



The Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA)

Handbook for Candidates

All candidates should read this booklet before the test

ABOUT DELA

DELA tests academic language skills in reading, writing, and listening needed for university-level courses of study. The test is made up of three subtests, and takes one hour and forty-five minutes in total. The sub-tests are taken in this order:

Reading	45 minutes	(see pages 3-5)
Writing	30 minutes	(see page 6)
Listening	30 minutes	(see pages 7-8)

WHAT DELA CONTAINS

READING:

Time allowed: 45 minutes

There are two reading passages in your test booklet. These passages are on a topic of general interest which does not require specialist subject knowledge. The total length of the two texts is approximately 1,500 words. A range of question types is used, including cloze, summarising, matching ideas, information transfer, multiple choice, true/false and short answer. Examples of most of these question types appear below under the heading "Sample Questions".

The reading test assesses the following skills:

- speed
- ability to find specific information
- ability to locate causes and effects, sequences, contrasts
- ability to distinguish between main points and evidence or supporting ideas
- ability to select words which fit the meaning and the grammatical construction of the text (cloze)
- ability to summarise main topics
- ability to draw a conclusion based on information in a passage
- ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- ability to reorganise information in a passage in another way (e.g. insert in chart, graph, map, diagram)

(If you have any difficulty in understanding what these skills mean, first try the sample questions, then, if necessary, consult a teacher of English.)

Please note:

You will not be permitted to use more than 45 minutes for the Reading subtest. On the test paper, a suggested time is given for each section. You should check how many sections there are before beginning the test, and take note of how much time is suggested for each one. If you find you are using far too much time for a certain section, leave it and go on to the rest of the paper. You can return to it if you finish the other sections early.

NB: It is important to read the questions *before* you read the text. If you do this, you will know what information to look for.

WRITING

Time allowed: 30 minutes

You must write an argumentative essay of at least 250 words on a given topic. An argumentative essay requires that you express more than one side of an argument, though you may show that you favour one side in particular. A set of ideas are provided for you. Information from these ideas may be used, but you are also encouraged to contribute your own ideas and opinions. In the test booklet, a space is provided for you to make notes. These notes are not assessed.

The essay is assessed against a number of criteria. These include:

A. Grammar and Vocabulary

The range of vocabulary and sentence structures you use, their accuracy (correctness) and their appropriacy will be looked at. Spelling is looked at, but is not the main focus.

B. Organisation

One aspect of organisation is the cohesion of the writing. This is the way the parts of the writing relate to each other. Another aspect of organisation is coherence. This is the way the writing makes sense for the reader, and involves careful clear organisation and paragraphing.

C. Content

This refers to the ideas used in the writing. In an argumentative essay, ideas should be clearly related to one or the other side of the argument and to each other. Clear distinctions should be made between main ideas and evidence to support these ideas. There should also be progression: the argument should move from one point to another and arrive at some conclusion.

Penalties:

Points will be deducted if you use large sections of the input texts in your writing without significantly changing the expression of these. You can, however, quote small portions of the readings or use individual words and expressions.

LISTENING

Time allowed: 30 minutes

You will hear a mini-lecture on a topic of general interest which requires no specialist knowledge. A brief introductory reading passage will help you get an idea of the topic before the lecture begins. The lecture is divided into four sections. You will have time to read through the relevant questions before listening to each section of the lecture. You will have time after each section to complete your answers.

In the listening test, you will be assessed on your ability to:

- locate and recall specific or key information
- reorganise information from the lecture to complete a graph or chart or diagram
- summarise main points
- distinguish between main points and supporting detail

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Please note that the examples below are not from the actual test.

READING

Example 1 (multiple choice): A section of the text reads as follows:

Until the early 1970's, no-one cared about energy conservation. Very few people knew what it meant. This apathy was caused by apparently ever-increasing quantities of fuel available at decreasing prices. However, the western world was suddenly jolted into reality by the "OPEC oil crisis", which clarified many of the reasons for bothering with energy conservation.

Q: The "OPEC oil crisis"

- A. made westerners aware of the need for energy conservation.
- B. increased westerners' apathy about energy conservation.
- C. made more fuel available at lower prices.
- D. caused the western world to reject high fuel prices.

A: **A**

Example 2 (short answer): A section of the text reads as follows:

Political leaders and the media often express concern about the possibility of cuts in oil supplies due to political unrest in the Middle East. When this is coupled with Australia's dwindling local oil reserves, then clearly the longer we can make out present reserves last the less vulnerable we will be to external conflicts in the future.

Q: What two factors may make Australia vulnerable to outside events?

- A:
1. political unrest in the Middle East
 2. dwindling local oil reserves

Example 3 (cloze): A section of the text reads as follows:

We should also try to reduce our dependence on local energy sources such as gas and electricity. For example, a person who lives in a well-insulated house with solar water heating will be less inconvenienced by power restriction than other people. And someone who lives close to work, shops and other facilities will never be affected by disruptions to transport services. Someone who walks or rides a bicycle never needs to worry about petrol supplies.

Q: Below is a summary of the passage. Select appropriate words from the box to complete the summary and write the corresponding letter in the numbered space to the right. Note that there are more words given than you will need. Each word may be used once only.

Your answers

If you(1).... your house and(2).... solar water heating,

1.**K**. 2.**G**....

problems with the power supply will ... (3)... you less than

3.**F**....

others.(4).... non-motorised forms of transport also avoids

4.**E**....

problems(5).... with transport and fuel disruptions.

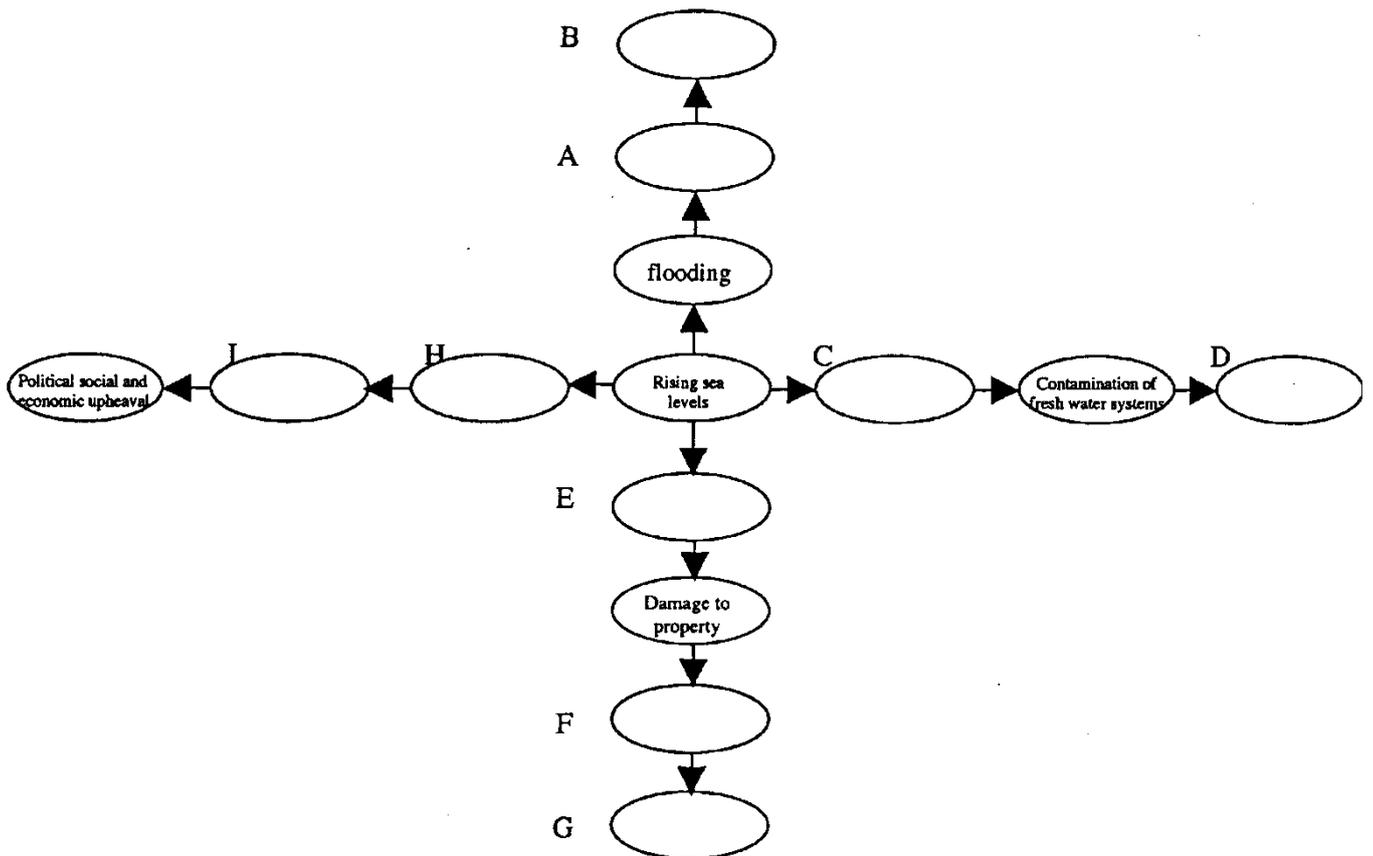
5.**B**....

A	depend	H	protect
B	associated	I	sell
C	avoid	J	caused
D	convenience	K	insulate
E	using	L	affected
F	inconvenience	M	together
G	install	N	driving

Example 4 (diagram completion)

Read the following passage, then fill in the blank shapes with information from the text on events which occur as a consequence of rising sea levels. Note that the most direct consequences should be shown in the ovals closest to the central oval. Answers are provided at the bottom of page 6.

The consequences of the greenhouse effect will be far reaching. The many disastrous consequences of climatic change and rising sea levels will go far beyond the immediate effects. For example, crop losses due to flood in one part of Australia will affect food prices throughout the country. Damage to property due to costal changes will lead to the lack of homes and land, and will eventually affect real estate prices. Rivers and irrigation systems will be ‘contaminated’ by salt water moving up streams and crops will fail. the mass movement of millions of people from flooded countries will have major political, social and economic consequences for countries not directly affected by rising seas.



Answers to Reading, Example 4

- A. Crop losses
- B. Rising food prices
- C. Salt water moves upstream
- D. Crops fail
- E. Coastal changes
- F. Lack of homes and land
- G. Rise in prices
- H. Flooding of low-lying countries
- I. Mass movement of people

WRITING

Example task

You are given some statements about the care of the aged in our society. Spend about 5 minutes reading and considering them. Then write a short essay in response to the following questions:

“Who should take the most responsibility for the care of the aged – the family or the government?”

You may use ideas contained in these statements, but DO NOT COPY phrases from them. You should also add ideas of your own. You should write at least 250 words.

Older people have given their best years, not only to their children, but also to the nation.

The greatest happiness and security comes from living with the family.

Family size has been reduced. There are now fewer children to share the cost of caring for parents.

The aged deserve dignity, financial security and the warmth of friends and family.

When families cannot afford to support the parents, the government should take over.

LISTENING

Example 1: You hear a section of the lecture as follows:

“...Community health proponents argue that to prevent ill health and promote good health it is necessary for a community health centre to be concerned about the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community, as well as be concerned about disease diagnosis and treatment...”

Q: What are the two basic aims of the community health programs?

- A:
1. to prevent ill health
 2. to promote good health

Example 2: You hear a section of the lecture as follows:

“...It is possible to break down the work of community health centres into 4 broad categories. First there is primary care – this can include medical, dental, nursing and physiotherapy services. Then there is what we could call social and welfare services which might include counselling, social work, psychology and youth work. The third category is health education and promotion. This includes providing information and working with people to help them make healthy changes to their lifestyles and the final category can be called community work or community development and tries to build up community organisations and networks and to address social isolation and alienation. It seeks to empower and resource local people, local organisations and wider networks....”

Q: What are the four broad categories into which the work of community health care centres can be divided?

- A:
1. primary care
 2. social and welfare service
 3. health education and promotion
 4. community work

Example 3: You hear a section of the lecture as follows:

“...As I’ve indicated, there are lots of ways in which people from very diverse backgrounds can work in the community health sector. These would not only be health practitioners but also people whose backgrounds are in social and welfare work, community development, health education and administration. The one key prerequisite would be sympathy with the principles of community health....”

Q: What characteristic must all people involved with community health have?

A: *sympathy with its principles*

Example 4: You hear a section of the lecture as follows:

“...There is no broad agreement about the legitimacy and value of the community health approach and so there is a lack of broad support within the political parties, with policy makers within the health professions and the health bureaucracies for the community health sector. For this reason the sector remains small and a relatively minor component of both the public health and broader health systems....”

Q: What reason does the speaker give for the relatively small size of the community health sector?

A: *the lack of agreement on its value*