

TEST OF READING

Time: 1 hour

PART	Main Skill Focus	Input	Response	Number of Questions
1	Reading – scanning and gist	One longer or four shorter informational texts (approx. 250 – 350 words in total)	Matching	7
2	Reading – understanding text structure	Single text: article, report, etc. with sentence level gaps (text plus 7 option sentences approx. 450 – 550 words in total)	Matching	5
3	Reading for gist and specific information	Single text (approx. 450 – 550 words)	4-option multiple choice	6
4	Reading – vocabulary and structure	Single informational text with lexical gaps (text including gapped words approx. 200 – 300 words)	4-option multiple choice cloze	15
5	Reading – understanding sentence structure / error identification	Short text (approx. 150 – 200 words) Identification of additional unnecessary words in text	Proof reading	12

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

Part One

This is a matching task. There are four short texts on a related theme (e.g. descriptions of a group of products, or advertisements for jobs) or a single text divided into four sections. Although the context of each text will be similar, there will also be information that is particular to each text. The texts are labelled A – D. Candidates are presented with a set of seven items which are statements related to the texts. They are expected to match each statement with the relevant text.

Questions in this part tend to focus mostly on the identification of specific information and detail, although some items may focus on gist.

Preparation

In order to prepare for this part it would be useful to familiarise students with sets of short texts that have a similar theme. Newspapers, magazines and catalogues are useful sources in which to find such texts. Students should be encouraged to look closely at all the information, particularly as short texts often include additional snippets of information on separate lines (such as prices, dates, titles, measurements, etc.) that can easily be overlooked.

Students could be set questions which test global reading skills prior to reading the texts, so that they are trained to think of who a text is written for and why it was written.

Part Two

This is a matching task, comprising a text that has had six sentences removed from it and a set of seven sentences labelled A – G. Candidates are required to match each gap with the sentence which they think fits in terms of meaning and structure. The first gap is always given as an example so that candidates have five gaps left to complete. When they have finished this part there will be one sentence left which they have not used.

The texts for this part will have been chosen because they have a clear line of thought or argument that can still be discerned by the reader with the sentences removed. In doing the task, therefore, students should be trained to read through the gapped text and the list of sentences first, in order to get an idea of what it is about. Having done that, they should be reassured that there is only one sentence that fits each gap.

This part tests understanding of text structure as well as meaning and the gaps will be reasonably far apart so that candidates can successfully anticipate the appropriate lexical and grammatical features of the missing sentence. Candidates can be expected to be tested on a variety of cohesive features with both a backward and forward reference, sometimes going beyond the sentence level. Thus, while selecting the appropriate sentence for a gap, they should read before and after the text to ensure that it fits well. At the end of this part, they should read through the entire text, inserting the gapped sentences as they go along, to ensure that the information is coherent.

Preparation

This can be quite a difficult task, especially for candidates who are unfamiliar with such an exercise. In preparing them for this part, it would be a good idea to select a number of graded texts that have clear, familiar ideas and evident cohesive features. Texts can be cut up as they are in the test or simply discussed in their entirety. In this way, students can work up to dealing with more complex material and identifying the many different ways that ideas are connected.

It would also be useful when doing gapped texts to look at sentences that do not fit in gaps and discuss the reasons for this. Sometimes it is possible to make a sentence fit a gap by simply changing a few words. Discussion on areas such as this would also be fruitful.

Part Three

This task consists of a text accompanied by four-option multiple choice items. The stem of a multiple choice item may take the form of a question or an incomplete sentence. There are six items, which are placed after the text. Sources of original texts may be the general and business press, company literature and books on topics such as management. Texts may be edited, but the source is authentic.

Preparation

- Multiple choice questions are a familiar and long-standing type of test; here they are used to test opinion and inference rather than straightforward facts.
- Correct answers are not designed to depend on simple word-matching, and students' ability to interpret paraphrasing should be developed.
- Students should be encouraged to pursue their own interpretation of relevant parts of the text and then check their idea against the options offered, rather than reading all the options first.
- It could be useful for students to be given perhaps one of the wrong options only, and for them to try to write the correct answer and another wrong option.

Part Four

This is a multiple choice cloze test with fifteen gaps, most of which test lexical items, and may focus on correct word choice, lexical collocations and fixed phrases. The texts chosen for this part will come from varied sources but they will all have a straightforward message or meaning, so that candidates are being tested on vocabulary and not on their comprehension of the passage.

Preparation

Candidates are usually familiar with this type of task and so it is most important to try to improve their range of vocabulary. The options provided for each item in the test

will have similar meanings but only one word will be correct within the context provided. Familiarity with typical collocations would be especially useful. The language of business is often very precise and so it is worth spending time looking at the vocabulary used in different types of text, getting students to keep a vocabulary list and encouraging them to make active use of the lexical items that are new to them.

Part Five

In this task, candidates identify words that have been introduced into a text in error.

This exercise can be related to the authentic task of checking a text for errors, and suitable text types therefore include letters, publicity materials, etc. The text contains twelve numbered lines, which are the test items. Further lines at the end may complete the text, but these are not test items.

Preparation

- Students should be reminded that this task represents a kind of editing that is common practice, even in their first language.
- Any work on error analysis is likely to be helpful for this task.
- A reverse of the exercise (giving students texts with missing words) might prove beneficial.

PART ONE
Questions 1 – 7

- Look at the statements below and the comments given on the opposite page by mobile phone retailers.
- Which section (A, B, C or D) does each statement 1 – 7 refer to?
- For each statement 1 – 7, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

Example:

0 the extent to which mobile phones have changed in size

0	A	B	C	D
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 1 the need for retail staff to stay informed about the mobile phones they are selling
- 2 the belief that the market will not sustain the present number of mobile phone retailers
- 3 the use of mobile phones no longer being restricted to a specific group of people
- 4 the relationship between charges and the number of mobile phone users
- 5 a negative view of competing mobile phone retailers
- 6 a comparison between change in the mobile phone industry and that in a different sector
- 7 those services available at mobile phone outlets that are not provided by other retailers

2

A

Market awareness of the mobile telephone has exploded and the retailer who specialises in mobile phones is seeing growth like never before. Admittedly, some customers buy their first mobile phone in the supermarket, but for advice, add-ons and particular services they turn to the specialist. There are a large number of mobile phone retailers and I can't help but feel the market only has room for four players. Undoubtedly, customer service is the factor that differentiates operators and I think this year we will probably see rationalisation in the sector.

B

When I first started in the industry, mobile people come into the market. This will phones were retailing at a thousand pounds and continue, and while retail dealers' profits will were as large as box files. Now, prices are be affected dramatically, network providers constantly being driven down and handsets are will have to generate more revenue by offering considerably more compact. There is intense internet provision and data services to the competition between the network providers, mobile user, and every time they lower their tariffs, more

C

Over a few years, prices have dropped sharply and technological advances have meant products have changed – and are changing. Successful retailers must try to keep on top of these developments and invest in the training of employees so they are able to offer impartial advice to customers. E-commerce is taking off but this won't necessarily replace traditional retail outlets. In order to stand out, you need innovative ideas on customer service. We don't believe in criticising other retailers, but there's nothing particularly exciting out there at present.

D

The mobile phone business is behaving like the but clearly all the main mobile phone retailers internet industry in take-up and the pace of have succeeded in taking the industry forward. innovation, and it's important not to be left Growth has accelerated rapidly and the mobile behind. We must continue to innovate in telephone has changed from simply being a delivering the product to the customer. In business tool, to being a means of terms of service provision, you can draw communication for everyone. comparisons between us and our closest rival,

Turn Over ▶

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PART TWO
Questions 8 – 12

- Read the article below about a survey of businesswomen staying in hotels.
- Choose the best sentence from the opposite page to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap 8 – 12, mark one letter (A – G) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

Hotels Failing Businesswomen

Hoteliers should take note because they are facing serious criticism! Women account for more than half of all business travellers, but hotels are not doing enough for them. (0) These show that the number of complaints made about the way women guests are treated is increasing.

The Bartonsfield Hotel in London also conducted a recent survey of UK businesswomen, which reveals that 70% feel they receive an inferior service. (8) The attitude of hotel staff made them feel out of place in public areas; for example, 62% chose to eat in their rooms because they were made to feel uncomfortable by staff when dining alone. (9) Four years ago, for example, a similar survey had revealed that a significant number of women travelling alone and wishing to use the hotel restaurant were actually turned away.

Many of the suggestions for improved services put forward by the Business Travel Association are relatively simple. (10) Placing tables in restaurants in a way that allows the head waiter to introduce guests to one another, so they can

choose to sit together over a meal, was a further suggestion. Guests in the dining room would then have the opportunity to meet up with others who might, for example, be attending the same conference, or have the same business interests.

Wendy Manning, executive manager of the Bartonsfield Hotel, agreed with the Business Travel Association that hotel star ratings should be influenced by the level of service they offer to female business guests. (11) 'Our survey highlighted the unwillingness of many women to air their views if they are treated badly,' Wendy Manning pointed out.

A group of influential businesswomen recently met to discuss the results of the Business Travel Association questionnaire. They suggested that businesswomen should not hesitate to make it clear if they have a problem. (12) Once clients have gone, it is all too easy for the issue to be ignored by hotel managers, and it will also be forgotten by the overworked business executives themselves.

Example:

0	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- A** The hotel staff assumed they should be booked into the same room.
- B** But there is clear evidence that things are slowly improving.
- C** This would enable women to make an informed choice about a hotel, and they would not be placed in the uncomfortable position of having to complain about poor service.
- D** It is advisable for them to do this during their stay rather than waiting until they check out.
- E** Making sure that facilities in guest bedrooms cater equally for the needs of male and female guests is one such idea.
- F** Most of the women, when questioned further, thought that the reason for this was that they were female and travelling alone.
- G** This is evident from the results of a questionnaire distributed to hotel guests by the Business Travel Association.

PART THREE
Questions 13 – 18

- Read the article below about product life cycles and the questions on the opposite page.
- For each question 13 – 18, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

Product Life Cycles and Sales Strategy

One of the most important concepts in sales management and marketing is that of the product life cycle. This is a historical record of the life of a product, showing the stage in its life the product has reached at a particular time. By identifying the stage that a product is in or may be heading towards, companies can formulate better marketing plans. All products have 'lives' in as much as they are created, sell with varying profitability over a period of time, and then become obsolete and are replaced or simply no longer produced. A product's sales position and profitability can be expected to fluctuate over time and so, at each successive stage in the product's cycle, it is necessary to adopt different tactics.

The two main features of the product life cycle are unit sales and unit profit. The unit sales figures usually jump on introduction, as a response to heavy advertising and promotion, as customers buy the product experimentally. This is generally followed by a levelling off while it is evaluated – the length of this period depending on the use to which the product is put. Then, unit sales rise steadily through the growth phase to the maturity phase, when the product is widely accepted, and so on to saturation level. By this time, competitors will have entered the market with their own version and, from this point, the sales team will have to work even harder to win all additional sales. Eventually, the product's sales decline as better versions enter the market and competition becomes too strong.

In retrospect, most firms know what happened to their products from launch to withdrawal. They can

compile this information from the records of unit sales.
Unfortunately, unit sales are not the complete story as it is unit profit that is the decisive factor: although this is not always recorded accurately. It is this figure that sales management has to monitor, though, to ensure an effective marketing strategy and to produce effective profits.

At launch, the product is costed accurately on the basis of production costs plus selling costs. Initially these remain fairly stable, but, when the product is proving successful, competitors will bring out their own 'copy-cat' products. With a competitor in the field, the original firm has to respond in order to maintain its market position. It can run special sales promotions, improve deliveries, make more frequent sales calls and so on. Often the extra expenditure is not accurately charged to the product and the result is that, long before unit sales are noticeably falling, the unit profit has already fallen.

The product life cycle, then, presents a picture of what happened in the product's 'lifetime', so how can this be used as an ongoing aid to management decision-making? Every sales manager has a chart on which the progress of sales is plotted and this can be used as a guide to the stage of development each product is currently in. An essential management skill is being able to interpret sales results and draw in the stages as they occur. Deciding where each stage begins and ends can be a random exercise, though usually the stages are based on where the rate of sales growth or decline becomes pronounced.

13 According to the text, the end of a product's life cycle is marked by

- A a sharp rise in production costs.
- B the product becoming outdated.
- C an increase in customer complaints.
- D less support from sales management.

14 What does the writer say about sales management in the first paragraph?

- A Companies should spend more time on their sales planning.
- B There are many managers who need to improve their sales performance.
- C Most sales managers fail to recognise which stage a product has reached.
- D The sales approach should change with each phase of the product life cycle.

15 According to the text, a greater sales effort is required for a product when

- A it is particularly innovative.
- B the advertising budget has been cut.
- C rival companies start to produce something similar.
- D consumer interest switches to a new product category.

16 According to the text, a good marketing strategy must primarily be concerned with

- A sales statistics.
- B product details.
- C consumer data.
- D profit information.

17 According to the text, profit levels may fail to correspond to the volume of sales because

- A the full selling costs have not been taken into account.
- B the production costs were not estimated correctly.
- C there are unforeseen problems with distribution.
- D there has been a lack of economic stability.

18 What does the writer say about the charts that show sales progress?

- A It is a matter of judgement where one sales phase finishes and another begins.
- B Managers should review policy when a sharp fall in sales is indicated.
- C It is difficult to see how sales charts can provide sufficient guidance to managers.
- D Managers should get confirmation of the data they plot on the sales charts.

Turn Over ▶

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PART FOUR
Questions 19 – 33

- Read the advice below about the use of technology in presentations.
- Choose the best word to fill each gap from **A**, **B**, **C** or **D** on the opposite page.
- For each question **19 – 33**, mark one letter (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) on your Answer Sheet.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

Guidelines for giving Presentations

Most presentations today (0) ... on the use of some sort of technology, such as a laptop computer, linked to a projector. While this technology can help to (19) presentations better, it also has a (20) of getting in the way. As a general (21), it is better to (22) on the content of a presentation as a means of (23) your audience's attention, rather than relying on sophisticated equipment.

Bear in mind that when an organisation invites (24) for a contract, they may (25) four or five presentations from different companies on the same day. Each of these companies will probably be using the same computer graphics (26) and the same equipment. The chances are the presentations will be similar too.

That's why the content and (27) of what you say are important. Think about what you want to say and how to say it as clearly as possible. As a first step, you need to (28) the main points you want to get across. Audiences are easily bored and (29) to remember only the most entertaining, exciting or unusual ideas.

Next create your materials, choosing the images for your presentation carefully. Remember you do not want to stop your audience from listening to you, nor do you want to (30) them.

Finally, make all the necessary (31) for the equipment you need. If technology is to be an important (32) of your presentation, make sure you know how to use it (33) and test it out beforehand.

Example:

A calculate B depend C determine D lean

0 A B C D

- 19 A produce B make C construct D build
 20 A behaviour B habit C practice D routine
 21 A method B law C rule D course
 22 A focus B define C target D direct
 23 A gaining B acquiring C collecting D taking
 24 A requests B calls C bids D commands
 25 A appoint B programme C schedule D catalogue
 26 A parcels B packets C bundles D packages
 27 A formation B design C structure D system
 28 A catalogue B label C mark D identify
 29 A point B tend C lead D move
 30 A disorder B mistake C confuse D complicate
 31 A appointments B procedures C arrangements D organisations
 32 A share B role C function D element
 33 A precisely B suitably C properly D accurately

PART FIVE
Questions 34 – 45

- Read the article below about a training company.
- In most of the lines 34 – 45 there is one extra word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the meaning of the text. Some lines, however, are correct.
- If a line is correct, write **CORRECT** on your Answer Sheet.
- If there is an extra word in the line, write **the extra word** in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet.
- The exercise begins with two examples, (0) and (00).

Examples

0	ς	ο							
00	C	ο	R	E	C	T			

Training Provision

- 0 There is little doubt that training has become so an accepted part of business but it is equally true that companies take a much less scientific approach than they should. A recent study suggested us that, while UK organisations spend nearly £10bn a year on training, 37% of them have never evaluated that expenditure in strict terms of business impact. Yet if training activities that are run along the same lines as other business operations, in ways that maximise with opportunities, it becomes easier for training organisations to help companies meet strategic goals. One organisation showing an awareness of what this principle is CT Solutions, a training business that has its own premises in South London. The need for more training has combined it with cutbacks in office accommodation to create plenty of business for those hiring out space, particularly upper-end hotels. But while CT Solutions detected that many organisations were not satisfied with hotels because they do not always provide a good service. CT Solutions is totally dedicated to providing of space for business, mostly for training, but also for conferences and AGMs. Clearly, since the business has been grown in size, it is an approach that works.
- 00
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45

READING ANSWER KEY

Part One	Part Two	Part Three	Part Four	Part Five
1 C	8 F	13 B	19 B	34 US
2 A	9 B	14 D	20 B	35 STRICT
3 D	10 E	15 C	21 C	36 THAT
4 B	11 C	16 D	22 A	37 WITH
5 C	12 D	17 A	23 A	38 CORRECT
6 D		18 A	24 C	39 WHAT
7 A			25 C	40 IT
			26 D	41 CORRECT
			27 C	42 WHILE
			28 D	43 CORRECT
			29 B	44 OF
			30 C	45 BEEN
			31 C	
			32 D	
			33 C	

TEST OF WRITING

Time: 45 minutes

PART	Functions/Communicative Task	Input	Response	Register
1	e.g. giving instructions, explaining a development, asking for comments, requesting information, agreeing to requests	Rubric only (plus layout of output text type)	Internal communication (medium may be note or message or memo or e-mail) (40 – 50 words)	Neutral/informal
2	<p>Correspondence: e.g. explaining, apologising, reassuring, complaining</p> <p>Report: describing, summarising</p> <p>Proposal: describing, summarising, recommending, persuading</p>	One or more pieces of input from: business correspondence (medium may be letter, fax or e-mail), internal communication (medium may be note, memo or e-mail), notice, advert, graphs, charts, etc. (plus layout if output is fax or e-mail)	Business correspondence (medium may be letter, fax or e-mail) or short report or proposal (medium may be memo or e-mail) (120 – 140 words)	Neutral/formal

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

For BEC Vantage, candidates are required to produce two pieces of writing:

- an internal company communication; this means a piece of communication with a colleague or colleagues within the company on a business-related matter, and the delivery medium may be a note, message, memo or e-mail;
- and one of the following:
 - a piece of business correspondence; this means correspondence with somebody outside the company (e.g. a customer or supplier) on a business-related matter, and the delivery medium may be letter, fax or e-mail
 - a report; this means the presentation of information in relation to a specific issue or events. The report will contain an introduction, main body of findings and conclusion; it is possible that the delivery medium may be a memo or an e-mail
 - a proposal; this has a similar format to a report, but unlike the report, the focus of the proposal is on the future, with the main focus being on recommendations for discussion; it is possible that the delivery medium may be a memo or an e-mail.

Part One

In this part candidates are presented with the context in the task rubric. This explains the role the candidate must take in order to write a note, message, memo or e-mail of around 40 to 50 words using a written prompt. It also identifies who the message is to be written to. The prompt is included in the instructions, in the form of bullet points clearly stating the pieces of information that must be incorporated into the answer.

Where the delivery medium specified for a Part One answer is a memo or an e-mail, candidates need not include to/from/date/subject details.

Part Two

In the second Writing task, candidates are required to write 120 to 140 words in the form of business correspondence, a short report or proposal. There is an explanation of the task and one or more texts as input material. These texts may contain visual or graphic material and have ‘handwritten’ notes on them.

There is no significant difference between the format required for proposals and reports. At this level, reports must be clearly organised and should not contain letter features. There is no particular requirement to provide subheadings, particularly given the length of the report.

Where the delivery medium specified for a Part Two answer is a letter, candidates need not include postal addresses in their answer. Similarly, where the delivery medium specified is a fax, candidates need not include ‘fax header’ details, and where the delivery medium specified is a memo or an e-mail, candidates need not include to/from/date/subject details.

Accuracy and Appropriacy in Faxes and e-mails

Please see page 11.

Preparing for the Writing Questions

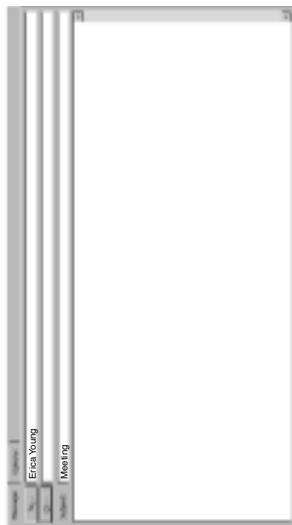
The preparation activities outlined for BEC Preliminary candidates would be equally valuable at this level.

In the second task for this level, candidates are often provided with annotated information and are asked to report or convey these comments. It is important that students know how to reformulate the comments, incorporating some of their own vocabulary and structures into their work. Whilst at BEC Preliminary level the emphasis is on the accurate reporting of facts, at this level much more is expected in terms of register, cohesion and the range of structures and language used.

For the BEC Vantage Writing component, candidates write their answers in pen in their question paper booklet.

PART ONE

- You are a regional sales manager for an international company. You have been asked to go to a meeting at your company's head office. You cannot go, so somebody else will go in your place.
- Write an **e-mail** to Erica Young, who is organising the meeting:
 - apologising for not being able to go to the meeting
 - explaining why you cannot go
 - saying who will go.
- Write 40 – 50 words.**
- Write on the opposite page.



PART TWO

- You work for BusinessSpace plc, a company which rents fully serviced offices to other businesses. You have just received the fax below.
- Look at the fax and the other information below, on which you have already made some handwritten notes.
- Then, using **all** your handwritten notes, write a **fax** in reply to Reinhard Mieter.
- Write 120 – 140 words.**
- Write on the opposite page.

RENVER ESTATES
FAX

TO: BusinessSpace
FROM: Reinhard Mieter
SUBJECT: Renting Office Space

Further to our discussion last week we have now decided to rent office space from you for the next twelve months:

Requirements

- one office of 10m², two of 15m², one of 20m²
- must be on same floor
- 40 parking spaces

Please confirm if this office space is vacant in Central Tower.

offer 10% discount for 18-month booking

CENTRAL TOWER (CT)	
Offices currently vacant	Size m ²
CT 19	10
CT 24	20
CT 53	15
CT 54	15

four left, different floors, no parking - suggest Opera Place

OPERA PLACE (OP)	
Offices currently vacant	Size m ²
OP 34	10
OP 39	20
OP 46	10
OP 47	15
OP 48	20
OP 49	15

OPERA PLACE
Why choose Opera Place?

- 300 parking spaces
- good public transport connections
- wonderful views

mention these benefits

four same floor

ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

An impression mark is awarded to each piece of writing. The General Impression Mark Scheme is used in conjunction with a Task-specific Mark Scheme, which focuses on criteria specific to each particular task. This summarises the content, organisation, register, format and target reader indicated in the task.

The band scores awarded are translated to a mark out of 10 for Part 1 and a mark out of 20 for Part 2. A total of 30 marks is available for Writing.

The General Impression Mark Scheme is interpreted at Council of Europe level B2.

A summary of the General Impression Mark Scheme is reproduced below. Examiners work with a more detailed version, which is subject to regular updating.

Summary of General Impression Mark Scheme

Band 5

Full realisation of the task set.

- All content points included and expanded upon where the task allows.
- Controlled, natural use of language; minimal errors which are minor.
- Wide range of structure and vocabulary.
- Effectively organised, with appropriate use of cohesive devices.
- Register and format consistently appropriate.

Very positive effect on the reader.

Band 4

Good realisation of the task set.

- All content points adequately dealt with.
- Generally accurate, errors when complex language is attempted.
- Good range of structure and vocabulary.
- Generally well-organised, with attention paid to cohesion.
- Register and format on the whole appropriate.

Positive effect on the reader.

Band 3

Reasonable achievement of the task set.

- All major content points included; some minor omissions.
- A number of errors will be present, but they do not impede communication.
- Adequate range of structure and vocabulary.
- Organisation and cohesion is satisfactory, on the whole.
- Register and format reasonable, although not entirely successful.

Satisfactory effect on the reader.

Band 2

Inadequate attempt at the task set.

- Some major content points omitted or inadequately dealt with; some irrelevance is likely.
- Errors sometimes obscure communication, are numerous, and distract the reader.
- Limited range of structure and vocabulary.
- Content is not clearly organised or linked, causing some confusion.
- Inappropriate register and format.

Negative effect on the reader.

Band 1

Poor attempt at the task set.

- Notable content omissions and/or considerable irrelevance, possibly due to misinterpretation of the task set.
- Serious lack of control; frequent basic errors.
- Little evidence of structure and vocabulary required by task.
- Lack of organisation, causing a breakdown in communication.
- Little attempt at appropriate register and format.

Very negative effect on the reader.

Band 0

Achieves nothing. Either fewer than 25% of the required number of words or totally illegible or totally irrelevant.

WRITING PART I

CANDIDATE A

I'm really sorry but I'm not able to go to the meeting at our company's head office. I can't attend because of previous arrangements which I can't change.

Mr Jan Korwalski, a very good worker, will go instead of me.

Please accept my apologies.

Marta Stefanska

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All points covered. Successful attempt at complex language, Band 5
for example '*I can't attend because of previous arrangements*', '*will go instead of me*'. Concise, making a very positive effect on the reader.

CANDIDATE B

Dear Mrs Young

I would like to apologise for not being able to go to meeting at our company's head office because I will not be in the country. I am going on the business trip to Italy.

Mr Mark Smith will go instead of me.

Many Thanks

Nadia Johnson
Regional Sales Manager

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All points adequately dealt with. Good range of structure and Band 4
vocabulary. Minor non-impeding errors, for example '*go to meeting*', '*on the business trip*'. Positive effect on the reader.

CANDIDATE C

To: Erica Young

Cc:

Subject: Meeting

Dear Mr Young:

Thanks for your last letter! I'm very glad to be invited to attend the meeting at your company's head office. But first of all, I'm apologising for not being able to go to the meeting. This is due to a error of my agenda, in fact. I have a international conference that day.

I feel sorry for my absence. I'd like to recommend my personal assistant to go to instead of me. His name is Jim Green. I hope this will not cause you some trouble.

Best wish yours

Chan Bo Fun

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Generally well organised (although not concise), leading to a satisfactory effect on the reader. There are, however, some basic non-impeding errors, for example '*a error of my agenda*', '*cause you some trouble*'.

Band 3

CANDIDATE D

Hello Erica,

I'd like to apologise you, but I can't attend to this meeting in our head office.

In this time I'm going to London for sales meeting with our customers.

Instead of me, for this meeting will go my sales assistance – Tom

Best regards

Natasha

EXAMINER COMMENTS

A number of errors, but they do not impede communication. Overall, an adequate attempt at the task.

Band 3

WRITING PART 2

CANDIDATE E

Dear Mr Mieter,

Thank you for your order by fax. I'd like to mention that I can offer you 10% discount if you are booking for 18 - month period.

We have 4 offices left in Central Tower as you required but they are on different floors. Also there is no parking space available at the moment in Central Tower. I can offer you a very interesting alternative in Opera Place Building:

- * 4 offices as you required on same floor
- * 300 parking spaces and good public transport connections for your employees
- * wonderful views.

Please think about this alternative and the discount I mentioned before. I look forward to hearing from you soon so I can make the booking.

Yours sincerely,

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All points are covered and developed. Organisation is good, and the candidate displays a wide range of natural language and a natural business tone. Errors are minimal.

Band 5

CANDIDATE F

BUSINESS SPACE PLC

From: Business Space

Attn: Sabrina Korkhau

FAX

To: Renver Estates

Attn: Reinhard Mieter

Subject: Renting Office Space.

Mr Mieter, I've just received your fax and after searching for different possibilities, this is what I can offer you:

- 10% discount on the total prize if you book our offices for 18 months, could it be interesting for you?
- You asked us for 4 offices in Central Tower and we only have 4 left but placed in different floors and there are no parking spaces left. Would you mind if I search what you need in Opera Place?
- Opera Place is a big Tower with 300 parking spaces, it has wonderful views to Central Park and the public transport connections are really good.

- I've just checked if we have 4 offices left in Opera Place and for your information we have them now!!

At the same floor and one is 10m², two are 15m² and the last one is 20m² as you required.

Please let me know if you are interested in this possibility.

Regards

Ms Korkhau

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All content points are achieved, with good organisation. There is an adequate range of language, and the register and format are reasonable. The effect on the reader is satisfactory.

Band 3

CANDIDATE G

TO: Reinhard Mieter,

Thank you for your fax. And we are glad you have decided to rent office space from us for the next twelve months. I'd like to inform you that we can offer 10% discount for 18 - month booking, please confirm whether you'll book longer or not.

As requested we couldn't supply you in Central Tower, since there is no vacancy on the same floor and no parking either. But I recommend Opera Place, a suitable place as well. There are four in the same floor, and the sizes are proper. 300 parking spaces are there, which is enough for you. Moreover, public transport connections here are good as well as wonderful views I hope this change will be convenient for you. Meanwhile, I am sure you will be satisfied with Opera Place.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

sincerely,

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All points are covered. Format, organisation and register are adequate. There is some attempt at range, for example *'I hope this change will be convenient for you.'* The errors do not impede.

Band 3

CANDIDATE H

TO: Reinhar Mieter
FROM: Business Space
SUBJECT: Confirmation

Thank you for have selected us for doing Business. Concerning with the requirements you have specified in your fax, I would like to inform you than even though there are four Offices vacant there are all of them in different floors, and moreover there are no parking spaces, However In opera place you could set up the four offices in the same floor, it would be the four floor also there are still available 300 parking spaces so in this matter there is no problem. Let me tell you that in this place you can delight a wonderful view to the sea and this place is relationated with good public transport. and because it is near the sea you can get easily connections not only internal but abroad as well. So I suggest you to go for opera place Please if you have any further enquiry please do not hesitate in contact me.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Organisation and range of language are poor. There are frequent basic errors and the first content point (the offer of a discount) is missing.

Band 2

TEST OF LISTENING

Time: approx. 40 minutes including 10 minutes' transfer time

PART	Main Skill Focus	Input	Response	Number of Questions
1	Listening for writing short answers	Three telephone conversations or messages	Gap filling	12
2	Listening; identifying topic, context, function, etc.	Short monologue; two sections of five 'snippets' each	Multiple matching	10
3	Listening	One extended conversation or monologue; interview, discussion, presentation, etc.	Multiple choice	8

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

Part One

In this part there are three conversations or answering machine messages, with a gapped text to go with each. Each gapped text provides a very clear context and has four spaces which have to be filled with one or two words or a number. The gapped texts may include forms, diary excerpts, invoices, message pads, etc. Candidates hear each conversation or message twice, and as they listen they are required to complete the gapped text.

This part of the Listening test concentrates on the retrieval of factual information and it is important for candidates to listen carefully using the prompts on their question paper in order to identify the missing information. For example, they may have to note down a person's name, and if names on the tape are spelt out, these must be spelt correctly. Alternatively, they may have to listen for a room or telephone number, or an instruction or deadline. Answers to this part are rarely a simple matter of dictation, and some reformulation of the prompt material will be required in order to locate the correct answer.

Part Two

This part is divided into two sections. Each section has the same format: candidates hear five short monologues and have to match each monologue to a set of items A – H. In each section, the eight options will form a coherent set and the overall theme or topic will be clearly stated in the task rubric. For example, candidates may hear five people talking and have to decide what sort of jobs the people do. In this case, the set of options A – H will contain a list of jobs. Alternatively the set of options may consist of eight places/topics/addressees/purposes etc. The two sections will always test different areas and so if the first section focuses on, say, topics, the second section will focus on something else, such as functions.

In this part of the Listening test, candidates are being tested on their global listening skills and also on their ability to infer, extract gist and understand main ideas. In order to answer the questions successfully, they will need to work out the answer by developing ideas, and refining these as the text is heard. It will not be possible to 'word match' and candidates should not expect to hear such overt clues. However, there will always be a 'right' answer and candidates are not expected to opt for the 'best' answer.

Part Three

A longer text is heard in this part, usually lasting approximately four minutes. The text will typically be an interview, conversation or discussion with two or more speakers, or possibly a presentation or report with one speaker. There are eight, three-option multiple choice questions that focus on details and main ideas in the text. There may be questions on opinions and feelings, but these will be relatively straightforward and will not require candidates to remember long or complex pieces of information.

Preparing for the Listening Paper

All listening practice should be helpful for students, whether authentic or specially prepared. In particular, discussion should focus on:

- the purpose of speeches and conversations or discussions
- the roles of speakers
- the opinions expressed
- the language functions employed
- relevant aspects of phonology such as stress, linking and weak forms, etc.

In addition, students should be encouraged to appreciate the differing demands of each task type. It will be helpful not

only to practise the task types in order to develop a sense of familiarity and confidence, but also to discuss how the three task types relate to real life skills and situations.

- The first is note-taking (and therefore productive), and students should reflect on the various situations in which they take notes from a spoken input. They should also be encouraged to try to predict the kinds of words or numbers that might go in the gaps.
- The second is a matching (with discrimination) exercise, featuring differing styles and registers.
- The third involves the correct interpretation of spoken input, with correct answers often being delivered by more than one speaker.

In all three tasks, successful listening depends on correct reading, and students should be encouraged to make full use of the pauses during the test to check the written input.

Conversation Two
(Questions 5 – 8)

- Look at the form below.
- You will hear a man calling a computer supplier.

HILLS PC SUPPLIES
Customer Services
Telephone Message

Caller's name: *JAMES FIRTH*

Client: *Allen and Brown Ltd*

Item(s) ordered: (5)

Order no./date: *HPC02345 / 12-3-02*

Notes: *order was delivered late by the (6)*
and was supplied without (7)
call to apologise and discuss (8)

Action:

Turn Over ▶ 3

PART ONE
Questions 1 – 12

- You will hear three telephone conversations or messages.
- Write **one or two words or a number** in the numbered spaces on the notes or forms below.
- You will hear each recording twice.

Conversation One
(Questions 1 – 4)

- Look at the notes below.
- You will hear a woman telephoning a conference centre office.

NOTES ABOUT SEMINAR

Date: *21st February*

Title: (1)

Time: *10 am – 4 pm*

Venue: (2)

Topic of extra workshop: (3)

Amount payable in advance: (4) £..... *per person*

2

**Conversation Three
(Questions 9 – 12)**

- Look at the notes below.
- You will hear a recorded message about a job vacancy.

Position: *Manufacturing Administrator*
 Responsible to: **(9)**
 Candidates should preferably be qualified in **(10)**
*The person appointed will need to be **(11)** in their relations with other people.*
 Salary: **(12)**

**PART TWO
Questions 13 – 22**

**Section One
(Questions 13 – 17)**

- You will hear five short recordings. Five people are talking about a problem that occurred.
- For each recording, decide what each speaker is talking about.
- Write one letter (**A – H**) next to the number of the recording.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- You will hear the five recordings twice.

- | | | | |
|----|-------|----------|---------------------------------|
| 13 | ..... | A | losing a business card |
| 14 | ..... | B | taking the wrong equipment |
| 15 | ..... | C | arriving late for a meeting |
| 16 | ..... | D | forgetting an address |
| 17 | ..... | E | misunderstanding a message |
| | | F | missing a presentation |
| | | G | forgetting to make a phone call |
| | | H | taking the wrong documents |

**Section Two
(Questions 18 – 22)**

- You will hear another five recordings.
- For each recording, decide what the speaker is doing.
- Write one letter (**A – H**) next to the number of the recording.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- You will hear the five recordings twice.

- | | | | |
|----|-------|----------|-------------------------|
| 18 | ..... | A | making a complaint |
| 19 | ..... | B | confirming information |
| 20 | ..... | C | giving instructions |
| 21 | ..... | D | changing an arrangement |
| 22 | ..... | E | requesting information |
| | | F | making a recommendation |
| | | G | giving an invitation |
| | | H | requesting advice |

Turn Over ▶ 5

PART THREE
Questions 23 – 30

- You will hear a radio interview with José Martínez, the Director of Pizza Rapida, a pizza delivery chain in Spain.
- For each question **23 – 30**, mark one letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 José Martínez became successful by

- A** taking over a well-known competitor.
- B** establishing an innovative retail business.
- C** gaining a reputation for high quality.

24 Before José Martínez set up his pizza delivery service, he

- A** tested samples on potential clients.
- B** handed out product questionnaires.
- C** assessed demand in different areas.

25 According to José Martínez, the Spanish fast food business

- A** is different from that of the U.S.
- B** has slowed slightly in its rate of growth.
- C** employs an increasing number of women.

26 José Martínez wants his trainee managers to

- A** develop a competitive attitude.
- B** try out some of the shop-floor jobs.
- C** spend some time working abroad.

27 José Martínez believes that at first people invested in Pizza Rapida because they

- A** were attracted by what the company offered.
- B** saw that the shares were performing well.
- C** thought food companies were a safe investment.

6

28 José Martínez left the first company he worked for because it

- A** set the staff impossible targets.
- B** offered insufficient incentives.
- C** provided inadequate support.

29 José Martínez finds that popular sports events

- A** are good places to advertise his service.
- B** raise brand awareness through team sponsorship.
- C** increase public demand for his products.

30 What does José Martínez plan to do in the future?

- A** develop a chain of restaurants
- B** set up a franchise operation
- C** expand into the frozen food market

You now have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to your Answer Sheet.

7

LISTENING ANSWER KEY

Part One

- 1 SUCCESSFUL SELLING
- 2 (THE) CENTRAL HOTEL
- 3 PROFIT MARGIN(S)
- 4 (£)40/FORTY
- 5 (LASER/LAZER) PRINTER
- 6 DISPATCH/DESPATCH COMPANY
- 7 (ANY) CABLES
- 8 (A) DISCOUNT
- 9 (THE) PLANT MANAGER
- 10 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
- 11 FLEXIBLE
- 12 NEGOTIABLE

Part Two

- 13 F
- 14 H
- 15 G
- 16 C
- 17 E
- 18 F
- 19 C
- 20 E
- 21 H
- 22 B

Part Three

- 23 B
- 24 A
- 25 B
- 26 B
- 27 A
- 28 B
- 29 C
- 30 C

TAPESCRIPT

PART ONE. QUESTIONS 1 TO 12.

Conversation One. Questions 1 to 4.

- M: Apex Business Centre. How may I help you?
- F: Hello. I'm calling about the seminar next week.
- M: Erm, which one? We have at least three on next week. Do you remember the name?
- F: No, I, er ... wait a minute, I know it's on the twenty-first of February.
- M: Oh, yes, madam, that would be Successful Selling. It's a very popular seminar.
- F: That's the one! Now, can you tell me when and where it is, please?
- M: Certainly. It's being run from 10 till 4, and it's being held at the Central Hotel. It's next to the University.
- F: Oh, yes, I know where that is.
- M: Now, could I also mention an additional session we're offering on the day? There's a workshop on profit margins starting at four-thirty after the main seminar.
- F: Oh, that might be useful ... but I have a meeting to go to ... anyway, how much is it?
- M: There's no charge for the additional session. The day costs a hundred and twelve pounds for each participant. I can reserve a place for you now, if you like. We do need to have forty pounds as a deposit, and the balance on the day.
- F: Yes, please. My name's ...

Conversation Two. Questions 5 to 8.

- F: Good morning. Hills PC Supplies.
- M: Yes, hello. I want to speak to David Hills
- F: I'm afraid he's away today. Can I take a message?

- M: Well, ok. Tell him it's James Firth, from Allen and Brown.
- F: Certainly.
- M: I'm really not happy at all. We ordered a laser printer from you last month and...
- F: Let me just find the reference on that...ah yes, HPC02345 ... on the twelfth of March...
- M: Yes. Now, the first problem was the delivery. It came several days after you promised. I don't see why you use a despatch company if that's what happens.
- F: Oh dear. No.
- M: And then, when we took it out of the box, we found you'd sent the thing without any cables, so we couldn't even connect it up. If you think we're going to pay this invoice in full...
- F: Well, I am sorry, Mr Firth. I'll check what went wrong and I'll ask David to ring you. I'm sure he'll want to talk about a discount. Will you be in this afternoon?
- M: Yes. Well, good bye.

Conversation Three. Questions 9 to 12.

- F: Hello. Thank you for calling the Jefferson recruitment line. Here are details of our current job vacancies. First of all, we are looking for a manufacturing administrator to join a team led by the plant manager. This role involves monitoring all aspects of the production process, and will include some project work.
- For this position you should have some relevant experience and a recognised qualification in business administration would be an advantage. You need to be a good organiser, with excellent administrative skills. A high level of computer skills is essential. You must be able to work without

supervision, and must be flexible when working with others, as the position supports other managers. You should be able to work to tight deadlines.

The hours are 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. The salary will be negotiable. In addition we offer a benefits package including subsidised lunches, 23 days' holiday and health insurance.

PART TWO. QUESTIONS 13 to 22.

Section One. Questions 13 to 17

M: It was just so embarrassing, the whole thing. I mean, being late's one thing, and I had already got my secretary to phone through and leave a message to say I was running being schedule. But in the end I didn't get there at all ... and all the other managers were there to see the team show the project and its results. Oh well, that's how it goes, I guess...

F: Well, I'm certainly not going to forget that in a hurry! What a terrible mistake... It made the whole meeting pointless, really. I can't imagine what they thought of me, sitting there with the paperwork for another client. Very unprofessional. I mean, I could still tell them the relevant facts, but I couldn't show them the actual contract. I didn't put it in my briefcase last night.

M: What a lost opportunity. I should've made a proper note in my diary where I would have seen it instead of just on the back of an old envelope. Anyway, it's too late now. I just didn't remember and that's that. They'll have given the work to someone else by now... I'd promised to ring before midday if I was available. I really need to be better organised.

F: I was so busy preparing all the equipment for the presentation that I didn't notice the time passing. So then I asked reception to call me a taxi ... I was still checking the papers when they rang to say it had arrived ... but I couldn't believe it when he didn't know where the street was and drove all over the place ... they'd already started without me by the time I finally got there.

M: Well, I thought it was a bit strange at the time, but I just took down what I thought I heard on the machine, and then made out the order form accordingly. It wasn't till they called back to query the quantity that we realised just what I'd done. Still, we sorted it out before it was too late so it wasn't a disaster, after all.

Section Two. Questions 18 to 22

F: I guess the main weakness is with the image of some of the products. I complained about this last

year. With our present strategy, we could find ourselves having problems in the future. We need to turn the situation around, work the market to our advantage. What I'd suggest is a complete review of the way we're approaching the market. I think we should get everyone together and explore all the possibilities.

M: I'm very glad that you can come. I was worried that the invitations were so late that many key people wouldn't be able to make it. We do need your input – your information is important. I understand you're planning to come by train. The train service can be a bit of a problem, but if you go to Medford Central Station, it's a direct line. That'll take you to Tower Square – and if you give us a call when you arrive we'll send someone to collect you.

F: When I first read the report, I was very disappointed. Our results are well below target, in spite of using the consultants, and all the new strategies we've been applying. I can't understand it at all. In order to try and get clear what's going on, I'm going to need input from various sections. What I'd like from you, as soon as you can, is price comparisons for the different regions. I'll also need a report on how useful the consultants' advice was.

M: No, I mean they've given me everything I asked for, so I can't really complain about that. They even invited me to come over and check the figures for myself. But I'd rather try to go through them here with you, if you could spare the time. Perhaps you could tell me what you think would be the best thing to do. I'd be really interested in your views. Your experience means you must have dealt with this type of problem before.

F: I just thought I ought to let you know, that following the discussion we had last week about staffing levels, I took your recommendation to the Board. You've probably heard already that we agreed that we do need to create a new Area Manager's position. I just wanted to let you know officially that it had been authorised. So now we can contact the recruitment agency and ask them to start looking around. They might have somebody on their books already.

PART THREE. QUESTIONS 23 to 30.

F: Good evening and welcome to Business People. We are fortunate to have as our guest tonight José Martínez, the founder and Director of Pizza Rapida. José was brought up in America and started his working life there. Now he is one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Europe. How did he achieve this? Well, he began his rise to success in Europe when he launched his pizza delivery chain

from a small shop in the Spanish capital, Madrid, 10 years ago. By the late-nineties he had succeeded in expanding the business to over 400 outlets and in doing so, he has almost transformed the eating habits of the nation. As a result of this success, he has recently been able to buy out his main competitor and today, Pizza Rapida is well-known for producing top-quality food at reasonable prices. José is now one of the wealthiest men in Spain.

José, welcome to our studio.

M: Thank you.

F: Now, did you do lots of market research before you set up your pizza delivery service?

M: Well, not really. But I did do some basic research to get the product itself right by giving some away to teenagers in the neighbourhood. I kept experimenting with the key ingredients until they all thought the pizzas were great.

F: But surely Spain isn't traditionally a fast food market, so why did you think a pizza home delivery service would be successful?

M: Well, I just thought that the same trends which had caused the fast-food revolution in the US were at work in Spain. For example, more and more women were joining the labour market, leaving them less time to shop and cook, so families were beginning to think of fast food as an attractive alternative to home cooking. The sector grew incredibly quickly in the first few years. It's a little steadier now – still very healthy though.

F: Great! So you must need an increasing number of staff - but what do you look for in your managers?

M: I try to follow the American system and make sure my people get experience at all levels of the business. I don't want managers to come straight from university to the office without doing the basic jobs in the company first.

F: Pizza Rapida was floated on the Stock Exchange in 1998. Was that a success, too?

M: Yes, it was amazing!

F: Why do you think Pizza Rapida attracted so much investment?

M: I think initially it was largely because the basic theory of home delivery pizzas was new, easy for the general public to understand, and fun. Once we were established, the shares started to take off. And I'm happy to say that we've been the best performer on the stock market for two years and profits were up again by 45% last year.

F: What background did you have, or training, to lead to this amazing success?

M: Sales basically. I started my working life as a salesman for a soap company in America. After the initial three month training period, I managed to exceed the annual target they had given me, but I was so disgusted by the tiny bonus I was offered that I resigned and joined a competitor. Ten years later, they sent me to Spain to run their sales and marketing operation.

F: Does any aspect of the Spanish lifestyle help you to promote your products?

M: Well, Spaniards are very keen on football, as you know, and I think you have to be constantly aware of all possible opportunities. So now, when top teams are playing, I hire extra staff to deliver pizzas for the fans to eat while they watch the match on television.

F: That sounds like a real winner! And what's next?

M: Well, one option I was looking at was franchising the operation but I decided I didn't want to lose control, so what I'm seriously considering now is producing frozen pizzas and other food to sell to supermarket and restaurant chains.

F: Well, I wish you every success with that and many thanks

TEST OF SPEAKING

Time: 14 minutes

PART	Format/Content	Time	Interaction Focus
1	Conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate. Giving personal information. Talking about present circumstances, past experiences and future plans, expressing opinions, speculating, etc.	About 3 minutes	The interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves and to express personal opinions.
2	A 'mini-presentation' by each candidate on a business theme. Organising a larger unit of discourse. Giving information and expressing and justifying opinions.	About 6 minutes	The candidates are given prompts which generate a short talk on a business-related topic.
3	Two-way conversation between candidates followed by further prompting from the interlocutor. Expressing and justifying opinions, speculating, comparing and contrasting, agreeing and disagreeing, etc.	About 5 minutes	The candidates are presented with a discussion on a business-related topic. The interlocutor extends the discussion with prompts on related topics.

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS**Part One**

In the first part of the test, the interlocutor addresses each candidate in turn and asks first general, then more business-related questions. Candidates are not addressed in strict sequence. In this part of the test, candidates are being tested on their ability to talk briefly about themselves, to provide concise information on their home, interests and jobs, and to perform functions such as agreeing and disagreeing, and expressing preferences.

Part Two

The second part of the test is a 'mini-presentation'. In this part, each candidate is given a choice of three topics and has one minute to prepare a piece of extended speech lasting approximately one minute. After each candidate has spoken their partner is invited to ask a question about what has been said.

Part Three

The third part of the test is a conversation between the candidates. The interlocutor gives them a topic to discuss. The candidates are asked to speak together for about three minutes. The interlocutor will support the conversation if appropriate and then ask further questions related to the main theme.

Preparing for the Speaking Paper

Candidates should be familiar with the paired assessment as discussed in BEC Preliminary.

Students need to practise exchanging personal and non-personal information; at Vantage level it may be possible for students to practise talking about themselves in pairs with or without prompts (such as written questions). However, prompt materials are necessary for Parts Two and Three, and students could be encouraged to design these themselves or may be provided with specially prepared sets. In small classes, students could discuss authentic materials as a group prior to engaging in pairwork activities. Such activities familiarise students with the types of interactive skills involved in asking and providing factual information, such as: speaking clearly, formulating questions, listening carefully and giving precise answers.

In the 'mini-presentation' candidates are being asked to show an ability to talk for an extended period (approximately one minute). Discussion activities as well as giving short talks or presentations should help to develop this skill.

In the final discussion in the Vantage Speaking test, candidates are also being tested on their ability to express opinions, compare and contrast, concede points and possibly reach a conclusion (although it is perfectly acceptable for candidates to agree to differ). Any discussion activities on a business theme that encourage students to employ these skills will be beneficial. Group or class discussions are valuable ways of developing these skills.

Task Sheet 2

A: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Preparing for a job interview

- Studying the job advertisement
- Finding out about the company
-
-

B: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Deciding whether to attend a conference

- Venue
- Speakers
-
-

C: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Developing new products

- Market Research
- Costs Involved
-
-

BEC Vantage – PART TWO

Task Sheet 1

A: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Selecting applicants for a job

- Work Experience
- Personal Qualities
-
-

B: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Choosing a new supplier

- Prices and Discounts
- Reputation
-
-

C: WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN...?

Aiming to improve production quality

- Up-to-date equipment
- Staff Training
-
-

BEC Vantage – PART TWO

Foreign Business Trip

Your company is attending a trade fair in a foreign country for the first time.

You have been asked to help with the preparations for the trip.

Discuss the situation together, and decide:

- what travel and accommodation arrangements you will need to make before the trip
- which kinds of business customs in the foreign country it would be useful to know about, and how to find out about these before the trip

BEC Vantage - PART THREE

ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING

Candidates are assessed on their own performance and not in relation to each other, according to the following analytical criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. These criteria are interpreted at Vantage level. Assessment is based on performance in the whole test and is not related to particular parts of the test.

Both examiners assess the candidates. The Assessor applies detailed, analytical scales, and the Interlocutor applies a Global Achievement Scale which is based on the analytical scales.

Grammar and Vocabulary

This refers to range and accuracy as well as the appropriate use of grammatical and lexical forms. At BEC Vantage level, a range of grammar and vocabulary is needed to deal with the tasks. At this level candidates should be accurate enough, and use sufficiently appropriate vocabulary, to convey their intended meanings.

Discourse Management

This refers to the coherence, extent and relevance of each candidate's individual performance. Contributions should be adequate to deal with the BEC Vantage level tasks. At times, candidates' utterances may be inappropriate in length.

Pronunciation

This refers to the candidate's ability to produce comprehensible utterances. At BEC Vantage level, meanings are conveyed through the appropriate use of stress, rhythm, intonation and clear individual sounds, although there may be occasional difficulty for the listener.

Interactive Communication

This refers to the candidate's ability to take an active part in the development of the discourse. At BEC Vantage level, candidates should be sensitive to turn-taking and sustain the interaction by initiating and responding appropriately. Hesitation may, at times, demand patience of the listener.