

**Assessment considerations**

Video at: [www.trinitycollege.com/TESOL-AL](http://www.trinitycollege.com/TESOL-AL)

This video looks at the considerations that need to be borne in mind when writing and/or choosing tests.

00:09 – 01:45 Assessment considerations overview  
01:45 – 05:08 Validity

05:09 – 10:46 Reliability  
10:47 – 13:11 Practicality

**1. Before watching the video**

a. When choosing a test for your students, which of the following five factors are most important to you?

The test covers the same topics covered in the language syllabus you follow		The test provides an accurate indication of your students' language proficiency	
The test assesses the students' ability to use grammar accurately		The test items cannot be guessed	
The test assesses the students' knowledge of vocabulary		There is no pass/fail. Students are simply given a numerical score	
The test assesses all four skills		The test is easy to mark	
The test assesses the different skills together (integrated skills approach) as opposed to testing skills individually		The test is easy to administer	

b. What do you think the following terms mean? Write a brief definition:

Validity
Reliability
Practicality

**2. During the video**

**Assessment considerations Overview (00:09)**

a. Now watch the first section of the video, which provides an overview of the considerations that need to be borne in mind when selecting an assessment, and compare your definitions of validity, reliability and practicality to those given in the overview.

b. Now watch the rest of the video and decide which of the issues listed below are related to validity, reliability and practicality. Write the issues in the correct columns of the table

- Validity (01:45 – 05:08),
- Reliability (05:09 – 10:46)
- Practicality (10:47 – 13:11)

- i. Certain question types do not test the candidate’s ability to produce language
- ii. Not all tests assess language in the way the students are going to use the language
- iii. The marking of tests can be time-consuming; they can be labour-intensive and costly to mark
- iv. Examiners need to be trained appropriately to ensure the assessment criteria is being applied in the same way
- v. Some items may not give a true indication of a candidate’s proficiency if the questions can be guessed
- vi. Examiners may apply criteria differently depending on how they feel at the time they are marking
- vii. Tests may require the candidate to use other skills which were not intended to be tested
- viii. Writing good distractors to multiple choice questions can be difficult; as a result, some distractors may be ineffective

Validity	Reliability	Practicality

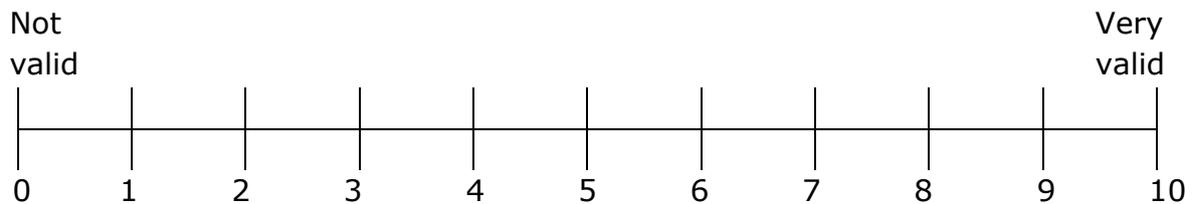
c. Now match the solutions below to four of the eight issues given above.

- a) Require examiners to complete examiner training and pass a standardisation task
- b) Think carefully about the skills required to answer the question
- c) Have questions double-marked by two different examiners
- d) Use questions which have open answers, which require students to write whole answers

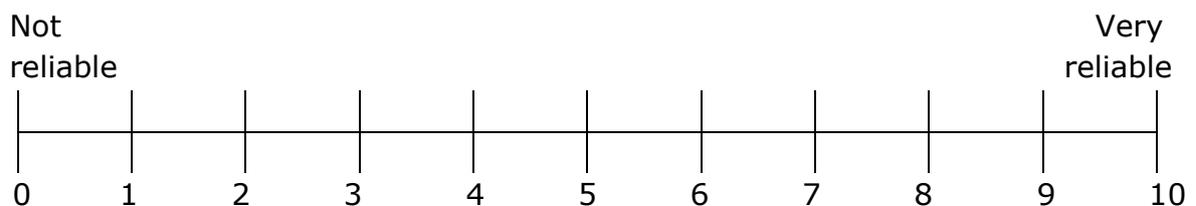
**3. Discussion points**

Think about a test you are familiar with. Rate it in terms of validity, reliability and practicality.

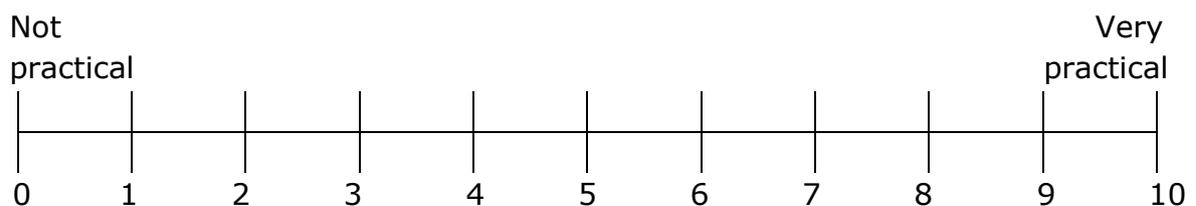
a) Validity



b) Reliability



c) Practicality



a) How could you improve the validity of the test?

b) How could you improve the reliability of the test?

c) How could you improve the practicality of the test?

#### **4. Further learning**

If you want to learn more about this topic, look at these resources:

##### **Books**

Baxter, A., & Seligson, P. (1997). *Evaluating Your Students*. London: Richmond Publishing.  
Brown, H.D. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Pearson: Harlow.  
Hughes, A. (2002). *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: CUP.  
Tummons, J. (2011). *Assessing Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector*. Exeter: Learning Matters.

##### **Websites**

<https://research.collegeboard.org/services/aces/validity/handbook/test-validity>

##### **Journal article**

Shohamy, E., Gordon, C.M., and Kraemer, R. (1992). 'The effect of raters' background and training on the reliability of direct writing tests'. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76 (1), p27-33.