

Occupational English Test Prep

By **Wayne Trotman** - 4th December 2020



Nursing and Medicine: Speaking and Writing

By Ros Wright

ISBN: 978-1-4715-8694-1

Express Publishing, 2020

All Professions: Reading and Listening

By Tom Fasnidge

ISBN: 978-1-4715-8693-4

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The Occupational English Test (OET) is an increasingly popular high-stakes and potentially life-changing exam taken by healthcare professionals, largely doctors and nurses, but also open to others including those working in Dietetics, Pharmacy and Podiatry. As a test of English ability in the context of general clinical knowledge, an OET grade B is equivalent to level C1 on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference). For most professions this is a key requirement in support of overseas work-visa applications.

The publishers have done well to take advantage of the fact that, apart from the OET website, there is currently a shortage of material for potential candidates to access. The two titles reviewed here will provide excellent exam support. However, users should ideally already be at level B2 to fully benefit from this. While it is possible to use the Reading and Listening title on a self-study basis, there is a large emphasis on doctor-patient role-play in the speaking exam, so many elements of Speaking and Writing require a partner or group.

The eight core units in OET Speaking and Writing constitute the first half of this title. Each unit has a medical focus, such as obstructive sleep apnoea, migraines and depression. Around these topics are oral tasks like building a relationship with a patient, and written tasks relating to opening and closing a letter. In [issue 473](#) of the *EL Gazette* the author, Ros Wright, explains how to use the material to prepare candidates for the Speaking exam.

The other half of Speaking and Writing consists of additional resources in the form of sample written medical reports, a skill in which candidates are asked to demonstrate clear ability. The transcripts of sample role-plays

with a medical interlocutor are analyzed in detail, pointing out where, for example, the doctor displays empathy with the patient. Grammar reference points, audio transcripts plus acronyms and abbreviations make up the rest of the book. Most of us could provide the full form of DOB, but how many could do the same for SOB? (Shortness of Breath). For PTSD you may need to refer to the book itself.

The ten units in OET Reading and Listening Skills Builder deal largely with more general topics related to medicine, which range from diagnosing and managing work-related asthma to treating minor injuries such as back strains. As we might expect, units focus on types of reading texts candidates are likely to face, such as those based on flowcharts, tasks involving identifying the main idea and finding specific information. The book is similarly structured for developing listening skills, where candidates are encouraged to recognise signposting language and to identify thoughts and feelings. A key feature of the listening involves following a fairly lengthy dialogue, users will have the chance to listen to doctors on their rounds, anaesthetists discussing patients, and a senior nurse introducing palliative care.

The two titles reviewed here would certainly be of immense help on courses preparing individual or groups of candidates for the OET itself. They would also, however, be of great use on optional medical courses, such as those perhaps supporting or backing up general university faculty first and second year work.

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