



OET Speaking and Writing Sub-Test Guidance:

Speaking:

- 1) Remember the assessor is looking for clear information presented concisely and where the person can understand with no misunderstanding.
- 2) Students can make the mistake of talking too quickly to get as much language noticed by the examiner. Don't do that, instead do this.
 - A) Look at the test card and ask yourself what vital information do you need to include. How can you present this most logically with a step by step approach?
 - B) The examiner is not assessing you on your clinical knowledge but on your ability to communicate with a wide vocabulary and a variety of tenses used correctly.
- 3) Practice, practice, practice! Stand or sit in front of a mirror and pretend you are the patient in the reflection and talk to yourself and give yourself the information that the test card is presenting to you.

- 4) Keep listening to the English language every day. This will, of course, help you in the listening sub-test.
- 5) Study words and phrases that express empathy, sympathy, compassion, kindness, imparting instructions. This will help you when speaking to the angry, sad and confused patient or relative.
- 6) Develop your questioning skills. Many students practice sentences as an answer or a statement but don't then think how that sentence can be turned into a question.
- 7) Learn five new words every day and keep a vocabulary book. Look at the synonyms and antonyms of each root word. This exercise alone will help you with all the other sub-tests.
- 8) Remember in the sub-test demonstrate to the examiner that you are checking he/she has understood you in the role-play. This is where your increased questioning skills and practice helps you.
- 9) When you speak pause between phrases and sentences. Remember intonation- a rise of the voice at the end of a sentence if you have asked a question.
- 10) Use word stress correctly and emphasis key-words in a sentence to get your language point across.
- 11) Non-native English speakers can role words one into another so that the two words said are confused. Make a point of speaking each word clearly, even if you are slower at first. Your speed will increase as you become

more fluent.

12) When you are practising and have difficulty in finding the right words, translate into first language the main words you want to use and build your sentences from these. Use a dictionary or google translate to help you.

Written referral letter:

- 1) Remember your letter is to ask for help to solve a problem that the patient has.
- 2) Look at who you are writing it to. I know this sounds obvious but then ask the question, what does this particular practitioner need to know?
- 3) Based on the above, you can now think more clearly about what to include in the letter that is important and what can be excluded.
- 4) Think of your letter like a story, it has a beginning, a middle and an end.
- 5) Use more formal language and remember the text is one of the information and facts, not opinions.

- 6) It is **important to note** that the way in which the letter is presented needs to be considered with each individual referral. Do not follow one template example. The most important questions you need to ask are:
What is the purpose of this letter?

Who is the letter intended for?

What information does the health-care professional need to know in order to follow the letter's specific instructions for the care of that individual?

In your letter you will need to examine and consider the following:

Diagnosis, relevant past medical history, procedures, treatment and discharge requirements.

Life-style advice to the patient, or referral to other specialised services for further investigations, treatment or support.

The letter needs to be personalised to that particular patient and every letter needs to reflect that patient's unique circumstances or story. Therefore, the way each letter is presented and written will be different.

Once all the information is written, check your paragraphs to ensure you have included all that is required.

You can then end the letter with the following sentences.

Thank you for accepting this referral. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely if you are naming the person in the letter,

Yours faithfully if you are not naming an individual eg,

to whom it may concern- dear doctor/nurse.

7) Mistakes can be made when you have copied chunks of words from the cue card. You need to learn to rephrase in the most simple language but where the information and meaning is not lost and is clear and to the point.

8) Do pay attention to punctuation and correct grammar.

9) The letter needs to flow in a clear logical manner with no confusion to the receiver.

10) Remember, this sub-test is about presenting information in the right order, with the correct priority of what is to be included and within a tight word-count. Your ability to plan and to look at the cue card and skim and scan the text for key information is also required. So again, practice reading as many different types of letter scenarios as you can. Write example letters and put yourself as the person receiving the letter. Swap roles and ask what would you want to know if you were the practitioner receiving this letter.

I hope these above points help you with the speaking and writing sub-test. Do let me know and contact me anytime if you have any questions or need additional support. I am here to help and want to continually improve my service.

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