



A Guide to the Community Language Aide (CLA) Test Practice Material



This practice material reproduces the format and level of the test used for the Community Language Aide (CLA) Test, administered by NAATI.

Overview of the CLA test

The CLA test is conducted live by NAATI role-players. It is video-recorded, so assessors can mark the test once it is over. The CLA test assesses a candidate's ability to **speak** a language other than English (**LOTE**) well enough to provide effective customer service in that LOTE in an Australian public service setting.

Test structure

The test takes about 20 minutes and consists of four parts: a warm-up, which is **not** assessed, and three role-plays, which **are** assessed. In the role-plays, you, the candidate, will always play the role of a **customer service officer** in a public service setting, while the NAATI role-player will always play the role of a **LOTE-speaking customer** who cannot speak English.

- **Warm Up (maximum three minutes)**

In the warm-up, the NAATI role-player will ask you a series of general questions to elicit basic information about you, in order to ease you into the test environment. This part is not assessed.

- **Role-play 1 (maximum five minutes)**

In this role-play, the NAATI role-player is a customer with a routine request. You will play the role of a customer service officer, who needs to elicit particular information from the customer. In the course of the interaction, you are expected to confirm the information with the customer and explain some basic points.

- **Role-play 2 (maximum six minutes)**

In Role-play 2, the customer (the NAATI role-player) will present you with a letter written in English. You, as the customer service officer, will need to explain the most important points of the letter to the customer in your LOTE, and to clarify, in the LOTE, anything that is unclear. You will need to demonstrate an ability to convey relevant information and ensure the customer is aware of all the significant points.

- **Role-play 3 (maximum six minutes)**

In Role-play 3, the customer (the NAATI role-player) approaches you, as the customer service officer, with a problem they want to resolve. In this role play, you will need to demonstrate an ability to follow and understand a short narrative, and use tentative or suggestive language to provide help, advice and a possible solution to the problem.



Test materials

At the start of each role-play, you, the candidate, will receive a candidate card from the NAATI role-player. The card contains information about your role as a customer service officer, a list of tasks you are expected to complete during the role-play, an instruction on how to start the role-play, and the criteria used to rate your performance. There may be some other document you need to refer to as well, such as a letter or an internal policy document. These other documents will be given to you with the role-play card.

Role-play cards in English, but test conducted orally in the LOTE

The role-plays are always set in an Australian public service context, and you as a candidate will always play the role of a customer service officer. For this reason, all candidate cards and supporting materials, such as the letter used in Role-play 2, are written in English. However, the spoken interaction will take place entirely in your LOTE, not in English. Remember, in the role-plays, the customer (played by the NAATI role-player), cannot speak English, which is why you, as a speaker of the LOTE, are helping them with their customer service enquiry.

About the practice material

The practice material consists of:

- A brief outline of the parts of the test, with simple descriptions of the topics or situations for each part
- Candidate cards for Role-plays 1 to 3
- NAATI role-player cards for the Warm-up, and for Role-Plays 1 to 3.



How to get the most out of the practice material

1. **Read** over the role play cards to familiarise yourself with the structure, content and level of all the tasks.
2. Make sure you **understand** what the task is that you need to achieve.
3. **Practise** the tasks with someone who speaks your LOTE. Give them the cards for the NAATI role-player and ask them to play the role of the customer. Practise with a number of different people, as each person playing the role of the customer will ask questions in a slightly different way.
4. Remember: The instructions the role player gives you, and all questions and interactions they have with you will be in the **LOTE**. As this practice material will be used by speakers of many languages, the customer role cards are in English – whoever is playing the role of the customer will need to orally reproduce them in the LOTE. They should also strictly adhere to the timing for each part of the practice test.
5. Ask the person playing the customer to **provide you with feedback** on how they, as a LOTE-speaking customer, felt about the interaction. Most importantly, did they feel you'd helped them achieve what they'd needed to achieve as a customer?

Note: The scenarios in the actual test will be similar to, but not the same as, the scenarios in this practice material. As each test has different role-plays, each will have slightly different instructions. Listening is an important skill in customer service. In the actual test, please listen carefully to the instructions that are given to you.