

English for Business

Level 4

Past Papers 2005

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Past Papers 2005

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There was no Series 1 in 2005

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SERIES 3 EXAMINATION 2005
ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 4

(Code No: 4041)

FRIDAY 10 JUNE

Instructions to Candidates

- (a) *The time allowed for this examination is 3 hours.*
 - (b) *Answer **all 4** questions.*
 - (c) *All questions carry equal marks.*
 - (d) *All answers must be clearly and correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.*
 - (e) *While formal accuracy is expected, adequate and appropriate communication is essential and candidates must judge the length of their answers in this light.*
 - (f) *When you finish, check your work carefully.*
 - (g) *The use of standard English dictionaries and cordless non-programmable calculators is permitted. Candidates whose first language is not English may use a bilingual dictionary.*
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QUESTION 1(a)

Read the following article and **answer the questions** that follow it. Credit will be given for answering the questions in your own words and demonstrating comprehension, rather than quoting directly from the text.

Maintaining your Balance

The challenges faced by business today are more than just financial – they encompass questions of leadership, long-term goals, risk management ... the list goes on.

How can you be certain that your business is going to get the results for which you strive? Many successful organisations have used the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to ensure that they have the framework and processes in place in order to execute their strategy successfully.

The Balanced Scorecard has emerged as a powerful new way to manage and execute organisational strategy. According to a recent survey by Bain and Co the BSC is used in approximately 60 per cent of organisations around the world.

Of these, the organisations that are able to successfully manage and execute their strategy using the BSC – Strategy Focused Organisations – are getting breakthrough results rapidly. The ability of these organisations to manage and execute strategy using the Balanced Scorecard as an integral part of their management system is what led to these results.

The Balanced Scorecard Approach

The idea behind the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which was introduced in a 1992 *Harvard Business Review* article, is that successful implementation of an organisation's strategy requires that strategy must be translated into terms that can be understood and acted upon – by all employees of the organisation.

The Balanced Scorecard is a prescriptive system of linked objectives, measures, targets and initiatives that collectively describe the strategy of an organisation and how that strategy can be achieved. An organisation's Balanced Scorecard identifies both financial and non-financial measures to assess strategic performance.

Following the key premise that measurement motivates, the Balanced Scorecard uses the language of measurement to more clearly define the meaning of strategic concepts like quality, customer satisfaction and growth. A scorecard that accurately describes the strategy can serve as the organising framework for the management system.

Organisations that were early adopters of the BSC have shown impressive results to date. Companies such as Halliburton/Brown & Root Chemical (now Chase Manhattan) Bank, Hilton Hotels, Saatchi & Saatchi, DuPont and numerous others in both the public and private sectors have achieved breakthrough results by executing their strategies using the Balanced Scorecard.

Using the Balanced Scorecard successfully

Executing strategy is difficult. Not many organisations – less than one in 10 by some accounts – successfully implement their strategy. Those organisations that have beaten these odds and successfully executed their strategies using the Balanced Scorecard have one important thing in common; they have reinvented and refocused every part of their management system to focus on strategy.

These organisations created a performance management programme that put strategy at the centre. They have made strategy execution a core competency and strategic thinking is now at the core of their management process.

Integrating the Balanced Scorecard and quality programmes

Many organisations are already embarked on quality initiatives such as Six Sigma, Total Quality Management, Baldrige National Quality Program and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model. People wonder about the relationship of the BSC to their existing quality efforts and programmes. Is the BSC competitive, a replacement or something that must be done in addition to quality programmes? The answer is simple.

The Balanced Scorecard and quality programmes share several important characteristics that make them appear quite similar. Both use measurements to promote a dialogue about performance improvement, both strive to act as catalysts for change and both require continuous feedback and learning processes. They both require, for success, that management be deeply committed to improving organisational performance.

The two programmes, however, approach performance enhancement from different perspectives; they have different origins and seek to delivery different specific benefits.

The BSC is not a replacement to quality programmes. The two are highly compatible, and can enhance and leverage each other. The BSC enhances quality programmes and gives them focus and clear linkages to improvements in strategic customer and financial outcomes. Quality programmes, in turn, provide a systematic discipline for improving critical business processes that enhance customer value propositions and increase productivity.

(Adapted from an article in *Excellence 2003*)

QUESTION 1(a) CONTINUED

- (a) What do the authors understand by a strategy focused organisation? (3 marks)
- (b) Explain in your own words what the following figures represent. (1 mark)
- (i) 60% (para 3)
 - (ii) less than one in 10 (para 9)
- (c) What is the underlying principle of the Balanced Scorecard? (2 marks)
- (d) Are the following statements True or False? Justify your answer. (4 marks)
- (i) The Balanced Scorecard is quite similar to quality programmes.
 - (ii) There is no benefit in having a quality programme and the BSC.
- (e) What two major factors mentioned in the article can cause the Balanced Scorecard approach to fail? (2 marks)
- (f) Explain the following expressions in your own words. (3 marks)
- (i) breakthrough results (para 4)
 - (ii) a prescriptive system (para 6)
 - (iii) catalysts for change (para 12)
- (15 marks)

QUESTION 1(b)

Situation

As the Chief Executive of a large company you have decided to introduce the Balanced Scorecard approach. You decide to hold a meeting with your senior managers to explain your decision and the action to be taken.

Task

Write a memo to the managers informing them of the meeting. Give a brief overview of the BSC and list some the advantages you expect to accrue.

(10 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You work in the Customer Relations department of 'Consumer Watch', an organisation that defends the interests of consumers. You have received the following letter from one of your members asking for your assistance.

24 The Oaks
Shepton Mallet
Kent
CT10 9BX

8 June 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

I hope you will be able to help me with a problem I recently had with a local shop, Florrie's Flowers of 225 The High Street, Shepton Mallet CT11 8BZ.

I entered this shop yesterday to purchase some flowers. Unfortunately, my three-year-old daughter accidentally knocked over one of the vases they had for sale and broke it. The shop assistant called the manager who was extremely rude to me when I pointed out the vase should not have been left on the floor where it was not safe. He insisted I paid £38.99 which was the price on the label on the vase.

I am very unhappy about his attitude and I wonder whether I should have paid the full price for the vase as it was partly the shop's fault that it got broken.

Can you advise me as to what I can do?

Yours faithfully

Mrs Jean O'Connor

(Member 21558)

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

You have the following conversation with Hussain McDoom of your legal department:

You:	You've read Mrs O'Connor's letter, Hussain. It doesn't seem likely to me that we can help her.
Hussain:	Why do you say that?
You:	Well, her little girl was clearly at fault and I imagine the shop had one of those notices saying 'all breakages must be paid for'.
Hussain:	That's true, but it doesn't mean there's nothing we can do.
You:	You mean we could complain about the manager's attitude? I suppose that's better than nothing.
Hussain:	Well, we can certainly do that but I was thinking of something else. From what Mrs O'Connor wrote I'm sure she paid the full retail value of the vase.
You:	I don't see what you're getting at. Surely you have to pay for items you break?
Hussain:	Of course! But you only have to pay for the actual monetary loss to the retailer. In other words what the item cost the shop not the price it was selling it for.
You:	I never realised that! With the mark ups these shops have it could make quite a difference.
Hussain:	Exactly! So we need to point out the legal situation to the manager and ask for proof of how much the vase cost him so he can refund the difference to our member.
You:	Thanks a lot, Hussain. I'll get on to it straight away.

Task

- (a) **Write a letter** to Mrs O'Connor sympathising with her situation and informing her you are pursuing the matter on her behalf. Explain the legal position to her.

You may assume letterhead paper is used, but lay out the rest of the letter appropriately.
(12½ marks)

- (b) **Write a letter** to the manager of the flower shop as per your conversation with Hussain.

You may assume letterhead paper is used, but lay out the rest of the letter appropriately.
(12½ marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 3(a)

Situation

You work in the UK office of a multinational firm. An Italian colleague has been transferred to your office and, as she is likely to be in the country for some time, she is thinking of purchasing a house or a flat. She asks you for advice on the matter and you come across the following article:

Freehold or Leasehold?

When you buy a freehold property you are buying the bricks and mortar as well as the land in which the property stands. However, with a leasehold property you are buying the right to live in the property with the freehold held by a third party. You buy only a lease for a set number of years – often 99 years. The freeholder will usually have a say over the insuring and maintaining of the property.

Most houses in the UK are freehold and most flats are subject to a lease. The answer to whether you buy freehold or leasehold is, therefore, usually decided for you when you decide whether it is a flat you wish to buy or a house. However, you will occasionally come across leasehold houses and, more rarely, freehold flats so it is worth examining in a little more detail.

First let's look at leasehold houses. You may find the odd property that is subject to a lease but these are often long, say, originally 995 years. You may have a lease of 950 years remaining. This should not concern you and you can often negotiate to buy the freehold when buying the property. Freehold flats are less common but do occasionally occur and you should keep well clear of them. A freehold flat is almost impossible to mortgage and has limited resale potential. The lease itself is important for flats as it sets out the responsibilities of the individual lessees and the freeholder. It will say who is responsible for maintaining the common areas, the insurance arrangements and how any maintenance charges are set. Without a lease, disputes could arise (for example, who pays for the upkeep of the common garden areas, who pays for maintenance of the fences, who is responsible for repairs to the roof). It is usual that all the individual lessees jointly own the freehold and set up a management company to hold the freehold.

You will normally find that flats are subject to a lease for 99 or 125 years from a start date. If you need to raise finance to buy a flat you will find it almost impossible to raise such finance unless there is a reasonably long lease available. Most lenders will only mortgage a flat if there is an outstanding lease at the end of the mortgage term of at least 30/35 years.

So, broadly speaking, if you consider buying a flat you should look for a leasehold property and if you are looking for a house you will normally find these are freehold. Leasehold houses are satisfactory providing the lease is long and you have it checked by your solicitor.

(Abridged from an article in *LandlordsData.com*)

Task

You decide to **summarise the main points of the article** to make your colleague aware of the factors she should take into account before making any decision.

(12½ marks)

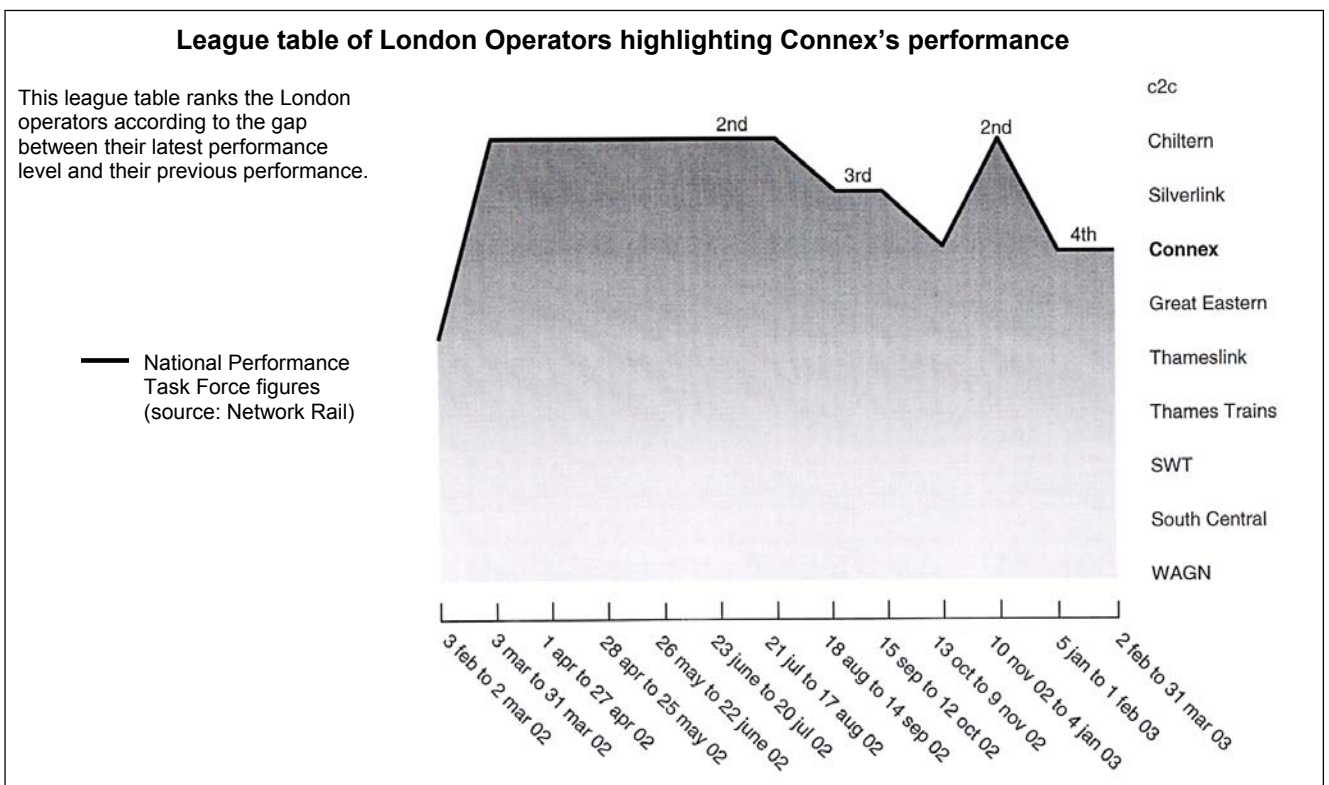
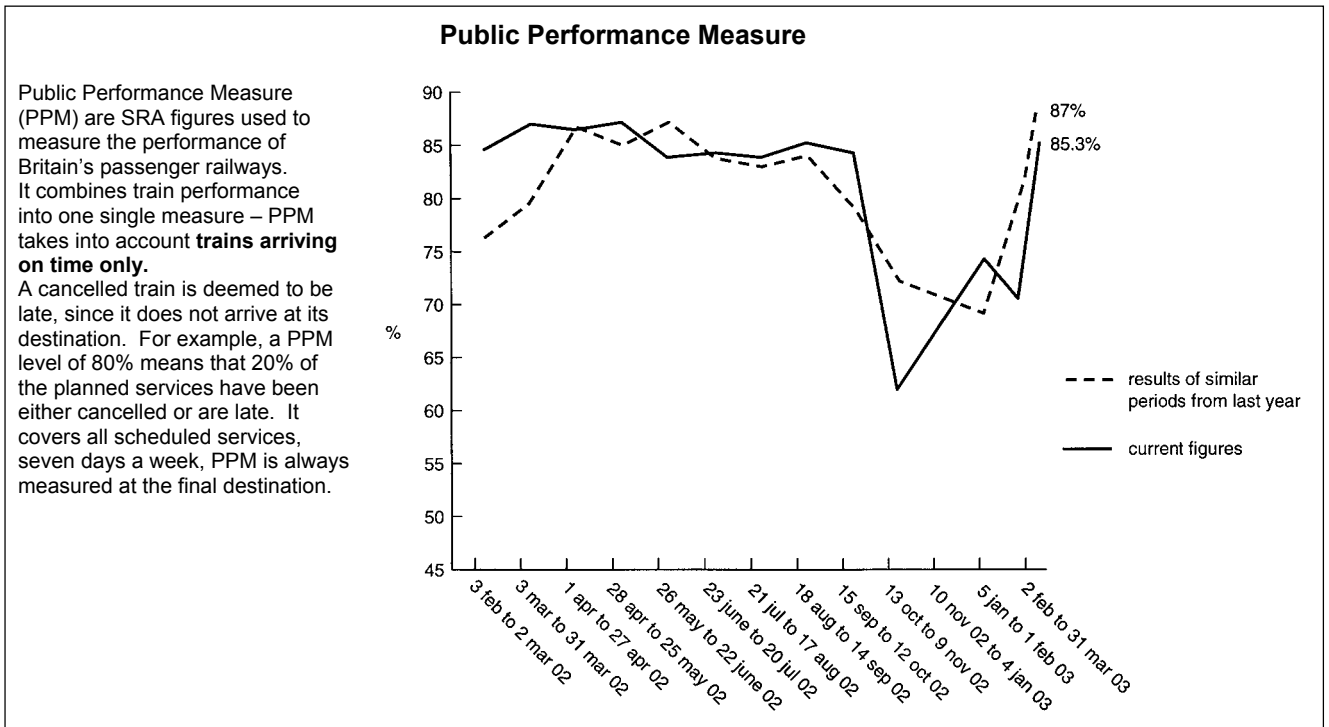
QUESTION 3(b)

Situation

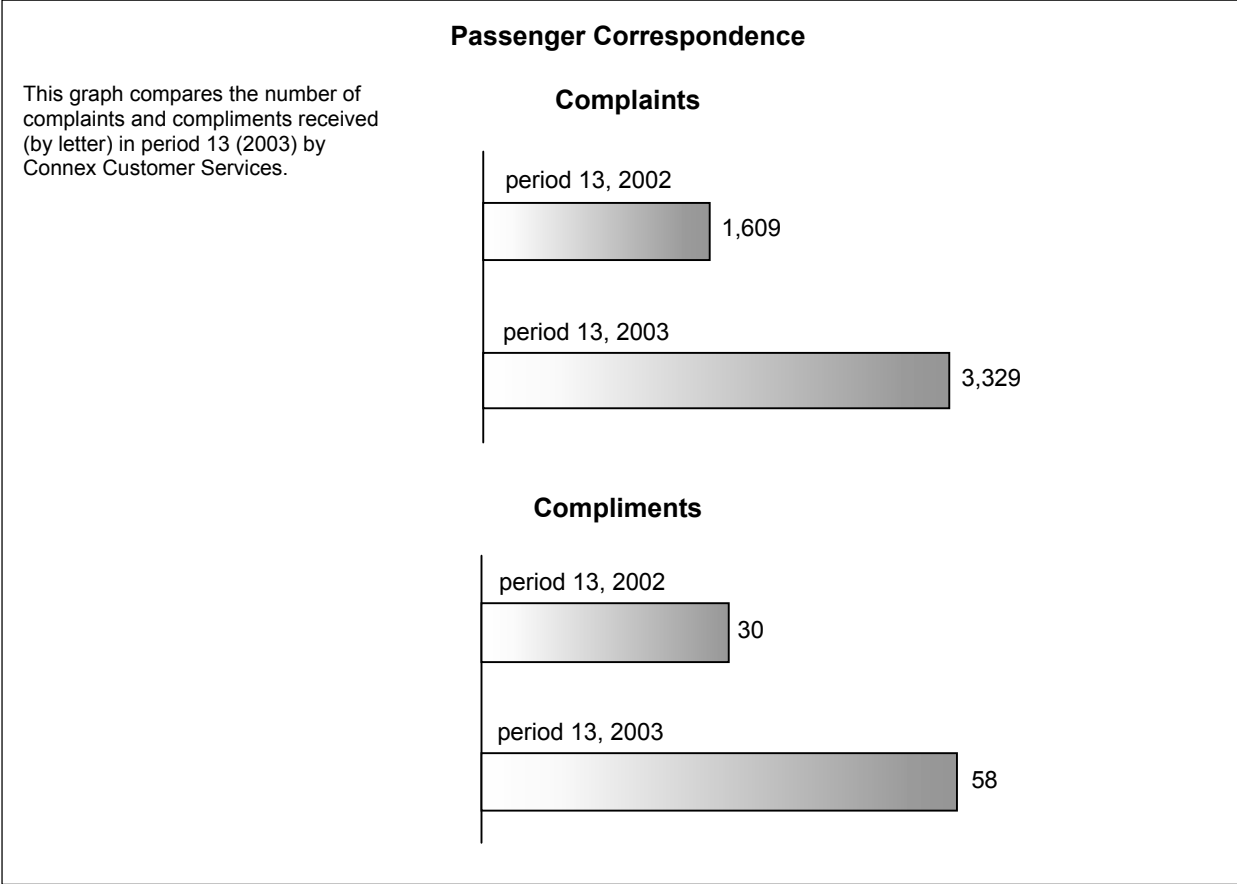
You are a researcher in the transport field. You have been asked to investigate the performance of one of the London train operators, Connex.

Task

Use the information in the three graphs below to **write a short report** on Connex's performance over the period in question.



QUESTION 3(b) CONTINUED



(12½ marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 4

On the basis of the two following openings and according to the instructions accompanying them, continue and complete each extract in an appropriate way.

Some or all of the key words and phrases may be, but do not have to be, used in your answer.

(a) **Situation**

You work for the marketing department of “High in the Sky”, a company that takes people on short helicopter trips. It is now possible to book these trips on-line.

Task

Write a section on the on-line booking procedure for your brochure ‘Booking a flight’.

Key words and phrases:

pleased to announce... / Internet booking service / book a flight / number of guests / simple and secure / on day of trip / confirmation number / ticket collection

(12½ marks)

(b) **Situation**

You work for the Hotel Moderna and have been asked to prepare a welcome letter which all guests will receive.

Task

Write the welcome letter. You may assume that headed paper is used. Include invented information about the following key areas:

Key information

- friendliness
- business and leisure visitors
- location
- well-equipped bedrooms
- food and drink
- leisure activities
- conference facilities

(12½ marks)

(Total 25 marks)

SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2005
ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 4

(Code No: 4041)

WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER

Instructions to Candidates

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-

QUESTION 1(a)

Read the following article and **answer the questions** that follow it. Credit will be given for answering the questions in your own words and demonstrating comprehension, rather than quoting directly from the text.

PLUGGED INTO INDIA

Suddenly, the idea of India as a leading power in the 21st Century is gaining currency. Goldman Sachs forecast that India's rate of growth will continue above five per cent for several decades, exceeding China and Russia.

Most experts agree that India will enjoy continuous growth driven by a young, ambitious, technology-savvy middle class. It's hard to argue.

The UK is building relationships with the big four emerging nations of Brazil, Russia, India and China. But does India really need special attention? Start with the bond of history, add the 1.3 million Britons with origins in India, a common language and the Indian economy roaring away, what is there to fix?

In short, plenty. For decades strategically vital relationships between India and the UK atrophied. The political relationship was strained, import substitution and the licence raj in India kept trade levels low. Academic and educational links with the UK gave ground to those with the US.

Some of this lost ground has been retrieved. The frequency and the substance of ministerial contact have begun to transform our political and trade relations. The pace of change is heartening. Both India and the UK agree that the relationship needs a further boost across the board including knowledge exchange.

The future prosperity of India with more than a billion population depends on the skill and energy of about 10 million highly educated people aged between 20 and 35. It is with these young professionals that the British Council in India is connecting today. We have an unmatched reputation throughout India for promoting education and knowledge sharing. Our research tells us that the one thing India's young aspirational class want to do is develop themselves to succeed in the global marketplace.

Interest in the UK is reviving. The number of Indian students studying in the UK has tripled in five years: from 5,000 to more than 14,000. We estimate that within three years new students arriving in the UK will draw close to the numbers going to the US, provided that our colleges and universities are able to maintain and, in some cases, improve the quality of support that they give to students from abroad.

This summer we will launch an online service that will initially be offered to our 100,000 library members as an upgrade. It has journals and books online, English language self-access material, and study modules to help with personal and professional skills development. Later in the year those people throughout India who can't reach our libraries will be able to become members from their home or place of work. Conditions are improving for people who want to study mainly online – with support from a tutor at a distance – in our centre in New Delhi, by means of video-conference. The demand for this kind of programme will grow as universities develop better content and employer resistance to qualification earned online recedes. As a leading educational journalist wrote after interviewing students following these new programmes in our Delhi centre: 'We're looking at a future that has already arrived.'

(UKConnections summer 2004)

QUESTION 1(a) CONTINUED

- (a) Why is the article called 'Plugged into India'? (2 marks)
- (b) Explain in your own words what the following figures represent.
- (i) five per cent (1 mark)
 - (ii) 5,000 (1 mark)
 - (iii) 10 million (1 mark)
- (c) In what areas did the relationship between India and the UK suffer in the past? (2 marks)
- (d) What must UK universities do to continue attracting students from India? (1 mark)
- (e) What factors will cause the demand for on-line learning to grow? (2 marks)
- (f) What is meant by 'We're looking at a future that has already arrived'? (2 marks)
- (g) Explain the following expressions in your own words.
- (i) technology-savvy (paragraph 2)
 - (ii) across the board (paragraph 5)
 - (iii) aspirational class (paragraph 6)
- (3 marks)
- (15 marks)

QUESTION 1(b)

Situation

You are the Director of Training of a large company with branches in New Delhi and other Indian towns and cities. You want your training managers to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the British Council and the UK.

Task

Write a memo to the managers giving an overview of the opportunities available and suggesting how to incorporate them into their training programmes. Tell them they need to report back to you on this.

(10 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You are the Assistant Manager of the Business Advisory Service. Your boss, Patrick Connolly (PC), holds a meeting with you to discuss the next seminar you have to organise.

PC:	We need to arrange our next half day seminar for people thinking of starting their own business. Any ideas?
You:	Well, I've thought of a title – "How to start and grow a successful business". What do you think?
PC:	Not bad, but I think we need to get the word 'profitable' in there somewhere. After all, everyone wants to make a profit!
You:	OK, I'll amend the title. Now I was wondering where the event should take place. There's always our conference room, I suppose.
PC:	That won't do – it's far too small. We need to get at least 80 people to attend. You'll have to find a suitable hotel – and make sure it's got its own car park. We don't want a repeat of last time when half the participants received parking tickets!
You:	No, that was most embarrassing. I'll make sure the hotel knows what to provide, including refreshments.
PC:	You also need to prepare a letter for the participants covering every aspect of the day so they know what to expect. The timetable, who the guest speaker is, the subject of his talk, how to get there ...
You:	Where to get their delegate badge and information pack ...
PC:	There'll be an opportunity to meet other business support organisations and, of course, to network with other delegates
You:	There's a lot to get into that letter! Plus of course the very important fact that it's free.
PC:	Exactly! So make sure you cover everything and that it's clear. Ah, I've just thought – supposing they book and discover later they can't come?
You:	They'll have to email or telephone me to let me know so we can offer their place to someone else. Is there anything else I should include?
PC:	Yes, the date! Make it the 5th of next month and make sure you tell them everything they need to know.
You:	Right! I've got the message!

Task

- (a) **Write an email** to the manager of the Traveller's Hotel, whom you know well, setting out your requirements for the seminar and requesting a quote. (9 marks)
- (b) **Write a standard letter** to the participants of the seminar giving them all the information they require.

You may assume letterhead paper is used, but lay out the rest of the letter appropriately. You do not need to supply addressee information as this will be added later by mail merge.

(16 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 3(a)

Situation

You work in the marketing department of an export company. The company website is performing poorly and the Marketing Manager is researching why this might be. You come across the following article:

International web marketing: are exporters getting it right?

What is rare, when you carry out any form of Internet search, is to find a company website that allows you easy access to the information you want, presented in a way which is clear and comprehensive. For some strange reason, and unlike most corporate brochures, companies seem to end up with a website which appears to have been put together if not by an alien, then by somebody with little understanding of basic communication skills.

Perhaps companies have got away with this in the past because at least the language of the Internet was primarily English (89% in 1997). But things are changing and English now represents something in the region of just 40% of all web communication.

Just how effective UK exporters are at web marketing is falling under the spotlight of a new research study being undertaken by the International Web Export Research Unit at the University of Brighton.

Of course, how effective a website is becomes far more polarised when it is intended to be a sales and marketing tool in an international arena. It must concern every company with growing international business that potential trade is lost because their only means of global communications, their website, falls short of what is required. The unit estimates that over £50,000,000 worth of sales are lost each year to competitor countries through inadequacies in websites. Since 1998 the percentage of export websites in Germany and France offering four or more languages has increased from 9% to 49%.

Initial ground work leading up to the Brighton University study suggested that, of 2,000 companies looked at, only 1% had made an effort to acknowledge the language, let alone the culture, of the countries they were targeting.

The research study being undertaken by the International Web Export Research Unit at the University of Brighton involves recording, measuring and quantifying the reaction to exporters' websites of 200 MBA graduates. These graduates are studying in the UK but are from overseas and represent European, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern countries. The results will include observations covering the participants as a whole and, for the 40+ export companies that take part, there is the added bonus of receiving specific comments on their website completely free.

International website development and marketing is a subject that should be top of mind for every company trading internationally, and yet so few seem to have focused on it. The International Web Export Research Unit at the University of Brighton found that the current web approach of 75% of the companies involved in a pilot study leading up to the main research programme, would impair their global trade potential. Perhaps companies limit themselves to in-house resource when what is clearly required is external input of the highest level. If they go outside it is often to a supplier with limited knowledge of the real world and exposure to it. Ironically most companies would not dream of handling legal matters internally, and go outside for accountancy advice, and yet try to handle for themselves the increasingly complex issue of international web marketing.

QUESTION 3 (a) CONTINUED

Even when a company has developed a website that meets the communications requirements in terms of language and culture for customers in countries with which they trade, the job is not totally done. The percentage of web users who search in their first language, rather than English, is 87%. Therefore the additional task of ensuring that all the international search engine requirements are in place, so that those potential companies can find them in the first place, also needs to be looked at. Many UK-based companies will think that reasonable positions for their key words on English Google, MSN and Lycos etc., is enough, when in fact there is much to be done in that area.

Abridged from Export Focus Issue 20

Task

You decide to **summarise the main points of the article** to send to the Marketing Manager. Write 250 – 300 words.

(12½ marks)

QUESTION 3(b)

Situation

You work for the marketing department of an international food company.

Task

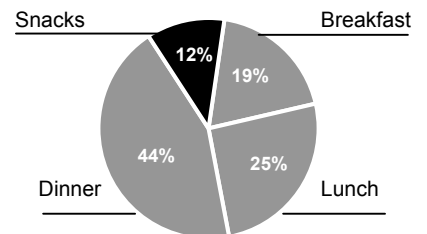
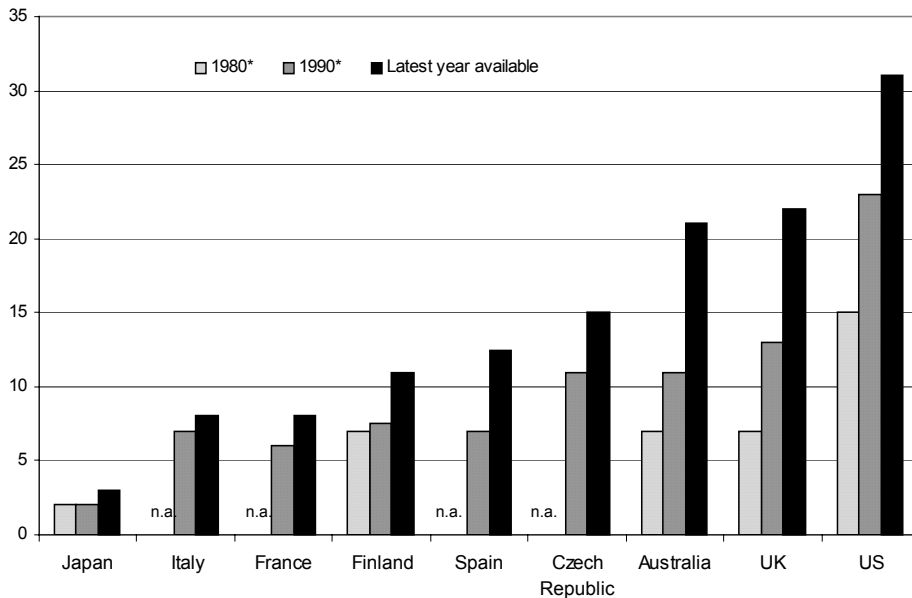
Use the information in the table and pie charts below to **write a short report** describing the changes in people's food consumption and suggesting the kind of product that could sell well.

Obesity rates among the adult population

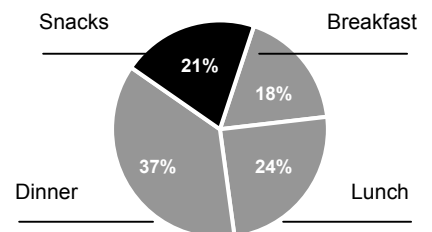
% of population with a body mass index (BMI) over 30

Changes in daily calorie intake in the US

1977-78 Total daily calories: 1,798



1994-96 Total daily calories: 2,003



Sources: OECD; JPMorgan; Morgan Stanley

* Or nearest years available

(12½ marks)

QUESTION 4

Assess the following situations and complete the tasks as instructed.

Some or all of the key words and phrases may be, but do not have to be, used in your answer.

(a) **Situation**

You work for an advertising agency which has been given the job of writing the text for a newspaper advertisement for a new colour printer.

Task

Write the advertisement.

Key words and phrases:

Launch / new XYZ colour printer / advantages / faster / light and flexible / on desk / easy to use / maintenance / special offer / short time / price / golden opportunity

(12½ marks)

(b) **Situation**

Your company has decided to emphasise its commitment to quality by hiring its first Quality Manager, Stephanie Henchoz. You have been asked to write a short portrait of Ms Henchoz for the company newsletter.

Task

Write the portrait.

Key words and phrases:

delighted to welcome / first Quality Manager / studied at / previously worked for / many years abroad / several languages / new ideas / improvements / hobbies / sports / induction programme / meet the staff

(12½ marks)

(Total 25 marks)

