

Writing sample: Life in the UK Test (504 words)

The *Life in the UK Test* is the examination that people must take if they want to become a British citizen, or if they want to live permanently – or at least indefinitely – in the United Kingdom (the UK is England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). It asks questions about the culture, history, values, geography and important people of the UK. The test costs £50, consists of 24 questions, and you are allowed 45 minutes to complete it. To pass it, you must correctly answer 75% of the questions.

People prepare for it by reading the official *Life in the UK Test Handbook* which is published every year. Organized by chapter, it contains information about Britain's history, society, etc. It's recommended that you memorize everything in the book. The book also gives sample questions to give you an idea of how the test asks questions.

The test questions might not require you to parrot back exactly what you memorized, but require you to show that you understand how the material fits together. For instance, a question might ask if a certain scientist made a certain discovery in a certain year which was during the reign of Queen Victoria. Maybe the whole sentence is correct except that the year named wasn't during the reign of Queen Victoria. You have to understand that so you can mark that statement false.

Once you've learned all the material in the *Handbook*, it has practice tests you can take. Take them. The *Handbook* and its practice questions are designed to help you pass the test. There are also many apps and websites that allow you to practice taking the *Life in the UK Test*. It's important to do practice questions, not only to increase your chances of passing, but to build your confidence. You want to be as confident and relaxed as possible when you take the test.

You register for the *Life in the UK Test* online, choosing an official test center. On the day of the test, take some form of official identification with a photo. The name you use must match the name on the ID.

You take the test by computer. Some questions will be multiple choice and some will be true or false. Some will require one answer, while others might need two or three answers. Don't rush. You are entitled to take the entire 45 minutes to finish the test. Some people have said that they found the practice questions harder than actual questions on the test. Sometimes that happens, but it's better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. Each computer pulls the test questions from a database of over a thousand questions. No two people get the same test, so cheating is impossible.

Afterwards, you have wait on the premises to find out if you passed. If you leave, your test will be destroyed. Each person finds out individually if they got a pass or a fail result. If you don't pass the test, you have to wait seven days to re-take it.