



# Construction and Standardization of an Achievement Test in English for Class 9 Students of CBSE Schools

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## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the construction and standardization of an achievement test in English specifically designed for Class 9 students enrolled in CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) schools. Achievement tests play a vital role in evaluating students' comprehension, linguistic proficiency, and application skills in English. This research outlines a systematic approach to developing a reliable and valid test, ensuring its alignment with CBSE's prescribed syllabus and learning objectives. The test items, covering reading, writing, grammar, and literature components, were subjected to expert validation, pilot testing, and item analysis for difficulty and discrimination indices. The final test consisted of 50 items, demonstrating high reliability and content validity. The standardized test can be a valuable tool for educators and researchers to assess English language achievement and identify areas requiring pedagogical intervention.

**Keywords:** Achievement Test, Standardization, English, Class 9, Test Construction, Reliability, Validity

## 1. Introduction

### Overview of the Importance of English Language Learning in the Secondary Curriculum:

With globalization, international commercial and cultural interactions have increased, highlighting the necessity of multilingual communication. English, one of the most widely spoken and learned languages, plays a crucial role in business, education, and tourism (Ilyosovna, 2020). Proficiency in English enhances global competitiveness, facilitates intercultural communication, and provides access to vast academic resources, as approximately 81% of scientific publications are written in English (Rao, 2019).

Early exposure to English fosters linguistic and cultural awareness, necessitating curriculum modifications to meet young learners' needs (Özüdoğru & Adıgüzel, 2015). Effective English language instruction requires well-planned implementation, assessment, and evaluation strategies (Baysal & Ocak, 2019). Beyond academics and professional advantages, English is a global lingua franca, fostering cross-cultural relationships and international collaboration (Atasheva, 2024). It is the primary language of instruction in many prestigious universities worldwide, making proficiency essential for higher education and career advancement (Bakhramovna & Farhod qizi, 2024). English-language literature, music, and cinema have also profoundly shaped global culture, enriching cross-cultural understanding.

In India, English has historically served as both an official language and a medium of education, continuing to connect the nation to the global community (Latha, 2018). Therefore, proficiency in English not only opens doors to global interaction but also enriches individual cognitive frameworks, underscoring its multifaceted importance in contemporary society. The English language holds a critical role in the secondary school curriculum, not only because it is an international language but also because it serves as a medium of instruction in many subjects. In the contemporary global landscape, mastery of the English language is imperative for achieving academic excellence, enhancing career prospects, and facilitating effective communication. As English continues to be a key subject in school curricula, ensuring that students acquire necessary language skills such as reading comprehension, writing, grammar, and communication becomes paramount. A well-structured curriculum for secondary school, especially class 9, helps build a strong foundation in language acquisition that prepares students for higher studies and real-world communication. English occupies a crucial position within the framework of secondary education in India, chosen to ensure that teaching methodologies align with the needs of students and the goals of their educational endeavours. It

must be taught engagingly and functionally as a global language to enhance learning. To understand the effects of functional approaches, standardized or validated achievement tests are required. Standardized achievement tests play a crucial role in evaluating teaching effectiveness and student progress, ensuring informed decisions on instructional methods.

### **Need for Standardized Testing in Measuring Achievement in English for Class 9 Students:**

Assessment and evaluation play a fundamental role in English language teaching. Assessment *for* learning identifies students' current knowledge and guides necessary interventions, while assessment *of* learning measures progress post-intervention (Meidasari, 2015). This dual approach not only supports student improvement but also refines teaching strategies. Reflection *for* teaching helps educators tailor instruction based on learning outcomes, whereas reflection *on* teaching drives method adjustments for better results. Effective evaluation helps refine teaching strategies, address learning deficiencies, and ensure quality education. It is essential to acknowledge the importance of assessment within the realms of teaching and learning, prompting initiatives aimed at the development and validation of achievement tests. Measurement tools such as achievement tests are widely used due to their high validity and reliability (Borghans et al., 2016). Achievement testing is essential to the educational process, it provides measurable insights into students' learning outcomes.

A standardized achievement test helps in:

- Measuring students' proficiency uniformly across different schools and regions.
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in language acquisition.
- Providing reliable data that can be used for curriculum adjustments and instructional strategies.
- Ensuring that the assessment is objective, valid, and reliable.

Measurement in education refers to assessing the precision or extent of a student's knowledge, skills, and competencies (Kim et al., 2019). Achievement tests are used to determine how much knowledge or skills a student has gained and retained. Achievement tests need to be used to evaluate students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities rather than their ability to recall facts (University Education Commission, 1949, p. 245). Any test that evaluates an individual's attainments or accomplishments following a learning session is an Achievement test (Downie & Heath, 1974). It constitutes the systematic evaluation of the knowledge and skills acquired by a student, conducted under established criteria, culminating in a judgment regarding their proficiency (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020). An Achievement Test is a specialized evaluation that is specifically crafted to evaluate the impact of specific teaching or training within a particular area of the curriculum. According to Gupta & Lata (2014), achievement tests are a crucial component of the school evaluation programme and are specifically developed to evaluate educational goals. An achievement test is a methodical process used to measure a representative selection of learning tasks (Gronlund, 1982). The purpose of achievement tests is to assess an individual's current level of performance by measuring their acquired knowledge. They are instrumental in ascertaining the academic progress of individuals or groups. Unlike intelligence or aptitude tests, achievement tests assess the extent of learning attained after formal instruction (Lindeman, 1967). They can be classified into teacher-made and standardized tests, with the latter offering a more consistent and comparative evaluation. Standardized tests administer the same set of questions and conditions, making them effective in measuring educational outcomes across diverse student populations (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

Despite the significance of standardized achievement tests in English language learning, research on their development remains limited (Baysal & Ocak, 2019; Özüdoğru & Adıgüzel, 2015). A well-constructed and validated achievement test not only assesses student performance but also informs curriculum planning and instructional strategies, ensuring that educational goals align with student needs (Anastasi, 1968; Freeman, 1962). The construction and standardization of an English achievement test for Class 9 students is a critical process aimed at ensuring a reliable and valid assessment of language proficiency (Chakraborty & Ambedkar, 2022). This involves a systematic approach that includes defining clear objectives, selecting appropriate content, consulting subject matter experts, and conducting statistical validation. Studies by Kaur (2018) and Kumar (2016) underscore the importance of meticulous planning and analysis in developing effective assessment tools. The CBSE Class 9 English curriculum emphasizes a balanced development of reading, writing, grammar, and literature skills, yet there is a noticeable lack of a standardized test specifically designed to evaluate these competencies. Implementing such a validated tool would provide a uniform framework for assessment across schools, enhance the quality of evaluation, and inform instructional strategies. This research aims to fill that gap by developing and standardizing an achievement test aligned with the CBSE curriculum, ultimately contributing to improved language learning outcomes.

## **2. Objectives**

The primary objectives of the study were:

1. To design an achievement test in English aligned with the Class 9 CBSE syllabus.
2. To ensure the test measures the key components: reading comprehension, writing skills, grammar proficiency, and literature understanding.
3. To validate the test in terms of reliability and content validity.

### 3. Methodology for the construction and standardization of achievement test

This achievement test was developed based on the objectives of English instruction, encompassing knowledge, understanding, and application at the secondary level. Before developing the achievement test, the investigator reviewed the existing literature on Achievement Tests for ninth-grade students in the English Language and Literature domain. However, no suitable Standardised Achievement Test was identified for the study. So, after examining them, it was determined that an achievement test based on the most recent CBSE English Language and literature at IX level syllabi was necessary. Hence, a decision was made to create an English Achievement Test to assess the students' proficiency in the subject matter chosen for instruction. Several tests were examined, discussions were conducted with English teachers and assistant professors in English across schools and colleges of education, and considerable efforts were undertaken to identify the significant components of English language and literature at the IX level. Consequently, a preliminary draft of the test was formulated. The items were delivered in the form of multiple-choice questions.

To fulfil the stated objectives, the investigator constructed an English achievement test encompassing eight distinct topics within the realm of English Language and Literature for Class IX.

The following steps, as shown in Fig. 1, were taken to construct and standardize the achievement test in English Language and Literature:



**Fig. 1 Steps for constructing test**

#### 3.1. Planning of the test

The planning phase is the first and most crucial step in constructing an achievement test. Effective planning ensures the test is well-structured and serves its intended purpose. To achieve this, the investigator considered several key aspects, including the subject, grade level, target students, assessment objectives, timing, and evaluation methods. In this context, the investigator made the following critical decisions: defining the objectives, selecting appropriate content, determining the scoring process, specifying the number and types of items, setting the test length, assigning weightage to objectives and content, allocating time, and establishing the marking criteria (Bala & Singh, 2019).

For this achievement test, the investigator chose English as the subject for 9th-grade students. The test was designed to include multiple-choice questions, ensuring a standardized and objective assessment format.

##### 3.1.1. Purpose of the test

An English achievement test is considered essential to evaluate the pupils' accomplishments. The investigator used established protocols for formulating an achievement assessment while creating the initial version of the test. Achievement assessments created and standardized by other investigators were carefully analyzed to achieve this.

##### 3.1.2. Course Content

The process of content analysis constitutes a significant aspect in the formulation of an achievement test. It encompassed the eight most significant topics. Subsequently, a blueprint was developed, considering the content area and the learning objectives per Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.

The topics selected were:

- The Fun they had
- Sound of Music
- The Road Not Taken
- Tenses
- Reported Speech
- Dialogue Writing
- Story Writing
- Comprehension

### 3.1.3. Objectives

The objectives outlined in this achievement test were articulated in behavioural terms, emphasising knowledge, understanding, and application derived from the English Language and Literature curriculum for the IX class as prescribed by the CBSE. The objectives delineated by Bloom's Taxonomy, along with pertinent action verbs, have been meticulously identified by the investigator and are presented in the subsequent tables:

➤ Weightage to Content

Weightage to the topics is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Weightage to the Content**

S.No.	Content	Marks	Percentage%
1	The Fun they had	6	10
2	Sound of Music	6	10
3	The Road Not Taken	6	10
4	Tenses	12	20
5	Reported Speech	6	10
6	Dialogue Writing	6	10
7	Story Writing	6	10
8	Comprehension	12	20

➤ Weightage to Objectives

**Table 2. Weightage to Objectives**

S.No.	Objectives	Marks	Percentage%
1	Knowledge	18	30
2	Understanding	30	50
3	Application	12	20

➤ Weightage to the Difficulty level

**Table 3. Weightage to the Difficulty level**

S.No.	Level	Marks	Percentage%
1	Easy	10	16.66
2	Average	40	66.66
3	Difficult	10	16.66

### 3.1.4. Preparation of Blue Print

To ensure comprehensive coverage of all subject matter, a blueprint was formulated and subsequently reviewed by experts. The blueprint is a tri-dimensional diagram that illustrates the intersection of content, objectives, and question format. This was conducted to assess whether the questions were evenly distributed across all regions. Table 4 presents a model of the blueprint that has been prepared.

**Table 4. Blue Print**

Topics	Knowledge Objectives	Understanding Objectives	Application Objectives	Total	Weightage %
The Fun they had	2	3	1	6	10
Sound of Music	2	3	1	6	10
The Road Not Taken	2	3	1	6	10
Tenses	3	6	3	12	20
Reported Speech	2	2	2	6	10
Dialogue Writing	2	3	1	6	10
Story Writing	2	3	1	6	10
Comprehension	3	7	2	12	20
Total	18	30	12	60	100

## 3.2. Preparation for the Test

### 3.2.1. Item Writing

The investigator opted for multiple-choice items in the test due to their ease of grading and objectivity. Multiple-choice items are highly adaptable objective test items that can effectively assess both basic and intricate learning objectives across all academic levels and disciplines.

Multiple-choice questions prompt participants to choose the most appropriate response from a set of options. The impact of guessing on scores is comparatively lower in multiple-choice items as compared to other

objective items. Additionally, it is possible to gather valuable diagnostic data by scrutinizing the incorrect options (also known as distractors) chosen by examiners. These items are comparatively less time-intensive and simpler to administer, score, and process (Gronlund, 1993).

The efficacy of multiple-choice items is contingent upon the careful selection of distractors. The current study utilized a rational and empirical approach for the selection of distractors by the investigator. The rational approach incorporates personal judgments, while the empirical approach involves identifying common erroneous answers that students frequently provide when presented with questions.

### 3.2.2. Evaluation by Experts

A group of experts was given the prepared test items to assess qualitatively. The experts were chosen from secondary school English teachers and teacher educators. The experts were asked to confirm that each item fit within the defined objectives, check for ambiguity in questions, and recommend any necessary changes. The test was subjected to a panel review, which involved an assessment of its content analysis and test blueprint to ensure that it aligned with the intended test specifications. The aforementioned analysis aided the investigator in circumventing issues about linguistic complexity and items that may possess multiple interpretations. Based on recommendations from the review panel, the investigator implemented the required modifications and adjustments to the test items before producing the ultimate version of the test, which consisted of 60 multiple-choice questions. A total of 90 minutes was allocated for the completion of 60 exam items. The test offered no alternatives.

### 3.2.3. Scoring of the test

The scoring system for the test awards a single point for each correct response and no points for erroneous responses; there are no negative marks.

### 3.3. Administration of the test

**Before the try-out phase**, the test was produced and given to a representative sample of 30 students in IX class who had previously studied the subject matter assessed by the test. Comprehensive guidelines were furnished to the pupils. During the pre-try-out phase, certain students encountered challenges comprehending the language in the questions. The investigator documented those questions and made necessary revisions concurrently. The main purpose of the pre-try-out was to identify non-functional options inside the multiple-choice questions and to identify things that were excessively challenging or simple. This task was executed with meticulous attention to detail. There was no specified time constraint, and students completed the test with an average duration of 80 minutes.

**Try-out phase**- Once the test had been appropriately modified, it was printed and distributed to a group of 100 ninth-grade students who had already covered the test subject. The scoring was accomplished by utilizing a scoring key. A correct answer is awarded one mark (1 mark), whereas an incorrect answer is awarded zero (0).

### 3.4. Item Analysis of the Test

The investigator organized the 100 answer sheets in descending order to conduct an item analysis based on their overall scores. The sample was divided into two groups based on their ranking, with the top 27 participants being assigned to the upper group (U) and the bottom 27 participants being assigned to the lower group (L). The 46 items in the middle were eliminated. The upper and lower groups of an item were subjected to separate recordings of their respective correct response counts. The formula proposed by Ebel (1991) was employed to compute the level of difficulty and discriminating power for each item.

#### Difficulty Index (DI)

The percentage of students who answered the item correctly is indicated by the item's difficulty index. The calculation was performed utilizing a prescribed formula (Ebel, 1991),

$$DI = (U + L) / 2N$$

Where U= number of correct responses in the upper group

L= number of correct responses in the lower group

N= Number of students in any of the group

#### Discriminating Power (DP)

The term "discriminating power" pertains to the ability of an item to differentiate between students who possess high levels of aptitude and those who exhibit lower levels of aptitude. The calculation was performed utilizing a prescribed formula (Ebel, 1991).

$$DP = (U - L) / N$$

Where, U= number of correct responses in the upper group

L= number of correct responses in the lower group

N= Number of pupils in any of the group



### Items for the Final Test

The process of selecting an item was based on the psychometric properties of the items. The selection process involved choosing items with a difficulty level ranging from 0.4 to 0.6 and a discriminating power exceeding 0.4. Therefore, a total of 60 items that exhibited these psychometric properties were ultimately incorporated into the administered test. Table 5 shows details of the Item analysis of the Achievement Test.

**Table 5. Item Analysis of Achievement Test**

Items No.	U	L	DI	DP	Item Selected
1	25	10	.65	.56	Selected
2	23	12	.65	.41	Selected
3	27	20	.87	.26	Discarded
4	17	06	.46	.41	Selected
5	27	08	.64	.70	Selected
6	24	09	.61	.56	Selected
7	23	11	.63	.45	Selected
8	26	07	.61	.70	Selected
9	25	09	.62	.59	Selected
10	24	10	.63	.52	Selected
11	24	08	.59	.59	Selected
12	10	02	.22	.30	Discarded
13	26	18	.81	.29	Discarded
14	20	08	.52	.44	Selected
15	22	07	.54	.56	Selected
16	18	05	.43	.48	Selected
17	21	05	.48	.59	Selected
18	23	06	.53	.63	Selected
19	19	07	.48	.44	Selected
20	20	08	.52	.44	Selected
21	21	17	.70	.14	Discarded
22	24	10	.63	.52	Selected
23	18	05	.43	.48	Selected
24	21	05	.48	.59	Selected
25	08	04	.22	.15	Discarded
26	19	06	.46	.48	Selected
27	23	05	.52	.67	Selected
28	18	06	.44	.44	Selected
29	22	07	.54	.55	Selected
30	19	05	.44	.52	Selected
31	26	09	.65	.63	Selected
32	15	06	.39	.33	Discarded
33	18	07	.46	.41	Selected
34	22	08	.56	.52	Selected
35	21	09	.56	.44	Selected
36	20	05	.46	.55	Selected
37	11	08	.33	.11	Discarded
38	21	07	.52	.52	Selected
39	24	05	.54	.70	Selected
40	23	08	.57	.55	Selected
41	22	06	.52	.59	Selected
42	19	04	.43	.56	Selected
43	24	08	.59	.59	Selected
44	23	11	.63	.44	Selected
45	25	10	.79	.26	Discarded
46	21	06	.50	.55	Selected
47	17	05	.41	.44	Selected
48	27	09	.67	.67	Selected
49	13	06	.35	.26	Discarded
50	20	08	.52	.44	Selected
51	26	10	.67	.59	Selected

52	23	08	.57	.56	Selected
53	19	07	.48	.44	Selected
54	22	11	.61	.41	Selected
55	18	07	.46	.41	Selected
56	23	10	.61	.48	Selected
57	21	09	.56	.44	Selected
58	10	04	.26	.22	Discarded
59	19	06	.46	.48	Selected
60	20	06	.48	.52	Selected

### Preparation for the Final Test

Out of the initial pool of 60 items, 50 were selected for the final test. The selection process was based on the items' difficulty index and discrimination power. The chosen articles were organized based on their level of complexity. The allotted duration for completing the test was established at 90 minutes. The final test was printed with all essential instructions.

### 3.5. Standardization of the test

#### 3.5.1. Reliability

The attribute of reliability is of the utmost significance in evaluating outcomes. The concept of reliability is essential in establishing the validity of research findings and assessing the extent to which generalizations can be made with confidence. It ensures consistency and accuracy in the measurement of variables.

➤ **Test-retest Method** The reliability of the achievement test was established by employing the test-retest method. The follow-up assessment was administered following a one-month interval. The reliability coefficient is determined by utilizing the two test scores obtained. The study determined that the reliability coefficient of the achievement test was 0.65, with a sample size of 100. This indicates that the test possesses a satisfactory level of validity and reliability to quantify the academic performance of class IX students in the subject of English.

➤ **Split-half Method** The split-half method entails dividing a test into two equal parts, followed by calculating the correlation between these two parts. An effective strategy involves categorizing odd numbers as one test and the items with even numbers as another exam. The answer sheets of a sample size of 100 students enrolled in the IX class were used for the aforementioned purpose. The correlation between the scores obtained in the two halves of the test was determined, and the test's reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.62.

#### 3.5.2. Validity

Validity pertains to the sufficiency and suitability of the inferences drawn from evaluations about a specific purpose. The concept of validity pertains to the particular application of evaluation outcomes and the reliability of our suggested understanding of said outcomes. Regarding achievement tests, the significance of content validity cannot be overstated.

➤ **Content Validity:** The optimal method for validation involves verifying the concurrence between the elicited responses from the question and the established criterion. Lindquist (1951) stated that the formulation of an achievement test's content frequently involves an analysis of the curriculum and textbooks, which is then combined with the expert opinions of recognized authorities in the field. The test was designed with consideration given to the relative importance of various concepts, as well as input from experts. As a result, it can be deemed a valid assessment.

➤ **Statistical Validity:** The statistical validity of the test was established through a methodological approach that involved comparing the scores with the mean marks achieved in English during the final exam. In this study, an analysis was conducted on the scores of 100 students and their corresponding final examination marks. The resulting correlation coefficient was computed. The coefficient 'r' exhibited a value of 0.63.

➤ **Objectivity:** The degree of objectivity exhibited by a test has a significant impact on both its validity and reliability. The utilization of solely objective-type items in the preparation of the achievement test ensured a high degree of objectivity. The utilization of a scoring key for assessment purposes additionally guarantees impartiality.

➤ **Practicability:** The test's feasibility is upheld through considerations such as the mode of delivery, ease of interpretation, cost-effectiveness, accessibility of resources, and efficiency in scoring and interpreting outcomes. The administration of the prepared achievement test was found to be facile. The item in question exhibited cost-effectiveness. The allotted time for scoring was restricted. Therefore, the test demonstrates a high level of practicality.

## 4. Results

The study aimed to construct a reliable and valid Achievement Test in English Language and Literature for Secondary School students. A standardized test comprising 50 items was developed, reflecting the selected domains of Bloom's Taxonomy—Knowledge, Understanding, and Application. This test, designed specifically

for Class IX content areas, was standardized on a sample of 100 CBSE Secondary School students. To guide the study, two research questions focusing on reliability and validity were formulated. Both theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the test construction were reviewed. The reliability of the test was established through the Test-Retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.65, and the Split-Half method, which produced a coefficient of 0.62. Content validity was also assessed to ensure comprehensive coverage of the subject matter. Given its strong reliability and validity, the Achievement Test can effectively be used by English teachers to assess students' performance in English Language and Literature at the secondary level.

## 5. Discussion

The standardized Achievement Test is a reliable and valid tool designed to assess English Language and Literature among Class 9 CBSE students. Aligned with the CBSE syllabus, the test ensures curricular relevance and offers educators an effective means to diagnose student weaknesses and tailor instructional strategies accordingly. Achievement tests are intended to measure students' learning outcomes, enabling teachers to monitor progress and provide continuous feedback. This particular test emphasizes comprehensive language skills—including reading, writing, grammar, and literature—structured around Bloom's Taxonomy. Domains such as Knowledge, Understanding, and Application were carefully selected based on the CBSE Class 9 curriculum, with test items distinctly categorized under each. The use of Bloom's Taxonomy supports the development of higher-order thinking by initially engaging students with lower-order cognitive skills like Knowledge. In consideration of learners' developmental levels, the test assigns 30% weightage to Knowledge and 70% collectively to Understanding and Application, ensuring a balanced evaluation of language proficiency and critical thinking (Cummins, K., 2019).

## 6. Conclusion

This study successfully developed a standardized Achievement Test in English for Class 9 students, fulfilling the essential criteria of reliability and validity. Designed in alignment with the updated CBSE syllabus, the test serves as an effective tool for evaluating students' proficiency in English Language and Literature. More than a means of assigning grades, assessment plays a critical role in helping educators reflect on and adapt their teaching methods. A reliable and valid test enables accurate measurement of student learning outcomes, minimizing ambiguity and ensuring meaningful feedback. The English Achievement Test developed through this study offers both teachers and students valuable insights into the teaching-learning process. By identifying individual learning gaps, the test allows for tailored instruction and targeted remediation. It also enables teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and make necessary adjustments. As a standardized tool, it provides a fair and consistent method of assessment and can help uncover the root causes of widespread underperformance in English. Moving forward, future research could explore adapting the test for use across different educational boards and grade levels, as well as examining its predictive validity in assessing higher-order language skills. Ultimately, this achievement test serves as a practical and insightful resource for improving English language instruction and student performance.

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