



English for Commerce

Levels 1, 2, 3

Information Pack

Contents: Syllabus
 Sample Papers (Series 4 2001)

Short Syllabus

ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE (EFC) – Level 1

The examination is designed to test basic knowledge of the written language. Credit will be given for the appropriate use of complex sentences, punctuation and vocabulary, and for grammatical accuracy.

The examination will consist of three sections:

- (a) To write about 200 words on any one of six topics. The subject matter will be related to general topics of a simple commercial nature (40 marks)
- (b) To answer questions testing comprehension of a passage of about 300 words. The questions will require short written answers derived from the content of the passage (30 marks)
- (c) To write a letter of about 100 words based on given data. The subject of the letter will not be technical and the assignment will involve writing as a private individual or organisation to an organisation (30 marks)

Examination Requirements

A 2 hour examination. All questions are to be answered.

Notes

1 Candidates are allowed to take one dictionary into this examination which may be either English or foreign language/English; the Board cannot undertake to advise on which dictionaries to choose and candidates make the choice entirely at their own risk. Poor quality dictionaries may be misleading and candidates will lose time looking up words if they frequently have recourse to them.

2 A textbook, composed specifically for this examination, has been published – Preparing for English for Commerce, by David Davies and Douglas Pickett, publisher Prentice Hall (ISBN 0 13 697293 4).

Examiner's Reports, Model Answers and Past Question Papers can be purchased from the LCCIEB Customer Service Department.

ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE – Level 2

The examination is designed to test knowledge of the English language as a means of communication within a commercial or industrial context.

The written examination will consist of 3 sections:

- (a) To write about 300 words on any one of 6 subjects. The subject matter will be of a general commercial and/or commercial/industrial interest (40 marks)
- (b) To summarise a passage of about 400 words in no more than 120 words. The subject matter of the passage will be of a general commercial/industrial nature (30 marks)
- (c) To write a letter of 120-150 words based on given data. The assignment will involve writing in an official capacity to an organisation concerning a straightforward business transaction. (30 marks)

Examination Requirements

A 2½ hour examination. All questions are to be answered.

Notes

1 This level of examination goes beyond the groundwork laid at the First Level by testing more complex writing and understanding.

2 In the letter writing task, the examiners will accept a variety of current layouts, provided they are followed consistently.

3 Candidates are allowed to take one dictionary into this examination which may be either English or foreign language/English; the Board cannot undertake to advise on which dictionaries to choose and candidates make the choice entirely at their own risk. Poor quality dictionaries may be misleading and candidates will lose time looking up words if they frequently have recourse to them.

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Examiner's Reports, Model Answers and Past Question Papers can be purchased from the LCCIEB Customer Service Department.

Oral Test

Candidates whose mother tongue is not English are recommended to take the oral test in order to secure higher education recognition of their award. Details of the oral tests are available from the Board.

Oral Tests must be taken within 12 months of the written paper to be included on the certificate. Where administratively feasible, a compatible level of Spoken English for Industry and Commerce (SEFIC) may be taken in lieu, by Combined Entry Procedure. For details see separate SEFIC guide or contact the Board.

Centres are required to tape record a minimum of 6 oral tests per candidate entry (all candidates if the entry is fewer than 6) and to send these tapes to the Board for moderation along with the completed results forms.

ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE – Level 3

The examination is designed to test the candidate's knowledge of English and ability to use it efficiently and appropriately within a business context. Candidates are therefore required to display a knowledge of business practice and an ability to discuss commercial and economic issues.

The written examination will consist of 4 sections:

- (a) To write 400-500 words on any one of 6 topics requiring some knowledge of general commercial, business or industrial matters. Candidates may be asked to give their answers in the form of a report or memorandum etc. (25 marks)
- (b) To answer questions testing comprehension of a passage connected with general commercial, business or industrial affairs (25 marks)
- (c) To summarise a business passage of about 500 words in the candidate's own words in no more than 180 words (25 marks)
- (d) To write a letter as from an organisation to an individual concerning a specific transaction. This will involve some such task as giving an explanation of difficulties, requesting clarification, writing an apology, etc. The necessary background information will be given (25 marks)

Examination Requirements

A 3 hour examination. All questions are to be answered.

Notes

1 This examination will test, at a higher level, the linguistic skills and business knowledge tested at the Second Level.

2 Candidates are allowed to take one dictionary into this examination which may be either English or foreign language/English; the Board cannot undertake to advise on which dictionaries to choose and candidates make the choice entirely at their own risk. Poor quality dictionaries may be misleading and candidates will lose time looking up words if they frequently have recourse to them.

Examiner's Reports, Model Answers and Past Question Papers can be purchased from the LCCIEB Customer Service Department.

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SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2001

ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE

LEVEL 1

(Code No: 1042)

MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER

Instructions to Candidates

- (a) The time allowed for this examination is **2** hours.
 - (b) Answer **all 3** questions.
 - (c) All answers must be clearly and correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.
 - (d) Credit will be given for appropriate use of complex sentences, punctuation and vocabulary and for grammatical accuracy.
 - (e) When you finish, check your work carefully.
 - (f) 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

Write about 200 words on ONE of the following topics:

- (a) What are the advantages and disadvantages of living and working in a city?
- (b) Explain how the economy of your country or district is changing.
- (c) Describe some recent training you have had and say how good it was.
- (d) What improvements to public transport (for example, buses, trains, underground systems) in your area would help working people?
- (e) What advice would you give to a friend who wants to open a bookshop either in a small town or a university city?
- (f) "Even famous and successful companies need to advertise." Explain why you agree or disagree.

(40 marks)

QUESTION 2

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow it, using your own words where possible. Write your answers in complete sentences except for Question 'II.

TOURISM IN SPAIN

Tourism is now the second most important industry in the world. Why? In many countries, especially in the 1960s, peoples incomes increased. Many people received holiday pay for the first time. Also travelling became easier, and holiday companies began to sell cheap holidays in beautiful, quiet and sunny places.

British tourists bought these holidays. Their favourite place was Spain — particularly its Mediterranean coast. In the 1960s, 400,000 Britons took holidays there. They went for the good weather, low prices and quiet beaches. Spain's old villages were important to them too. Although the roads were not good, and there was very little entertainment, they were happy.

However, things changed quickly. Business people and the Spanish government wanted to earn more from tourists, so they provided more for them. They built hotels, apartments and houses. They improved some of the roads to make travelling easier. And to give them more to do at night, they built bars and discotheques. Of course this changed the quiet villages, but tourism was good for Spain's economy. It was so good that, by the 1970s, 3 million Britons went to Spain. Then there were new jobs in the construction and service industries.

By 1984, Spain welcomed 6.2 million Britons and 7.5 million by the end of the 1980s. In some areas, 70% of employment was then in tourism. So, on the sunny coast they built bigger and better hotels and luxury villas too. They also opened new motorways.

That sounds good, but there were problems. Spain had been too successful in attracting tourists. It was difficult to provide water for them all. With the tourists came litter, dirty beaches, pollution and crime. And the towns were congested with traffic. The beautiful coast now looked like a modern city. and the birds and animals disappeared.

Perhaps for these reasons fewer Britons went to Spain in the 1990s. There were also cheaper holidays in some other warm countries where the environment was better.

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

- 1 Which is the second most important world industry? (1 mark)
 - 2 Give 3 reasons why tourism grew in the 1960s. (3 marks)
 - 3 How many Britons went to Spain on holiday in the 1960s? (1 mark)
 - 4 Give 4 reasons why they went there. (4 marks)

 - 5 Name 4 things which the Spanish government and business people did to encourage tourism. (4 marks)
 - 6 How many British tourists went to Spain in the 1970s? (1 mark)
 - 7 In which 2 industries were there more jobs because of tourism? (2 marks)
 - 8 Which 3 things did Spanish people do for tourists in the 1980s? (3 marks)
 - 9 How many British tourists visited Spain by the end of the 1980s? (1 mark)
 - 10 Name 4 problems Spain had because of tourism. (4 marks)
- 11 Choose any 3 of the following definitions, and say which words from the passage they fit best:
- (a) earnings (paragraph 1)
 - (b) inexpensive (paragraph 1)
 - (c) made better; upgraded (paragraph 3)
 - (d) work; jobs (paragraph 4)
 - (e) expensive and comfortable (paragraph 4)

(6 marks)
(Total 30 marks)

QUESTION 3

As part of a business course, you and some other students have to write a project on a company which makes women's clothes.

You would like to tour the whole factory and take photographs if possible, and some students would like 20 minutes to interview a designer, a machinist and a salesperson.

Write a letter of about 100 words to the Public Relations Director of the clothing company asking if you can visit the factory. Explain the purpose of the visit, say what you would like to see and do, give the number of people in your group, and suggest possible dates and times.

You should make up suitable names and addresses.

(30 marks)

SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2001
ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE
LEVEL 2

(Code No: 2042)

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER



Instructions to Candidates

- (a) The time allowed for this examination is **2 hours 30 minutes**.
 - (b) Answer all **3** questions.
 - (a) All answers must be clearly and correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.
 - (d) Credit will be given for appropriate use of complex sentences, punctuation and vocabulary and for grammatical accuracy.
 - (e) When you finish, check your work carefully.
 - (f) 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

Write about 300 words on ONE of the following subjects:

- (a) What are the advantages of large-scale trading by big businesses?
- (b) Discuss what the economist means by “want” in relation to people’s requirements.
- (c) Essential business insurance.
- (d) Give your views on women with young children going out to work.
- (e) Outline some of the problems of the railways in your country and suggest ways to solve them.
- (f) Describe a busy market with which you are familiar.

(40 marks)

QUESTION 2

Carefully read the following passage, which contains about 400 words. Then, using your own words as far as possible write a summary of it in not more than 120 words. Finally, supply an appropriate title for your summary.

These days, having a company car is almost as common as, for example, owning a home computer, video cassette recorder, DVD player, or mobile phone. Yet for those who do have one it is a kind of powerful status symbol.

Job packages for people such as sales representatives right up to chief executives are made much more attractive when a car is provided. Naturally, the more senior the post, the bigger and better the car usually is.

It is a fact that not many people will tell complete strangers what salary they are earning, but they will talk with great pride about their company car being a two-litre GLX rather than an L.

When company cars were first brought on the scene, those who were fortunate to be offered them were told by their employers which car they would be given to drive on company business, which manufacturer would supply the cars, and what the colour of these vehicles would be. The question of choosing the car one would prefer did not arise.

Over the years this has changed and many employees are allowed to have a say in the type of vehicle they would like. Today, many employers give a list of car suppliers to drivers so that they can decide which car they would like. This list indicates which kind of car the employer has deemed appropriate for each job title.

This system gives company car users quite a considerable amount of power because car manufacturers sell a large number of cars to the company car sector, therefore these manufacturers provide many “extras” such as improved safety, security and comfort features.

As company car drivers make up such a varying cross-section of the population, including anyone from a district health visitor to the chief executive of the country’s biggest company, it is very often difficult to ascertain any common views they have about possessing a company car.

However, a report published a few years ago took a hard look at company car drivers views and came to the conclusion that these people were, on the whole, a contented group, most of them regarding their cars as essential for their jobs.

The majority of these drivers insisted that they were dependent on their cars, and almost three-quarters asserted that they would find it almost impossible to carry out their work effectively without them.

(30 marks)

QUESTION 3

Write a correctly laid out reply, in 120-150 words, to the following letter which has just been received by your company.

L R DEIGHTON & SONS

House Builders of Distinction
Deighton House — Wallace Road — Newcastle-on-Tyne NE6 81V

16 November 2001

J Bell & Co Ltd
Electrical Contractors
44 Hammett Street
Middlesbrough
M129 9KK

Dear Sirs

We have just secured a contract to build 36 detached houses in Middlesbrough and I am writing to you to ask if you are interested in doing the electrical work in them. If so, perhaps you could suggest a few dates when it would be possible for us to arrange a meeting — preferably, but not necessarily, here — to discuss the matter.

First, however, I should like answers to the following questions:

What percentage of your employees are qualified electricians?
Can you guarantee to keep to agreed times to finish jobs?
Can you provide names and addresses of people whom you have worked for previously so that we can judge the quality of your work?

I look forward to your reply and any other relevant information you can supply.

Yours faithfully

Leonard R Deighton

Leonard R Deighton
Managing Director

(30 marks)



SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2001

ENGLISH FOR COMMERCE

LEVEL 3

(Code No: 3042)

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER

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 I

Write 400-500 words on ONE of the following topics:

- (a) Discuss some of the strategies used to turn around a company which is failing. You may wish to illustrate your comments using examples with which you are familiar.
- (b) How can the exploitation of workers, often indirectly supported by global companies, be overcome? What are the difficulties that face the reformers?
- (c) Large companies and supermarkets were expected to lead to the decline of smaller businesses, but many have continued to thrive. By what means have small firms and corner shops survived?
- (d) Describe how one or two companies with which you are familiar have maintained public confidence and support over the years.
- (e) How can the government of your country help and protect the commercial sector in its fight for world markets?
- (f) The MD of your company, of which you are Head of Human Resources, has stated on a number of occasions that the firm's cycle of recruitment, induction, training and promotion is not going well, and has asked you to prepare a report for the next board meeting. You do not completely agree with him.

Write the report.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Read the following passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow it, using your own words where possible. Your answers should be written concisely in complete sentences, unless you are otherwise instructed.

LOOK TO THE PROCESS FOR A BETTER PRODUCT

Production operations management is the systematic creation and delivery of products to customers. Most things we buy, from the clothes we wear to the newspapers we read, started out as raw material which has been processed, finished, packaged and delivered. It is the job of production operations to deliver the products every day, on time, at the right cost and quality.

This requires a systematic process to transform the input resources of materials, information, staff and equipment into outputs of goods - thus the production operation typically accounts for 80% of business costs. If operations are too costly compared with rivals, the business eventually fails. If quality is poor, or delivery times are too long, customers will go elsewhere.

In production operations there are four main types of process. For a company making a wide range of unique products the appropriate process will be *jobbing*. This operation designs and makes items to customer order, in very low volumes and with few staff — examples would be bespoke furniture or hand-made shoes. Repetitive mass production cannot be used and skill levels drive up prices.

As volumes increase and more items are repeated, *batch* manufacturing becomes appropriate. Here there is still the flexible equipment used in jobbing, but machines produce longer runs of items and are then re-set for the next product. This type of operation covers such industries as clothing or printing.

As volumes increase further and the range of items narrows, a company may use a *line* operation, with sequenced workstations repeating short-cycle tasks and producing quite complex products (consumer electronics, for example) quite cheaply.

When volumes are very large, a line may be automated, as with cars

Finally a commodity product produced in vast quantities requires a *continuous flow* process, such as a paper mill or an oil refinery. These processes need large capital investment but little labour.

Although only one type of operation is called continuous flow, in practice most types aspire to continuous flow. Moving materials swiftly through processing reduces cost. This is the principal lesson from the Japanese "just in time" (JIT) method of production, perhaps the greatest innovation in manufacturing methods since the moving assembly line. The JIT principle, pioneered in the 1970s, is implied by its name; the satisfying of demand as it arises, so there is neither the waste of having finished goods waiting in store for an order which may never come, nor the unresponsiveness of making a customer wait. When this idea is applied through the production chain and beyond to suppliers, we approach continuous flow. Materials are pulled through the supply chain ultimately by customer request. The idea is not to hold more than the minimum inventory and to make just what is needed when it is asked for and not before.

The next phase of manufacturing development will be the spread of mass customisation — the production of customised items but at close to mass-market availability and pricing. National Bicycle in Japan has developed a system to make custom-built bicycles for about 15% more than a top-of-the-range mass-produced machine. The customer is measured in the shop on a special frame and chooses style, colour, brakes, tyres, pedals etc right down to how the name will be painted on the finished bike. The attraction for the manufacturer is that you sell the product and then make it, so avoiding waste. With customers searching for products that exactly meet their tastes, pressure will grow for operations to become more agile to satisfy those needs at an acceptable cost.

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

As the example of National Bicycle shows, technology can transform manufacturing. The key factor is linking information technology to processing technology. The use of robots to perform human tasks is an example of this. The use of robots is so much on the increase that at Fanuc's robot-making plant in Italy, you can see robots making robots?

At the moment automation remains a choice rather than an imperative. But this will change as the price of equipment falls and human wages rise. The factory of the future is already with us - all the elements are at a late stage of development, at least in showplace plants. The last phase is to bring it all together, making high-quality, attractively-priced, customised goods in highly-automated lean production units. That is 21st Century engineering.

Adapted from an article in The Financial Times.

- (a) Which type of production process is suitable for the following products:
(1) flavoured ice creams
(2) flour refining
(3) designer hats
(4) mountain bicycles (4 marks)
- (b) Write down the 2 processes which can be handled by a single person. (2 marks)
- (c) For what reason do most operations 'aspire to continuous flow'? (2 marks)
- (d) Write down 4 factors which make the JIT system a success. (4 marks)
- (e) What single factor dictates the automation of a line operation? (1 mark)
- (f) To which manufacturing development does the author compare JIT? (2 marks)
- (g) To the average reader, which manufacturing development in the article would seem most futuristic? (2 marks)
- (h) In your own words explain each of the following phrases from the passage:
(1) short-cycle tasks (para 5)
(2) customised items(para 9)
(3) lean production (para 11)
(4) showplace plants(para 11) (8 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 3

Make a summary of the main points of the following passage in your own words. Your summary should be no more than 180 words. Supply a title for your summary.

A new year ahead and perhaps time for a new job. But what are you worth? It is essential to have an idea when negotiating terms. The most important issue to focus on is the strength of your negotiating position. Making unrealistic demands during negotiations may alienate the employer and see the job offer withdrawn. Be realistic when negotiating. Unless you are very senior, the employer is unlikely to make exceptions to the company's standard policy on benefits.

Find out as much as you can about your new employer before accepting an offer. Does the company have a reputation for keeping its word? How are employees treated? Try to speak to your predecessor or your prospective colleagues.

Work out the market rate for the job, and check what fringe benefits you can expect to receive. These will vary depending on your seniority and the industry sector you work in. Benefits might include a company car, medical cover, a season ticket loan or share options. Share option schemes have become a familiar part of executive packages. Both employers and employees will want to ensure that the package offers the right degree of incentive, and schemes can take a variety of forms.

If you are moving from a secure job, you should explore the possibility of a signing-on bonus or a higher rate of pay in acknowledgement of the sacrifice you are making. Be flexible in negotiations. For example, if you are not offered the salary you want, explore other options such as more holidays, the use of a better company car, shorter working hours or a longer period of notice. The notice period plays a key role in the calculation of compensation for breach of contract if the employee is dismissed without notice or justification. In the absence of an agreed notice period, the law provides for a minimum of one week in the first two years of employment and one week for every subsequent year up to a maximum of twelve weeks.

In addition employees can argue that they are entitled to reasonable notice. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances. A bond dealer may be able to argue typically for four weeks' notice, whereas the director of a company could argue for between one and two years.

Get the offer of employment in writing. Legally, terms agreed on a handshake are just as enforceable as a written contract. But it can be hard to prove the terms of a verbal agreement if a dispute arises later, and it is not worth the risk. Make sure you avoid so-called "agreements to agree". These usually arise when the employer vaguely promises some benefit such as a bonus or commission.

You should ensure that all key terms of your employment are nailed down at the outset, when your bargaining power is at its strongest. The risk of failing to do so is that you may lose your right to compensation. That is one thing that you must avoid.

Adapted from an article in the Financial Times

(25 marks)

QUESTION 4

You work as Customer Services Manager for Charming Holiday Homes. You have received the following letter of complaint from a customer, Mr Percival Clarke.

6 The Moorings
Castleton
Rochdale
RD2 4JK

20 November 2001

The Complaints Manager
Charming Holiday Homes
The Old Mill
Kirby
Oxford
OX3 SKN

Dear Sir

I am writing to demand a full refund of £525.00, the price I paid for the hire of Dowthwaite House in Shipston on Stour.

I can tell you plainly that the accommodation was well below my expectations, since all the rooms were tiny; particularly the bathroom, which contained one of those useless half baths and an equally useless shower. A number of other appliances did not work, including the video recorder and the toaster.

Each night we were kept awake by the incessant barking of dogs — your brochure failed to mention that there were boarding kennels just across the small field at the rear of the property.

The cottage owner, a Ms Partridge, insisted on making a daily visit ~to check that everything was alright". This constant intrusion of privacy became intolerable, and we left a day early to avoid giving her a piece of my mind!

The whole experience was unacceptable.

I await your early response and compensation.

Yours faithfully

Percival Clarke.

Percival Clarke

You learn from Ms Partridge that Mr Clarke had been rude to her on arrival, and that she had been unhappy with the Clarke's casual use of the property and its facilities. The showerhead in the bathroom had been dislodged from its wall fixing and the place was constantly in an untidy and uncared-for condition. Write a letter in reply to Mr Clarke, pointing out the terms and conditions of hire etc. The level of compensation (if any) is at your discretion.

(25 marks)