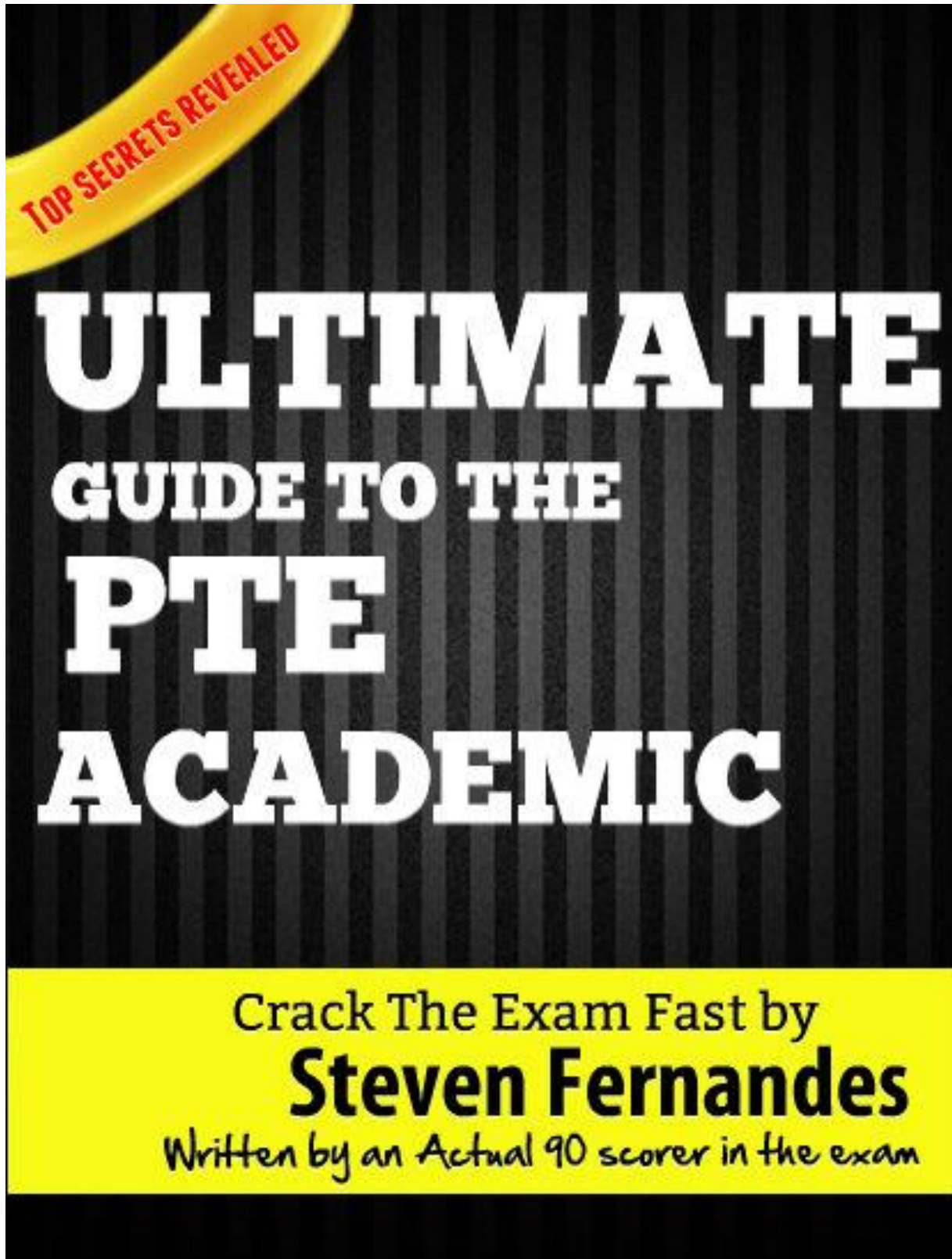


SAMPLE TEXT - ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE PTE ACADEMIC

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ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE PTE ACADEMIC

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Attitude and mentality

"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right."
— Henry Ford

I feel it's important to spend some time on this topic as I have seen students struggling due to lack of a correct attitude and mentality going into the exam.

Like any other exam or challenge in life, persistence and self-belief are keys to success.

English may not be your native language and they may be few people out there who have a slight advantage to you in this regard. You need to understand, that using this as an excuse, will not change anything or help you in anyway. Focus on what you can change and improve. If English isn't your first language that's great! You will have an even better success story to tell once you conquer this exam and get your desired score.

On the contrary, there are those who have good command of the English language and turn up to the exam over-confident with minimal preparation. This is a recipe for disaster and one you want to avoid.

Whichever category you fall under, know that you can only get better, so stay humble and take some time to familiarize yourself with the format of the exam.

If you are giving your exam it is probably because you will be working, studying or living in a country where English is the language of communication. You will be expected to converse and interact with others in English. As I worked on improving my scores for the exam, I could also observe improvements in the way I communicated with others in English during day to day life.

So keep in mind that your time and efforts in preparation are not going to go to waste even after the exam. The practice and time that you spend can be carried forward in other areas of your life, whether it be now or in the future whenever English is involved.

1 SPEAKING

General guidelines

This is the first part of the test and is a part where some people tend to struggle. Have no fear, because as you master the techniques and guidelines presented below with enough practice, you should be able to make your way.

Understand what is being tested:

As you will be in a country where English is the language of choice, the speaking section is designed to measure how well converse with others, be it in a professional or social setting. In simple words, what you say should be understood to the person you are talking to (in our case a computer).

How you are scored on speaking?

A detailed version of how you are scored for each question type is given in the subsequent pages. However, for the speaking section you will be more or less scored on the following parameters.

Content: 5 , Pronunciation: 5 , Oral fluency 5

Note that parameters of pronunciation and oral fluency have more weightage compared to content, so these two areas that require our focus in terms of improvement. A few pointers and guidelines have been provided on these two topics below. Whatever level of English you are at, you should find some takeaways that will improve your score, if put into practice.

More on improving oral fluency and pronunciation in the full book

1.2 Read aloud

What to expect

In this section, you are given a text on screen. In 40 seconds, you must read this text aloud as naturally and clearly as possible. You have 40 seconds to read aloud.

You can expect around 7 texts for this section. Each text will usually be a single paragraph between 50-65 words.

How you are scored

Content: Each replacement, omission or insertion of a word counts as one error

Maximum score depends on the length of the item prompt

Pronunciation: 5 Native-like 4 Advanced 3 Good 2 Intermediate 1 Intrusive 0 Non-English

Oral fluency: 5 Native-like 4 Advanced 3 Good 2 Intermediate 1 Limited, 0 Disfluent

Strategy

The official PTE sample test recording of answers were completed between 23-28 seconds. As a guideline, this a good time-frame to keep in mind. Anything out of this range will usually mean you are speaking too fast or too slow.

Although this is a fairly straightforward section, special attention needs to be placed on pronunciation and oral fluency. You may say something and understand what you say, but it's important that the software interprets what you say correctly as well.

Many people have questions on what the tone of voice should be. The tone should be appropriate to the message conveyed in the text. You have 35 seconds to go through the text before you speak. Use this time wisely. Make sure you read the text and understand what it says. This way when you repeat you will have a better chance of speaking in a tone that conveys meaning. While reading the text in the 35 seconds given also pay special attention any words that you may find difficult to pronounce. Play in your head or speak aloud how you are going to pronounce any such words during this time.

Another important aspect of the section is to use appropriate pauses during punctuations (full stops, commas, etc.). Full stops generally will have a longer pause and commas a bit shorter. For example, if there is a comma in the sentence, the spacing between comma and next word is usually longer than when there is no comma. Similarly, the spacing for a full stop should be

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longer than what you use after a comma. This is fairly basic, but something you want to keep in mind when you practice.

In case you come across instances where quotation marks like “xxx” or ‘xxx’ are used to encapsulate a word, make sure you stress this word higher than the ones around it.

Example: In his book “The 10x Rule” Grant Cardone notes that excuses are for people who refuse to take responsibility for their life and how it turns out. (In this sentence the words 10x rule is the highlight of the sentence which needs to stressed upon)

When you speak, try to link the words within phrases and do not emphasize grammar words such as prepositions (e.g. for, to, with) and articles (e.g. the, a, an). This will help you achieve native-like rhythm and phrasing, and sound more fluent.

Again, this is not a very difficult section, and is good chance to up your speaking score, provided you keep in mind the above points.

2.1 Summarize written text (one sentence)

What to expect

In this section, you are given a passage on screen and need to summarize it using one sentence. You have 10 minutes to finish the task. Your response is judged on the quality of writing and how well your response presents the key points in the passage.

There can be 2 items sets from this section. Each passage will be between 200 to 350 words long.

How you are scored

Content:

2 Provides a good summary of the text. All relevant aspects mentioned

1 Provides a fair summary of the text but misses one or two aspects

0 Omits or misrepresents the main aspects of the text

Form:

1 Is written in one, single, complete sentence

0 Not written in one, single, complete sentence or contains fewer than 5 or more than 75 words.

Summary is written in capital letters

Grammar:

2 Has correct grammatical structure

1 Contains grammatical errors but with no hindrance to communication

0 Has defective grammatical structure which could hinder communication

Vocabulary:

2 Has appropriate choice of words

1 Contains lexical errors but with no hindrance to communication

0 Has defective word choice which could hinder communication

Strategy

The idea here is to simplify the text into one grammatically correct sentence. The use of conjunctions over here can be employed, if suitable. Go through the passage given and understand what is being presented. There may be several facts and figures presented, and you

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do not need to include them all in your summary. You should have one crisp sentence that conveys the general idea that the passage is trying to convey.

The summary sentence word count needs to be 5-75 words. Anything shorter or longer and you get zero score. Make sure your grammar and spellings are correct. A general rule is to avoid using any word of which spelling you are unsure. The summary made should make sense if viewed in conjunction with any of the other sentences in the main passage.

Take the below as an example.

Sample Question:

On 6 July 1910, the National Congress of Chile passed a bill allocating 400,000 pounds sterling to the navy for two 28,000-long-ton battleships—which would eventually be named Almirante Latorre and Almirante Cochrane—six destroyers, and two submarines. The contract to build the battleships was awarded to Armstrong Whitworth on 25 July 1911. Almirante Latorre was officially ordered on 2 November 1911, and was laid down less than a month later on 27 November, becoming the largest ship built by Armstrong at the time. The New York Tribune reported on 2 November 1913 that Greece had reached an accord to purchase Almirante Latorre during a war scare with the Ottoman Empire, but despite a developing sentiment within Chile to sell one or both of the dreadnoughts, no deal was made.

Almirante Latorre was launched on 27 November 1913, in an elaborate ceremony that was attended by various dignitaries and presided over by Chile's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Agustín Edwards Mac Clure. The battleship was christened by the ambassador's wife, Olga Budge de Edwards. After the First World War broke out in Europe, Almirante Latorre was formally purchased by the United Kingdom on 9 September 1914; she was not forcibly seized like the Ottoman Reshadieh and Sultan Osman I, two other ships being built for a foreign navy, because of Chile's "friendly neutral" status with the United Kingdom.

Sample Answer:

Chile purchased several Naval ships in 1911, of which one battleship named the 'Almirante Latorre' was bought back by the United Kingdom after the First World War broke out.

The above is a good answer because it is one sentence, has correct Grammar, has no spelling mistakes, has appropriate vocabulary and provides a fair summary of the text.

3.1 Multiple choice questions (choose single answer)

What to expect

In this section, you are given a text. Read the text and answer the multiple-choice question by selecting the correct response. Only one response is correct.

There will generally be 2 questions asked in the exam from this section. The text will be around 100 words each with 4 options provided in each question.

How you are scored

Correct/incorrect:

1 Correct response

0 Incorrect response

Strategy

Read the question first and quickly go through the options given. Don't focus too much on what the correct answer is going to be at this stage. Just get a sense of what is being asked. Now read the text given. As noted, it is important to read with the intention of understanding. Don't think about the question, just focus on understanding the text. Once you have read it all, get back to the question and eliminate all the incorrect responses, picking the correct answer.

For a difficult questions there may be one or two options that seem correct. If needed, re-read the section of the text that contains content related to the question to narrow down on the answer.

Do NOT try to answer the question in the light of any knowledge which you personally may have. Additionally, as far as possible, do not assume anything to be true in the options unless specifically mentioned or implied.

The options generally fall under the below three categories:

1. The option is true
2. The option is false
3. Insufficient information given to determine true or false.

Only category 1 option is the correct answer. Category 3 options are often included to make it harder, so be mindful of these during the exam.

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You will better relate to the above concepts after going through the below example.

Select the correct option after reading the below text:

Other criminologists, political scientists, and similarly learned forecasters laid out the same horrible future, as did President Clinton. "We know we've got about six years to turn this juvenile crime thing around," Clinton said, "or our country is going to be living with chaos. And my successors will not be giving speeches about the wonderful opportunities of the global economy; they'll be trying to keep body and soul together for people on the streets of these cities." The smart money was plainly on the criminals. And then, instead of going up and up and up, crime began to fall. And fall and fall and fall some more. The crime drop was startling in several respects. It was ubiquitous, with every category of crime falling in every part of the country. It was persistent, with incremental decreases year after year. And it was entirely unanticipated—especially by the very experts who had been predicting the opposite.

Question:

Why was the fall in crime rate particularly surprising?

- A. It had been predicted at the time by President Clinton
- B. It happened after six years of steeply rising rates of crime.
- C. It took place despite fewer people expressing an interest in crime and Justice policies
- D. It happened in all criminal categories and continued for a number of years.

Answer explained:

A is false as the opposite was predicted

B is not specifically mentioned so there is insufficient information given to determine true or false. Notice how 'six years' mentioned in the paragraph is part of the question. This is deliberately included to test your understanding. Do not assume that the option is right because it contains certain keywords from the text. Select the correct answer after understanding the meaning of the entire sentence in the option.

C is also not specifically mentioned so there is insufficient information given to determine true or false

D is correct because it has been stated that the every category of crime fell year after year.

4.1 Summarize spoken text

What to expect

In this section, you will hear a short audio lecture. You need to write a summary for a fellow student who was not present. You should write 50-70 words. You have 10 minutes to finish this task. Your response will be judged on the quality of your writing and on how well your response presents the key points presented in the report.

There will be 2-3 item sets in the exam from this section. The recording will be between 60 to 90 seconds long.

How you are scored

Content:

- 2 Provides a good summary of the text. All relevant aspects are mentioned
- 1 Provides a fair summary of the text, but one or two aspects are missing
- 0 Omits or misrepresents the main aspects

Form:

- 2 Contains 50-70 words
- 1 Contains 40-49 words or 71-100 words
- 0 Contains less than 40 words or more than 100 words. Summary is written in capital letters, contains no punctuation or consists only of bullet points or very short sentences

Grammar:

- 2 Correct grammatical structures
- 1 Contains grammatical errors with no hindrance to communication
- 0 Defective grammatical structures which could hinder communication

Vocabulary:

- 2 Appropriate choice of words
- 1 Some lexical errors but with no hindrance to communication
- 0 Defective word choice which could hinder communication

Spelling:

- 2 Correct spelling
- 1 One spelling error
- 0 More than one spelling error

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Strategy

The lecture is about 2 minutes and you have 10 minutes to write down your summary. You need to listen carefully and take down notes that you will be able to expand upon later. Note taking is an important skill that needs to be practiced to get a good score for this section. Do not take down entire sentences as notes. This is a time waster.

Some general tips to help in note taking:

- Only important points and keywords should be captured.
- Keywords are words that are stressed/emphasized by the speaker or something that he/she has specifically mentioned as important. Names, dates, figures, numbers can be a part of this.
- If you miss an important point it is fine. Focus on the remaining piece.
- Use abbreviated words while taking notes to shorten time taken.
- Be on the lookout for the overall idea of the lecture and any connected main ideas.

After the lecture gets over, spend the next thirty seconds noting down any additional important content that you can remember and you will be able to expand upon later. It is not realistically possible to cover everything that would have been said during the lecture. This is fine. Having a few quality notes can be more useful than many notes that you can barely make sense of.

If you really had a tough time during the lecture, as a last resort you can expand upon the keywords of the lecture based on your general knowledge and views. If you do this, make sure you broadly stick to content keywords as far as possible and focus on writing clean English free of grammatical and spelling errors. You are allowed and are encouraged to paraphrase information using your own words.

While writing your summary use words that you are confident you can spell correctly. Avoid using the same word repeatedly. Try rephrasing or use a synonym that conveys the same meaning. This will improve your vocabulary score. Another important point is to make sure you stay between the given word count (50-70). The word count will be given on screen as you type.

Content makes up only 20% of the scoring in this section, so you would want to give appropriate importance to grammar, vocabulary, form and spelling as well.

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More Awesome content like this in the full book that is guaranteed to raise your score. Don't delay, get the book NOW and take action towards realizing your dreams.

To your success!

Steven Fernandes