

VIEWING-TO-DESCRIBE TASKS: SPECIFICATIONS & DESIGN TIPS

Project title: Assessing multimodal viewing-to-write constructs: Task design, performance, processing, and rating

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TASK SPECIFICATIONS

TASK TYPE	Viewing-to-describe
GENERAL TASK FEATURES	
Skill focus	Multimodal integrated skills: viewing (<i>watching, listening</i>) + writing
Task level (CEFR)	B1 to C1
Task description	Test-takers watch a video-recording which orally describes and visually depicts a process and then write a short magazine article describing the process.
Further task focus information	Test-takers are allowed to take notes while viewing the input.
Instructions to candidates	You will watch a video describing how something is made. The video will be played twice. You are allowed to take notes while watching. Then, write a short magazine article describing the different steps in the production process. Your text should be coherent and 150-200 words in length. A title will be provided for you.
Presentation of instructions	Both written and oral (pre-recorded)
Time for task	9 minutes for watching (double play) + 18 minutes for writing
Delivery	Computer-delivered
Response format	Written text
Cognitive processing levels of listening	Input decoding, lexical search, syntactic parsing, meaning construction, and discourse construction
Processing of visuals	Viewing and interpreting images, figures, words, phrases and numbers Processing animations
Intended writing genre	Magazine article
Intended writer-reader relationship	Journalist writer – general public reader
Discourse mode	Process description; Factual
Domain	Public; Educational
Writing functions targeted	Describing a process

FEATURES OF THE INPUT

Length	4.5 minutes (instructions + single play)				
Domain	Personal	Public	Educational	Occupational	
Discourse mode	Descriptive	Narrative	Expository	Argumentative	Instructive
Type	Visual + aural				
Content knowledge	None required				
Cultural specificity	Not culture specific				
Nature of information	Factual				
Presentation	Video				
Topic	Production processes				
Content points	8 production steps				
Oral input features					
Pattern	Monologue				
Lexical level	B1-C1				
Grammatical level	B1-C1				
Speakers	Highly proficient (English L1 or L2) 1 for the instructions, 1 for the process description				
Visual input features					
Types of visuals	Images, figures, graphs, words, phrases, numbers				
Animation	Yes				
Sources	Creative commons (e.g., Pixabay, Unsplash, Pexels); self-created				
Digital resources	Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, laptop (voice recording)				

FEATURES OF THE EXPECTED RESPONSE

Genre	Short magazine article
Length of response	150-200 words
Time for response	18 minutes
Level	B1-C1
Mode	Typed on computer
Target features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content which accurately and comprehensively reflects the product development process • Coherent and well-organised text describing the process • Linguistically (grammar, vocab, spelling, punctuation) accurate, sophisticated and straightforward-to-understand description of the process
Rating	Human rating with an analytic rating scale and crib sheet

Extra design tips

! The best way to get an idea of viewing-to-describe tasks is to first look at a few examples on <https://osf.io/xude7/>.

What you will need to MAKE viewing-to-describe tasks:

1. A laptop or computer with Microsoft Office packages (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) and microphone (in-built or external)
2. Internet access to look for inspiration and copyright-free visuals
3. Ideally, two willing speakers (one person to record task instructions, one person to record the task content; you can be one of these)

1. Topic

- Select a topic that is:
 - a) a generally accessible subject while not overly common knowledge
 - b) rich in information points
 - c) possible to represent visually
 - d) likely interesting to the target population
- Find content inspiration from websites, YouTube videos, media programmes
- Select a product that is manufactured in multiple steps and which can be distilled into a predetermined number of *main* steps. [We decided to create tasks that describe the production processes in 8 key steps. There might be more (detailed) steps, but include the main ones in the viewing input.]
- Script a text in Word (or similar) that describes the production process. Keep in mind that this is for listening, so make sure to include spoken language features in your script and adopt a spoken language style.
- For each production step, script a few lines of text. Keep in mind that the test-takers' task is to extract the core information from each step.
- Create a coherent sequence of steps by making use of a variety of explicit connectors (e.g., "The first thing", "then", "next", "finally") and also more indirect transitions (e.g., "It all starts with", "What happens next?", "Is it ready now? Not yet, because", "An interesting fact is that", "Now, let's see how").
- Brainstorm on potential visuals related to each step in the production process.

2. Visuals

The type of visuals and how they are included in the video determine whether the task requires mono-modal listening or rather the intended multi-modal viewing. To achieve the latter:

- Use various visuals in the PowerPoint slides. For example, across your set of slides, include a mix of content pictures, written words/phrases/numbers, indicator shapes, moving animations, graphs/tables with additional data, etc.
- Use visuals that complement information from the listening text. For example, if the speaker describes how an object turns around, have a picture of the object turn around by adding an animation to the slide. Or, if a technical term, name of a place or person is mentioned which the learners may not be familiar with, display it in writing on the slide. Or, show on the slide a number or unit of measurement (e.g., temperature) that is challenging to note down through listening only.

- Explicitly connect the visual and listening modes. For example, in the listening script, include phrases such as “Let’s have a look at ...”, “In the graph here, you can see...”, “Look how...”, “Just look at this picture!”

3. Task instructions

Purposeful viewing regulates and enhances integration of the different modes. Therefore,

- Give an explicit direction for the viewing stage
- In the viewing instructions already, make clear what the target language function will be at the writing stage

4. Task demands

Multimodal integrated tasks are complex. Task design needs to balance attention between the different modes, keep memory demands low, and stimulate integration of the modes. Therefore,

- Play the input twice
- Allow note-taking during viewing
- Include rich content information, i.e. have multiple main points and embed them within a wider context and also include details. This will ensure that it is not about literally transcribing the video listening text, but about extracting main points and organising them in writing.

5. Input creation in PowerPoint (or similar)

- Start with an instruction slide, displaying the instructions in writing and also record them orally in PowerPoint. Ideally, use one speaker to audio-record all instructions, and another speaker to audio-record the process description.
- Begin the process description with an introduction to the topic. Include 1-3 slides with visual(s) and a short audio-recorded text with general topic information to ease the test-taker into the topic.
- Then, for each main process step, create one slide with one or more visuals. Audio-record the accompanying text on the slide.
- After you’ve created a full set of process slides, include an intermediate instruction slide that states – in writing and orally – that the test-takers will watch the video for a second time.
- Copy the set of process slides and paste these after the intermediate instruction slide, to allow for the second playing of the input.
- Finish the slide deck with a final instruction slide that states – in writing and orally – that the test-takers now need to write their text.
- In PowerPoint, export the slide deck to create a video file.

[If you are not familiar with the various functionalities of PowerPoint, search online for how to record audio, use animations, create videos, etc. in PowerPoint. There are various guides and YouTube videos that will explain how to do this.]

What you will need to ADMINISTER viewing-to-describe tasks:

If your context has limited resources:

- A computer connected to a projector and audio system that can broadcast the video to a whole room at once
- Paper and pen for test-takers for notetaking, and for writing their text

If your context has more elaborate resources:

- A laptop/computer and headphones for each test-taker
- A survey platform (e.g., Qualtrics)
- An internet connection
- Paper and pen for test-takers for notetaking

For contexts with *more elaborate* resources:

1. Embed the video in a survey platform

YouTube

If it is feasible in your test context to administer the tasks to test-takers on individual laptops/computers, you could upload the video to a channel on YouTube. [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are various guides and YouTube videos that will explain it.]

Some tips:

- Set the video visibility to 'unlisted'.
- Select an end screen and a thumbnail
- Disable the 'watch later' and 'clip' functionalities of the YouTube video [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are various guides and YouTube videos that will explain it.]

Qualtrics (or similar survey platform)

- See the 'Tasks' document on <https://osf.io/xude7/> for examples of a task display and instructions.

For the viewing stage:

- Create a new page (Add a new question → Question type: Text/graphic)
- Insert the YouTube video into Qualtrics. [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are Qualtrics support guides and communities that explain how to do this.]
- Disable the 'going back' and 'replay' functions of the video. Add html code after your source link: `controls=0&rel=0&autoplay=1` [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are Qualtrics support guides and communities that explain how to do this.]
- To restrict the display length of the page with the instructions and video input, activate an automatic timer for moving forward to the writing stage. For example, allow for 1.5 minute longer page display than the length of the video. For instance, if the video is 9 minutes, make the page automatically move on after 10.5 minutes, so test-takers cannot linger on the video page. [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are Qualtrics support guides and communities that explain how to do this.]

For the writing stage:

- Create a page break.
- Insert a timer display (Add a new question → Question type: Timing).
- Create a writing space (Add a new question → Question type: Text entry).
- Insert a word counter. [If you are not familiar with how to do this, there are Qualtrics support guides and communities that explain how to do this.]

Thank you for accessing our viewing-to-write materials. We are keen to hear your thoughts, experiences, or feedback through this short survey:

https://lancasteruni.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2avjD3ONtnPeD8W