

2026 national curriculum tests

Key stage 1

English reading

Administering Paper 1: reading prompt
and answer booklet

Key stage 1 tests are designed to be taken at the end of the key stage 1 programme of study. It is suggested that schools administer the tests during **May**, to help inform the support that can be given to pupils ahead of their transition to key stage 2.

Schools may choose to administer the non-statutory key stage 1 tests under test conditions. To help maintain the integrity of the tests for those doing so, we ask that all schools treat all test materials as confidential until **June 2026**.

For test administration

Key stage 1 English reading test

The key stage 1 English reading test consists of 2 papers. The papers should be administered in order. Pupils do not have to sit both papers on the same day. If both papers are administered on the same day, pupils may benefit from a break between papers. Both papers can be administered to the whole class, smaller groups of pupils or on an individual basis.

Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet

The following information explains how to administer the key stage 1 English reading test Paper 1: reading prompt and answer booklet.

Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 1 consists of a combined reading prompt and answer booklet. It is expected that Paper 1 will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, but it is not strictly timed. It is at your discretion to choose when or if a pupil requires a break during the test or whether, if appropriate, to stop the test early. The paper includes some practice questions for you to use to introduce the contexts and question types to pupils. Test administrators should allow additional time to go through the practice questions with pupils.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each pupil will need the equipment specified below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a pencil or blue or black pen. Highlighter pens may be used if it is normal classroom practice. Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out. If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use monolingual English electronic spell checkers, provided they do not give definitions of words. Pupils should not use a dictionary or thesaurus.
Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should ensure that nothing you say or do during the test could be interpreted as giving pupils an advantage, for example, indicating that an answer is correct or incorrect, or suggesting the pupil look at an answer again. The English reading test should not be read to individuals or to a group, except for the general instructions below, and the practice page and practice questions. There is no specific hearing impairment guidance for this test, but be careful when signing to ensure you do not convey information that could give pupils an advantage. Guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment is contained in the relevant modified test pack. If a pupil asks a question about test content, you should not explain any words or expressions. The example below illustrates how to deal with a common situation: Question: I don't understand the question. Answer: Read the question again and underline the words that tell you what to do.
Before the test begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the list of pupils with any particular individual needs, for example, pupils who may need support from a scribe or a transcript made at the end of the test.
What to do at the start of the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check seating is appropriately spaced and that no pupil can see another pupil's answer booklet. Check pupils do not have mobile phones or other disruptive items. Check pupils do not have any materials or equipment that may give them extra help. Ensure each pupil has an unused copy of the reading prompt and answer booklet.

How to introduce the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that you spend at least 5 minutes introducing each section of the paper to the pupils. The paper contains practice pages to familiarise pupils with each text and to introduce the format of the questions. These are designed to be read to pupils by the test administrator. The practice pages at the beginning of each section also provide the opportunity to discuss setting and characters in the case of fiction, and content and context in the case of non-fiction. Test administrators will need to plan time to go through the practice pages with pupils at specific intervals throughout the time spent on the paper. You should use these instructions to introduce Paper 1 of the English reading test. The wording of these instructions can be adapted, provided the meaning is retained. <p><i>This is the English reading test: Paper 1.</i></p> <p><i>The test will take around 30 minutes.</i></p> <p><i>We are going to spend some time going through the practice page for the first text in the booklet together. When we have done that, you'll need to answer the questions quietly on your own.</i></p> <p><i>Try to answer as many questions as you can. If you can't answer a question, you should move on to the next one and come back to it later on if you have time. If you want to change an answer, you should rub it out or put a line through the answer you don't want to be marked.</i></p> <p><i>When you have answered the questions for the first text, you should check your work carefully and then put your pen or pencil down. Then we'll go through the practice page for the second text.</i></p> <p><i>There will be different types of question to answer, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>writing an answer on a line</i> <i>putting a tick in a box next to the answer you think is correct.</i> <p><i>If you have any questions during the test, put your hand up and wait for someone to come over to you. Remember, we can't help you answer any of the test questions or read any of the words to you after the practice page.</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any questions?</i></p> <p><i>Write your name on the front of the booklet.</i></p>
See instructions for introducing reading text one and reading text two on pages 4 and 5.	
What to do at the end of the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to make a transcript of a test script, complete it with the individual pupil at the end of the test, under test conditions. Particular care should be taken to ensure accurate transcriptions are made and the pupil's answers are not corrected or amended.
Marking the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the key stage 1 test mark schemes to mark the test, following both the general guidance and any specific guidance for each question.

Instructions for reading text one:

One of Our Tigers is Missing!

What to say at the start of reading text one

- Read out the name of the first text to the pupils. One of Our Tigers is Missing! does **not** have a list of 'useful words'.

One of Our Tigers is Missing!

- Ask the pupils to look at page 5.

There is a story on the top half of the page with some questions below. I'm going to read the story to you and then I'll explain how you should answer the questions.

- Read the story on page 5 aloud to the pupils and discuss what is happening in the narrative.
- Tell the pupils to look at question a. Read it aloud.

(a) Ava and Ted thought tigers were...

boring.

interesting.

scary.

funny.

You need to tick the box that you think is correct.

- Allow the pupils time to think about the answer and then discuss the options with them. Encourage the pupils to read through all the choices again before making a decision. Tell the pupils to put a tick in the correct box in their booklet.

Correct response: interesting.

- Tell the pupils to look at question b. Read it aloud.

(b) Who gave Ted and Ava tickets to the safari park?

You need to write your answer for question (b) on the line.

- Give the pupils some time to think. You should then discuss their selections, noting different ways of expressing the correct answer and explaining that it is perfectly acceptable to use different words to explain the same idea. Let the pupils fill in the answer in their booklet.

Correct response: reference to their gran.

You now have 15 minutes to finish reading the story and answer the questions on pages 6 to 12 on your own. You should think carefully about the answers you give on the answer lines and which boxes you tick.

- After approximately 15 minutes, ask pupils to turn to page 14 of the booklet.

Instructions for reading text two: Swans

What to say at the start of reading text two

- Read out the name of the text to the pupils.

Swans.

You need to look at the useful word on page 14.

- Talk about the letters and the sounds in the word to ensure that pupils will recognise it when they meet it in the text. Ensure that the pupils understand the meaning of the word.

Now look at page 15.

There is some information on the top half of the page with some questions below. I'm going to read the information to you and then I'll explain how you should answer the questions.

- Read the text on page 15 aloud to the pupils and discuss the content.
- Tell the pupils to look at question c. Read it aloud.

(c) How do swans move?

*Write **two** ways.*

You need to write your answers for question (c) on the lines.

- Give the pupils some time to think. You should then discuss their selections, noting different ways of expressing the correct answer and explaining that it is perfectly acceptable to use different words to explain the same idea. Let the pupils fill in the answer in their booklets.
Correct response: reference to any two of the following: walk, swim or fly.
- Tell the pupils to look at question d. Read it aloud.

(d) You will find them near ponds or rivers.

This tells you that swans live near...

water.

trees.

hills.

fields.

You need to tick the box that you think is correct.

- Allow the pupils time to think about the answer and then discuss the options with them. Encourage the pupils to read through all the choices again before making a decision. Tell the pupils to put a tick in the correct box in their booklet.

Correct response: water.

You now have 15 minutes to finish reading the information and answer the questions on pages 16 to 23 on your own. You should think carefully about the answers you give on the answer lines and which boxes you tick.



Standards
& Testing
Agency

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