



# **The Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA): Handbook for candidates**

All candidates should read this booklet before the test

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## About DELA

The DELA tests academic language skills in reading, writing, and listening needed for university-level courses of study. The assessment 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 4-6)
Writing	30 minutes	(see page 7)
Listening	approx. 25 minutes	(see pages 8-10)

## What DELA contains

### Reading (45 minutes)

There are two reading passages in your test booklet. These passages are on topics of general interest which do 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 gap-fill, 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 a variety of skills, including the following:

- 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 insert missing words which fit the meaning and the grammatical construction of the text (gap-fill)
- 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 the sections 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 section 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 (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. Content (ideas and argument)**

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.

**B. Fluency (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. Form (sentence structure and grammar)**

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.

### *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 (approximately 25 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

**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.

**Complete the following question by circling the correct letter.**

What impact did the "OPEC oil crisis" have?

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

Answer: A

**Reading example 2 (short answer):** A section of the text reads as follows:

Education experts and the media often express concern about the possibility of cuts to education funding, worrying about the impact on class sizes, teacher salaries, and overall academic performance. These concerns are particularly acute in areas with already strained budgets, where reduced funding could exacerbate existing inequalities.

Answer the question below **using words from the text**. Use no more than three words for each answer.

What four areas may be affected by reduced funding to education systems?

- Answer: 1. class sizes  
2. teacher salaries  
3. overall academic performance  
4. existing inequalities

**Reading example 3 (gap-fill):** 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 home solar systems will be less inconvenienced by power restrictions than other people. And someone who lives close to work, shops and other facilities will seldom be affected by disruptions to transport services. Someone who walks or rides a bicycle never needs to worry about fuel supplies.

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

If you .....(1)..... your house and .....(2)..... home solar systems, problems with the power supply will .....(3)..... you less than others. ....(4)..... non-motorised forms of transport also avoids problems .....(5)..... with transport and fuel disruptions.

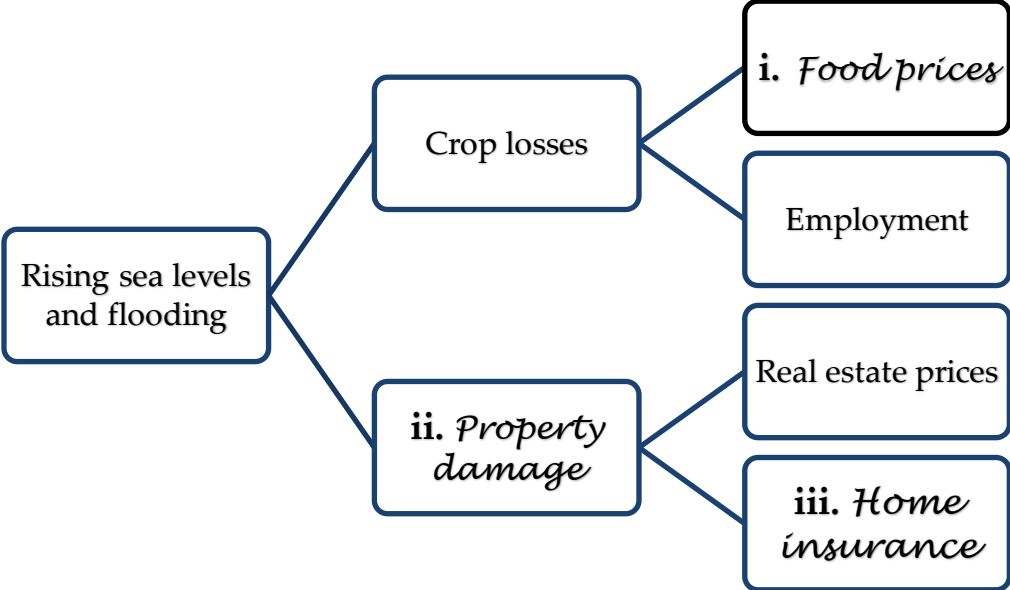
1.   K
2.   G
3.   F
4.   E
5.   B

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

**Reading example 4 (diagram completion).** A section of the text reads as follows:

The consequences of the greenhouse effect will be far reaching. The many disastrous consequences of climatic change and rising sea levels will have economic consequences. For example, crop losses due to flood in one part of Australia will affect food prices and employment 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 as well as home insurance for properties in the area.

Complete the following flow chart (items i-iii) about the economic effects of flooding using information from the text. Use no more than three words for each gap.



## WRITING

### Writing example task

Many schools around the world have policies that require students to wear uniforms during school hours. Below are some statements about wearing school uniforms. Spend a few minutes reading and considering the statements. Then write an essay in response to the following question:

### **“Should school uniforms be compulsory?”**

You may use the ideas contained in these statements but DO NOT COPY phrases from them. You should also add ideas of your own.

You are expected to write at least 250 words. You may use the space for notes for planning your essay.

#### Statements for

Uniforms can foster a sense of belonging and unity among students.

Uniforms promote equality and reduce social pressure by removing visible socioeconomic differences.

Having a uniform makes it easy for students to choose what to wear each day.

#### Statements against

Having to wear uniforms limits individual expression, creativity and style.

Purchasing specific uniforms can be expensive for families.

Not all students find that school uniforms are comfortable to wear or are suitable for their body type.

## LISTENING

**Listening example 1 (multiple choice question):** 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. This would reduce the burden on healthcare centres when it comes to disease diagnosis and treatment...”

**Complete the following question by circling the correct letter.**

What do health advocates suggest is important for improving health outcomes in communities?

- A. Increasing the number of healthcare staff and centres.
- B. Considering socioeconomic and environmental factors.
- C. Prioritising disease diagnosis and treatment.

Answer: C

**Listening example 2 (short answer question):** 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....”

**Answer the following question in no more than three words using information from the lecture.**

What characteristic must all people involved with community health have?

Answer: Sympathy with the principles

**Listening example 3 (gap-fill):** 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 to 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....”

**Complete the gaps (i-vii) in the following notes using information from the lecture. Use no more than three words for each gap.**

What do community health centres do?

1. Primary care

- (i) medical
- dental
- (ii) nursing
- physiotherapy

2. Social and (iii) welfare services

- counselling
- social work
- (iv) psychology
- youth work

3. Health education and (v) promotion

- Working with people to achieve healthy lifestyles

4. Community work

- Build up community organisations and (vi) networks
- Address social isolation and (vii) alienation
- Empower and resource local people communities

**Listening example 4 (multiple choice questions with more than one answer):** 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 shortage 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....”

**Complete the following question by circling the TWO correct letters.**

What conclusions does the speaker reach about policy making in the community health sector?

- A. The various stakeholders are in general agreement.
- B. There is a lack of support among the political parties.
- C. C. Attracting health professionals to jobs is difficult.
- D. Bureaucracy makes important changes challenging.
- E. Community health plays a lesser role than it could.

Answer: B and E