Few tips and points for PTE Academic by Sahil Chaudhary

1. The first tip is about concentration. I gave PTE and I realized this while giving Practice test exams. Concentration and alertness is very important for exam. Let me give you an example, in Describe Image item type you will be given 25 sec to study the image and 40 sec to answer.

Now the question/instruction. Will be like this:

Look at the picture/image/graph and within 25 sec describe blah blah blah.

Don’t waste your time reading the instruction. Timer of 25 sec will start as soon as first image appears so don’t waste time reading instructions. You should know that it is describe image question and what you have to do. As soon as describe image question comes, start observing the image/graph/table and utilize 25 sec fully.

And same goes for other item types. 25 sec still is good time. In case of listening item type say multiple choice multiple answer, a person will speak on some topic and you have to answer a question. For eg.

What are the reasons for draught in Australia?

Now the recording will start playing in 7 secs, so that means you have only 7 sec to read the question. Because after 7 sec, person will start speaking so if you haven’t read the question how would u know what to hear for..

1. The next is about headphones. I prepared for the exam using my in-ear canal ear fones that completely cut the outside noice and I raised my laptop volume to 80% which enabled me tolisten for listening talks quite nicely and I thought that I would get the same environment. Though their headphones are good bt don’t expect the sound to be as loud as u practices, atleast in my case I should hv taken dis into account. During speaking tasks I could hear other speaking which distracted me but then you have to bring in the first tip into play ie concentration. Concentrate on ur own taks and don’t listen to wat others are saying. Don’t worry about others voice messing up ur score bcz dere microfone is real good nd enabled for outside noice cancellation and wil listen for ur voice only. Try giving the exam on weekday as their might be less people in the room. In my case there were total 5 systems in the room and all were occupied i.e. we all were 5 includingme.. I gave on weekday but stil it was full. I drank strong coffee 20 mins b4 the exam for concentrating and alertness levels. So you might wana do that.
2. Next is regarding erasable notepad. The erasable notepad has 10 pages nd is long like a long resiter. You wil get a market. Notepad has plenty of pages so u wont run out. In rare case if you do then you can ask for more. You cant erase d notepad with ur hands. If it finishes then you rasie ur hand nd d examiner vl get new one. Exam wont be paused or wat for ds time . also here also I would like to mention is that when I was preparing for the exam I used to take notes on notepad on laptop. My typing speed is fast and I could easily take the notes. But on real exam I had a terrible time taking notes as I couldn’t even figure out wat I wrote. So for real simulation while u practice take notes using pen nd paper. And regarind note taking u hv to take notes of only main points. Don’t try to take notes word by word
3. Now would give a general overview of different item types that might trouble you. so there are total of 20 diff item types and out of which 3 hav negative marking. Many people including me found describe images and retell lecture tough. So will give few tips on dem. Frankly speaking I messed them but stil got 90 in speaking which makes me think that their AI is bit leneitn and as long as u r contiously speaking you are good to go. Yeah also for all speaking types where you hae to speak , if you keep quite for more than 3 sec microfone vl stop recording and your answer will be marked as completed. Don’t that 3 sec giv u jitters as wen u actually giv tests(or practice test) it is quite a long time ..not like 1, 2, 3 nd over…also if you stil need time to gather ur thoughts then u can fill the gaps using ums, ahh…now you might be wondering that will ums, ahs etc vl decrease your points. The answer is NO as long as you are not doing them very frequently. So that means during speaking item types you can use ums, ahss etc etc but if you are using very very frequently then it vl casue ur scores to reduce. I did used them during repeat sentence, describe images and retell lectures.
4. Most of the tips for describe images are in the book so you may refer that. Here I would like to mention is how to start the describe images questions. So you will get a graph and u hv to describe main points in 40 sec. there wil be title or heading given for e.g

Rainfall, UK, 2001. Followed by graph

So you start that this graph shows/depicts/describes average rainfall in mm in UK for year 2001 from Jan to Dec, or during 1999 to 2010 etc etc. .after this you can start summarizing main points, high , lows of graph. If time permits try giving conclusion.

1. Next is retell lecture. So re-tell lecture item types comes after describe images item types. There will be 7-8 describe images question and 2-3 re-tell lecture questions. Now what happens is that re-tell lectures sometimes are accompanies by image/picture which might make u think that this is another describe image question. so dis might throw u out of balance so be aware of this. For re-tell lecture grab ur erasable noteboard nd marker and get alert .listen to the recording , making notes of main points, supp points, numbers, dates , percentages etc. if there is a name of the person in the recording for eg. Dr Henry kabutz or some othe r name you need not repeat the name while giving ur response. A simple doctor, or researcher or person is fine. Re-tell lecture means you hv to speak the SUMMARY. So you need not repeat evathing word by word. You just hv to give main points. So if there is an example in the recording then you need not describe it compeltelty. You can shorten it. Here also the key is that don’t stop speaking. Keep speaking. Proper note taking helps a lot. Also one more tip suppose recording starts and you are not able to listen or understand some words, don’t panic. I repeat don’t panic. Listen remaining of the recording and keep taking notes. Don’t worry about wat u hv missed or didn’t understood. After the recording is over, repeat wat u understood in your own words. If you panic then you might mes up the whole re-tell lecture. So ignore wat you haven’t understood and move one. There are only 2-3 re-tel l lecture so don’t worry much about them.
2. Writing is the easiest of all. Writing is the part where ielts makes us fool. In PTE it is the easiest. I need not talk much about writing but jst exhibit range of vocabulary, spelling should be accurate and jst follow normal ielts tips that we know. I.e. introduction, main body (2 or more para, conclusion. This is for essay type. In essay type cover evathing that the essay is trying to ask you. If it asks you to give examples, references then don’t forget dem. Next question you would ask is hw we wil write 200-300 words essay in 20 mins. Then I think since we are from IT we won’t have any issues. Also there is cut, copy paste available which you can utilize. Also word count will appear below the area where you are typing so don’t worry about you exceeding the number of words unlike ielts .

The other task in writing is summarizing written text. Here there will be a paragraph and you have to summarize it in ONE LINE. I repeat 1 LINE AND should be between 5- 75 words. There is another item type in listening namely SUMMARIZE SPOKEN TEXT. Here you will listen to a recording and summarize, however the difference is that in latter you can write more than 1 line. However in former you have to summarize in ONE LINE. You will get 10 mins for this. Many people find this as tough as how to summarize a paragraph. Key here is to find topic sentences, main points and using your words, synonyms to summarize the paragraph. I don’t think so you will find issues in this. You can easily do it. Just keep in mind that you have to summarize a paragraph so you have to understand what the paragraph is about and what it is trying to communicate. Try to show range of vocabulary, spelling.

Since we are talking about writing one important tip is punctuation. It is very important in all writing tasks. So things like Capital letters appropriately (start of sentence, nouns), then commas, semicolons etc. should be put wherever necessary. Another is to practice spelling of confusing words like believe, achieve etc.

Lastly don’t worry much about writing as it is easiest of all.

1. Speaking and Writing will happen in one go i.e. together. In case of writing you have 10 mins for summarizing text. Don’t think that if you complete it before 10, then remaining time will be added in next section. After this we have reading section which is a bit tough because time is less. Time for reading varies between 32-41 mins and in this time you have to complete 13-17 item types. The reading item types ARE NOT individual item types. So once you complete the question, move on to next. In reading the tip I can give you is read fast. When you read fast it not only will save time but when we read fast we understand and fathom much easy compared to when we read slow and word to word. Here also keep track of time. Don’t panic. Don’t rush. Read the question for multiple choice question clearly. Sometimes they put NOT so beware of that. For example, what is the speaker NOT trying to say? In reading section there is one item type namely multiple choice, choose more than one option that has got negative marking so choose the options wisely. A similar item type is there in listening as well. Re-order paragraphs are not difficult and you will do them. For rest of sections key is to read fast and try to understand what the topic is about, what the writer is trying to say. Understanding the writer’s intention is very important.
2. After reading section there will be 10 mins break. Instruction for break will be communicated you in start of the test so don’t worry about that. After 10 mins the last section is listening section and it is also easy. After writing this is the easiest section. Here also you have to show in your concentration and listening skills. You can increase your headset volume. This should be done infect at the start of the test. In listening section there can be multiple speaker with different accents so it is possible one person is speaking first 4 lines and rest by other speaker. Don’t let that distract you. Most of the item types are easy and I feel you will be good to go.
3. There is one more item type that I missed that people face problem in speaking section viz Repeat sentence. Here you will hear a sentence and you have to repeat it exactly as you hear it. You need not show accent like the speaker but you can use stress and intonation as necessary. The key to repeat sentence is don’t try to remember it (memory do play a role) but try to understand the sentence, meaning of sentence for e.g. the library is located northwest of the chemistry lab. If you focus on meaning then our brain has more chance of repeating it. Also in this item type you have to hold the sentence in your brain cache for few sec. what happens is that you will hear a recording and then microphone will open after some time so once it opens you have to start speaking.

Also there are some item types in speaking which DON’T HAVE TONE. And they are Repeat Sentence Item types. So in this item type you have to speak as soon as recording appear (of course you can leverage 3 sec period, which believe me is not that panicking as it seems).

1. Also in the shared drive I have kept few pdfs downloaded from **longsman** website. There are total of 20 pdfs corresponding to each item type along with practice questions. If you have time you can read specific pdfs as per the topic you find you are having trouble with.
2. Regarding listening item types Write after dictation, this one is similar to repeat sentence, the difference being in repeat sentence we have to speak and this one we have to write. Here since my typing speed is real fast so I thought I will write as the speaker is speaking. While this is possible I couldn’t do it and used to miss few words. So what I did is I heard the complete sentence, kept in short term memory (just like repeat sentence) and then wrote it.

HOW DID I PREPARE?

This is the sequence I used in order

1. Read the official book. Bought from amazon for 438 along with 2 practice cd (cds are there on shared drive, in case smbdy has the book but not the cds). Keep in mind the book is 2012, there is no new edition so like I said earlier that don’t expect the order to be same as given in the book, however 80% it was same. Also the book is mostly about the format of each item type so you have to be prepared for the format. What each item type requires so you don’t waste time reading the prompt. While reading the book I did all the exercise that came along. I copied the audio cd in my phone and listened to simple responses and compared with my recorded responses (on phone).
2. After reading the book, I knew I had trouble with describe images and re-tell lecture. So I started watching YouTube video on describe images. Watched more than 20 different describe images etc. after this I searched for graphs images on google images and then used to set the timer as per exam timing I used to describe the graph and listened back my response. I wanted to make sure that my describe images were perfect before I gave online paid practice test A and practice Test B. if you have bought both test, then I suggest you give practice test before 10 days from your exam so that if you fail u need to work on some item type you have couple of days before you give practice test B. Again this depends upon person to person. I gave practice test A 6 days before exam and practice test B, one day before the exam. I didn’t had time to do test boosters provided along with the practice exams but they are useful. You need not do dem all just do for item types you find difficult.
3. After this I read the one thread on expat forum on the exam. It is 177 pages long and I have summarized important points in a word document (it is on shared drivce). So you don’t have to read that thread.
4. After this I did longsman pdfs. I did all the 20’s as I required 79 + and I didn’t wanted to leave any stone unturned. Now I know that that I could have easily avoided reading **longsman** pdfs. But they are good and 5-6 pages long. Won’t hurt reading them
5. After this I did practice test A and got overall 64. I was scared of my performance on speaking as I got 57. I knew that practice test are tougher and 64 meant I can get 79. But I speaking I was 57. 57, again because of describe images and retell lecture. So I started preparing again. This time I did 3 practice test that came with CD’s. They wont assign you marks but they have sample answers which give u ideas how to respond on item types. For 3 practice test I only did speaking, reading and listening. Writing is easy so I didn’t waste time on that. After this I gave second practice test B and got 67 overall. Again my speaking was 59 and I was scared that even if I get 79 + in others I would get less than 79 in speaking.
6. Day of final exam. Exam was at 10:30 am in the morning in south Bombay, marine lines at Edwise centre. I reached at the venue at 8:30. So I had 2 hours. The centre was closed. It opened at 9 am and they were good enough to allow me to come inside and sit inside ac. I sat there and slept for 30 mins. Felt good. Then I woke up and went down and had a strong strong coffee. I had a samosa pav wen I reached i.e 8:30. I knew that I needed concentration and alertness so I made sure I didn’t eat heavy. Finally the exam started. After the exam they gave me printout of the confirmation of the exam. Now wat to bring at the exam. Passport of course in original and also printout of test schedule. I didn’t got printout of test schedule but I had taken screenshot it in my phone and I showed that and it worked.