

London Tests of English for Children – Task Four

Teaching Tips for Task Four

Task Four often takes the form of a matching exercise which tests candidates' familiarity with English in everyday situations.

On the test paper there are several pictures, each of which shows a person speaking (For example, in the picture below the customer is speaking). Alongside is a list of sentences. Candidates have to consider the situations depicted, and decide which sentence is said by which person. They then draw lines to join each sentence to the appropriate picture.



Shall I open the window?

How much is that?

That's £4.95.

To give them as much help as possible in the exam, it is a good idea to familiarise the children with reading pictures, and with using everyday English.

Understanding speech bubbles

Some candidates lose marks because they misread which person in a picture is speaking, and then draw a line to the wrong sentence. (For example, they might look at the picture above, mistakenly think that the shop assistant is speaking, and therefore choose 'That's £4.95'.) So it is important to get your students used to looking at people in pictures and focusing on whose mouth the speech bubbles are coming from. A simple way is to show your class some big pictures copied from past papers, one at a time (e.g. on an overhead projector) and to get them to decide as quickly as they can who is speaking. For example, you can ask 'Who is speaking – the shop assistant or the customer?... The policewoman or the man?... The bus driver or the passenger?' The children can race to be the first to give the correct answer.

Reading pictures

Some candidates have difficulty because they are unused to considering what situation is shown in a picture. So it is worth giving your students lots of practice looking at pictures (e.g. in school text books) of people relating to each other, and getting the children to discuss what is going on, and what each person is doing, thinking, intending and wanting. The children are then in a better position to decide what the people might say.

Using everyday English

The language tested in Task Four is often very commonplace in spoken English – things like 'Thank you very much' or 'Let's go' – but might be unfamiliar to your students if most of the English they encounter is written rather than spoken.

You can encourage the children to use some simple English expressions, like 'Thanks', 'Excuse me' or 'Sorry', instead of using the equivalents in their own language, whenever they are working or playing together. This is easy for students to do, and gets them used to

associating each expression with its social purpose, as well as generally getting them to 'think in English'.

Children also enjoy acting out roles (bus drivers, teachers, shopkeepers ...) and imagining being in different situations (at a post office, in a cafe, at a party ...). You can give them the skeleton of a dialogue (as in the examples below), and let them act it out in pairs, filling in the details and improvising as they like. They will also appreciate having some simple props (e.g. things to buy in a shop), which they could even draw or make themselves. Another benefit of this is that it will help the children to think about the clues they should look out for in the pictures in the exam. For example, the till and the counter in the picture above are clues that the situation is occurring in a shop.

Customer:	Excuse me, have you got any ____?	A: Ouch!
Shop assistant:	Yes, I'll show you ...	B: What's the matter?
Customer:	Thank you. How much is it?	A: ____
Sales assistant:	£____	B: Oh dear. Shall I ____?
Customer:	Thank you very much.	A: ____