

How To Pass the *Bergenstest*



This guide is designed to help you prepare for the written part of the *Bergenstest* (Test in Norwegian – Advanced Level / *Test i norsk - høyere nivå*). It is based on Skapago's experiences with students who have successfully passed the test.

How well do you have to speak Norwegian?

The *Bergenstest* requires that you speak Norwegian at a fairly advanced level, namely B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

What does this mean?

You are able to talk fluently and spontaneously in a way that conversations with Norwegians are not particularly problematic. You should also be able to read Norwegian newspapers and write longer and detailed texts in which you can express your own opinion. (This is, of course, only if you take the written *Bergenstest*.)

By what means can this guide help you?

We do not go into detail considering your language level of Norwegian – for this, we recommend that you get tested in your language skills, for example, in a free [demo lesson](#) with one of our teachers. However, we want to advise you on any difficulties you may have with the type of individual tasks and how to deal with these.

The *Bergenstest* consists of two parts which are independent of each other—a written and an oral part. Before you sign up, be sure that you have checked whether you really need both parts (your employer or the educational institution where you are applying to study can give you this information). This guide is dealing with the written part only.

☰ Section 1 – Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension consists of two task types—*multiple choice* and *short answers*. In the *short answers* part you will be tested to have understood the text correctly. It is very important that you answer the questions precisely. Do not write more than what is necessary and hope that the correct answer is somewhere in what you've written—you won't get any points that way. Neither should you write your opinion or use information that is not in the text.

✓ Solving The Task

The text you have to read may be quite long (e. g. 400 to 500 words). It can be difficult to determine precisely in which line the requested information can be found. Therefore, it is wise to read the entire text first. Afterwards, you have an idea where to find the answers. Usually, the order of the questions corresponds to the order of the given information in the text, which means that you will find the answer to the last question near the end of the text.

✗ Example:

Norge har noen av verdens strengeste alkohollover. Aldersgrensen er 18 år for alkoholholdig drikke med inntil 21,9%, alt over er det 20 års aldersgrense for. Det er ikke lov med alkohol sterkere enn 60%. Det er forbudt med reklamer for alkohol.

Spørsmål: Hva slags drikkevarer får man kjøpe i Norge hvis man er 19 år gammel?

For example, you might answer: "*drikkevarer med inntil 21,9% alkohol*"

Answer in a short and precise way—a complete sentence isn't necessarily needed. The grammar here is not as important as long as one can understand what you want to say.

Multiple-Choice Questions are intended to check vocabulary and grammar. You get a text with gaps—you have to fill in each gap with the correct word. You can choose between three alternatives.

✓ Solving The Task

The words are often quite similar in meaning. Therefore, it is important that you read the entire paragraph in which the word is supposed to be used so you can see which word fits best.

✗ Example:

Nå sitter han i politiets varetekt, - 1 - uaktsomt drap og **for** å ha begått tyveri.

- 1
- a) på grunn av
 - b) dømt for
 - c) siktet for

Answer c) is the right solution.

Why not a) or b)? Well, a) is not possible because we must include the word "for" here since it comes again after "og" (highlighted in red). Answer b) is, however, not possible because one cannot be convicted as long as one is in police custody. You see that it is very important to understand the whole paragraph in both content and structure. Maybe you can exclude any options that are not correct.

Section 2 - Listening

Listening Comprehension is a multiple choice task—you already recognize this task type from the Reading Comprehension.

✓ Solving The Task

Read each question and each answer option *before* you listen to the text. Ask yourself, “What information do I need?” This makes it much easier for you to concentrate on the answer while you’re listening.

✗ Example

Oppgaven er:

Martin kan ikke regne med å få pakken fordi

- a) den ikke ble sendt gjennom posten
- b) avsenderen skal på ferie
- c) posten leverer langsomt

After you have read this, you already know that Martin gets a package. It might be delayed, but you don’t know why. The last word before the response options is „fordi”— so, the only thing that it depends on is why the package may come too late. This is what you need to concentrate on when you are listening to the text.

You will now hear the following text:

„Du Martin, jeg sendte deg en pakke på tirsdag, så jeg håper virkelig den kommer fram før du reiser på ferie. Jeg regner sterkt med at det kan bli et problem når man tar i betraktning posten sitt tempo.“

Even if you didn’t understand everything, you can immediately exclude answer option b). They said „du reiser på ferie”—so, it is Martin who goes on holiday, not the sender. To determine whether the solution is a) or c), you must, of course, understand the expressions „ta i betraktning” and „posten sitt tempo”. But even if you do not understand it this 100%: have we received the information that the package was sent by another way other than through the post? No. Therefore we can rule out option a)—so c) must be the correct answer.

Section 3 - Referat

Referat is a written reproduction of a conversation. You will hear a conversation between two people (usually an interview) that lasts a few minutes. Beyond that, you get some keywords, or so-called *momenter*. After having heard the conversation twice, you must

write a text of what was said. The so-called *momenter* are a guidance for what you have to write down.

Remember not to write anything that has not been said. You should neither interpret what you have heard. Even if you know that what the interviewee says is completely wrong, you will still have to write precisely what he or she said.

✓ Solving The Task

Read the *momenter* before listening to the interview. This way you will already have an idea what the text is about. Also, you will hear the text twice - at least one of those times should be used to take notes of the *momenter* so you do not forget anything.

🗣️ How can you prepare?

Listen to interviews on the radio and television and try to take notes. The problem with the *referat* is usually not that candidates don't understand what is said, but that they do not remember everything. Therefore, you ought to take notes while listening to the conversation—this is the most important precondition to write the *referat* successfully.

§ 📝 Section 4 – Grammar, Word and Phrase

In this section you will be asked to rephrase sentences. You will always get an original sentence and a „copy“ but in the second sentence some words are missing. You have to insert words that complete the sentence in a way that it means (roughly) the same as the original sentence.

✗ Example:

Original: Per sa: „Jeg kommer for sent.“

Ny setning: Per sa at _____

The correct solution is „... han kom for sent.“

The act of rephrasing a word is generally aimed at testing whether you can handle a certain grammatical phenomenon or understand an idiomatic expression. The example here will test whether you have mastered the indirect speech, i. e. you put the verb in the past tense and have shifted the pronoun to the 3rd person. In order to manage this task, it is very important that you have a sense of what the task is intended to test.

🗣️ How can you prepare?

It is important that you work a lot with tasks similar to the tasks in this section, even more than for the other parts. You can order such tasks from [Folkeuniversitetet](#). Beyond that, it

is important that you master the Norwegian grammar very well. To prepare, we recommend the „Håndbok i grammatikk og språkbruk“ along with the included workbook (Eva Høgberg, Forlaget Fag og Kultur) as well as our textbook [Mysteriet om Nils](#).

Section 5 – Writing

This is perhaps the most difficult part of the *Bergenstest*. You must write an essay on a given subject (you get to choose between two options—of course you will choose the topic you know the most about) and defend your own opinion. The first third of the essay should be used to present the topic. This means that you explain what the issue really is about. In this section, you simply state the facts or quote what others say—your own opinion comes in the second part of the essay (the last two-thirds). Here you are supposed to clearly state (and justify!) your own point of view.

It is better to write simple, but correct sentences, rather than complicated, but incorrect sentences. Avoid grammatical combinations that you are not able to handle. Of course, you should use complex sentence structures which you can easily master—you are not expected to just write short sentences.

✓ Solving The Task

Let's solve a hypothetical task such as the following:

Spørsmål: Er Norges alkoholpolitikk utdatert og gammeldags?

Kildestoff:

Alkoholpolitikken er veldig streng i Norge. Man må være 18 år for å kunne kjøpe øl og vin (drikkevarer med inntil 21,9% alkohol). Sterkere drikkevarer får man bare kjøpe hvis man har fylt 20 år, og bare ved det statseide Vinmonopolet. Det er totalforbud mot drikker med mer enn 60% alkohol. Det er også forbud mot alkoholreklame her i landet.

- ① **Do not just start writing.** The first step is to think: what do you think regarding the question? Is the Norwegian policy on alcohol old-fashioned? Will you answer the question with "ja" or „nei“?—or e.g. with „ja, men ...“? Let us assume that you have a very liberal point of view—you are against the strict Norwegian alcohol policy. Which arguments do you have for your opinion? Produce at least two arguments.

For example:

1. High prices do not help people who are addicted to alcohol, and merely cause the Norwegians to go abroad just to get drunk.
2. Alcohol consumption has nothing to do with the person who owns the store selling it.
3. Why can you be a soldier when you're 18, but you can't buy a drink?

② **The main argument** should come last. Now, it's important that you remember to consider that others may have a view different from yours on the topics you choose to talk about. Some might think that higher prices help to reduce alcohol addiction. Make it a point to mention arguments that are against your own views. This makes the essay more credible.

③ **Now write down what you want to write about**—just a few notes. Make a small „mind map" or plan, putting your arguments in order. Remember to start a new paragraph when you change to a new argument. In this way, you forget nothing, and the essay has a good structure. Then start writing.

④ **Read through the essay again** after you've completed it. You might take a little break before doing so or return to other tasks to get some "distance". This helps you find unnecessary errors in the essay. Be aware of what types of errors you tend to make, and be especially alert for those mistakes.

X Sample Answer

Now let's look at an example response. The essay on the next page is taken from a political blog—so, it's not a *Bergerstest* task, and it is written by a native speaker. We'll use it anyway to see what kinds of linguistic techniques can be utilized to structure such an essay:

Norge har noen av verdens strengeste alkohollover. Når du kjøper en flaske vin på vinmonopolet, går 48,40 kroner inn i statskassen som alkoholavgift. Jo sterkere vare, desto høyere avgift (en liter brennevin 40% 247,20 kroner i avgifter, en liter brennevin 60% 370,80 i avgifter). Dersom en vare er sterkere enn 4,7%, er det bare vinmonopolet som har lov til å selge den. Aldersgrensen er 18 år for alkoholholdig drikke med inntil 21,9%, alt over er det 20 års aldersgrense for. Det er ikke lov med alkohol sterkere enn 60%. Det er forbudt med reklamer for alkohol.

Etter min mening er disse lovene gammeldagse og utdaterte. Når det kommer til dette med de høye alkoholavgiftene ser jeg argumentet om at man ikke vil ha flere alkoholikere, men jeg tviler på at høye priser er måten å redusere antallet på. Vi må huske det at alkoholikere er avhengige av alkohol, og da vil ikke høye priser stoppe dem i å drikke. Det eneste de høye prisene gjør for alkoholikerne, er å sørge for at de bruker enda mer penger på alkohol, og dermed enda tidligere blir nødt til å ty til kriminalitet for å finansiere avhengigheten sin. Et annet problem med at prisene er så høye, er at når nordmenn reiser til utlandet drikker de mye mer enn de ellers ville ha gjort siden prisene er så lave i forhold til hva de er i Norge. Dette fører til alkoholskader, og ikke minst til at nordmenn får rykte som fyllefanter utenlands. Jeg skjønner selvsagt at man ikke bare kan fjerne avgiftene over natten, sett at det i en periode ville bli uante mengder fyll i Norge. Avgiftene må gradvis settes ned.

Et annet element jeg har lyst til å peke på med norsk alkoholpolitikk, er monopolet vinmonopolet har på alle alkoholholdige varer på over 4,7%. Jeg mener at vinmonopolet bør oppheves slik at man også kan kjøpe vin og brennevin i dagligvarebutikker. Jeg ser ikke hensikten med at varer som er fullt lovlig ikke skal kunne selges av andre enn staten.

This section presents the topic. The author writes the facts—no opinions. Of course, it can be difficult to write details, but you can always use source material given to you for the task. Remember to use your own words—but not your own opinion.

Now the argument, which the author clearly states.

Also note which phrases he uses and how he connects the sentences.

The essay should show that there are always pros and cons. It is good to admit that there are arguments that don't support your opinion, but write clearly why you think your arguments are more important.

When you start talking about a different topic it is wise to make the transition clear. So far, the author has talked about tax—now it's something completely different, namely *vinmonopolet*. Remember to create paragraphs!

Again, note the kinds of expressions you can use to express your opinion.

Til slutt vil jeg peke på den mest meningsløse alkoholloven i landet. Nemlig den som sier at du ikke får kjøpe drikker med mer enn 21,9% alkohol dersom du ikke er fylt 20. Når du er 18 kan du dra til Afghanistan og kjempe i krig for Norge, men på veien tilbake har du ikke lov til å kjøpe en vodka i Tax Free butikken på Gardermoen. Er du gammel nok til å dø for Norge, er du også gammel nok til å kunne ta deg en drink på byen.

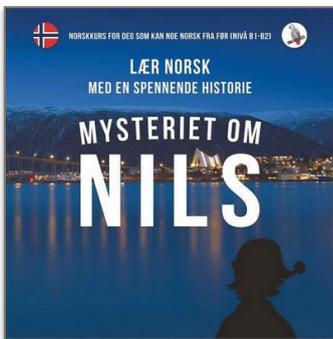
In the essay's course your arguments should gradually gain importance—the main argument should come last.

You could possibly end the essay with a conclusion in which you briefly summarize your opinion. This is what's missing here.

The author, Gaute Kandal Hoel, has allowed Skapago to use this text. Originals can be found here: (<http://denkonservativeskribent.wordpress.com/2011/04/24/norsk-alkoholpolitikk-utdatert-og-gammeldags/>). Skapago takes no position on the content of the text or the author's attitude - we use only the text as a linguistic example.

How Skapago can help you to pass *Bergenstesten*

Textbook *Mysteriet om Nils*



Mysteriet om Nils (ISBN 9783945174036) is a Norwegian textbook made up of a coherent story. Can't stop reading? Well then - you will have to learn Norwegian!

The book deals with grammar in pictures, casual yet comprehensive explanations, and a lot of easy to remember examples. Exercises and additional texts are an important element as well. There are also a few special *Bergenstest* tasks.

If you have not achieved level A2 yet, you should start with *The Mystery of Nils* (ISBN 9783945174005)

For more information see www.skapago.eu/nils

Live individual lessons with a teacher (*through Skype/virtual classrooms*)



Our Norwegian teachers have a lot of experience with the *Bergenstest* and prepare a tailored course for you. We will only focus on your personal problems and relevant exam tasks, in contrast to standardized *Bergenstest* courses where you might waste a lot of time doing things that are not difficult for you.

Schedule a free demo lesson with a teacher at www.skapago.eu/en/contact.html.

Skapago is not responsible for errors and inaccuracies. This guide is based on our experiences and is not an official advisor—unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that you will pass the Bergenstest if you follow our advice.

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Lykke til med Bergenstesten!

