

PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

Lesson 5 – Answer short question

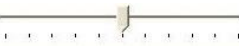
Time allocated: 30 minutes

Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This is a short-answer item type that integrates speaking and listening skills, and requires test takers to understand a recorded question and provide a brief and accurate response.

You will hear a question. Please give a simple and short answer. Often just one or a few words is enough.

Status: Beginning in 3 seconds.

Volume 

Recorded Answer

Current Status:
Beginning in 8 seconds.

Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

Strategy 1

Activate your background knowledge to answer the question. Identify the topic and think about what you already know about it.

Strategy 2

Try to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.

Strategy 3

Listen for the “direction” words which will help you interpret the question accurately.

Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

Strategy 1

Explain to your students that this item type will test the skills and knowledge that they have acquired through education and experience. Although the questions include topics of academic interest, these are generally things that are commonly known.

To increase their general knowledge, learners should read more books, journals and articles online, which will also help them acquire more vocabulary and develop word skills. Improving long-term memory will result in retaining more information. Your students should try to make connections between different information they acquire, which will facilitate easy retrieval of any information they need.

Explain that this strategy will not only lead to better test results, but will also help students improve their general language ability and aid success at academic study.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Give students some academic topics, e.g., *cardiology*, *hemispheres*, *astronomy*, and have them discuss what they know about each one and provide some definitions.
- Assign a topic to each pair and have them brainstorm any associated words.

Strategy 2

Explain to your class that questions associated with this item type will be based on academic language, and they should try to build good academic vocabulary knowledge. This will also help them figure out the meaning of any unfamiliar words in context.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Display the following question: *If telescopes are used to locate distant objects, what instrument is employed to magnify miniscule objects?* Point to the word *telescope* and have students identify the context clues, e.g., explanation of function or purpose – *to locate distant objects*; category – *instrument*.
- Now point to the word *miniscule* and have students identify the context clues, e.g., verb clues – *magnify* (to make things look bigger).

Strategy 3

Explain to your students that the question will contain some “direction” words that will help them identify what type of information they are required to provide. These direction words usually carry stress and stand out in the utterance.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Display the question: *If telescopes are used to locate distant objects, what instrument is employed to magnify miniscule objects?* and have students identify the “direction” words (*instrument*, *magnify*). What other “instrument” is mentioned in the question? (*telescope*). Have students think about names of all scientific instruments they know. What magnifying instruments do they know? (*spectacles*, *binoculars*, *microscopes*)
- Read out the question and have students provide the answer (*microscope*).

Step 4: Respond to an Answer Short Question Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. Remind students of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

If possible, seat your students at separate workstations or position them in a way so that they will not interfere with each other when speaking. Play the audio [L5_Answer_short_question_1], and ask students to record their responses using the recording devices on their mobile phones or computers. If this isn't possible, ask students to write their answers on a piece of paper.

Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to compare their responses in pairs or groups. Then provide the correct and incorrect answers.

Item 1: Transcript and Answer Key

Transcript

What organ do cardiologists specialize in?

Correct answer:

(the) heart, hearts

Incorrect answer(s):

(the) body, medicine, lungs, liver, stomach, skin, kidneys