respond orally using fluent speech, correct intonation, stress and pronunciation that are easily understandable to most regular speakers of the language. PTE Academic recognizes regional and national varieties of English pronunciation to the degree that they are understandable to most regular speakers of the language.

Five item types appear in the speaking section of PTE Academic. The total time to complete the speaking section of the test is approximately 30–35 minutes, depending on the combination of items in a given test. Some of the item types are integrated and assess both speaking as well as listening and reading skills.

Section 2 (speaking) total time: 30–35 minutes				
Item type	Task	Skills assessed	Text/Recording length	Time to answer
Read aloud	A text appears on screen. Read the text aloud.	reading and speaking	text up to 60 words	varies by item, depending on the length of text
Repeat sentence	After listening to a sentence, repeat the sentence.	listening and speaking	3–9 seconds	15 seconds
Describe image	An image appears on screen. Describe the image in detail.	speaking	N/A	40 seconds
Re-tell lecture	After listening to or watching a lecture, retell the lecture in your own words.	listening and speaking	up to 90 seconds	40 seconds
Answer short question	After listening to a question, answer with a single word or a few words.	listening and speaking	3–9 seconds	10 seconds

The recordings for the item type *Re-tell lecture* focus on academic subjects in the humanities, natural sciences or social sciences. They contain characteristics of actual speech, such as accents and dialects, fillers, hesitations, false starts, self corrections and variations in delivery speed. Although you may not be familiar with the topics presented, all the information you need to answer the items is contained in the recordings.

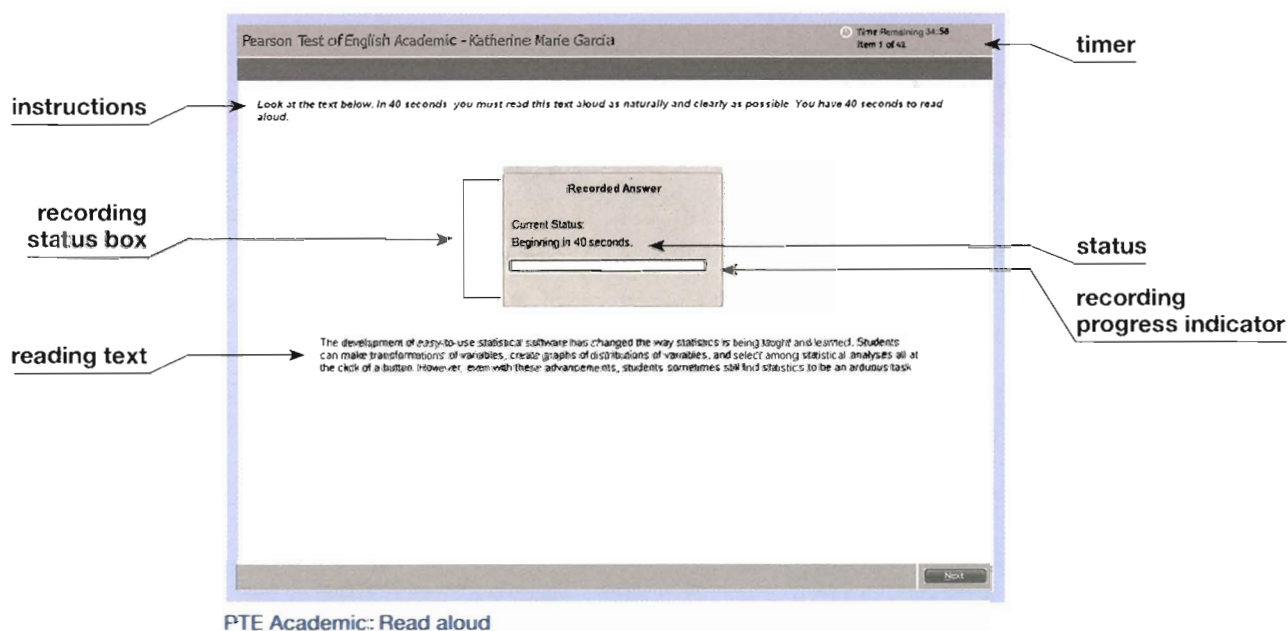
Each recording is played only once. You may take notes using the Erasable Noteboard Booklet and pen, and use these notes as a guide when answering the items.

Speaking item types are not timed individually. You can refer to the timer in the upper right-hand corner of the computer screen, “Time Remaining,” which counts down the time remaining for the speaking section.

Read aloud

Task

Read aloud is a long-answer speaking item type. It tests your ability to read a short text aloud using correct pronunciation and intonation. It assesses both speaking and reading skills. The image below shows the item type.

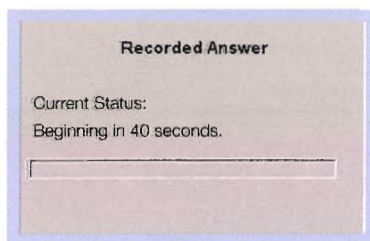


Below are the features of *Read aloud*.

- 1 Instructions are presented at the top of the computer screen.

Look at the text below. In 40 seconds, you must read this text aloud as naturally and clearly as possible. You have 40 seconds to read aloud.

- 2 In the recording status box, the status will count down from 40 seconds.

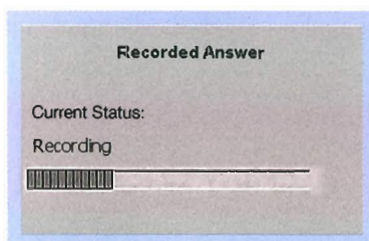


The amount of time you have to prepare will vary by item. The time will be stated in the instructions. In the case of the current example, you have 40 seconds to prepare.

3 A reading text follows.

The development of easy-to-use statistical software has changed the way statistics is being taught and learned. Students can make transformations of variables, create graphs of distributions of variables, and select among statistical analyses all at the click of a button. However, even with these advancements, students sometimes still find statistics to be an arduous task.

4 After 40 seconds, you will hear a short tone and the microphone will open. In the recording status box, the status will change to "Recording."



The recording progress indicator represents the entire duration the microphone is open. So if the text is short, the bar moves faster. If the text is long, the bar moves slower.

The recording progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right. If you stop speaking for more than three seconds, or if time runs out, the status will change to "Completed." The amount of time you have to respond will vary by item. The time will be stated in the instructions. In the case of the current example, you have 40 seconds to give your response.

You should not read punctuation marks aloud. For example, if a phrase is set off by quotation marks, do not say, "quotation mark." Only read aloud the words in the text. A comma may require a short pause. Read the text naturally.

5 Click on the "Next" button to go to the next item. The timer for the speaking section will continue running.

The reading texts for this item type are up to 60 words in length. There are six to seven *Read aloud* items in PTE Academic, depending on the combination of items in a given test. They are presented together in a single block. The amount of time you have to respond to each item will vary. The time will be stated in the instructions.

Scoring

Your score on *Read aloud* is based on three factors:

- **Content:** Does your response include all the words in the reading text, and only these words?

Content is scored by counting the number of correct words in your response. Replacements, insertions and omissions of words will negatively affect your score.

- **Oral fluency:** Does your response demonstrate a smooth, effortless and natural rate of speech?

Oral fluency is scored by determining if your rhythm, phrasing and stress are smooth. The best responses are spoken at a constant and natural rate of speech with appropriate phrasing. Hesitations, repetitions and false starts will negatively affect your score.

- **Pronunciation:** Does your response demonstrate your ability to produce speech sounds in a similar way to most regular speakers of the language?

Pronunciation is scored by determining if your speech is easily understandable to most regular speakers of the language. The best responses contain vowels and consonants pronounced in a native-like way, and stress words and phrases correctly. Responses should also be immediately understandable to a regular speaker of the language.

PTE Academic recognizes regional and national varieties of English pronunciation to the degree that they are understandable to most regular speakers of the language.

Partial credit scoring applies to *Read aloud*. No credit is given for no response or an irrelevant response. This item type affects the scoring of the following:

Overall score		✓
Communicative skills		
Listening		Speaking
Reading	✓	Writing
Enabling skills		
Grammar		Spelling
Oral fluency	✓	Vocabulary
Pronunciation	✓	Written discourse

Speaking and reading skills

Read aloud is an integrated skills item type that tests both your speaking and reading skills in an academic environment. Below are the key skills tested:

Speaking

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- reading a text aloud
- speaking at a natural rate
- producing fluent speech
- using correct intonation
- using correct pronunciation
- using correct stress
- speaking under timed conditions

Reading

- identifying a writer's purpose, style, tone, or attitude
- understanding academic vocabulary
- reading a text under timed conditions

Your listening and writing skills are not tested by this item type.

Strategies

Before speaking

- **Read the text before the microphone opens.** You have between 30 and 40 seconds to do this.
- **Focus on the content of the text.** Some features of speech, such as phrasing and intonation, convey overall meaning. You can only deliver them correctly if you understand what you are reading.
- **Briefly rehearse any unknown words,** following normal spelling and pronunciation conventions.
- **Speak when you hear the tone.** Sit up straight and take a deep breath—this will help you speak clearly.

While speaking

- **Imagine that you are reading to an audience** that is interested in what you are saying. Speak in such a way that you help the imaginary audience to understand.
 - Speak clearly and at a normal speed. Avoid speaking too quickly as there is plenty of time.
 - Speak at a normal volume. If you speak too softly, it may be difficult to score your response.
 - Use the punctuation, such as commas, semi-colons and periods, as a guide for pauses and sentence stress.
- **Make an attempt at unknown words** and then move on.
- **Do not go back to correct yourself or hesitate.** If you make a mistake, continue reading. The microphone will close after three seconds of silence.

- Give a single response demonstrating your best ability. You will not be able to re-record your response.
- Go on to the next item if you finish speaking before the recording progress indicator reaches the end.

Practice

Below is a *Read aloud* item for you to respond to.

Pearson Test of English Academic - Katherine Marie Garcia Time Remaining: 34:58
Item 1 of 42

Look at the text below. In 35 seconds, you must read this text aloud as naturally and clearly as possible. You have 35 seconds to read aloud.

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 35 seconds.

Photography's gaze widened during the early years of the twentieth century and, as the snapshot camera became increasingly popular, the making of photographs became increasingly available to a wide cross-section of the public. The British people grew accustomed to, and were hungry for, the photographic image.

Next



35 sec.

Read the text aloud as naturally and clearly as possible. To simulate the test conditions, give yourself only 35 seconds to respond to this item.

Photography's gaze widened during the early years of the twentieth century and, as the snapshot camera became increasingly popular, the making of photographs became increasingly available to a wide cross-section of the public. The British people grew accustomed to, and were hungry for, the photographic image.

Record your response and compare it with the sample responses on the Audio CD.

Remember, during PTE Academic you will give your response by speaking into a microphone at a test delivery workstation.

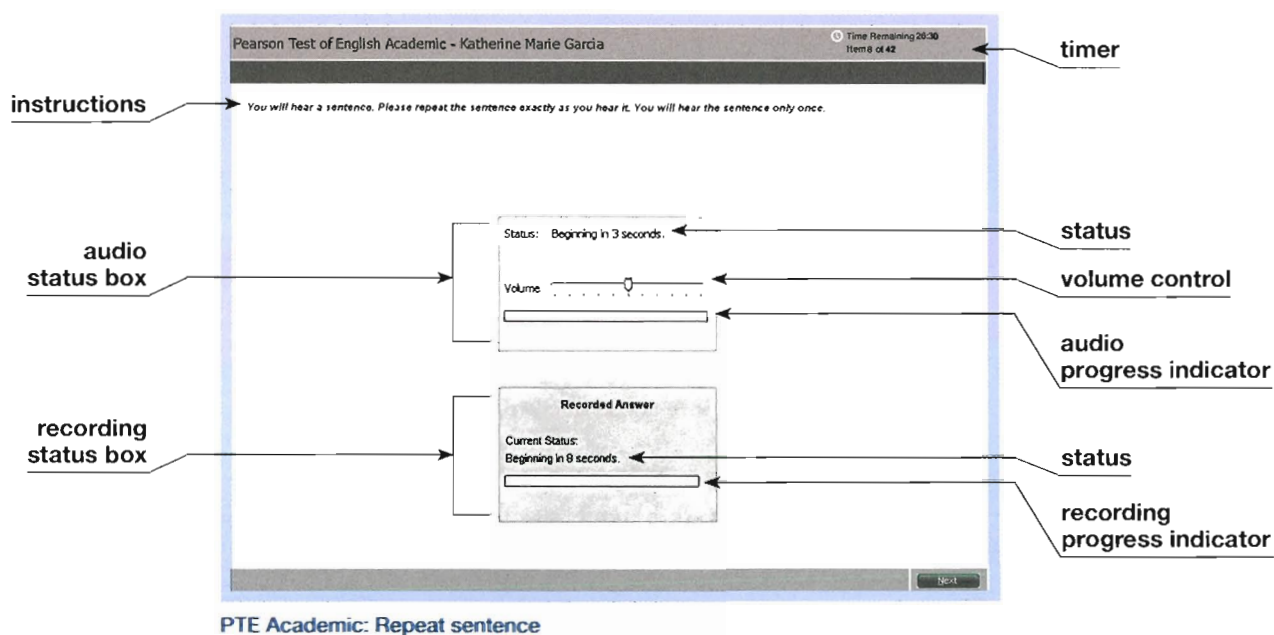
Answer key p.174

Now check the Answer key.

Repeat sentence

Task

Repeat sentence is a short-answer speaking item type. It tests your ability to understand and remember a sentence, and then repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it using correct pronunciation. It assesses both speaking and listening skills. The image below shows the item type.

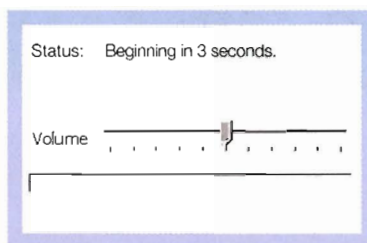


Below are the features of *Repeat sentence*.

- 1 Instructions are presented at the top of the computer screen.

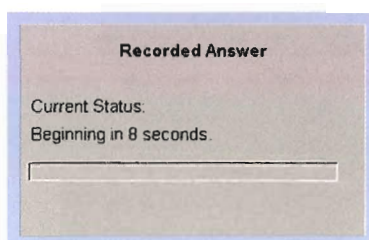
You will hear a sentence. Please repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.

- 2 There are two status boxes for *Repeat sentence*. The first is the audio status box. In the audio status box, the status will count down from three seconds. Then a recording will play automatically.



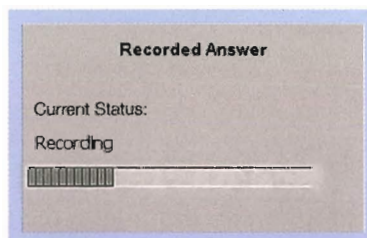
The audio progress indicator represents the entire duration of the recording. So if the recording is short, the bar moves faster. If the recording is long, the bar moves slower.

The status will change to "Playing." To adjust the volume of the recording, move the slider left to decrease and right to increase. You can adjust the volume at any time while the recording is playing. The audio progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right as the recording continues. When the recording finishes, the status will change to "Completed."



In the recording status box, the status will start counting down at the same time as the audio status box. The status will count down while the recording is playing. When the recording finishes, the status will count down one second—the time you have before you respond.

- 3** After one second, the microphone will open. There is no tone before the microphone opens. In the recording status box, the status will change to "Recording."



The recording progress indicator represents the entire duration the microphone is open. So if the sentence is short, the bar moves faster. If the sentence is long, the bar moves slower.

The recording progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right. If you stop speaking for more than three seconds, or if time runs out, the status will change to "Completed." You have 15 seconds to give your response.



2 Play the CD to listen to the recording that goes with this item.

- 4** Click on the "Next" button to go to the next item. The timer for the speaking section will continue running.

The recordings for this item type run for approximately three to nine seconds. Each recording will play only once. There are 10 to 12 *Repeat sentence* items in PTE Academic, depending on the combination of items in a given test. They are presented together in a single block. You have 15 seconds to record your response to each of these items.

Scoring

Your score on *Repeat sentence* is based on three factors:

- **Content:** Does your response include all the words in the sentence, and only these words?
Content is scored by counting the number of correct word sequences in your response. Having almost nothing from the prompt in your response will negatively affect your score.
- **Oral fluency:** Does your response demonstrate a smooth, effortless and natural rate of speech?
Oral fluency is scored by determining if your rhythm, phrasing and stress are smooth. The best responses are spoken at a constant and natural rate of speech with appropriate phrasing. Hesitations, repetitions and false starts will negatively affect your score.
- **Pronunciation:** Does your response demonstrate your ability to produce speech sounds in a similar way to most regular speakers of the language?
Pronunciation is scored by determining if your speech is easily understandable to most regular speakers of the language. The best responses contain vowels and consonants pronounced in a native-like way, as well as words and phrases stressed correctly. Responses should also be immediately understandable to a regular speaker of the language.
PTE Academic recognizes regional and national varieties of English pronunciation to the degree that they are understandable to most regular speakers of the language.

Partial credit scoring applies to *Repeat sentence*. No credit is given for no response or an irrelevant response. This item type affects the scoring of the following:

Overall score		✓	
Communicative skills			
Listening	✓	Speaking	✓
Reading		Writing	
Enabling skills			
Grammar		Spelling	
Oral fluency	✓	Vocabulary	
Pronunciation	✓	Written discourse	

Listening and speaking skills

Repeat sentence is an integrated skills item type that tests both your listening and speaking skills in an academic environment. Below are the key skills tested:

Listening

- understanding academic vocabulary
- inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words
- comprehending variations in tone, speed, accent

Speaking

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- speaking at a natural rate
- producing fluent speech
- using correct intonation
- using correct pronunciation
- using correct stress
- speaking under timed conditions

Your writing skills are not tested by this item type, and your reading skills are only used to read the instructions.

Strategies

While listening

- **Try to remember the sentence or take notes.** If you want to take notes, write key words and phrases. There will not be time to take complete notes.
- **Focus on the meaning of the sentence.** This will help you remember the sentence better, and help you use the most appropriate stress and intonation.
- **Speak when the status changes to “Recording.”** There is no tone before the microphone opens on this item type. Sit up straight and take a deep breath—this will help you speak clearly.

While speaking

- **Speak clearly and naturally.**
 - Do not try to copy the speaker’s accent. Speak naturally.
 - Speak at a normal speed. Avoid speaking too quickly as there is plenty of time.
 - Speak at a normal volume. If you speak too softly, it may be difficult to score your response.
- **Make an attempt at unknown words** and then move on.
- **Do not go back to correct yourself or hesitate.** If you make a mistake, continue speaking. The microphone will close after three seconds of silence.
- **Give a single response demonstrating your best ability.** You will not be able to re-record your response.

Practice

Below is a *Repeat sentence* item for you to respond to.

The screenshot shows a computer screen with the following elements:

- Header: Pearson Test of English Academic - Katherine Marie Garcia
- Time Remaining: 25:30
- Item 6 of 42
- Instruction: You will hear a sentence. Please repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. You will hear the sentence only once.
- Status: Beginning in 3 seconds.
- Volume: A slider control with a speaker icon.
- Recorded Answer: A box with the text "Current Status: Beginning in 8 seconds." and a recording bar.
- Next button: A button labeled "Next" in the bottom right corner.



3



15 sec.

Listen to the recording only once. Then repeat the sentence exactly as you hear it. To simulate the test conditions, give yourself only 15 seconds to respond to this item.

Record your response and compare it with the sample responses on the Audio CD.

Remember, during PTE Academic you will give your response by speaking into a microphone at a test delivery workstation.

Answer key **p.174**

Now check the Answer key.

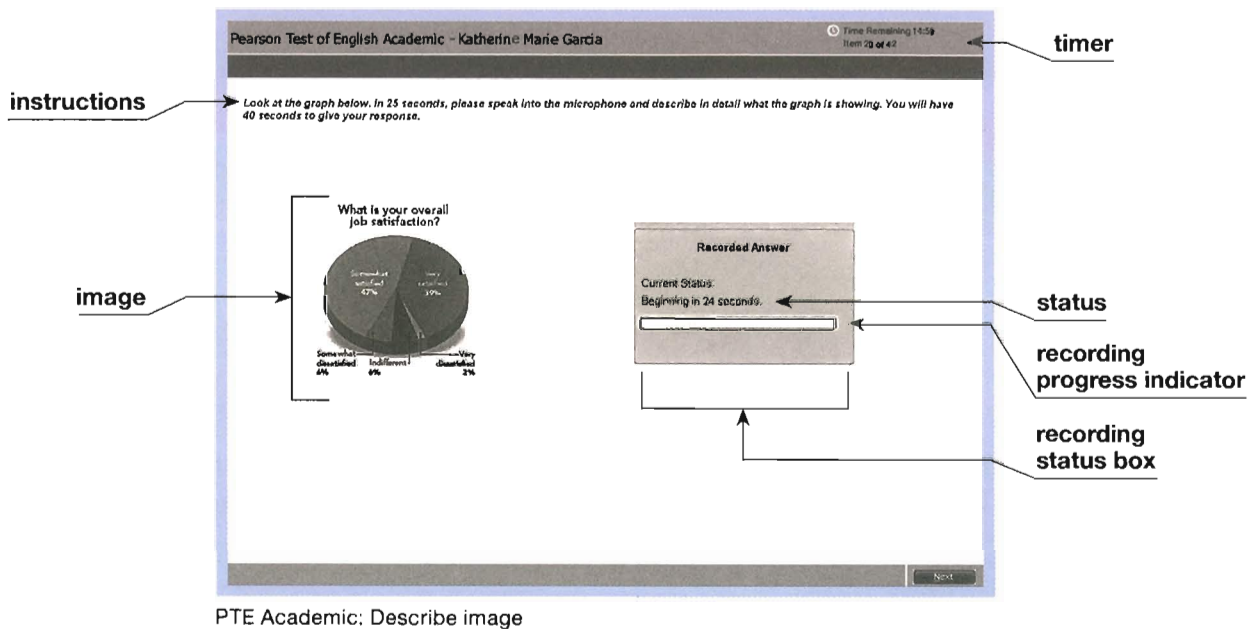
3

Speaking

Describe image

Task

Describe image is a long-answer speaking item type. It tests your ability to describe an image from an academic source. It assesses speaking skills. The screen below shows the item type.



PTE Academic: Describe image

Below are the features of *Describe image*.

- 1 Instructions are presented at the top of the computer screen.

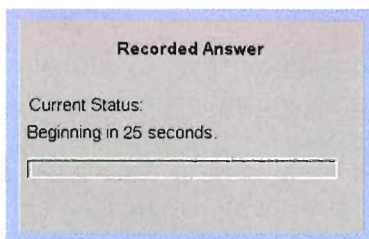
Look at the graph below. In 25 seconds, please speak into the microphone and describe in detail what the graph is showing. You will have 40 seconds to give your response.

- 2 An image follows.

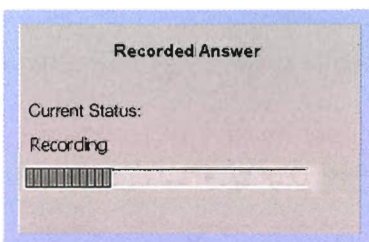


The type of image will vary by item. The image may be a graph, picture, map, chart or table. The type of image will be stated in the instructions. In the case of the current example, the image is a graph.

- 3** In the recording status box, the status will count down from 25 seconds.



- 4** After 25 seconds, you will hear a short tone and the microphone will open. The status will change to "Recording."



The recording progress indicator represents the entire duration the microphone is open.

The recording progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right. If you stop speaking for more than three seconds, or if time runs out, the status will change to "Completed." You have 40 seconds to give your response.

- 5** Click on the "Next" button to go to the next item. The timer for the speaking section will continue running.

The images for this item type are authentic images related to academic subjects in the humanities, natural sciences or social sciences. There are six to seven *Describe image* items in PTE Academic, depending on the combination of items in a given test. They are presented together in a single block. You have 40 seconds to record your response to each item.

Scoring

Your score on *Describe image* is based on three factors:

- **Content:** Does your response accurately and thoroughly describe the image?

Content is scored by determining if all aspects and elements of the image have been addressed in your response. Your description of relationships, possible developments and conclusions or implications based on details from the image is also scored. The best responses deal with all parts of the image, contain logical and specific information and include possible developments, conclusions or implications. Mentioning just a few disjointed ideas will negatively affect your score.

- **Oral fluency:** Does your response demonstrate a smooth, effortless and natural rate of speech?

Oral fluency is scored by determining if your rhythm, phrasing and stress are smooth. The best responses are spoken at a constant and natural rate of speech with appropriate phrasing. Hesitations, repetitions and false starts will negatively affect your score.

- **Pronunciation:** Does your response demonstrate your ability to produce speech sounds in a similar way to most regular speakers of the language?

Pronunciation is scored by determining if your speech is easily understandable to most regular speakers of the language. The best responses contain vowels and consonants pronounced in a native-like way, and stress words and phrases correctly. Responses should also be immediately understandable to a regular speaker of the language.

PTE Academic recognizes regional and national varieties of English pronunciation to the degree that they are understandable to most regular speakers of the language.

Partial credit scoring applies to *Describe image*. No credit is given for no response or an irrelevant response. This item type affects the scoring of the following:

Overall score			✓
Communicative skills			
Listening		Speaking	✓
Reading		Writing	
Enabling skills			
Grammar		Spelling	
Oral fluency	✓	Vocabulary	
Pronunciation	✓	Written discourse	

Speaking skills

Describe image tests your speaking skills in an academic environment. Below are the key skills tested:

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- supporting an opinion with details, examples and explanations
- organizing an oral presentation in a logical way
- developing complex ideas within a spoken discourse
- using words and phrases appropriate to the context
- using correct grammar
- speaking at a natural rate
- producing fluent speech
- using correct intonation
- using correct pronunciation
- using correct stress
- speaking under timed conditions

Your listening and writing skills are not tested by this item type, and your reading skills are only used to read the instructions.

Strategies

Before speaking

- **Study the image.** You have 25 seconds to do this. If necessary, take brief notes.
 - First familiarize yourself with the general topic and the type of information conveyed by the image. Check the title, the axes (graphs and charts), the headings and sub-headings (tables) or the labels (maps and pictures).
 - Make sure that you know the units of measurement (US\$, kilograms, etc) and the reference points (years, entities, etc) being used.
 - Determine the significant information conveyed by the image. For example, graphs, charts and tables often highlight trends. Maps and pictures usually highlight important features.
- **Speak when you hear the tone.** Sit up straight and take a deep breath—this will help you speak clearly.

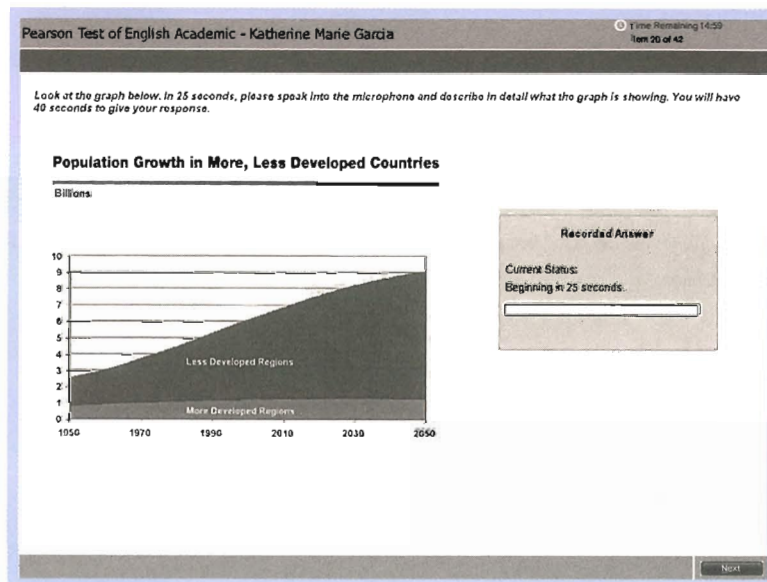
While speaking

- **Speak clearly and naturally.**
 - Speak at a normal speed. Avoid speaking too quickly as there is plenty of time.
 - Speak at a normal volume. If you speak too softly, it may be difficult to score your response.
- **Describe the general content of the image, then summarize the most significant points, referring to details for support.**
 - Include all the main points conveyed by the image.
 - Try not to repeat information.

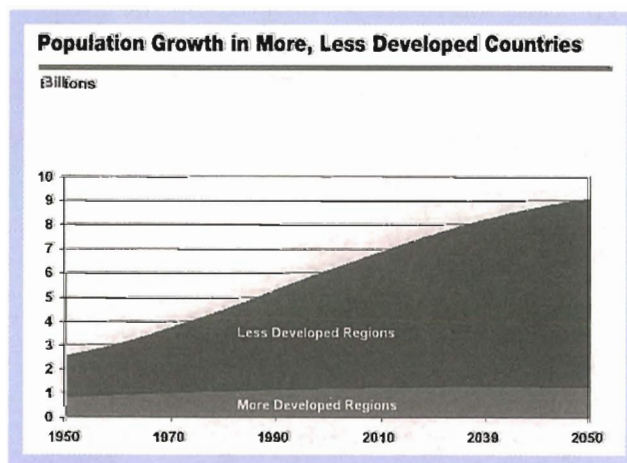
- When describing developments, conclusions or implications, support your response with details from the image.
- **Do not go back to correct yourself or hesitate.** If you make a mistake, continue speaking. The microphone will close after three seconds of silence.

Practice

Below is a *Describe image* item for you to respond to.



40 sec. Look at the graph below. Describe in detail what the graph is showing. To simulate the test conditions, give yourself only 40 seconds to respond to this item.



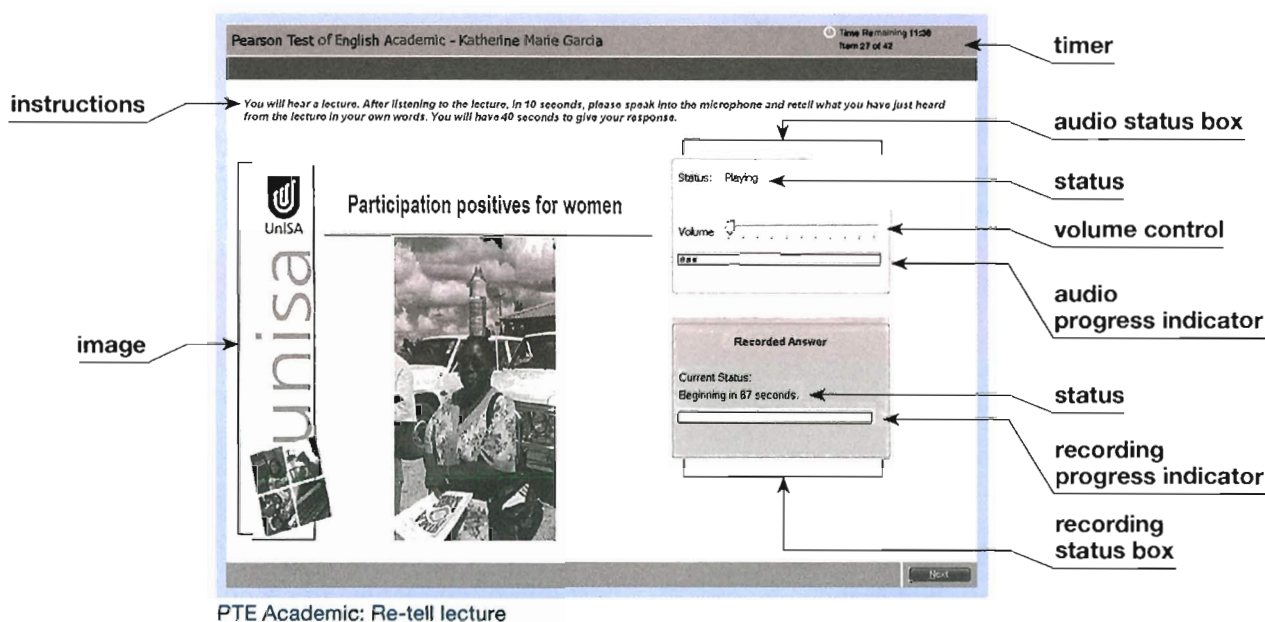
Record your response and compare it with the sample responses on the Audio CD.

Remember, during PTE Academic you will give your response by speaking into a microphone at a test delivery workstation.

Re-tell lecture

Task

Re-tell lecture is a long-answer speaking item type. It tests your ability to give a presentation on information from a lecture on an academic subject. It assesses both speaking and listening skills. The lecture may also be accompanied by an image. The screen below shows the item type.



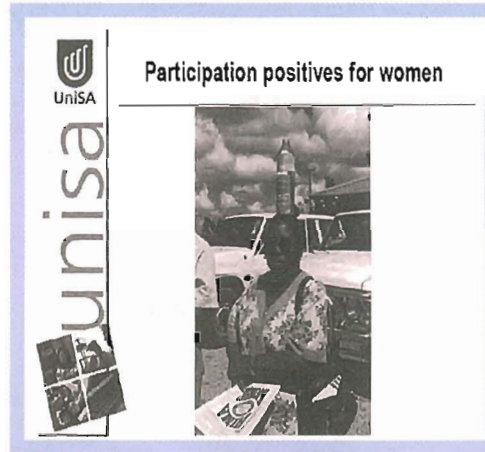
PTE Academic: Re-tell lecture

Below are the features of *Re-tell lecture*.

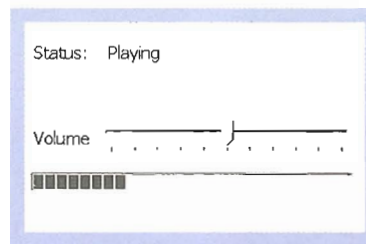
- 1 Instructions are presented at the top of the computer screen.

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give your response.

- 2 An image may follow.

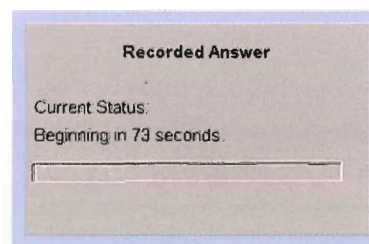


- 3 There are two status boxes for *Re-tell lecture*. The first is the audio status box. In the audio status box, the status will count down from three seconds. Then a recording will play automatically.



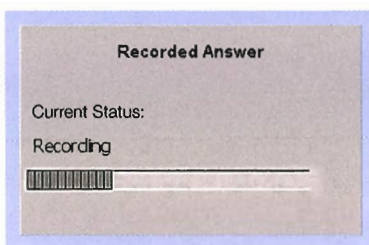
The audio progress indicator represents the entire duration of the recording. So if the recording is short, the bar moves faster. If the recording is long, the bar moves slower.

The status will change to “Playing.” To adjust the volume of the recording, move the slider left to decrease and right to increase. You can adjust the volume at any time while the recording is playing. The audio progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right as the recording continues. When the recording finishes, the status will change to “Completed.”



In the recording status box, the status will start counting down at the same time as the audio status box. The status will count down while the recording is playing. When the recording finishes, the status will count down 10 seconds—the time you have before you respond.

- 4 After 10 seconds, you will hear a short tone and the microphone will open. In the recording status box, the status will change to “Recording.”



The recording progress indicator represents the entire duration the microphone is open.

The recording progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right. If you stop speaking for more than three seconds, or if time runs out, the status will change to “Completed.” You have 40 seconds to give your response.



4

Play the CD to listen to the recording that goes with this item.

- 5** Click on the “Next” button to go to the next item. The timer for the speaking section will continue running.

The recordings for this item type run for approximately 60–90 seconds. Each recording will play only once. There are three to four *Re-tell lecture* items in PTE Academic, depending on the combination of items in a given test. They are presented together in a single block. You have 40 seconds to record your response to each of these items.

Scoring

Your score on *Re-tell lecture* is based on three factors:

- **Content:** Does your response accurately and thoroughly retell the information in the lecture?

Content is scored by determining how accurately and thoroughly you convey the situation, characters, aspects, actions and developments presented in the lecture. Your description of relationships, possible developments and conclusions or implications is also scored. The best responses **retell all the main points** of the lecture and **include possible developments, conclusions or implications**. Mentioning a few disjointed ideas will negatively affect your score.

- **Oral fluency:** Does your response demonstrate a smooth, effortless and natural rate of speech?

Oral fluency is scored by determining if your rhythm, phrasing and stress are smooth. The best responses are spoken at a constant and natural rate of speech with appropriate phrasing. Hesitations, repetitions and false starts will negatively affect your score.

- **Pronunciation:** Does your response demonstrate your ability to produce speech sounds in a similar way to most regular speakers of the language?

Pronunciation is scored by determining if your speech is easily understandable to most regular speakers of the language. The best responses contain vowels and consonants pronounced in a

native-like way, and stress words and phrases correctly. Responses should also be immediately understandable to a regular speaker of the language.

PTE Academic recognizes regional and national varieties of English pronunciation to the degree that they are understandable to most regular speakers of the language.

Partial credit scoring applies to *Re-tell lecture*. No credit is given for no response or an irrelevant response. This item type affects the scoring of the following:

Overall score		✓	
Communicative skills			
Listening	✓	Speaking	✓
Reading		Writing	
Enabling skills			
Grammar		Spelling	
Oral fluency	✓	Vocabulary	
Pronunciation	✓	Written discourse	

Listening and speaking skills

Re-tell lecture is an integrated skills item type that tests both your listening and speaking skills in an academic environment. Below are the key skills tested:

Listening

- identifying the topic, theme or main ideas
- identifying supporting points or examples
- identifying a speaker's purpose, style, tone, or attitude
- understanding academic vocabulary
- inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words
- comprehending explicit and implicit information
- comprehending concrete and abstract information
- classifying and categorizing information
- following an oral sequencing of information
- comprehending variations in tone, speed, accent

Speaking

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- supporting an opinion with details, examples and explanations
- organizing an oral presentation in a logical way
- developing complex ideas within a spoken discourse
- using words and phrases appropriate to the context
- using correct grammar

- speaking at a natural rate
- producing fluent speech
- using correct intonation
- using correct pronunciation
- using correct stress
- speaking under timed conditions

Your writing skills are not tested by this item type, and your reading skills are only used to read the instructions.

Strategies

Before listening

- **Scan the image, if one is included, quickly.** The image will provide the general context for the lecture. You have only three seconds before the recording starts to play automatically.

While listening

- **Pay attention to the content of the lecture.** It is important that you understand what you hear, because you will have to retell the lecture including all key elements.
- **Take notes** using the Erasable Noteboard Booklet and pen. Focus on key words. Do not attempt to take notes word-for-word. You may miss important information if you try to write too much.
- **Review your notes when the recording stops,** and decide how to organize the information. You have 10 seconds to do this.
- **Speak when you hear the tone.** Sit up straight and take a deep breath—this will help you speak clearly.

While speaking

- **Speak clearly and naturally.**
 - Speak at a normal speed. Avoid speaking too quickly as there is plenty of time.
 - Speak at a normal volume. If you speak too softly, it may be difficult to score your response.
- **Retell the lecture using your notes as a guide.** You will have 40 seconds to give your response.
 - Include all of the key points presented in the lecture.
 - Try not to repeat information.
- **Do not go back to correct yourself or hesitate.** If you make a mistake, continue speaking. The microphone will close after three seconds of silence.


Practice

Below is a *Re-tell lecture* item for you to respond to.

Pearson Test of English Academic - Katherine Marie Garcia

Time Remaining 1:128
Item 27 of 42

You will hear a lecture. After listening to the lecture, in 10 seconds, please speak into the microphone and retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. You will have 40 seconds to give your response.



Status: Beginning in 2 seconds.

Volume

Recorded Answer

Current Status
Beginning in 56 seconds.

Next



5



40 sec.

Listen to the lecture only once. Then retell what you have just heard from the lecture in your own words. To simulate the test conditions, give yourself only 40 seconds to respond to this item.



Record your response and compare it with the sample responses on the Audio CD.

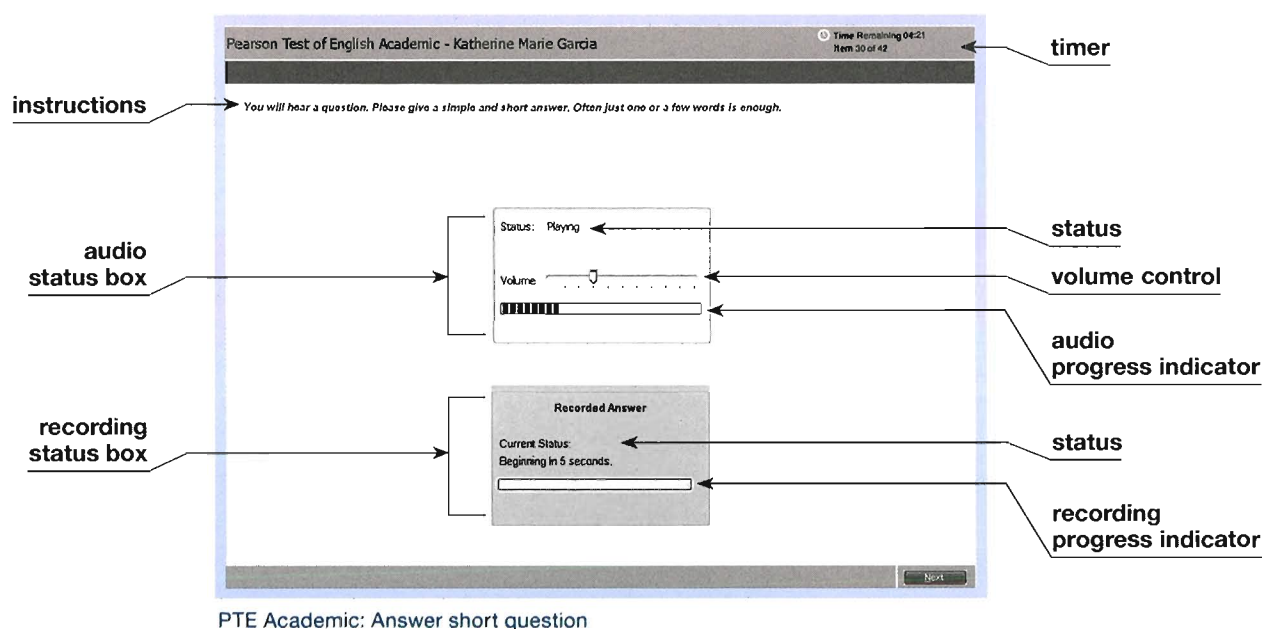
Remember, during PTE Academic you will give your response by speaking into a microphone at a test delivery workstation.

Answer key **p.176** Now check the Answer key.

Answer short question

Task

Answer short question is a short-answer speaking item type with a single correct response. It tests your ability to understand a question presented in a recording, and provide a brief and accurate response. It assesses both speaking and listening skills. The question may also be accompanied by an image. The screen below shows the item type.



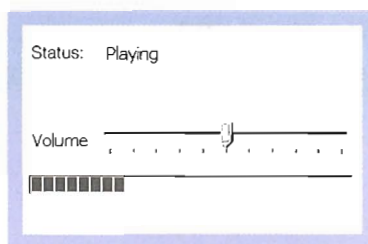
Below are the features of *Answer short question*.

- 1 Instructions are presented at the top of the computer screen.

You will hear a question. Please give a simple and short answer. Often just one or a few words is enough.

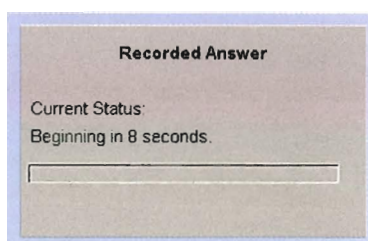
- 2 An image may follow.

- 3 There are two status boxes for *Answer short question*. The first is the audio status box. In the audio status box, the status will count down from three seconds. Then a recording will play automatically.



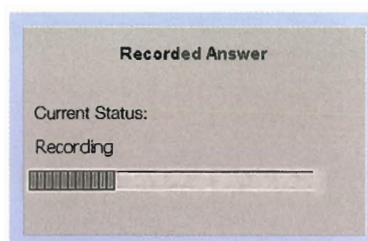
The audio progress indicator represents the entire duration of the recording. So if the recording is short, the bar moves faster. If the recording is long, the bar moves slower.

The status will change to “Playing.” To adjust the volume of the recording, move the slider left to decrease and right to increase. You can adjust the volume at any time while the recording is playing. The audio progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right as the recording continues. When the recording finishes, the status will change to “Completed.”



In the recording status box, the status will start counting down at the same time as the audio status box. The status will count down while the recording is playing. When the recording finishes, the status will count down one second—the time you have before you respond.

- 4** After one second, the microphone will open. There is no tone before the microphone opens. In the recording status box, the status will change to “Recording.”



The recording progress indicator represents the entire duration the microphone is open.

The recording progress indicator features a blue bar that will gradually move to the right. If you stop speaking for more than three seconds, or if time runs out, the status will change to “Completed.” You have 10 seconds to give your response.



6 Play the CD to listen to the recording that goes with this item.

- 5** Click on the “Next” button to go to the next item. The timer for the speaking section will continue running.

The recordings for this item type run for approximately three to nine seconds. Each question will play only once. There are 10 to 12 *Answer short question* items in PTE Academic, depending on the combination of items in a given test. They are presented together in a single block. You have 10 seconds to record your response to each of these items.

Scoring

Your response is scored as either correct or incorrect based on the appropriacy of the words in your response. No credit is given for no response or an incorrect response. This item type affects the scoring of the following:

Overall score		✓	
Communicative skills			
Listening	✓	Speaking	✓
Reading		Writing	
Enabling skills			
Grammar		Spelling	
Oral fluency		Vocabulary	✓
Pronunciation		Written discourse	

Listening and speaking skills

Answer short question is an integrated skills item type that tests both your listening and speaking skills in an academic environment. Below are the key skills tested:

Listening

- identifying the topic, theme or main ideas
- understanding academic vocabulary
- inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words

Speaking

- speaking for a purpose (to repeat, to inform, to explain)
- using words and phrases appropriate to the context
- speaking under timed conditions

Your writing skills are not tested by this item type, and your reading skills are only used to read the instructions.

Strategies

While listening

- **Listen carefully to the question** and determine the type of information your answer requires.
- **Speak when the status changes to “Recording.”** There is no tone on this item type. Sit up straight and take a deep breath—this will help you speak clearly.

While speaking

- **Speak clearly and naturally.**
 - Speak at a normal speed. Avoid speaking too quickly as there is plenty of time.
 - Speak at a normal volume. If you speak too softly, it may be difficult to score your response.
- **Respond with a single word or a short phrase.** Do not say more than necessary. You will not get credit for extra words.

Practice

Below is an *Answer short question* item for you to respond to.

The screenshot shows a software interface for the Pearson Test of English Academic. At the top, it says 'Pearson Test of English Academic - Katherine Marie Garcia' and 'Time Remaining 04:21 Item 30 of 42'. Below this, a message reads: 'You will hear a question. Please give a simple and short answer. Often just one or a few words is enough.' In the center, there is a 'Status: Playing' indicator and a 'Volume' slider. At the bottom, there is a 'Recorded Answer' box with the text 'Current Status: Beginning in 5 seconds.' and a 'Next' button.



7 | 10 sec. Listen to the recording only once. Then answer the question with one or a few words. To simulate the test conditions, give yourself only 10 seconds to respond to this item.

Remember, during PTE Academic you will give your response by speaking into a microphone at a test delivery workstation.

Answer key p.177 **Now check the Answer key.**

Improving general speaking skills

Effective speaking

Effective speaking, in both everyday and test situations, requires attention to the five areas listed below. Although not all of these areas will be tested in PTE Academic, improving your skills in each area will help your general language proficiency and improve your overall performance in the test.

► Organization

- **State the purpose clearly.** For example, at the beginning of a presentation, explain what the main aims of the presentation are. “Today, I will talk about the importance of adopting the research procedures.” In a discussion, clearly state your point of view and give reasons. “We will decide first on how to enhance our study forum since doing so will benefit students significantly.”
- **Use appropriate signposts to indicate changes in topic or point of view.** For example, “Now let’s go on to the next point.” or “That may be true. However, ...”

► Listeners’ needs

- **Make your point or goals clear from the beginning**, so that your listeners understand your purpose for speaking. For example, “I’d like to discuss the plans for the research project.”
- **Give clear signposts** so that your listeners can follow what is being presented or discussed. For example, “I am going to present three options for development.” or “Let’s compare the past with the present.”
- **Check your listeners’ reactions** to ensure that they can understand your pronunciation, word stress and intonation. Watch their facial expressions or listen for clarification requests.
- **Give your listeners opportunities to interrupt or clarify** to ensure correct understanding. For example, “Do you have any questions?”, “Does that make sense?” or “Is that clear?”

► Fluency and cohesion

- **Pronounce words and expressions intelligibly**, with appropriate stress, intonation and attention to the articulation of word endings. For example, pronounce the ending “s” clearly in “The students need to have copies of all documents.”
- **Link ideas appropriately**, using linking words and expressions such as “so,” “because,” “then” to produce a smooth flow of connected speech.

► Control of language

- **Ensure the range of vocabulary and choice of words appropriately convey the intended meaning.** For example, use “concerned” rather than “upset” to convey that someone has raised a possible problem, rather than an immediate problem.
- **Use a variety of expressions to make your speech interesting.** For example, use the synonyms “tired” and “exhausted” to express the different degrees of tiredness.
- **Use correct grammatical forms and structures to convey the intended meaning.** For example, use the correct tenses in complex structures such as “The head of research asked whether the transcripts had been updated in the database.”

► Strategies

- **Use appropriate register for the situation.** For example, use “kids” when talking informally with a friend or classmate, but use “children” when formally discussing a plan for educational sponsorship.
- **Follow appropriate turn-taking conventions** for interrupting, volunteering information or changing the subject without causing offence. For example, say “Excuse me, can I add something?” to interrupt and add information.
- **Use tentative expressions appropriately to convey politeness.** For example, say “Yes, thank you. I’d like...” instead of “Yes, I want...” as a response to “Would you like something to drink?”
- **Use clarification techniques to ensure understanding.** For example, “I’m sorry, what was that figure?” or “Can I just check that ...”
- **Use appropriate intonation and stress patterns to convey feelings and views.** For example, stress the word “extremely” in “This is extremely important” for emphasis.

Understanding your strengths and weaknesses

Improving your speaking skills starts with an understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses. This will allow you to concentrate on the areas which need to be improved in general, or specifically as preparation for taking PTE Academic. Use the checklist below to assess your current speaking skills and to decide on priority areas for improvement.

Effective speaking	My current proficiency level			Priority for improvement
	High	Medium	Low	
Organization				
I can state my purpose clearly, whether in an informal or formal situation.				
I can use signposts to indicate a change in topic or point of view.				
Listeners' needs				
I can make my point or goals clear from the beginning.				
I give clear signposts to help my listeners follow what I am presenting or discussing.				
I pay attention to my listeners' reactions to check understanding in face-to-face communication.				
I pause between points to give my listeners a chance to interrupt or clarify.				

Effective speaking	My current proficiency level			Priority for improvement
	High	Medium	Low	
Fluency and cohesion				
I can use a dictionary to learn the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and the correct word stress.				
I pay attention to all aspects of pronunciation, including the endings of words.				
I can apply stress and intonation effectively to convey meaning.				
I can link my ideas with appropriate linking words and expressions.				
Control of language				
I can choose appropriate words and expressions to convey the intended meaning.				
I can use different expressions to make my speech interesting.				
I can use different verb tenses and forms correctly to convey the intended meaning.				
I can use a range of grammatical structures correctly.				
Strategies				
I understand the difference between informal and formal speech and can adjust my language accordingly.				
I have a range of expressions to use when I want to take my turn in a conversation, or interrupt a discussion to add my point of view.				
I understand and can use expressions which convey politeness.				
I know the appropriate expressions for checking and clarifying information and can use them when I need to.				
I can use appropriate intonation and stress patterns to convey feelings and views.				

Developing your speaking skills

Follow the suggestions below to improve your general speaking skills.

► **Speak more. Look for opportunities to speak English.**

- **Take an online or classroom-based speaking course.** This will allow you to get speaking practice that is tailored to your proficiency level and needs.

- **Join English speaking clubs either online or in your community**, and get involved in the activities.
 - **Join special interest groups in your community** that have English-speaking members, for example, theatrical societies or sports groups.
 - **Join or set up an English-speaking community in your area** with friends or colleagues and organize English speaking social events. Choose activities for each session and make it a rule that only English is spoken.
 - **Sign up to online English forums** that focus on topics that you are interested in.
 - **Invite friends or colleagues to have debates** on different topics in English, for example, current affairs. Prepare points to discuss.
 - **Learn some English songs.** For example, use the lyrics pages on a CD booklet or from the Internet to practice reading and singing a popular song. Or join some friends for an English karaoke session.
 - **Call in to your local English radio stations** during call-in programs to express your opinions or ask questions.
 - **Travel to a country** where English is widely spoken. This will provide an opportunity to use English for a number of different purposes in authentic contexts.
- **Practice pronunciation, word stress and intonation.**
- **Listen to short audio recordings with transcripts.** Listen again and read the transcripts of the recordings aloud together with the speakers.
 - **Read aloud the dialogues in novels or short stories** to dramatize the stories. Aim to express the feelings of the characters as you read, using appropriate stress and intonation.
 - **Read simple poems and rhymes** to improve your pronunciation and rhythm. Exaggerate your speaking performance to have some fun and enhance your pronunciation.
- **Develop a checklist of useful words, expressions and structures.**
- **Keep a record of useful words and phrases** that you hear or read. Note these words and expressions, with the meaning, in a place where they are easily accessible. Refer to them regularly, aiming to memorize and use them appropriately when you speak.
 - **Use a dictionary to check the pronunciation and stress of the words** that you are not sure of.
 - **Use a thesaurus to find synonyms** for common words, so that you can increase your range of expressions. Check back with a dictionary to ensure that you understand any specific differences between the original word and its synonyms.
 - **Improve the accuracy of your use of grammatical structures.** Make a list of the structures you want to improve and look for information and practice materials in grammar books or on the Internet.
- **Read more.**
- **Read English in different formats**, such as short stories, novels, magazine or e-zine articles, blogs and so on. This will expand your range of English expressions and your knowledge of conventions in speaking.
 - **Refer to “Sources of reading material”** in the section “Improving general reading skills” in Chapter 5 of the *Official Guide* for other useful reading materials.

Speaking strategies

► Be prepared to start a conversation.

- **Use conventional openings in different situations.** For example, in a formal situation such as attending a meeting with people you do not know well, introduce yourself by saying “How do you do?” or “Hello, how are you?”

► Keep the conversation going.

- **Ask questions**, but not as if you are interrogating the person. For example, asking a lot of personal questions such as “Where do you live?”, “Are you married?”, “How many children do you have?”, “What is your job?”, “Do you like it here?” one after the other, can make other people feel very uncomfortable. Instead, comment on what the person has told you or ask a little more about what they have said. For example, if someone says they live in a particular country, you could ask what they think you should see if you visit that area.
- **Elaborate a little to add information or extend the discussion.** For example, if someone asks you how you got to the meeting, you might say “I took the bus.” Then follow up with a comment about the convenience of public transportation.

► Use verbal and non-verbal strategies.

- **Pay attention to other people’s body language**, including facial expressions and gestures. These will help you determine what they are thinking and feeling.
- **Use clarification techniques** to check your understanding or ask for repetition of the information you have missed. For example, “I’m sorry, I didn’t quite catch that.”, “I’m not sure that I understand” or “Can I check again—when will we meet next week?”

► Prepare for formal presentations.

- **Rehearse presentations** so that you feel confident. Memorize your opening and closing sections to start and end fluently.
- **Use signposting phrases** to indicate changes in topic. For example, “Now I’ll move on to ...”
- **Think of questions that you might be asked**, and try answering the questions by speaking aloud to yourself.

Sources of spoken English

- **Online English courses or textbooks** with accompanying CDs or DVDs provide samples of authentic or adapted spoken English. These courses or textbooks often provide speaking practice activities or grammar practice exercises.
- **English-speaking groups** offer the opportunity to practice both speaking and listening skills. Search for global groups on the Internet and find out about local clubs in your area.
- **The Internet** offers the opportunity to listen to a wide range of spoken English including presentations, lectures, descriptions, stories, commentaries and more.
- **Television programs** offer a range of situations in which authentic and scripted language is used. Some programs are subtitled, which can be helpful for overall comprehension and for exposure to a wide range of topics and language.

- **Radio broadcasts** provide samples of spoken English on a wide range of topics. News broadcasts provide exposure to short, well-organized presentations on a number of topics. Stories provide samples of character description and dialogue.
- **Face-to-face public lectures or short talks** are usually well-structured and are sometimes accompanied by written outlines, which can be helpful for both listening and speaking practice.

Preparing for PTE Academic

To prepare for PTE Academic, you should practice the speaking skills that you will be assessed on in the test:

- Read Chapter 3 of the *Official Guide* to obtain information on all aspects of the speaking item types in the test and practice responding to the example items.
- Use the CD-ROM included with the *Official Guide* to gain further practice in responding to speaking items.
- Use the PTE Academic Tutorial available at www.pearsonpte.com to learn how to respond to these items in the actual test.
- Take a practice test available at www.pearsonpte.com.

Refer to the section “Resources” in Chapter 2 of the *Official Guide* for further information.