



Progress test 3

Proficiency level (C2)

There are five parts to the test: A: Reading; B: Language; C: Listening; D: Speaking; E: Writing. **TEACHERS: only print the first four pages for your students.**

Student (full name): Company:
..... Group: Level: Teacher (full name):
..... Date course started:

To be completed by the teacher:

(A) Reading (5): (B) Language (5): (C) Listening (10):
(D) Speaking (15): (E) Writing (15): Total score: (50)

Teacher's comment:

This exam is designed to test your general language skills. It will help you (and the teacher) see where you might need a bit more help. You can do this test without any revision! Good luck!

A: Reading (Total = 5 points: half a point per question)

Read the text. Then, answer the questions. **IMPORTANT:** This article is about a comment by a British female comedian called Jo Brand. It also refers to right-wing politician Nigel Farage.



Comedian's battery acid joke deemed inappropriate!

[source: www.theguardian.com]

(1) Jo Brand's joke about throwing battery acid at politicians was inappropriate for a Radio 4 comedy show, the BBC has concluded, although it has dismissed claims from Nigel Farage that she was inciting violence.

(2) The comedian made the comment on the talk show Heresy, which sets out to provoke and make claims that go against the consensus. When discussing political figures, including Farage, who had been targeted with milkshakes during the European elections, Brand said: "I'm thinking: why bother with a milkshake when you could get some battery acid?"

(3) She swiftly added that she was joking and insisted she did not like the trend of throwing milkshakes over politicians. "That's just me. I'm not going to do it. It's purely a fantasy, but I think milkshakes are pathetic, I honestly do, sorry."

(4) Few listeners complained when the programme was first broadcast in June and the BBC initially stood by Brand. But the comment was soon picked up by rightwing blogs and pro-Brexit websites, which spread the story on social media and turned it into a row about editorial standards at the BBC.

(5) Within days Downing Street was calling for an explanation of why the joke had been broadcast, the Metropolitan police briefly considered launching an investigation, and

Brand herself said it had been a “somewhat crass” comment. As a result, the BBC edited it out of catch-up editions of the programme.

(6) The BBC’s executive complaints unit concluded that in context the “wider message from the episode of the programme was an argument for more civility in political discourse, not less”, and it recognised Brand’s contribution was not intended to be taken at face value. Despite this, it ruled that the joke went beyond what was appropriate for the show.

(7) The complaints unit said: “In the right context and with the right treatment, there is no subject matter which should be beyond the scope of comedy.” But the incident has raised concerns among comedians. Several told the Observer they feared throwaway comments being taken out of context and shared online where they could be misinterpreted.

1. What was the comedian referring to when she made her battery acid comment?
2. What has the BBC concluded with regard to the affair?
3. What has the BBC said about claims by Nigel Farage that Jo Brand was inciting violence?



4. What’s the aim of the *Heresy* talk show?
5. What does Jo Brand think of the idea of attacking politicians with milkshakes?
6. When was the comment Jo Brand made turned into a row?
7. What did the Metropolitan police briefly consider doing?
8. What did the BBC say about the intention of the comment?
9. What did the BBC complaints unit say about subject matter in general for comedians?
10. What are some other comedians afraid of?

B: Language (Total = 5 points: half a point per question)

What do the sentences mean, and in particular the words in bold? They all contain words or expressions taken from the Reading section. The paragraph where the word can be found is written in brackets ().

1. The BBC **dismissed claims** that Jo Brand was inciting violence. (1)
2. They didn’t share his view that **she was inciting violence**. (1)
3. The show **sets out to provoke**. (2)



4. Nigel Farage has been **targeted with** milkshakes several times. (2)
5. She **swiftly added** that she was joking. (3)
6. Initially, the BBC **stood by** the comedian. (4)
7. They turned the story into a **row** about editorial standards. (4)
8. She said it was a somewhat **crass comment**. (5)
9. The BBC said that the comment was **not intended to be taken at face value**. (6)
10. They fear that throwaway comments could be **taken out of context**. (7)

C: LISTENING (Total = 10 points)

The inappropriate comment!

You're going to watch a video news report about a comedian who has made what many deem an inappropriate comment regarding certain politicians. It's a follow-up video for the article in the Reading section. Watch it twice. Then, answer the questions.

1. What did the joke start as?
2. What sort of mood is Jo Brand in regarding the possibility of giving an apology?
3. What is 10 Downing Street (the government) asking for?
4. How does Jo respond to the question about the fact that she's still working for the BBC?
5. What are the Met (Metropolitan police) doing with the regard to the Radio 4 show *Heresy*?
6. What exactly did Jo say that has caused so much controversy with regard to throwing milkshakes over politicians?
7. How does the right-wing politician Nigel Farage feel about this?
8. What has Nigel Farage accused Jo Brand of doing?
9. What did comedian Jonathan Pie say about it?
10. What has the BBC said about the incident and panellists on the show and the things they say?



D: Speaking (Total = 15 points)

Use the questions below (or any others you can think of) to have a **discussion with a partner for at least eight minutes**. Choose any questions from below, or ask any others. It's up to you to keep the conversation going, and to make sure the talking doesn't stop!

Invent information if necessary – just keep talking!

- Have you ever had to defend something you said in public? What was it? Why did you have to defend it? How did you do that?
- When was the last time you put your foot in it? What did you do? How did you get out of it?
- Have you ever told an inappropriate joke? What was it? What happened?
- Have you ever been misinterpreted? In what way? What happened?
- Have you ever said anything inappropriate? What was it? What happened? Did anyone take it badly? Who? Why? How did you resolve the situation?
- Have you ever been told off for something you said? What was it? Who told you off?
- How important is freedom of speech in general? What about in comedy?
- Should the right to freedom of speech be absolute? Why? Why not?
- Should political speech be more rigorously protected than other forms of expression? Why? Why not?
- How have new technologies affected the freedom of speech debate?
- In what way are freedom of speech laws abused in your country?
- Should people be allowed to say whatever they want? Why? Why not?
- Who are some of the most famous comedians in your country? What do you think of them? Have they ever been involved in any scandals or rows? What happened?
- Who are some of the most famous politicians in your country? Why are they famous? How do they manage to get into the news so often? What do you think of them?

E: Writing (Total = 15 points)

Write a news report based on the information in the video. Include a motivating title, a lead sentence that has the whole story summarised: who, what, where, when, why, how... Then, include information in more detail on the following: what happened, who was involved, where it took place, when it took place, why it happened, what happened as a result, what the consequences were, your opinion of it, your thoughts on the issues involved... Also, include some quotes from people involved. **Invent any information** if required. **Write more or less an A4 page.**

TEACHER'S NOTES

DO NOT PRINT FOR YOUR STUDENTS!

Exam notes for teachers

Remember, this is a general test on your students' language skills. There's no need for your students to revise for it. We feel this is a good way of checking students' progress as they work on their own without any assistance from you. Extra weighting in the exam scoring is given to listening, speaking and writing – the important communicative skills.

- Give the exam during class time – don't let students take the exam away with them.
 - Be careful not to photocopy the answers when you make the copies for your students!
 - Please print the exam double-sided.
 - The exam should take about an hour and a half. If needed, this can be divided up into two testing periods, with the exam being given over two classes.
 - Mark the results clearly on each individual student's Progress Report Sheet.
 - Any student who doesn't turn up for the exam will have to do it another day.
- Students doing the exam after the event should do so quietly to one side of the normal class. For more information on this, speak to the DOS or teacher coordinator.
- The video/s is on our website.

You can download it/them from here:

www.learnhotenglish.com/teachers

Submitting the Information

- Once the exams have been completed, you are required to complete all fields of the Progress Report Sheet and send this by e-mail (or drop it off - whatever's easiest) to your point of contact in the central office. Completed Progress Report Sheets need to be handed in no later than two weeks after you have received the exam. To make our administrative processing easier, please group together students from the same class.

- Students have two weeks to do the test. It is your responsibility to make sure they all do the test. If after two weeks they still haven't done it, then you must write N/A (Not Attended) on the Progress Report Sheet. Thanks for your collaboration!

A: Reading (5 points) – students' answers may vary a bit – they don't have to be exactly the same. If in doubt, be generous!

1. The comedian was referring to the practice of "milkshaking" politicians (throwing a milkshake over them).
2. The BBC has concluded that the comment was inappropriate for a comedy show.
3. The BBC has dismissed the claims by Nigel Farage.
4. The aim of the Heresy talk show is to provoke and make claims that go against the consensus.
5. Jo Brand says she doesn't like it, and that she thinks milkshakes are pathetic.
6. The comment turned into a row when it was picked up by rightwing blogs and pro-Brexit websites.
7. The Metropolitan police briefly considered launching an investigation
8. The BBC said that it wasn't to be taken at face value
9. The BBC complaints said that there should be no subject matter which should be beyond the scope of comedy if it's placed in the right context
10. Some other comedians are afraid that throwaway comments could be misinterpreted and shared online.

B: Language (5 points)

1. If you “dismiss a claim”, you don’t accept it as valid or true – you reject it.
2. If someone “incites violence”, they encourage other people to act violently.
3. If someone “sets out to provoke” others, they try to make other people angry or upset by saying something offensive, upsetting, disrespectful...
4. If someone is “targeted with” a milkshake (for example), a milkshake is thrown over them – they’re attacked with a milkshake.
5. If someone “swiftly adds” something, they say it quickly.
6. If someone “stands by” you, they protect and support you.
7. A “row” is an argument or violent discussion.
8. A “crass comment” is something you say without thinking too much about its consequences, or considering how it could affect or hurt other people.
9. If you say that something “isn’t intended to be taken at face value”, you don’t think it should be taken seriously or literally.
10. If something is “taken out of context”, it’s misinterpreted, and/or changed so it’s different to what someone originally said or intended. This is often because the comment isn’t repeated in full, and the words or sentences that come before or after it have been omitted.

C: Listening (10 points) – students’ answers may vary a bit – they don’t have to be exactly the same. If in doubt, be generous!

1. The joke started as a comment on the state of politics in the UK.
2. Jo Brand is unapologetic.
3. 10 Downing Street (the government) is asking for answers from the BBC.
4. Jo says she isn’t employed by the BBC, so they can’t sack her.
5. The Met (Metropolitan police) are assessing the comment
6. Jo said, “Why bother with a milkshake when you could get some battery acid?”
7. Nigel Farage has failed to see the funny side of it.
8. He has accused Jo Brand of inciting violence.
9. Comedian Jonathan Pie said he found the joke funny.
10. The BBC has said that panellists on the show often say things that are deliberately provocative but which aren’t intended to be taken seriously.

D: Speaking (15 points - 3 points per objective)

Students get zero points per objective if they don’t complete it or if they do it poorly. Set it up so that students speak in pairs (or with you for one-on-one classes). Make notes while they’re speaking on how well they do. Other students could be doing the Writing test while you do this.

- Did the student complete the task? (3 points)
- Did the student speak clearly and fluently without too much hesitation? (3 points)
- Did the student speak accurately (not making many mistakes)? (3 points)

- Did the student pronounce the words correctly? Did the student use the correct intonation, word stress, sentence stress, etc.? (3 points)
- Did the student use a wide range of expressions and vocabulary? (3 points)

E: Writing (15 points - 3 points per objective)

Students get zero points per objective if they don't complete it or if they do it poorly.

- Did the student complete the task? (3 points)
- Did the student write accurately? (3 points)
- Did the student write text that makes sense? Were the ideas linked logically? (3 points)
- Did the student use a wide range of appropriate words or expressions? (3 points)
- Did the student use a wide range of appropriate grammatical structures? (3 points)