

English language self-assessment checklist

Use this checklist to identify which language skills you feel confident about. If you can answer 'yes' to a statement, tick (✓) the box beside the statement.

Vocabulary	✓ = yes
In newspaper articles, I can understand most words in a paragraph	
I can usually guess the meaning of words I don't understand	
I can usually think of the word I want to say, or find a similar alternative	
I feel confident about my vocabulary	
Vocabulary: I would like to improve:	

Grammar	✓ = yes
I am familiar with all the tenses in English and understand their use	
I can use plural forms, possessives and verb endings correctly	
I can use the articles 'a' and 'the' correctly most of the time	
I can create complex sentences (sentences with one main part and one or more other parts)	
Most of my written sentences are grammatically correct	
I feel confident about my grammar	
Grammar and vocabulary: I would like to improve:	

Pronunciation	✓ = yes
Most people can understand my pronunciation	

I feel confident about my pronunciation	
Pronunciation: I would like to improve:	

Reading	✓ = yes
I can understand the main points in newspaper articles	
I can understand lecture notes on Cecil or handouts	
I can understand the main points in my course reading texts	
I can understand most general texts in detail if I read them slowly	
I can find information I need in a general text quickly and easily	
I can read complex reports, articles and other extended (long) texts easily	
I can understand the implicit meaning of a text, and recognise irony	
Reading: I would like to improve:	

Writing	✓ = yes
I can write summaries from articles in my discipline area	
I know how to take notes in lectures	
I can describe processes or events in writing	
I can express my own opinions clearly on a range of topics	
I can present arguments in a systematic way (according to a plan, in a thorough and efficient way) in an essay	
I can write extended (long) reports	
I can understand the concept of 'referencing' as it applies within my subject area	
I am confident that I can avoid plagiarising other texts when I write	

I can write in a range of styles according to the audience and purpose	
Writing: I would like to improve:	

Speaking	✓ = yes
I can participate in a conversation in a group of people on familiar topics	
I can initiate, maintain and finish a conversation naturally	
I can speak without hesitating for longer than feels natural to me	
I can describe processes or events in some detail	
I can give my opinions in study contexts such as tutorials	
I can make formal presentations in English if I have time to prepare	
I can summarise stories or news items	
I can participate in discussions or debates on hypothetical issues	
I can monitor my own mistakes when I'm speaking	
Speaking: I would like to improve:	

Listening	✓ = yes
I can understand informal conversations about familiar topics	
I can understand lectures and presentations if they are clearly delivered	
I can follow discussions in tutorial or study groups	
I can usually understand spoken language without asking for repetition	
I can understand TV news and current affairs programmes	

I can usually follow the main points in discussions and debates	
I can guess unknown words from the context in which they are spoken	
I usually realise when someone is joking or being ironic (showing that they are really meaning the opposite of what they are saying)	
Listening: I would like to improve:	

What next?

Browse ELE's resources and services at ELE online for ways to develop any areas you do not say 'yes' to or that you would like to improve. Talk to an ELE language adviser at ELE on campus if you would like guidance.

Check your progress:

Complete the checklist again after about 6 months and at similar intervals throughout your university programme of study. Remember, language development is a process, so keep working on the areas you would like to feel more confident about.

(The vocabulary items in this checklist are either in the Academic Word List (AWL) or the Oxford 3000 word list. The few items that do not appear in these lists are explained (in brackets). For more information about the AWL and Oxford 3000 go to ELE online and search for "ELE Vibrant Vocabulary". Go to 'Words to learn' and 'Which words?')