



Language Flag Award for Schools & Colleges

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I involve my school in the scheme?

A: You will need to identify the individuals at your school, who you would like to become accredited testers. These individuals will attend a training day at the British Airways Learning Centre, Heathrow. On completing the course the newly accredited testers will be given a testing pack, which contains everything they will need to conduct testing in your school.

Q: Do the testers have to be language teachers?

A: No. But they do need to speak the language that they wish to test in fluently and be familiar with working with children. All training in how to conduct the test will be given on the training day. Language teachers would find the training easier.

Q: What is the test all about?

A: The introduction of a language test within BA highlighted a desperate shortage of language speakers within the UK. The Flag Award is an adapted version of the internal test and is our attempt to try and encourage young people to continue language learning. We aim to encourage a link between classroom language learning and the working world.

Q: What happens in the test?

A: It is a 15-20 minute speaking test in four parts; general conversation, reading aloud, role-play and listening and Interpreting. The test focuses mainly on spontaneous conversation, as this reflects the interaction between staff and customers. It tests their ability to convey messages with less emphasis on accuracy.

Q: What year group is the test designed for?

A: The test was originally aimed year 10 and above but many schools now use it with year 9's. It is challenging for year 9's but with plenty of preparation, they usually manage to pass. Some schools use it specifically with those students, who haven't opted to take languages at GCSE and use this test as a reward for their studies up until year 9.

Q: Can I prepare the students beforehand?

A: The students are allowed to prepare the reading section beforehand. The other sections can be prepared for but within the guidelines set out on the training day.

Q: How many hours preparation would they need beforehand?

A: This all depends on what year group you use the test with and their ability. Some schools dedicate a few hours before testing. Some schools have written their own course (usually to support year 9's) and they teach this over a period of 6 months. British Airways can supply you with contacts at other schools for you to share information with.

Q: What do the students get if they pass?

A: They will be awarded with a certificate stating their name, date of passing and the language plus a Flag Award badge.

Q: Is the test accredited by an examining body?

A: Not yet, but we are working on achieving full accreditation for the Award. However, this is a long process and may take some time before it achieves this status. The Award has been incredibly successful without external accreditation

Q: What can the students do with the qualification?

- How the students feel about the test reflects how you sell it to them. It can be used in Records of achievement
- It can be put on a CV.
- It is great preparation for GCSE.
- It will set them apart from other people when it comes to job applications. Employers will be expecting to see GCSE's. They won't be expecting a BA Flag Award.
- It builds confidence in speaking.
- It shows the students how important languages are to business.

Q: Do I have any targets?

A: We ask you to try and achieve 10 passes per academic year, which equates to approximately 1 test per month. However you are free to test as many students as you wish. Some testers test more than 70 pupils per year.

Q: How can I fit the test in around my other commitments?

A: When you test is completely up to you. Some testers take 15 minutes out of a lunchtime once a month. Some take pupils out of classes. However some schools wait until year 11 leave after exams and then use this free time in the timetable to test the Flag Award. We can provide you with contacts at schools, who maximise their time and have planned schedules in place.

Q: Does it cost anything to join the scheme?

A: No. You are not charged for any of the training, materials, certificates or badges for as long as you participate in the scheme. Your only cost is for your travel to Heathrow for the tester-training day.

Q: Is there training available at other locations in the UK apart from Heathrow?

A: We occasionally run training in other locations such as Bristol and Newcastle. This is subject to demand and availability of trainers.

Q: Are any other tests available through British Airways?

A: There is an Advanced Flag Award available for year 12/13 and beyond. It is the same level as the internal Flag test. It lasts 45 minutes and involves more in-depth language and requires the student to develop their ideas and use their initiative more.

Q: What do I have to do to get my school involved?

A: Contact Kath Curry, Languages Project Manager at the BA Learning Centre on 0208 56 20992 or email: kath.curry@ba.com to arrange a date for training. You will be sent booking forms and pre-course material to help prepare you for the day.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Language Flag Award scheme.