



# MICHIGAN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT



## MET 2019 Test Report

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**MICHIGAN  
LANGUAGE  
ASSESSMENT**



Cambridge Assessment  
English



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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# 1. Description of the Test

## 1.1 General Description

The Michigan English Test (MET) is a standardized, multilevel examination of general English language proficiency. Developed and produced by Michigan Language Assessment, the test covers the four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

The listening and reading sections measure listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills in educational, public, and occupational contexts, with recordings and reading passages that reflect interactions in an American-English linguistic environment. The writing section measures an individual's ability to write in English in response to two different tasks, and the speaking section measures an individual's ability to produce comprehensible speech in response to a range of tasks and topics.

The MET covers a range of proficiency levels from upper beginner to lower advanced; the A2

to C1 levels of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001), with emphasis on the middle range of B1 and B2. It is intended for adults and adolescents at or above a secondary level of education who want to measure their general English language proficiency in a variety of linguistic contexts. The MET can be used for educational purposes, such as when finishing an English language course, or for employment purposes, such as applying for a job or pursuing promotion that requires an English language qualification.

Michigan Language Assessment is committed to the excellence of its tests, which are developed in accordance with the highest standards in educational measurement. All parts of the examination are written following specified guidelines, and items are pretested to ensure that they function properly. Michigan Language Assessment works closely with test centers to ensure that its tests are administered following set procedures, in a way that is fair and accessible to test takers and that the MET is

**Table 1: Format and Content of the MET**

Section	Time	Description	Number of Items
Listening	35 minutes	<b>Part 1:</b> Short conversations are each followed by a question.	19 questions
		<b>Part 2:</b> Longer conversations between two people are each followed by a question.	14 questions
		<b>Part 3:</b> Short talks are delivered by a single speaker and followed by several questions.	17 questions
Reading	65 minutes	<b>Grammar:</b> An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of four words or phrases to complete it.	20 questions
		<b>Multiple-text reading:</b> Two sets of three thematically linked passages are each followed by ten questions.	20 questions
		<b>Single-text reading:</b> Two extended reading passages are each followed by five questions.	10 questions
Writing	45 minutes	Tasks require test takers to produce written language at the sentence, paragraph, and essay levels.	2 tasks
Speaking	10 minutes	Test takers participate in a structured, multistage task with one examiner.	5 stages

open to all people who wish to take the exam. Test preparation resources are available on the Michigan Language Assessment website.

## 1.2 Test Format

The MET measures listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary, writing, and speaking skills. It can be taken as a 2-skill test that consists of listening and reading sections or as a 4-skill test that includes speaking and writing sections. The listening and reading questions are multiple choice and have one correct answer. The speaking section is given separately from the other sections. Table 1 describes the format and content of the MET.

## 2. Scoring and Reporting of Results

### 2.1 Explanation of Scoring

The MET listening and reading sections are scored by computer at Michigan Language Assessment. Each correct answer contributes to the final score for each section, and there are no points deducted for wrong answers. A scaled score, ranging from 0 to 80, is calculated using Item Response Theory. This method ensures that scores are comparable across different administrations, and that the ability required to receive a score remains the same from year to year.

The writing and speaking sections are graded according to scales established by Michigan Language Assessment (see our website for the rating scales). The writing section is assessed by a Michigan Language Assessment-certified rater, and the speaking section is conducted and assessed by a Michigan Language Assessment-certified speaking examiner.

### 2.2 Procedures for Reporting Scores

All test takers receive a scaled score from 0-80 for each test section, and an average score for all sections taken. The scores are also reported as CEFR levels. Table 2 shows the MET scaled scores that correspond to these CEFR levels. These correspondences are based on standard setting research conducted by Michigan

Language Assessment (Papageorgiou, 2010; Michigan Language Assessment, 2014).

**Table 2: CEFR Level Equivalence of MET Scaled Scores**

CEFR Level	Scaled Score
C1	64 – 80
B2	53 – 63
B1	40 – 52
A2	27 – 39
Below A2	0 – 26

## 3. Interpreting MET Results

The MET is a multilevel exam, covering a range of proficiency levels from A2 to C1 on the CEFR. Selected CEFR performance descriptors illustrating what test takers should be able to do at each level are available from the Michigan Language Assessment website.

When interpreting MET results, it is important to remember that the MET estimates a test taker's true proficiency by approximating the kinds of tasks that may be encountered in real life. Also, temporary factors unrelated to a test taker's proficiency, such as fatigue, anxiety, or illness, may affect exam results.

When using test scores for decision making, look at each section score separately. It is possible for a test taker to be at a higher language proficiency level in one language skill than in another. Therefore, all section scores should be taken into account when interpreting the test results for use in decision-making. Additionally, check the date the test was taken. While the MET report is valid for two years, language ability changes over time. This ability can improve with active use and further study of language, or it may diminish if the report holder does not continue to study or to use English on a regular basis. It is also important to remember that test performance is only one aspect to be considered. Communicative language ability consists of both knowledge of language and knowledge of the world. Therefore, one would need to consider how factors other than language affect how well someone can communicate. For example, in the

general context of using English in business, the ability to function effectively involves not only knowledge of English, but also other knowledge and skills such as content knowledge and business skills.

#### 4. Test-Taking Population

This section presents an overview of the test takers who took the MET in 2019, providing demographic information for the test population. Every test taker completed a registration form, which asked for their gender, date of birth, and first language. Cases where information was not given or was not correctly given were treated as missing data.

Table 3 lists the first language backgrounds of the test takers. The test takers represented 29 different first language backgrounds, but it should be noted that the test population primarily consisted of test takers whose first language was Greek, Portuguese, or Spanish.

Tables 4 and 5 present the distribution of test takers by age and gender, respectively. Table 4 shows that the majority of MET test takers were under 20 years old (51.63%), with sizable proportions in the 13-16 and 17-19 age groups. This suggests that test takers tend to take the MET while still at school or university or in the very early stages of their careers. Additionally, Table 5 shows that the majority of the test takers who took the MET were female.

**Table 4: Distribution (in %) of MET Test Takers by Age**

Age	% of Test Population
≤12	0.11
13 - 16	25.10
17 - 19	26.42
20 - 22	15.82
23 - 25	12.53
26 - 29	7.13
30 - 39	7.45
≥40	5.29
Missing Data	0.15

**Table 5: Distribution (in %) of MET Test Takers by Gender**

Gender	% of Test Population
Male	41.10
Female	58.37
Missing Data	0.53

**Table 3: List of First Language Backgrounds**

American Sign Language	Dari	Ngwe
Arabic	Efik	Norwegian
Bambara/Malinke	English	Polish
Benga	Farsi/Persian	Portuguese
Bulgarian	French	Romanian
Burmese/Chin	Greek	Russian
Cambodian	Italian	Spanish
Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin)	Luo (Lwo)	Tigre/Tigrinya
Creole	Mano	Vietnamese
Croatian	Mongolian	

## 5. Test Statistics

### 5.1 Distribution of Results by CEFR Level

Tables 6 and 7 list the percentage of test taker scores by CEFR level for the 2- and 4-skill versions of the MET, respectively. They show that test takers who took the 4-skill MET were typically more proficient than those who took the 2-skill version, with a higher percentage of test takers achieving B2 and C1 levels.

**Table 6: Distribution (in %) of 2-Skill MET Test Takers by CEFR Level**

Section	Below A2	A2	B1	B2	C1
Listening	3.14	5.83	44.24	33.31	13.48
Reading	3.21	8.83	43.73	32.62	11.60
Average	1.22	11.26	42.27	32.99	12.25

**Table 7: Distribution (in %) of 4-Skill MET Test Takers by CEFR Level**

Section	Below A2	A2	B1	B2	C1
Listening	3.82	5.13	31.81	38.65	20.58
Reading	4.63	5.44	32.91	37.80	19.22
Writing	2.97	4.88	28.38	44.84	18.92
Speaking	7.05	11.28	26.38	27.24	28.05
Average	4.95	6.08	29.17	39.13	20.67

### 5.2 Reliability Figures for Listening and Reading

Test scores are a numerical measure of a test taker's ability. *Reliability* refers to the consistency of the measurement. In theory, a test taker's test score should be the same each time the test is taken or across different forms of the same test. In practice, even when the test conditions are carefully controlled, an individual's performance on a set of test items will vary from one administration to another due to variation in the items across different forms of the same test or due to variability in individual performance. Among the reasons for this are temporary factors unrelated to a test taker's proficiency, such as fatigue, anxiety, or illness. As a result, test scores always contain a small amount of measurement error. The aim,

however, is to keep this error to a minimum. For high-stakes exams such as the MET, a reliability figure of 0.80 and above is expected and acceptable. In addition to monitoring reliability, the estimated variability in test taker performance is also monitored through the standard error of measurement (SEM) estimate.

Reliability and SEM estimates are obtained for each administration of the MET. The reliability estimates are calculated in Winsteps using the KR-20 (Kuder-Richardson Formula 20) method. The SEM estimates are calculated using the reliability estimates and the scaled scores. In this report, the reliability and SEM estimates are summarized as averages across the different MET administrations. For the listening section, the average reliability estimate was 0.89, and the average SEM estimate was 3.67. For the reading and grammar section, the average reliability estimate was 0.86, and the average SEM estimate was 4.34. These values demonstrate that the reliability figures for both exam sections are above the minimally acceptable value of 0.80. Additionally, the SEM estimates as a proportion of the 80-point scale are very small. These values suggest good consistency of measurement for the MET listening and reading sections.

### 5.3 Writing Rater Performance

The raters for the writing test are highly proficient speakers of English who are trained and certified according to standards set by Michigan Language Assessment. Copies of all writing tests are sent to Michigan Language Assessment for monitoring and review.

### 5.5 Speaking Examiner Performance

The examiners for the speaking test are highly proficient speakers of English who are trained and certified according to standards set by Michigan Language Assessment. Recordings of speaking tests are sent to Michigan Language Assessment for review, and each speaking examiner is monitored annually.

## 6. References

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