

2026 national curriculum tests

# Key stage 1

## English reading

Administering Paper 2: reading booklet  
and reading 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 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet

The following information explains how to administer the key stage 1 English reading test Paper 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to attempt Paper 2, but administrators can stop individual pupils at any stage of the test if they are struggling.

<b>Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper 2 consists of a reading booklet and a separate reading answer booklet. All pupils should be given an unused reading booklet. Do not re-use reading booklets if you administer the test to groups of pupils at different times.</li> <li>It is expected that Paper 2 will take approximately 40 minutes to complete, but it is not strictly timed.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>This paper does not include practice questions or lists of useful words.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each pupil will need the equipment specified below:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a pencil or blue or black pen.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Highlighter pens may be used if it is normal classroom practice.</li> <li>Rubbers are allowed, but please encourage pupils to cross out answers they wish to change instead of rubbing them out.</li> <li>If it is normal classroom practice, pupils may use monolingual English electronic spell checkers, provided they do not give definitions of words.</li> <li>Pupils should <b>not</b> use a dictionary or thesaurus.</li> </ul>
<b>Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>The English reading test should not be read to individuals or to a group, except for the general instructions below.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Guidance for administering the test to pupils with a visual impairment is contained in the relevant modified test pack.</li> <li>If a pupil asks a question about test content, you should not explain any words or expressions.</li> <li>The example below illustrates how to deal with a common situation:</li> </ul> <p><b>Question:</b> I don't understand the question.  <b>Answer:</b> Read the question again and underline the words that tell you what to do.</p>
<b>Before the test begins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>What to do at the start of the test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check seating is appropriately spaced and that no pupil can see another pupil's answer booklet.</li> <li>Check pupils do not have mobile phones or other disruptive items.</li> <li>Check pupils do not have any materials or equipment that may give them extra help.</li> <li>Ensure each pupil has an unused copy of the reading booklet and a copy of the reading answer booklet.</li> </ul>

<b>How to introduce the test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You should use these instructions to introduce Paper 2 of the English reading test. The wording of these instructions can be adapted, provided the meaning is retained.</li> </ul> <p><i>This is the English reading test: Paper 2.</i></p> <p><i>Paper 2 doesn't contain any practice questions and I'm not going to read any of the pages aloud to you this time.</i></p> <p><i>There will be different types of question to answer, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• writing an answer on a line</i></li> <li><i>• putting a tick in a box next to the answer you think is correct</i></li> <li><i>• putting ticks in a table to show if an answer is true or false.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Each question has a page number above it in brackets. This is the page in the reading booklet where you can find the information you need to answer the question.</i></p> <p><i>The test will take around 40 minutes.</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.</i></p> <p><i>If you start to find the reading or the questions too hard, you should stop working.</i></p> <p><i>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>You need to work quietly on your own. You need to think of your own answers and you should not discuss them with anyone else.</i></p> <p><i>Read the questions carefully and check your work.</i></p> <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.</i></p> <p><i>Do you have any questions?</i></p> <p><i>Write your name on the front of the answer booklet.</i></p> <p><i>Now start the test.</i></p>
<b>What to do at the end of the test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>Marking the test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the key stage 1 test mark schemes to mark the test, following both the general guidance and any specific guidance for each question.</li> </ul>



Standards  
& Testing  
Agency

Key stage 1 English reading

Administering Paper 2: reading booklet and reading answer booklet

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