

Here are some test types commonly used in formal and informal testing.

Think about their advantages and disadvantages and make a few notes before you look at the next slide

Think about:

- what they can target
- how easily and objectively they can be marked
- how the learners will see them.

1. Multiple-choice or alternative-response tests of reading or listening comprehension

Advantages:

- Easy and objective to mark
- Learners see it as valid
- Can test a wide range of language and skills

Disadvantages:

- Quite dull
- Does not assess productive ability
- Random guessing can distort results

2.gap-fill tests

Advantages:

- Quite objective to mark
- Learners see it as valid
- Can test productive ability indirectly
- Can be adapted easily to make it harder or easier (e.g., by giving multiple-choice alternatives)
- Can be used to target a range of language and lexis

Disadvantages:

- Can require judgement if there are multiple possibilities
- Does not directly assess productive ability
- Random guessing can distort results

**3.re-ordering tasks: paragraphs,
sentences, phrases, words**

Advantages:

- Adaptable: can be used with a range of text types
- Learners see it as valid
- Can test receptive ability indirectly
- Can be used to target syntax or discourse

Disadvantages:

- Multiple correct ordering is sometimes possible so marking is more difficult
- Time consuming to prepare and do
- Does not target productive ability

4. sentence transformation / skeleton sentences

Advantages:

- Quite objective to mark
- Learners see it as valid
- Targets particular structures directly
- Can be used to target a range of language and lexis

Disadvantages:

- Can require judgement if there are multiple possibilities
- Lack of lexical knowledge can interfere with the ability to do the grammar task

5. information transfer (e.g., diagram to written text, diagram to spoken text)

Advantages:

- Directly assesses productive ability
- Learners see it as valid
- Can be adapted to make it harder or easier
- Can be used to target a range of language and specific lexis
(e.g., describing trends, making comparisons)

Disadvantages:

- Time consuming to prepare
- Advantages students who access graphical information easily
- Subjective marking

6.guided writing or speaking (structured response tests)

Advantages:

- Can be more objectively marked than free writing / speaking
- Learners see it as valid
- Can test productive ability directly
- Can be adapted to make it harder or easier
- Can be used to target a range of communicative language functions and lexis

Disadvantages:

- Can advantage students familiar with the topic
- Cannot be purely objectively marked
- Requires reading / listening comprehension to produce accurate responses in speaking or writing

7.one-to-one or paired interviews (role plays etc.)

Advantages:

- A direct test of communicative ability
- Can test productive ability directly
- Can be adapted as it progresses to gather more information
- Can be designed to target a range of language functions and lexis

Disadvantages:

- Subjective marking, even with a set of criteria
- Learners may not see them as fair or valid
- Requires both receptive and productive skills
- Stressful for many learners
- Paired learners can influence each other's ability
- Requires careful standardisation of assessors