EmSAT Achieve English

Public Test Specification

Test Description: The EmSAT English Achieve assesses the extent to which a test-taker is ready to study in an English-medium college or university. It is a computer-based exam and has eight major sections – Grammar, Vocabulary, Sentence Builder, Paragraph Builder, Cloze Reading, Extended Reading, Single-Question Reading, and Writing. Test sections, questions, and options are randomized for most of the test. Sections and subsections of the test are timed by the computer. Test-takers can see how much time they have throughout the exam.

Test Duration:	135 minutes (approximately)
Questions:	110 questions approximately, including one essay (200-250 words)
Content Areas:	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, and Writing
Task Types:	Multiple Choice, Drag and Drop, Essay, Reading, Sentence Builder, Paragraph Builder

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Score	**Score Descriptors**
2000	Can easily understand almost everything heard or read. Can summarize spoken or written information. Can express him or herself spontaneously, fluently and precisely, even in complex situations. ***(CEFR Band C2)***
1625 – 1975	Can understand a wide range of texts. Can express him or herself fluently and spontaneously without much difficulty. Can use language flexibly and produce clear, well-structured, text on complex subjects. ***(CEFR Band C1)***
1250 – 1600	Can understand the main ideas of complex text. Can interact with native speakers without strain. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint. ***(CEFR Band B2)***
875 – 1225	Can understand main points of familiar subjects in work, school, and leisure. Can deal with most situations while travelling where English is spoken. Can produce simple connected text or describe experiences on familiar or personal topics. ***(CEFR Band B1)***
500 – 850	Can understand sentences and common expressions on basic personal and family information, shopping, or routine. Can communicate regarding simple familiar or routine matters. Can describe simple aspects of environment and immediate needs. ***(CEFR Band A2)***
300 – 475	Can understand and use everyday expressions and very basic phrases for immediate needs. Can introduce him or herself and give personal details (address, friends or possessions). Can interact if the other person talks slowly and clearly and is helpful. ***(CEFR Band A1)***

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Appendix 1: Content Areas

Test-takers receive four scores in the Achieve English test:

- **EmSAT Overall Score**: a combined score for Reading and Writing, between 300 and 2000.
- **Reading Score**: a CEFR band is awarded for Reading, which includes questions in Grammar and Vocabulary as well as different types of reading texts. Question types can include multiple choice, drag and drop, fill-in-the-blanks, or sentence reordering.
- **Writing Score**: a CEFR band is awarded for Writing, based on a 30-minute, 250-word typed essay on a single topic.
- **EmSAT Band**: This is the overall CEFR level of the student between A1 and C2 combining the Writing and Reading bands.

See Appendix 3: Detailed EmSAT Descriptors for information on the CEFR bands

Reading

Grammar

In the Grammar sections in the test, test-takers are assessed on their ability to select the correct word or words to complete a sentence. Grammar content is primarily based on the English Grammar Profile Project (www.englishprofile.org). Questions can include multiple-choice, drag and drop, and re-ordering words to form a sentence.

Vocabulary

The Vocabulary sections consist of short multiple-choice vocabulary questions which assess the extent to which students know the high-frequency words needed to function effectively in an English-medium environment. Vocabulary content is primarily based on the English Vocabulary Project (www.englishprofile.org). The list has been screened to ensure that the words are culturally appropriate and useful in an academic context. Questions can be multiple-choice, drag and drop, or re-ordering words to form a sentence.

Cloze Reading Passages

In Cloze reading passage sections, test-takers see blanks in short (90 to 120-word) or longer (170-200 word) readings where level-appropriate words have been removed. The removed words are presented above the text and test-takers drag the words to fill the blanks.

Extended Reading

This Reading section includes reading texts, including descriptive, narrative, or expository texts, ranging from 450 words to 550 words. Reading skills tested include identifying the main idea, finding simple factual details, determining pronoun reference, finding the meaning of an unfamiliar word, understanding inference (what is implied), and sequencing (understanding the order of events). Questions on reading passages are multiple-choice.

Single-Question Readings

This Reading section includes short descriptive, narrative, or expository texts, ranging from 90 words to 150 words, with a single multiple-choice question. Reading skills tested include identifying the main idea, finding simple factual details, determining pronoun reference, finding the meaning of an unfamiliar word, understanding inference (what is implied), and sequencing (understanding the order of events).

Paragraph Builder

With this item type, students drag and reorder 4-7 sentences to form a single paragraph or a dialogue. There are no extra sentences. Some sentences (e.g., the first one) may be presented to help the student. In a dialogue, the speakers' names will be presented.

Writing:

The Writing component consists of a single writing task. The response is word-processor mediated, and test-takers are expected to write 200-250 words. The prompt is given in English only. The task is assessed by at least two professional markers using a holistic banding scale (see Writing Scale in Appendix 3), and the test-taker is awarded a band on the CEFR scale between A1 and C2. The Writing is included in the Overall score and accounts for 25% of the overall score.

Timing

The EmSAT English Achieve test is divided into multiple sections. Each section is timed individually. When a test-takers have used all the allotted time for a section, their responses are saved and they are moved automatically to the next section. The total time allotted for the test is about 135 minutes, but candidates can finish as soon as they have answered all questions in all sections.

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Appendix 2: Sample Items

1. Students who get good grades _____ sent to France for a two-year course.

A. ◯ were
B. ◯ to be
C. ◯ is being
D. ◯ will be

2. I can start early or work late: my hours are _____.

A. ◯ flexibility
B. ◯ flexibly
C. ◯ flexible
D. ◯ flex

3. Many people use their credit card without thinking, but eventually they will have to _____ and pay their bills.

A. ◯ have the best of both worlds
B. ◯ turn a blind eye
C. ◯ run wild
D. ◯ face the music

4. We have achieved some of our goals, but _____ remains to be done.

A. ◯ the more
B. ◯ much
C. ◯ little
D. ◯ most

5. Drag the words into the blanks below to complete the sentence.

out	let	kept	away	down	locked	gave	in

She left the house without her keys and accidentally _____ herself _____.

6. Drag **all** the words into the spaces to make a correct sentence.

as	as	tall	am	nearly	is	I

My younger brother _____.

7. The guide showed us round the castle, _____ we thought was very beautiful, and then he drove us to the airport.

A. ◯ what
B. ◯ which
C. ◯ that
D. ◯ of which

8. Drag the words into the blanks below to make a correct sentence.

fastest	one	more	than	my	faster	fast	is	old	mine

My new car _____.

9. The lion which escaped from the zoo was _____ last night and returned to the zoo.

A. ◯ distinguished
B. ◯ captured
C. ◯ gathered
D. ◯ released

10. You don't need to water those flowers - they're _____!

A. ◯ approximate
B. ◯ absurd
C. ◯ artificial
D. ◯ accessible

11. Vans can carry light loads, but _____ items have to be transported by truck or by rail.

A. ◯ alert
B. ◯ chaotic
C. ◯ bulky
D. ◯ variable

12. Flights _____ for London had to land in Manchester because of the bad weather.

A. ◯ reluctant
B. ◯ bound
C. ◯ vague
D. ◯ shabby

13. As the game finished, people in the crowd jumped over the _____ and ran onto the field to hug the players.

A. ◯ inflation
B. ◯ barrier
C. ◯ heel
D. ◯ dilemma

14. The police said he had started the fire, but he denied the _____ .

A. allegation
B. accessory
C. assignment
D. annoyance

15. There was an incredible sale in the store. I got _____ and bought too much stuff!

A. helped out
B. spread out
C. carried away
D. blown up

16. Drag the words to the spaces. There is one extra word.

at | but | have | quite | their | themselves

Coffee Drinkers and Farmers

Global coffee chains provide some of the best-tasting coffee on the planet. And that coffee definitely should taste pretty impressive _____ 25 AED per cup! While we consumers end up paying _____ a high price for our morning kick, how much of that income do the coffee growers see? Sadly, the farmers themselves often receive little payment for _____ efforts, sometimes surviving on as little as 4 dirhams per day. Such poor earnings _____ made many coffee drinkers uncomfortable, and consumers have pushed chains towards providing farmers not only better wages _____ also medical insurance and other benefits. Hopefully we can enjoy our coffee, knowing that the people who grow it are paid properly.

17. Drag the words to the spaces. There are two extra words.

absolutely	advantages	climate	connect	disappeared	entertains	huge
location	miles	number	sunshine	taxes		

America's movie industry began life over a hundred years ago in New York; but by 1910, movie-makers wanted to find a better _____. In New York, everything was too expensive; workers, land, _____. In addition, it was difficult to make movies in winter, because of the cold _____.

However, the small city of Los Angeles in the western state of California, thousands of _____ away on the other side of the country, was full of _____. In California, the warm weather and _____ meant that people could make films all through the year; and everything was cheaper. And most of all, there was lots of cheap land for sale.

Before long, film companies started to build _____ new studios in an area called Hollywood, at the foot of some small dry hills. Movies are expensive to make. For this reason, a small _____ of big companies such as MGM, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros. and Paramount started to take over smaller companies.

Many old film companies have _____, but some new ones have appeared, companies like Walt Disney and Steven Spielberg's company Amblin. Hollywood has changed a lot in 80 years, but still _____ us today!

Questions 18, 19 and 20:

The golden-headed lion tamarin is a small, squirrel-sized monkey, about 26 cm long with a 35 cm tail and a long, golden, lion-like mane around its face. It is predominantly black with golden fur at the front of the mane, the lower half of the front paws and part of the tail. Their face, hands and feet remain bare. Their feet have sharp claws (most other primates have nails) that are useful for gripping and climbing branches and also for grabbing insects to eat.

During the day, the golden-headed lion tamarins roam their territory looking for food. Their diet consists of sweet pulpy fruits, insects and small lizards. They are especially fond of the tiny invertebrates that live in small pools of rainwater that collect in the upper forest canopy. They will also **forage** on the forest floor in search of insects. As evening falls, the tamarins return to their nest, usually a hole in a hollow tree. The entrance hole to the nest is too small for most nocturnal predators of the region, so they can sleep in safety.

Hawks, cats, and large snakes are the main predators of golden lion tamarins. The tamarins give alarm calls in response to strange or threatening stimuli. They have a particular alarm call for large birds overhead. When that call is made, the animals head for the trunks of the trees or sometimes just let themselves fall to the ground. The alarm call and the response seem to be genetic, rather than learned. Even tamarins that have always lived inside a zoo make the call and head for safety in a tree when hawks fly over.

Tamarins live in small family groups of about four or five animals, consisting of a breeding pair and their youngest **offspring**. The young will stay with their parents after they are weaned and will help their parents raise the newest young. The parents have a strong pair-bond and will stay with each other for life.

18 What kind of animal is a tamarin?

A. ◯ squirrel
B. ◯ lizard
C. ◯ monkey
D. ◯ lion

19 Which part of the tamarin has golden fur?

A. ◯ nose
B. ◯ feet
C. ◯ hands
D. ◯ tail

20 How do tamarins differ from most other primates?

A. ◯ They sleep in a nest.
B. ◯ They live in family groups.
C. ◯ They climb trees.
D. ◯ They have claws.

Questions 21 and 22:

Anna Atkins, Photographer

Today everyone can take photographs quickly and easily with just a phone or digital camera, and quickly share them online with friends or family. However, when photography was new, people needed a lot of equipment, chemicals, and scientific knowledge.

Few people know that some of the first photographs ever published were taken by a woman. Anna Atkins was the daughter of an English scientist called John Children, who studied biology, astronomy, and minerals. Her mother died soon after Anna was born in 1799, so she was brought up by her father. Perhaps because of this, Anna received a good scientific education. When she was 24 years old, she helped her father with drawings of sea shells for a book that he had written. After marrying her husband John Atkins in 1825, she continued to collect and study plants and flowers.

Her husband and her father were friends with one of the first photographers in the world, Henry Fox Talbot. At the time, he was trying many new types of photography, and Anna became interested in one type: camera-less photography using cyanotype paper.

Camera-less photography, as you may have guessed, does not need a camera. Instead, the things you want to photograph are put on a special paper, called cyanotype paper. The paper has chemicals in it which change color with light. Sunlight is shone on the paper for a few minutes, and a

21. The reading says that Anna's education may have happened because _____.

- ◯ her father was a scientist and wanted her to learn
- ◯ her mother wanted Anna to be a scientist
- ◯ her husband pushed her to study harder
- ◯ Henry Fox Talbot taught her about plants and animals

22. The pictures in John Children's book were _____.

- ◯ drawn by his daughter
- ◯ photographed by his daughter
- ◯ photographed by Henry Fox Talbot
- ◯ drawn by himself

Question 23:

Drag the sentences to the spaces to make a paragraph.

- Because they come from glaciers, and not frozen seawater, the icebergs are made up of freshwater, which is full of nutrients.
- Holes in the iceberg also provide places for fish to escape from predators, and the ice provides a resting place for penguins or seabirds.
- They are commonly found near Antarctica and in the North Atlantic Ocean near Greenland.
- These nutrients provide food for fish of all sizes who come to feed around the new iceberg.

Icebergs: A Home for Wildlife

Icebergs are huge chunks of ice that have broken off from glaciers and fallen into the ocean. _____ _____ _____ _____ As a result, although they may last just a few years, icebergs form an important habitat for wildlife.

Question 24:

Drag the sentences to the spaces to make a dialogue.

- Are you sure? Most of my patients seem to like it.
- But I've used it before and it did not help at all.
- OK - let's try this one, and see if it helps you.
- Yes I am. Can you please prescribe another one?

At the Clinic

Doctor: Take this medicine for a week and you'll start to feel better.

Patient: _____

Doctor: _____

Patient: _____

Doctor: _____

25. Write 200 - 250 words on the following topic:

"In most developed countries people are living longer lives. Discuss the positive and negative effects on a society of people living longer."

Words: 0

Answer Key:

1	D
2	C
3	D
4	B
5	locked / out
6	My younger brother is nearly as tall as I am.
7	B
8	My new car is faster than my old one.
9	B
10	C
11	C
12	B
13	B
14	A
15	C
16	at, quite, their, have, but
17	location, taxes, climate, miles, advantages, sunshine, huge, number, disappeared, entertains
18	C
19	D
20	D
21	A
22	A
23	Icebergs are huge chunks of ice that have broken off from glaciers and fallen into the ocean. They are commonly found near Antarctica and in the North Atlantic Ocean near Greenland. Because they come from glaciers, and not frozen seawater, the icebergs are made up of freshwater, which is full of nutrients. These nutrients provide food for fish of all sizes who come to feed around the new iceberg. Holes in the iceberg also provide places for fish to escape from predators, and the ice provides a resting place for penguins or seabirds. As a result, although they may last just a few years, icebergs form an important habitat for wildlife.
24	Doctor: Take this medicine for a week and you'll start to feel better. Patient: But I've used it before and it did not help at all. Doctor: Are you sure? Most of my patients seem to like it. Patient: Yes I am. Can you please prescribe another one? Doctor: OK - let's try this one, and see if it helps you.
25	Essay – many answers possible *(marked by hand)*

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Appendix 3: Other Supporting Documents

- Document 1: **Detailed EmSAT Descriptors**
- Document 2: **Writing Marking Scale (Public)**

Document 1: Detailed EmSAT Descriptors

EmSAT Score	CEFR	CEFR Descriptors	Level
2000	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him or herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.	Proficient
1625 – 1975	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him or herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.	
1250 – 1600	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his or her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	Independent
875 – 1225	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.	
500 – 850	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his or her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.	Basic
300 – 475	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him or herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he or she lives, people he or she knows and things he or she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.	

Document 2: Writing Marking Scale (Public)

	General	Vocabulary & Grammar	Mechanics
C2	Comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language. Can formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate, and eliminate ambiguity.	Consistent grammatical control of complex language. A very broad lexical repertoire.	No spelling or punctuation errors.
C1	Writes clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts with a broad range of language in an appropriate and effective style. Logical structure helps readers find significant points.	High grammatical accuracy. Good command of a broad lexical repertoire, with idioms.	Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, with occasional slips.
B2	Expresses him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict language. Sufficient language for clear descriptions, express viewpoints and arguments on general topics. Some complex sentence forms used. Can use different registers.	Good range of generally accurate vocabulary for most general topics. Uses a variety of linking words efficiently.	Clearly intelligible continuous writing using standard layout and paragraphs. Spelling and punctuation reasonably accurate but show L1.
B1	Sufficient language to describe unpredictable situations and topics such as family, interests, work, travel, and current events. Can explain main points of a problem in a linear sequence with some precision.	Reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts. Errors occur but meaning usually clear. Repetition in vocab choice. Noticeable L1 influence.	Continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation, and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.
A2	A repertoire of basic language to deal with everyday situations. Uses brief, basic sentence patterns and memorized phrases and formulae on simple concrete needs and personal details. Frequent breakdowns in non-routine situations.	Some simple structures used correctly, but regularly makes basic mistakes, e.g., in verb tense choice or agreement	Can copy short sentences on everyday subjects, e.g., directions. Can write short words with reasonable phonetic accuracy (not standard spelling).
A1	Uses a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type. Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.	Only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures.	Can copy familiar words and short phrases: simple signs or instructions, everyday objects. Can spell address, nationality and personal details.