



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
Local Examinations Syndicate

**University of Cambridge Local Examinations
Syndicate (UCLES) report on the Preliminary
English Test project with Realschule pupils in
Baden Württemberg**

August 2001

Acknowledgements

The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate English as a Foreign Language Division (UCLES EFL) would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry in Baden Württemberg and all the members of the participating school offices for their support. We would also like to thank very much all the teachers involved in the project who worked so hard training to become oral examiners. Many thanks also to our two UCLES Local Secretaries, Marlis Schill and Jutta Ross; our Senior Team Leader, Davine Sutherland; and our team leaders, John Riach and Pauline Kiess for all their hard work and commitment to the success of the project.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Table of Contents	2
List of Abbreviations	4
1. Project outline and results	5
2. Distribution of candidates across school offices	6
3. Comparison of results with other candidates across the world.....	7
3.1 Overall comparison.....	7
3.2 Comparison of mean results by skill	8
3.3 Comparison of standard deviation by skill.....	8
4. Report on Candidates' Writing Performance.....	10
4.1 Background information.....	10
4.2 Overall performance	10
4.3 Task performance	10
4.4 Language performance	11
4.5 Conclusion.....	12
5. Report on Candidates' Speaking Performance.....	13
5.1 Candidate Task Achievement.....	13
Part 1.....	13
Part 2.....	13
Part 3.....	14
Part 4.....	14
5.2 Candidate Performance.....	14
5.3 Grammar and Vocabulary.....	14
5.4 Discourse Management.....	15
5.5 Pronunciation	15
5.6 Interactive Communication	15
5.7 Conclusion.....	16
6. Testimonials from participating teachers and pupils	17
Appendix A. Preliminary English Test in a European context	20
The Common European Framework.....	20
The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)	20
The ALTE Can-Do project	21
Can do statements at B1 (Preliminary English Test Level)	22
Listening/Speaking	22
Reading.....	22

Writing.....	22
Can do statements at B2 (First Certificate in English Level)	22
Listening/Speaking	22
Reading.....	22
Writing.....	22
Impact of external examinations on teaching and learning	23
Appendix B Summary of support for the project provided by UCLES EFL.....	24
Appendix C Preliminary English Test handbook	

List of Abbreviations

UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
EFL.....	English as a Foreign Language
KET	Key English Test
PET	Preliminary English Test
FCE	First Certificate in English
CAE.....	Certificate in Advanced English
CPE.....	Certificate in Proficiency of English
BW	Baden Württemberg
ALTE	Association of Language Testers in Europe

1. Project outline and results

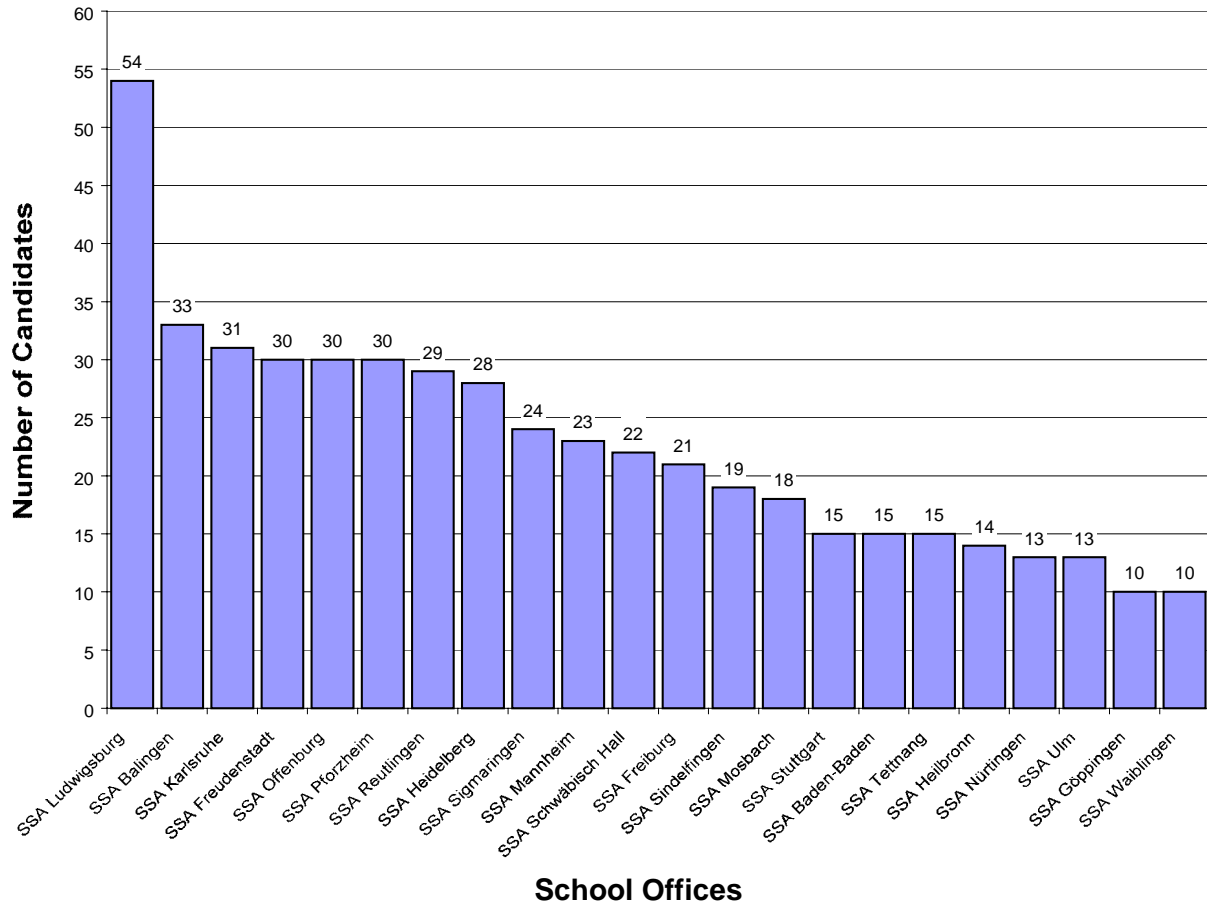
The Ministry of Cultural Affairs instigated a pilot project in Baden Württemberg which gave Realschule pupils from a number of schools across the region the opportunity to take an internationally recognised language examination. An analysis of the Realschule English curriculum for 9th class pupils indicated that an appropriate target language level for these students is the **Threshold Level (B1)** in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (Cambridge University Press 2001), ie Level 2 in the Framework of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). At this level, the Preliminary English Test (PET), which is set by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate English as a Foreign Language Division (UCLES EFL), was selected as the most suitable international examination in English for the Realschule pupils.

After the PET had been selected, UCLES EFL agreed, as part of its support for the project, to provide a report to the Ministry on the results of the first group of candidates to enter for the PET. This report compares the results of the BW Project candidates with those of typical PET candidates in the rest of the world, and also, for the benefit of teachers and others involved in the project, describes some of the important and interesting features of the performance of the BW Project candidates, in the PET examination as a whole, and in individual skill areas.

497 pupils participated in the May 2001 session of PET. The candidates were all 9th class Realschule pupils from 22 different school offices throughout Baden Württemberg. Overall the project was considered by both teachers and pupils to have been extremely successful as can be seen clearly from the results. From the 497 pupils who took the exam, 90 % passed, and 21% achieved a pass with merit. The success rate was high but the exam still provided a challenge as the number of pass with merits clearly demonstrates. The results therefore suggest that the Preliminary English Test is at the correct level for 9th class Realschule pupils and indicates a strong link between the Preliminary English Test syllabus and the school curriculum at this level.

UCLES EFL has examination centres across Germany and normally the Speaking Tests are carried out by UCLES' trained Oral Examiners who are recruited, trained and monitored by team leaders, who, in their turn, are trained and monitored by the Senior Team Leader for Germany. In the case of the PET pilot project, Realschule teachers were given the opportunity to train as Oral Examiners and training was provided through the existing Team Leader and Senior Team Leader System for UCLES EFL Speaking Tests. Realschule teachers were recruited according to the standard minimum professional requirements for UCLES EFL Oral Examiners and went through the same rigorous training and monitoring process. Enthusiasm and commitment to the project was shown by all participating teachers and the Team Leaders involved. Were this project to continue in the future, the Speaking Tests would be not be carried out in this way, but conducted through the existing Oral Examiner network. However, Realschule teachers who have trained successfully as oral examiners will be invited to become part of the existing examiner cadre.

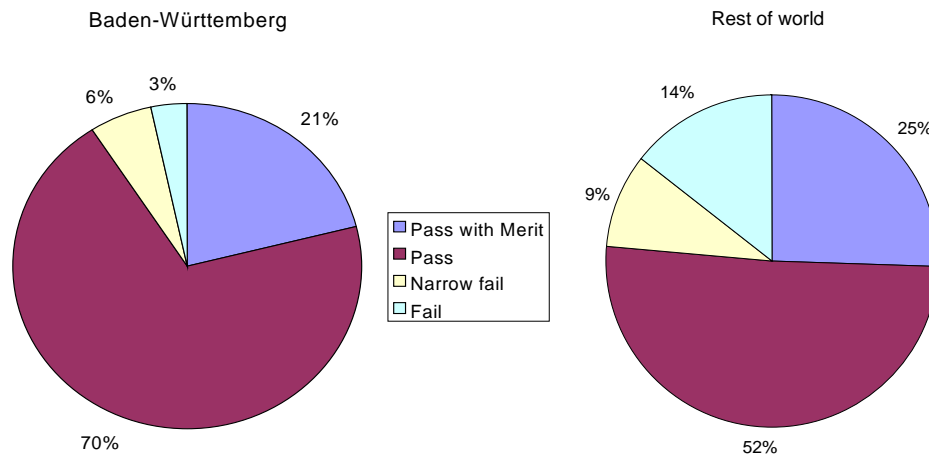
2. Distribution of candidates across school offices



3. Comparison of results with other candidates across the world

3.1 Overall comparison

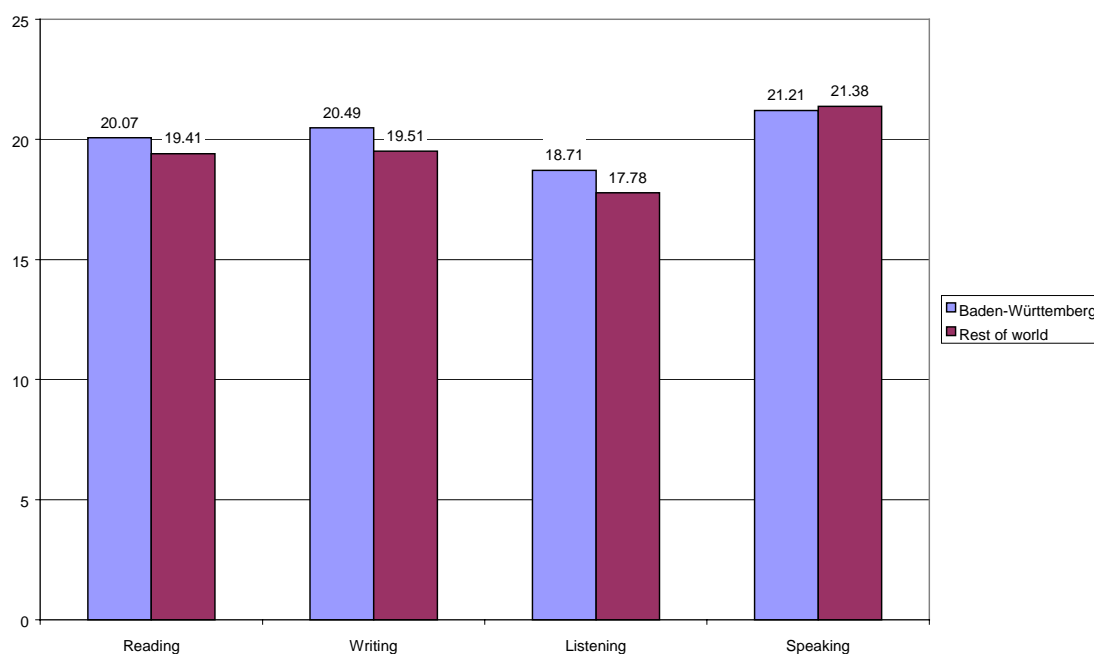
Realschule pupils compared favourably with students taking the same session of the exam in the rest of the world and it is hoped this will motivate Realschule pupils to go on to take higher level UCLES English as a Foreign Language examinations. 3% of Baden Württemberg Realschule candidates received a fail, compared to 14% across the rest of the world; 6% received a narrow fail, compared to 9% across the rest of the world; 70% received a pass, compared to 52% across the rest of the world and 21% achieved a pass with Merit, compared to 25% across the rest of the world. Overall the total number of passes for Baden Württemberg Realschule pupils was 451 (a pass rate of 91% compared to 77% for the rest of the world).



3.2 Comparison of mean results by skill

The analysis of the performance of Baden Württemberg Realschule candidates was broken down into the four different language skill areas: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

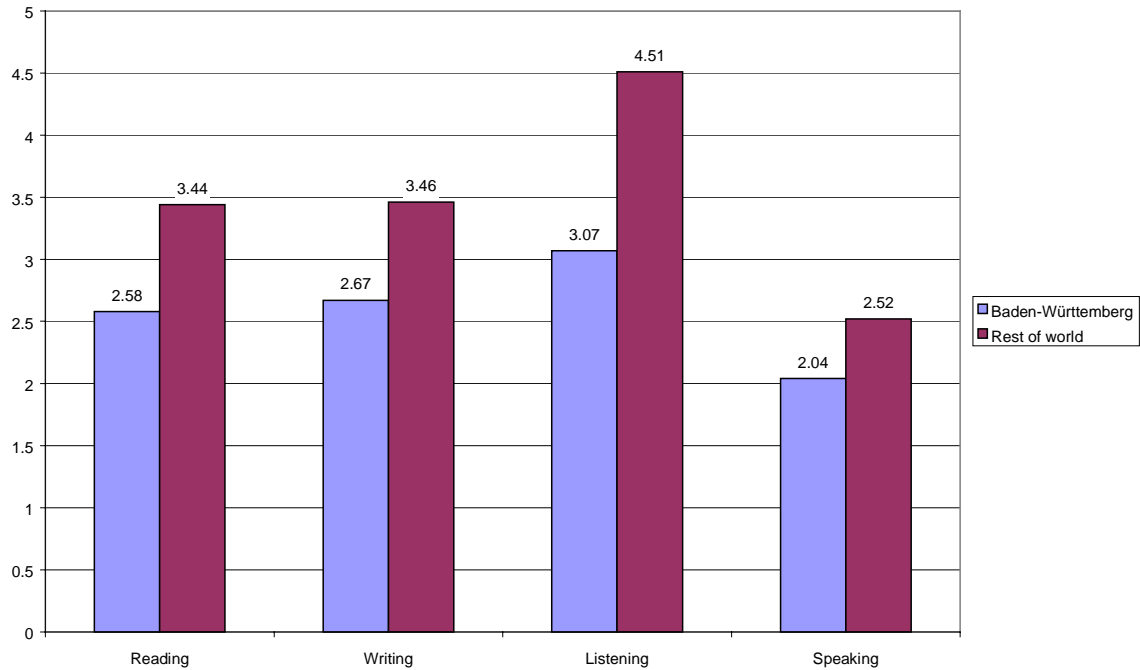
Out of a possible total score of 25 marks for each skill, Baden Württemberg Realschule candidates scored an average of 20.07 in the Reading, compared to an average of 19.41 in the rest of the world. In the Writing they scored an average 20.49, compared to an average of 19.51 in the rest of the world. In the Listening they scored an average of 18.71, compared to an average of 17.78 in the rest of the world and in the Speaking they scored an average of 21.21, compared to an average of 21.38 in the rest of the world. The results therefore show that Baden Württemberg candidates scored more highly than other candidates overall on the Reading, Writing and Listening components, but very slightly lower on Speaking. The overall average for a Baden Württemberg Realschule candidate (80.48 out of 100 marks) was higher than the overall average for the candidature as a whole (78.02 out of 100 marks).



3.3 Comparison of standard deviation by skill

The standard deviation is a measure of 'dispersion' on how widely the scores in each sample are spread. In the Reading the standard deviation for Baden Württemberg Realschule candidates was 2.58, compared to 3.44 in the rest of the world. In the Writing the standard deviation was 2.67, compared to 3.46 in the rest of the world. In the Listening the standard deviation was 3.07, compared to 4.51 in the rest of the world and in the Speaking the standard deviation was 2.04, compared to 2.52 in the rest of the world. The total standard deviation was 7.6, compared to 11.47 in the rest of the world.

The fact that there is a smaller range of variation in the Realschule Baden Württemberg scores than in the scores for the rest of the world suggests that the Baden Württemberg candidates are more consistent or coherent as a group. This is not surprising, given that these candidates are the same nationality and have been studying the same school English syllabus.



4. Report on Candidates' Writing Performance

by Annette Capel, Chair PET Reading/Writing

PET Writing Part 3 (Test 012)

4.1 Background information

This writing task is marked on-site by trained examiners, who use a dual scale general markscheme (this is given on page 40 of the PET Handbook). Up to 5 marks each can be awarded for Task and Language (5 is the highest mark and 1 the lowest), with the Task assessment relating mainly to coverage of content points, but also addressing issues of format and organisation. See *Task performance* below.

4.2 Overall performance

Baden Württemberg (BW) candidates performed strongly against the candidature as a whole. The average mark for Task was 4.36 (4.06 for the whole candidature) and for Language, 4.06 (3.56 for the whole candidature). What is especially impressive is the number of 'double 5s': 90 candidates scored band 5s i.e. maximum possible marks on both scales, which is a percentage of 18%. Conversely, very few scripts were awarded the lowest band, Band 1 for Task, and none for Language. Low marks were generally due to scripts being under length, rather than because of task misunderstanding or poor language.

4.3 Task performance

The majority of candidates covered the content points well and the task was clearly accessible to them. Candidates chose to write about a wide range of clubs, from live music and discos to tennis and computer games. In order to score a 4 or 5 for Task at PET, it is necessary to include all three content elements, with some elaboration. For this question, the content points were as follows: a description of what the candidate did at the club, information about someone the candidate met there and information about a future special event.

Candidates had no problems with the first two points and most elaborated well on these. The most commonly omitted point was the third. In many cases, this appeared to be an oversight, as these candidates had expanded well on what happened at the club and on the people there, and had written the required word length. As candidates can only score a maximum mark of 3 for Task if a content point is omitted, students preparing for PET should be reminded that they must cover all three (these appear together in the third bulleted sentence in the rubric).

As far as format goes, candidates showed themselves to be highly capable of writing an informal letter in English. A few candidates could only score 4 for Task because they had omitted to include a closing formula, for example *Lots of love*, *Bye for now*, *Take care*.

The other factor in Task assessment relates to the amount of effort required by the reader; in other words, how well the writer has ordered the content and planned and executed the letter. With very few exceptions, candidates performed well in this respect.

4.4 Language performance

As stated above, the group demonstrated above-average language ability and there were many 4s and 5s awarded for Language, including when the Task mark was held at 3 for Task omission. As already stated, there were no 1s awarded for Language and relatively few 2s. Often, a distinguishing feature between answers scoring a mark of 2, as opposed to 3, is whether the script contains any impeding errors. However, this was rarely an issue with the group in question. Another feature of performance where candidates score a 2 rather than a higher mark is erratic control, as in the following example from a weaker BW script: *he looked like a liddle bit older and has got long hears he weared a blue jeans...* Here, there are problems with past tenses and the spelling of PET-level vocabulary (*little, hair*).

Many candidates did have difficulty using uncountable nouns, and ‘hairs’ was a common error. The choice of past tense (usually present perfect or past simple) was also sometimes problematic, although the better candidates displayed good awareness of the differences and produced an impressive range for the level of PET, including accurate past perfect tense formations. It should also be recorded that, in contrast to typical PET-level candidates, irregular past tenses were generally handled well.

Accuracy in spelling is a problem for many PET candidates. Indeed, the most commonly mis-spelled word in UCLES examinations is ‘beautiful’ and these scripts produced variants, such as *beautifull, beautyful*. Rarely, however, does inaccurate spelling affect the message and spelling errors can be treated as non-impeding.

What was noticeable in many answers was a desire to make the most ambitious use of language. Even if candidates are unable to produce a complex sentence accurately, examiners can reward ambitious attempts. The following examples come from scripts that received 4 on language, where some non-impeding errors were present:

*Next week there will be a magican from Las Vegas. I’m looking forward to go there.
Later, when the band was making a break, we talked with the singers of it and they told us a lot of their work.
I was surprised to meet there an ancient friend of mine. We arranged to meet us soon.
That’s a column, where you can find out which bands are good or less.
You can’t imagine how many fun I had.*

The final example comes from a particularly strong attempt at appropriate informal language.

A script may still contain minor errors, due to ambition (e.g. the desire to take risks with the language), and receive a 5 for language, as in the following examples:

*Sandra and I talked all the time and then she showned me the club. You could not believe how big it is.
After the training Paul and I disccused about table tennis and some other stuff.
Next week there’ll be this rugby tournament, I’ll take part in.
The club house is in the industrial part of town, which is a good thing because there are no neighbours around who care about the noise we produce every night.*

The above examples of scripts scoring 4 and 5 for language performance highlight the range of structure found in BW scripts from this session. Not only were a range of tenses produced, but accurate use of modal verbs and relative clauses featured too. Often, the range of vocabulary relating to the chosen club was good for PET level. Sport and music were particularly strong topic areas in this respect. Finally, the use of linking language in many of these scripts was noticeably better than average for PET and clearly contributed to the readability of these answers.

4.5 Conclusion

The group as a whole performed strongly in both Task and Language and had been well prepared for the Part 3 Writing Task. In particular, the fluency and clear organisation of the scripts stood out.

5. Report on Candidates' Speaking Performance

by Jill Buggey, Chief Oral Examiner, Speaking

5.1 Candidate Task Achievement

In general, the Baden Württemberg candidates managed the test very well, and seemed confident and at ease with the test format. The majority of candidates were average or good PET level (scoring 3 – 4 out of 5 on the different criteria). One or two were assessed as above PET level perhaps because they had lived in an English-speaking country.

Part 1

Some of the candidates knew each other while others did not, but this did not affect their performance here. If anything, it makes for a more realistic conversation if they do not know each other. The topics covered tended to be limited to names, home town, school, family and hobbies, which are the expected areas at PET level. One pair, however, started the test by discussing their favourite colours! It may be worthwhile encouraging more development of other areas such as future plans, past/future holidays, likes and dislikes etc. in order to widen the range of vocabulary and tenses. Some candidates were very good at asking and answering questions, picking up on each other's topics and expanding/changing the topic very naturally. Others were not so good, and tended to run out of things to say after a very short time. Some further practice in listening and responding to a partner, showing interest in what they are saying and picking up on their points may be useful. There was no evidence of any long, prepared speeches.

Part 2

In general, the candidates seemed to be very well prepared for this interactive task, using the prompts systematically and showing good communication skills at PET level. They were able to give opinions/advice, agree and disagree and make alternative suggestions and choices. Sometimes the range of language produced was not very wide, however. It might be useful to teach them a variety of forms for expressing different functions. Interestingly, the group of three candidates performed particularly well in this part, with all three candidates participating actively (and quite heatedly) in the discussion. They were able to give reasons for their opinions, develop their ideas, question and disagree with the others' opinions and interrupt politely while doing this. A less interactive pair of candidates found it more difficult to do this, which resulted in them merely giving their own opinions of the prompt pictures, and finishing the task too quickly. *"Or he can play the piano...yeah, I like music too...but...piano...yeah..."* (tails off). Candidates should be encouraged to fill the time available, and keep talking and involving their partner throughout this part. Candidates should also not be afraid of using their own ideas as well as those on the sheet.

Part 3

The stronger candidates had a good command of descriptive vocabulary on the whole, and were able to structure their descriptions well, including some attention to detail, as well as describing the main focus, and speculating about the people/scene. E.g. *“Also I can see they are sitting next to a stream and they are sitting in the nature and enjoying the weather.”* Vocabulary was also quite good in this part, including *“racquets”, “landscapes”, “hanging on the wall”, “stream”, “harbour”, “ocean”, “stone/sand beach”, “holiday resort”, “discover the surroundings”*. Weaker candidates had more difficulty here and found it hard to sustain their turn for one minute. E.g. *“I can see people...market...they are looking for clothes for a little children. I can see a seller...”* (peters out). Less strong candidates tended to avoid using paraphrasing strategies, which could have been useful when the word was not known. Some descriptions were rather list-like with little expansion or attempt to speculate, and repetition of *“I can see...”*. Only one candidate I listened to was unsure of the task in this part, and invited his partner to comment on his photograph, rather than describe it on his own.

Part 4

This part was completed less successfully. Most of the candidates started the discussion with a monologue, which then resulted in the candidates merely taking turns to speak rather than developing a ‘real’ conversation. This part of the test needs some practice, with students being encouraged to ask questions, especially follow-up questions, react to what their partner tells them and develop the interaction in an appropriate way. A few candidates showed an ability to do this, e.g. *“Oh, riding! Have you got your own horse?”* The other problem in part 4 was that candidates tended to wander away from the topic into general conversation, and quite often some re-direction by the Interlocutor was needed. Candidates need to be advised to listen carefully to the task instruction, which clearly tells them which area to talk about, and try to keep to this or develop it in a logical way.

5.2 Candidate Performance

As already mentioned, the candidates performed generally well (average or above average PET level) and global achievement was generally good.

5.3 Grammar and Vocabulary

As to be expected, the range of candidates’ performance on this scale was quite wide. There were some instances of recurring errors, probably due to L1 interference, which are worth noting. These include:

Tense errors generally, especially mixing up past and present forms and incorrect use of simple and continuous forms e.g. *“The master hold 2 balls in his hand”* (is holding). *“He told them how to do that”* (is telling). *“A scarf, she didn’t need on a summer holiday”* (doesn’t need). *“They have a breakfast”* (are having), *“I’m coming from”* (come), *“I’m often going out with my friends”* (go).

Collocation problems e.g. *“make a party”, “make a picnic”*

Omission of 3rd person ‘s’ e.g. *“the boy bring drinks”*

Preposition errors e.g. *“on which class are you?”*, *“I go to swimming”*, *“on the photo I can see”, “give to them a drink”*.

Word order e.g. *“I was very often in the swimming pool last year”*, *“This is the wife of him”*, *“In which school do you go?”*, *“we have all time very fun”*, *“I like to go on the Bodensee to sailing”*.

Countables e.g. “they have much fun”, “you can learn much”.

Articles e.g. “It’s a wonderful nature”

Modals e.g. “I would a house” (would like), “I would learn to sail as well” (would like to/will), “Would we give them a present?” (shall).

Agreement e.g. “This clothes are for babies”, “The woman with the blonde hairs”, “There are 5 persons”.

Other problems: “How many brothers and sisters do you got?”, “ per example”, “do something other”, “It’s something other than the job”.

Some examples of good vocabulary have already been mentioned, when reporting on part 3 of the test. Some of the problems included: “material” (equipment), “sellwoman” (saleswoman), “roman” (novel), “master” (teacher/ coach), “It’s very funny” (It’s a lot of fun).

5.4 Discourse Management

The stronger candidates were able to sustain connected speech appropriately and develop and organise their contributions well. E.g. “I think he can ride on his bike in the afternoon when the sun is shining, and he can meet some friends who go with him”. They were also able to speculate and expand, e.g. “I believe it’s a warm country like Spain or Italy. I think it’s a wonderful place for a holiday”, “Both are older than I am, so I’m the oldest.” However, linkers tended to be simple – *and*, *but*, *so*, and weaker candidates found it difficult to use even these linking words, using very simple, short and often unconnected phrases, particularly when describing the photographs. E.g. *I see some friends sitting together. I don’t think that’s a family. I think it’s good friends, they meet each other.* Even when candidates did develop their utterances, it was often done with rather hesitant delivery, which gave an impression of disjointed communication. This is an area where all candidates could improve.

5.5 Pronunciation

Pronunciation was generally very clear, and on the whole the candidates were easy to understand with little strain. Some problems included:

Over-pronunciation of final ‘r’, e.g. *near*, *master*

Over-pronunciation of /z/, e.g. *houses*

Mispronunciation of sounds in certain words, e.g. *coast* (cost), *discuse* (discuss), *clothes* (2 syllables), *cupboard* (p sounded) *racords* (racquets)

Some candidates tended to overuse rising intonation when making statements, particularly when describing something, and many candidates need to widen their range of pitch and intonation, and speed up their pace of delivery in general.

5.6 Interactive Communication

This area has already been mainly covered in the section on task achievement. Overall, the candidates interacted very well with each other and were generally sensitive to turn-taking.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to re-iterate that I have been generally impressed by the candidates, both regarding their ease with the format of the test and also the level of their performance at PET level. They showed a good ability to deal with possible real-life situations and relevant tasks in English. This conclusion seems to tie in with the statistics comparing the performance of the BW candidates with the rest of the candidature in the world, which shows an extremely close relationship on all scales of the Speaking Test. Up to 5 marks can be awarded for each of the following (with 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest mark): Grammar and Vocabulary; Discourse management; Pronunciation; Interactive Communication and Global achievement. The average mark for Grammar and Vocabulary was 3.88 (3.94 for the total candidature); for Discourse Management 3.97 (3.98 for the total candidature); 4.09 for Pronunciation (4.12 for the total candidature); 3.99 for Interactive Communication (4.05 for the total candidature); and 4.00 for Global Achievement (4.06 for the total candidature). These statistics also indicate that the new Oral Examiners have a good grasp of the level of the test.

6. Testimonials from participating teachers and pupils

When the PET project was taken into consideration to be piloted for students at Secondary Schools in Baden Württemberg it was clear for me to support it. I think the sheer offering of doing such a certificate which is recognized all over the world provides motivation for autonomous learning, for doing more than you are expected to do, for finding out if you have reached the level the certificate is based upon.

It was a pleasure to have done all the organisation as it was for students who would prepare themselves mostly on their own, who are really willing and interested in learning the English language. And indeed, on the day of the exam one could feel how enthusiastic and ready the students were.

I was happy about the decision of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs to have offered this chance to pupils of our Secondary Schools.

From the point of the contents and structure of this exam it was interesting for me as well to see what has to be known to reach the Threshold Level.

But last not least, it was impressive to get to know how well the preparation, the layout, the mailing were done by UCLES and above all by Mrs Schill, the Local Secretary and her team.

PET Coordinator

The reasons why I took the PET-exam:

A very important reason for me was that I could say, "You're good, you have managed it!"

It was important for me that I could prove myself to be able to get the certificate.

The second reason was that in my opinion such a certificate is always useful. It can help me when I go on to grammar school.

English is a world language and it's necessary to be able to speak it.

I felt very nervous because it was my first exam in a foreign language.

I did the exam because I need a good mark in English, and I would like to get a job in England.

I was really nervous before the exam. I took it because I would like to go to the USA for a High School year. I think it was easy, but I had doubts in some parts.

It is very good that there is an English exam like the PET.

My teachers at school said that I should take part in PET. I should try it. It was the chance for me to know how far my English would take me. Besides it's good for my future job, when I can present the certificate. It gives a good impression.

When I arrived at the exam centre I felt really nervous because I knew it wouldn't be an easy test. But after the Reading and Writing part I felt better and wasn't as nervous as at the beginning.

We took part in the PET-exam because it was the first time we enjoyed the language. We think this certificate will be useful in our working career. It was a good practice for our GCSE-exam next year, too. At the beginning we were very nervous. It was a good experience for us, too. We had much fun and we found new friends.

I took the exam because of my family. They didn't believe me. I wanted to show them that I could take the exam.

I did the PET-exam because I need it for my application. I wanted to know how good I am in English and it was a challenge for me, too.

I decided to take the PET exam because I want to go to the USA when I'll have finished school. And I think it's good for my working career.

I think it's useful for my future because English is the most important language. It's useful when I decide to work in a foreign country.

As I would like to work in advertising English will be very useful.

When I heard about this exam it became a challenge to pass it. I think it's very useful in my future life. Maybe it makes a difference when you can present it with other certificates when applying for a job.

I like English and it was a challenge to do more for English. I'm interested in becoming a travel agent. Therefore I think it's useful for my application.

I took the exam because I wanted to find out how good I am at English.

The day of the exam I felt very nervous because I've never had a similar experience before. But when I saw the tasks I felt safer and became calm.

Every task was explained well and I'm just glad that I had the chance to do the exam.

Appendix A. Preliminary English Test in a European context

The Common European Framework

The Preliminary English Test is at Level B1, Threshold level in the Common European Framework. The Council of Europe's highly influential Threshold document informed the specifications of the Preliminary English Test. This document, a manifestation of the Communicative approach to language teaching, has had a lasting effect on classroom practice and test design, not only in Europe but throughout the world.

Threshold Level recommends a practical, functional approach to language teaching. It represents a shift away from the learning of languages as a scholastic subject, dominated by the study of structure, towards a situation in which language learning becomes a 'vital medium for the freer movement of people and ideas.' The main focus of this approach is on language in practical use, as it serves the daily personal needs of an adult living in a foreign country. Threshold and Waystage, however, are not courses, or a teaching syllabus, or even a list of the language features a learner at a given level should know, but rather a 'statement of objectives'. The documents present how a learner should be able to use a language for practical purposes in the target language community.

The Council of Europe's **Framework** of reference for Language Learning and Teaching takes this approach further. It provides a model of language ability in the European context to be used by all those involved in the field of language learning. The Framework document includes sections on the assessment of language ability in the context of the model and so provides the theoretical background which supports a communicative approach to language test design and development. This allows those designing and administering language tests to do so under the umbrella of a shared language testing system, to share a theoretical starting point and so produce tests that have a definite location and identity within the framework. The framework is further supported by a supplementary document entitled the **Users' Guide for Examiners**. This guide uses the Framework as a point of departure to provide models of test design and development with the aim of establishing European and international standards of test production.

UCLES EFL has been closely involved with the development of the Framework document and in particular with the Users' Guide for Examiners. Many of the models described in the Guide draw very closely on the experience of those designing and producing tests on a large scale in Cambridge. The focus of the Guide is on the principles that lie behind good practice. Each test will have its own individual character in order to meet the specific needs of its users. What the Users' Guide provides is a model of suitable processes, based on clear principles, that allows valid tests to be produced, whatever the immediate context.

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)

One example of the Common European Framework being used in practice is the **ALTE** system of levels. ALTE stands for the Association of Language Testers in Europe and UCLES EFL is a member of the Association. ALTE was formed in 1990, and its 18 members are all providers of language examinations and certificates from European countries. The three main objectives of ALTE are as follows:

- to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certification in Europe;

- to establish common standards for all stages of the testing process: this is for test development, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and reporting of findings;
- to collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how.

The ALTE code of Practice focuses on the responsibilities of both examination providers and examination users and covers four main areas:

- developing examinations;
- interpreting examination results;
- striving for fairness;
- informing examination takers.

Five levels of proficiency have been defined for the tests produced by ALTE users and these are reflected in the levels offered in the UCLES EFL examinations. These levels also correspond to the Council of Europe Framework.

The chart below gives an overview of the UCLES Main Suite (Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), First Certificate in English, (FCE), Preliminary English Test (PET) and the Key English test (KET) and where they fit on the ALTE and European frameworks:

Cambridge/ALTE Levels		European Framework Levels
CPE	Level 5	C2 (Mastery)
CAE	Level 4	C1 (Effective proficiency)
FCE	Level 3	B2 Vantage
PET	Level 2	B1 Threshold
KET & Flyers	Level 1	A2 Waystage
Movers Starters		A1 (Break through)

The ALTE Can-Do project

An important project ALTE is involved in is the development of a series of competency-oriented Can-do statements. These statements cover activities in three categories: work, social/tourist and study and are anchored to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework Levels. The statements provide a tool for those involved in teaching and testing language students as well as a self-assessment tool for the Learners themselves. Below are some examples of can-do statements at ALTE Level 2

(Preliminary English Test (B1, Common European Framework) and ALTE Level 3 (First Certificate in English (B2, Common European Framework)). A Baden Württemberg Realschule pupil with a pass in PET should typically be able to do the activities described at Level 2 (B1) and be working towards the language competences described at Level 3 (B2).

Can do statements at B1 (Preliminary English Test Level)

Listening/Speaking

- can give a clear/simple presentation or demonstration on a familiar topic
- can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way
- can participate in a conversation in a casual or semi-formal situation for a short time

Reading

- can understand a factual article/report in a newspaper/magazine
- can understand a letter expressing personal opinions
- can understand basic instructions and messages

Writing

- can write letters of a generally routine nature or simple letters relating facts and events
- can make simple notes from written sources
- can write a simple narrative or description

Can do statements at B2 (First Certificate in English Level)

Listening/Speaking

- can keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics
- can present his/her own opinions and justify opinions
- can ask questions, for example for reasons, clarification

Reading

- can understand opinions where these are simply expressed
- can read the media for information quickly and with good understanding
- can scan text for relevant information and understand detailed instructions or advice

Writing

- can express opinions and give reasons
- can present arguments, using a limited range of expression
- can make notes that will be of some limited use for essay or revision purposes

Impact of external examinations on teaching and learning

Impact is an integral part of the Code of Practice of the Association of Language Testers in Europe which covers the following four key concepts in language testing:

- Validity (An examination must be valid in terms of the constructs represented and content covered).
- Reliability (An examination must be reliable in that the results produced should be accurate/consistent and as free as possible from errors of measurement).
- Practicality (An examination must be practical in terms of the demands it makes on the resources of the test developer and administrator).
- Impact (An examination must reflect the needs of its users).

The results of the Baden Württemberg pilot project seem to suggest that the Preliminary English Test reflects, at least to some extent, the current needs of its users (in this case 9th class Realschule teachers and pupils). The Preliminary English Test tasks, as indeed all UCLES EFL examination test tasks, are based on a coherent model of language learning which underpins a communicative approach to language teaching. The design of examination tasks, therefore, reflects current thinking in terms of classroom methodology. In this way, the examinations are designed to support teachers in their work, by testing the type of language and the range of language skills which they are already teaching. Furthermore, as a result of regular revision and updating, the examinations are also able to reflect the changing needs of their users, by responding to recent research and innovations in classroom practice. It is therefore hoped that as a consequence of the initial successful project, further candidates in Baden Württemberg will have the opportunity to benefit from the positive impact of UCLES EFL examinations.

Appendix B Summary of support for the project provided by UCLES EFL

UCLES EFL provided the following financial, professional and administrative support for the pilot PET project in May 2001

- Funding of Team Leaders for UCLES EFL Speaking tests to carry out induction, training and co-ordination of Oral Examiners as outlined in UCLES' minimum professional requirements for Oral Examiners
- Funding of expenses incurred at the above meetings
- Costs of monitoring the Oral Examiners
- Significant support from Senior Team Leader for UCLES EFL Speaking Tests, Germany
- 20% discount on UCLES university fee for Preliminary English Test fees.