



Candidate Instructions – Writing Test – Short Version

You have been registered to take ALTA's Online Writing Test (Short Version). This test is designed to assess your ability to write in a given language. The evaluation is done online with pre-selected questions.

Please read all of these instructions before beginning your evaluation.

Here are some important things to remember when taking the test:

- ALTA's Writing Test (Short Version) is a 2-question test.
- The time limit is 35 minutes. A timer in the corner of the screen will inform you how much time you have remaining, and you will be given a warning five minutes before the end of your test.
- It is important to take the test in a quiet area where you can concentrate fully on what you are writing.
- The questions are designed to elicit writing samples in a variety of styles and forms.
- You must answer the 2 questions. An effective answer will typically consist of a minimum of 100 words.
- You are able to move backward and forward through the test, if you choose. That is, if you skip the first question, you will be able to come back to it later.
- **You may not use reference materials of any kind on this test (dictionaries, electronic devices, external websites, etc.)**
- Once you have started your test, you may not stop it, start over, or take the test again.
- It is important that you complete your scheduled test in one sitting. If you close your browser window or otherwise log out of a test before you have completed the test, you will not be able to log back in to finish.
- You must click "Submit Test" when you have finished answering the last question – otherwise, your test will not be scored.

You will be evaluated on the following:

- Quality and style of your sentences



- Organization and expression of ideas
- How well the responses relate to the questions asked
- Use of formal and informal structures where appropriate
- Grammar, spelling (including accent marks where applicable), punctuation

Computer Requirements:

- PC with Windows 7 and above
- Mac with OS Sierra and above
- JavaScript (turned on)
- Broadband connection
- Supported Browsers: Firefox, Safari, Chrome, Microsoft Edge

Also, for languages with non-roman characters, character encoding needs to be set up at Unicode. It's usually done per default. In case it's not: in the Firefox task bar, go to view, to character encoding and make sure that Unicode (UTF-8) is selected.

(If "view" does not appear, go to web developer)

It is your responsibility to use the appropriate settings on your keyboard for the language being tested. You will not be able to insert characters with diacritical marks. Note also that the copy and paste functions are disabled within the test. If you do not know how to set up your keyboard to type those marks, please use the character codes. There is a list of these codes on the next page. Have the list of codes for your language ready, and practice on your computer before taking the test. On the next page, you will see options based on the device you are using to take the test.

Please practice the codes before taking the test. If it works in Word, Google Docs, AND emails, it will work within the test.



ALT CODES

For Computers with Windows Operating System

- **With a separate numeric keypad**

To enter a character code, you need to hold down the “Alt” key and type in the appropriate code on the numeric keypad on the right side of the keyboard (the numbers at the top of the keyboard won’t work, and you’ll need to be sure that “Num Lock” is on in order to use the numeric keypad). You can either use the code ALT + the 3 digits or the code ALT + the 4 digits. Please try those keys before taking the test.

Charts For specific languages

(Alt key + 3 digits is to the left of the accented letters; Alt key + 4 digits is to the right)

FRENCH

133 à (0224)
 131 â (0226)
 135 ç (0231)
 130 é (0233)
 138 è (0232)
 136 ê (0234)
 137 ë (0235)
 140 î (0238)
 139 ï (0239)
 œ (0156)
 147 ô (0244)
 151 ù (0249)
 150 û (0251)
 183 À (0192)
 182 Â (0194)
 128 Ç (0199)
 212 Ê (0200)
 144 É (0201)
 210 Ê (0202)
 211 Ë (0203)
 215 Î (0206)
 216 Ï (0207)
 Œ (0140)
 226 Ô (0212)
 235 Ù (0217)
 234 Û (0219)
 174 « (0171)
 175 » (0187)

SPANISH

160 á (0225)
 130 é (0233)
 161 í (0237)
 164 ñ (0241)
 162 ó (0243)
 163 ú (0250)
 129 ü (0252)
 Á (0193)
 144 É (0201)
 Í (0205)
 165 Ñ (0209)
 Ó (0211)
 Ú (0218)
 154 Ü (0220)
 168 ¿ (0191)
 173 ¡ (0161)

PORTUGUESE

ã (0227)
 Ã (0195)
 135 ç (0231)
 128 Ç (0199)
 149 ò (0242)
 Ò (0210)
 162 ó (0243)
 Ó (0211)
 õ (0245)
 Õ (0213)

ITALIAN

133 à (0224)
 138 è (0232)
 141 ì (0236)
 149 ò (0242)
 151 ù (0249)
 183 À (0192)
 212 È (0200)
 Ì (0204)
 Ò (0210)
 Ù (0217)

POLISH

ą (0261)
 Ć (0262)
 ć (0263)
 Ę (0280)
 ę (0281)
 ń (0324)
 ó (0243)
 ś (0347)
 ź (0378)
 ż (0380)
 ł (0321)
 ł (0322)

GERMAN

132 ä (0228)
 134 å (0229)
 145 æ (0230)
 ö (0240)
 137 ë (0235)
 148 ö (0246)
 155 ø (0248)
 225 ß (0223)
 þ (0254)
 129 ü (0252)
 152 ÿ (0255)
 142 Ä (0196)
 143 Å (0197)
 146 Æ (0198)
 Ð (0208)
 Ë (0203)
 153 Ö (0214)
 157 Ø (0216)
 þ (0222)
 154 Ü (0220)
 “ (0147)
 „ (0132)



- **With numbers under the letter keys (laptops)**

You need to hold down another key (probably “Fn”) to access the number pad which is hiding out on the letter keys under your right hand. The top row of numbers won’t cut it.

- **With no numbers under the letters (laptops)**

If your laptop does not have the numbers under the letter keys, the best is to set up the US international keyboard on your computer. Go to settings, time & language, region language, click on English, and then on options and select English US international.

To switch from the ENG keyboard to the US keyboard when installed: push the window key and the space bar and select the keyboard you want to use.

You may want to print the layout (<https://dry.sailingissues.com/us-international-keyboard-layout.html>)

Below are the main keys. The dead key is the ALT key on the right of the space bar.

Acute accent: dead key + letter (é)

Grave accent: ~ + letter (è)

Umlaut: shift + “, then letter (ü)

Circumflex: shift + 6, then letter (ô)

ç: dead key + <

tilde: shift + ~ , then letter (ñ)

ß: dead key + s

μ: dead key + m

¿: dead key + ?

¡: dead key + !

æ: dead key + z

oe: o, then e

For Mac users

Spanish Character Shortcuts for Mac

á	Option + e, then A	Á	Option + e, then Shift + A
é	Option + e, then E	É	Option + e, then Shift + E
í	Option + e, then I	Í	Option + e, then Shift + I
ó	Option + e, then O	Ó	Option + e, then Shift + O
ú	Option + e, then U	Ú	Option + e, then Shift + U
ñ	Option + n, then N	Ñ	Option + n, then Shift + N
ü	Option + u, then U	Ü	Option + u, then Shift + U
ï	Option + 1	¿	Option + ?
«	Option + \	»	Option + Shift + \

For iPhone, iPad, Android, users



To type an accented letter, simply hold any vowel a little longer than normal (long press) and you'll see several other accented options pop up. Same for the "ñ," the exclamation point and the question mark.

Taking the test:

To take the test, you will need to access ALTA's online portal through the link in the email sent to you. If you have not taken an online test with ALTA before, you will be prompted to activate your account before getting started. Be sure to choose a password that you will remember later.

After registering, click the link for your assigned test. You must read and acknowledge the Honor Statement in order to take the test. Then, click "Start Test" in order to start your evaluation. Do not click "Start Test" until you are ready to begin, as the test cannot be stopped once started.

Prepare for your test:

For more information and practice tests, go to:

<https://www.altalang.com/language-testing/preparing-for-your-test/>