



Spoken English for Industry & Commerce

Level 3

Information Pack

Contents: Sample Paper
 Syllabus

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)



THIRD LEVEL

SAMPLE PAPER

SECTION A: GENERAL CONVERSATION

Introductory conversation including work-related topics. No sample material.

SECTION B: DISCUSSION OF WRITTEN DOCUMENT

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- give candidate written document to study (allow one minute maximum)
- check and/or explain the words: **permanent/temporary; pension; overtime; benefits; CV; application form; salary; rates of pay; previous experience**
- initiate a discussion based on the document
- test comprehension of key vocabulary and concepts

CANDIDATE to:

- study the document
- engage in discussion and explain key vocabulary and concepts as required

Questions

- 1 What sort of jobs is Fresh Start offering? (2 Finance Officers; 1 Permanent and 1 Temporary)
- 2 If you wish to apply for one of these posts, how should you contact Fresh Start? (By phone)

Fresh Start Housing Association

Finance Officers

2 Posts

We are currently looking for 2 finance officers, 1 permanent and 1 temporary (for 6 months) to work in our busy London office. The permanent post involves working closely with our Management Accountant to provide a high level service to our Housing Services Department. The temporary post will involve working on a wide range of financial tasks.

Good rates of pay plus benefits

For further information and an application form please call

0171 220 7302 (24-hour answerphone service)

Closing date for applications: 22 July 1999

Working towards equal opportunities

SECTION B: DISCUSSION OF WRITTEN DOCUMENT

CANDIDATE CUE CARD

Fresh Start Housing Association

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SECTION C: TAPED DIALOGUE

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- explain procedure
- play the introduction on the tape; stop the tape and check with the candidate that the sound level and quality is acceptable
- play the dialogue once
- ask the candidate to supply the key points of the dialogue
- ask any necessary follow-up questions and ask for the candidate's opinion on any aspect of the dialogue
- take in all notes made by the candidate

CANDIDATE to:

- listen to the tape and make notes
- relate the main points of the dialogue from any notes made
- answer any follow-up questions and to give an opinion as requested

Key points

- setting of discussion (ie radio interview); type of business and position of interviewee
- comprehension of subject matter - planned changes in work contracts; move from temporary to more permanent contracts
- reason for making changes - poor motivation and communication difficulties with temporary staff
- problems implementing changes - shortage of suitable people wishing to work full time
- reference to one other source of information: IRS report, New Generation Sportswear
- (relevant and accurate reference to at least one figure as a requisite for credit/distinction)

Opinion questions

- 1 Do you think that the employees will work better when they are on permanent contracts?
- 2 Is flexible working a good idea?
- 3 What do you think of the scheme to abolish fixed working hours?

Tape script

Jane Kelly, an interviewer on a radio business programme, is talking to Tim Hatfield, Human Resources Manager at Melrose, a leading supermarket chain.

- JANE Tim, welcome. You're in charge of Human Resources for a large and successful chain of supermarkets. A report recently published shows big changes in work patterns. Can you tell us about this?
- TIM Of course, we've just completed a major review of our staff contracts and have decided to implement some changes.
- JANE What sort of changes?
- TIM Well, the main difference will be a reduction of the number of temporary staff we employ.
- JANE Does this mean staff will be laid off?
- TIM Oh no, not at all. We plan to offer a greater number of permanent contracts. The aim is to reduce the number of temporary staff as a proportion of the workforce from 10 per cent to 3 per cent.
- JANE What led to this decision?
- TIM In the past we recruited temporary staff to meet the seasonal peaks in demand. This suited us as a company - and also many of the people we took on. However, there was a downside to this.
- JANE In what way?
- TIM Among the staff who remained on temporary contracts for an extended period, we found that there was poor motivation and more communication difficulties. There was also a lack of training for these employees.
- JANE Was this problem specific to your organisation?
- TIM No, quite the contrary. If you've studied the recent report from the Industrial Relations Services you'll know that it's widespread.
- JANE That report dealt with the problems of flexibility, didn't it?
- TIM Exactly, the report was based on information from 71 organisations where problems of flexibility have led employers to reassess and redesign flexible working practices.
- JANE In what way?
- TIM They found that the use of flexible working is becoming increasingly strategic, attempting to reconcile the needs of business with the needs of staff. What we need to do is ensure that employer and employee both benefit from flexible working.
- JANE And hence your decision to issue more permanent contracts. This must have made you very popular!
- TIM It's not as simple as that.
- JANE Why ever not?
- TIM Surprisingly, we've found it hard to recruit full-timers with the right skills. It seems that those with the right skills often prefer to work part time!
- JANE How do you propose to deal with this?
- TIM We're working on it at the moment.
- JANE I interviewed Sue Leith from New Generation Sportswear a few weeks ago. She told me that her organisation was piloting a scheme to abolish fixed working hours. The staff would have to complete projects to a deadline, but it would be up to them to arrange working time.
- TIM That's an interesting idea which might work for certain departments, but I'm not certain it would be appropriate for our organisation, especially as...
- JANE Unfortunately, we will have to stop there. Tim Hatfield, thank you very much.

(453 words approximately)

SECTION D: BUSINESS LETTER/REPORT

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- give candidate letter to study for 2 minutes
- ask who has written the letter and to whom, what kind of letter it is and the **key points**
- ask any follow-up questions to confirm the candidate's comprehension of the key points
- ask the candidate to explain 3 to 5 of the underlined words or phrases

CANDIDATE to:

- retain the candidate copy of the letter for the duration of the task
- study the letter
- outline the **key points** of the letter listed below
- explain words or phrases as requested by the examiner

FRESH START HOUSING ASSOCIATION
146 Newton Street
London E15 3SR
Tel: 0171 220 7302 Fax: 0171 220 7390

24 July 1999

Ms Elizabeth Jamieson
12 Regency Mansions
Carlisle Street
London SW11 2PQ

Dear Ms Jamieson

Following your successful interview last week, I am pleased to offer you a temporary post as a Finance Officer with Fresh Start Housing Association. This will be for a 6-month period and will involve working on a variety of financial tasks under the direction of the Senior Finance Officer.

As part of your duties you will be required to take over the responsibilities of Mrs Fernandes, a part-time Finance Officer. As Mrs Fernandes will need to explain certain key procedures to her replacement, we propose that you come in to meet her next Thursday 1 August at 10.30 am. We appreciate this is short notice but Mrs Fernandes is about to start her maternity leave.

Following this briefing session, Mrs Pearson, the Assistant Personnel Officer will see you to finalise details regarding work hours and your salary. The salary scale for Finance Officers is currently £11,250 - £13,345 plus a London Weighting Allowance of £1,675. In addition you will receive meal tickets and free membership of the Association's gym and fitness centre.

On receipt of this letter, please could you phone my secretary (direct line 0171 903 7206) to confirm your attendance.

Yours sincerely

James Fitzpatrick
Personnel Manager

Key points

- offer of 6-month temporary contract
- to replace Mrs Fernandes (who is going on maternity leave) as part of duties
- meeting with Mrs Fernandes 1 August, 10.30 am
- meeting with Assistant Personnel Officer afterwards regarding work hours and salary
- phone to confirm attendance

SECTION E: ROLE-PLAY

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- give candidate cue card to study (2 minutes)
- initiate (and, if necessary guide) dialogue

CANDIDATE to:

- participate in dialogue, including the points specified on the cue card

CANDIDATE CUE CARD

Examiner Assistant Personnel Officer of Fresh Start Housing Association (Mrs Pearson)

Candidate person offered job (Elizabeth Jamieson)

This dialogue takes place after the candidate's meeting with Mrs Fernandes

Outline of role-play

Candidate instructions

In addition to responding appropriately to the examiner's questions, you must address the following issues that are on your mind:

- *Your preference for a permanent job (is there the possibility of a permanent contract?).*
- *The possibility of financial assistance for study (you have a place reserved on a relevant course at a local college).*
- *You have a holiday already planned for fixed dates next month.*

Examiner instructions

- Enquire regarding the meeting with Mrs Fernandes.
- Give precise details of the salary proposed. Confirm this is acceptable with the candidate.
- Ask whether the candidate would like to start as soon as possible (it is a very busy period and several staff are away - holiday, maternity leave, extended sick leave).
- The candidate is covering duties of above staff – there is no permanent vacancy at present.
- There may be a vacancy in the future and a good temp in the post would be most welcome to apply (the candidate gave a very impressive performance at interview, has good experience, but lacks professional qualifications).
- Request more details regarding the training course; its relevance to the job; the times of the classes. You think funding is unlikely unless candidate can put forward very good arguments. You will have to ask the Personnel Manager.
- There are problems with the candidate taking holiday next month because of staff shortages. Ask for precise dates. Suggest alternative to whatever the candidate mentions.

Extended Syllabus

Spoken English For Industry and Commerce (SEFIC)

Third level

Aim

The aim of this examination is to test the candidate's speaking and listening skills in English in understanding a range of work or business-related information and/or instructions in order to respond appropriately in producing a range of language which will be clearly understood by a listener.

Objectives

A successful candidate will be able to:

- use a range of registers and hence have the flexibility to participate in a wider range of social or work situations, including both formal and informal discussions
- understand discussions and reports on a range of familiar topics
- take part in a range of familiar work-related interactions with a degree of spontaneity which makes interactions with native speakers possible
- explain a viewpoint on a familiar topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options
- understand and use certain advanced grammatical constructions and construct complex sentences using, for example, a variety of adverbial phrases, sub-clauses and conditional clauses.

Target audience

This qualification is intended for candidates who have achieved a thorough understanding of work or business-related English and an extended competence in interacting (speaking and listening) with English speakers in a work or business context. Candidates would be expected to be at the Council of Europe's Vantage Level or the UK National Standards (NVQ) Level 3.

Candidate progression

SEFIC Third Level is a suitable progression from SEFIC Second Level. Successful candidates may go on to take SEFIC Fourth Level. Successful candidates may also attempt LCCIEB's written examination at the same level, English For Business (EFB) Third Level.

Guide to assessment

Syllabus topics

- 1 Extensive social language within a business context
- 2 Routine and non-routine jobs, roles and relationships in a work context
- 3 Routine and non-routine work or business-related information, instructions and directions
- 4 Additional work or business-related operations

In addition candidates will be expected to demonstrate a level of linguistic competence as outlined in syllabus topics 5 to 9.

Coverage of syllabus topics in examinations

The examination will consist of 5 sections. Section A will concentrate on syllabus topics 1 and 2, Section B on topic 3, Section C on topics 2, 3 and 4, Section D on topics 2 and 3, and Section E on topics 1 and 4.

Candidates should note that, while each section of the examination will concentrate on testing the syllabus topics indicated, because of the communicative nature of the activities language from other topics may also be included in addition to the one(s) indicated.

Examination format

Candidates will be assessed by means of a 35-minute, one-to-one interview with an LCCIEB SEFIC examiner. The interview will consist of 5 sections:

- **Section A (5 minutes)** will be an introductory conversation, focusing on work-related topics. The candidate will be expected to demonstrate a cohesiveness in language production whereby sentences and utterances build upon each other and flow more easily from construct to construct.
- **Section B (5 minutes)** will be a comprehension exercise based on an item of work-related information or realia. The candidate will be asked to study this briefly and then answer questions. The purpose of this section is to introduce the business scenario and test comprehension of key vocabulary.
- **Section C (10 minutes)** will be a listening comprehension task. The candidate will listen to a taped dialogue (which follows on from the business scenario established in Section B) and take notes. After hearing the tape once the candidate will be asked to relate the main points of the dialogue and to suggest remedies or predict outcomes for the situation outlined in the dialogue.
- **Section D (10 minutes)** will be a reading comprehension task. The candidate will study a business letter or report (which further develops the business scenario established in sections B and C) and then briefly relay the contents and explained certain expressions selected by the examiner.
- **Section E (5 minutes)** will be a role play emanating from the preceding sections. The role assigned, which will be outlined on a cue card supplied by the Board, will require the candidate to participate in the discussion and negotiation of a familiar business 'problem'.

Candidate answer guidance

As the purpose of this examination is to assess oral communication, candidates will be expected to use the structures and responses appropriate to spoken discourse. This means that candidates are not expected to answer questions using full sentences unless this would be necessary in natural speech. However, as one of the main skills being tested is the ability to express complex linkages such as causal relationships and extended sequences, candidates should look for opportunities to display their mastery of the relevant structures. In addition, at this level candidates will be expected to display a range of registers and the flexibility to deal with a variety of social or work situations, both formal and informal, and throughout the examination the Examiner will be assessing the candidate's ability to adopt an appropriate tone as well as to successfully interact.

Recommended reading list and support material

Title	Publisher	ISBN Code
How to Pass SEFIC Intermediate Level Student's Book	LCCIEB	3-922514-35-9
How to Pass SEFIC Intermediate Level Teacher's Book	LCCIEB	3-922514-43-X
How to Pass SEFIC Intermediate Level Cassette	LCCIEB	3-922514-44-8

Please note the SEFIC 'Intermediate' examination changed its name to SEFIC 'Third Level' on 1 January 1999. Centres and candidates should be assured that the How to Pass SEFIC Intermediate materials can be used as preparation materials for the new SEFIC Third Level examination. A new edition of the How to Pass materials reflecting the change of name is forthcoming.

Syllabus topics and Items covered

1 Extensive social language within a business context

Candidates must be able to:

- 1.1 Ask and respond appropriately to a range of predictable and unpredictable social questions
- 1.2 Exchange information relating to work and personal circumstance
- 1.3 Express attitude, opinion and evaluations, using a range of appropriate expressions

2 Routine and non-routine jobs, roles and relationships in a work context

- 2.1 Ask and answer predictable questions on work roles and responsibilities accurately and fluently
- 2.2 Respond to unpredictable questions on work roles and responsibilities

3 Routine and non-routine work or business-related information, instructions and directions

Candidates must be able to:

- 3.1 Present routine information relating to work and respond accurately and fluently to predictable questions
- 3.2 Respond to unpredictable questions on work-related requirements

4 Additional work or business-related operations

Candidates must be able to:

- 4.1 Understand and describe a work-related problem
- 4.2 Interact in a predictable work-related discussion involving negotiation

5 Linguistic competence (structures)

Candidates must be able to understand and produce more complicated utterances by means of; a wide range of constructions, the ability to combine them flexibly and appropriately, most of the time, and the use of cohesive devices and logical connections, including for example:

- 5.1 Subordinate clauses (eg *The report, as you said, was quite favourable*)
- 5.2 Introductory adverbials:
 - 5.2.1 attitude (eg *frankly, confidentially, seriously, hopefully*)
 - 5.2.2 in declarative sentences (eg *(un)fortunately, naturally*)
 - 5.2.3 defining the viewpoint of the speaker (eg *financially, theoretically, practically*)
 - 5.2.4 words for argument structure (eg *actually, anyhow, anyway, still, otherwise, yet, in fact, as a result, by the way*)
- 5.3 The anaphoric use of pronouns, possessives, pro-adverbials and the verb *do* when referring back (eg *Juan comes from Andorra. **This** is a small country between France and Spain. **His** great grandparents lived **there** long before he **did**. **Andorrans** were mostly agricultural workers **then**)*

6 Linguistic competence (concepts)

Candidates must be able to:

- 6.1 Understand and use the following ways of expressing existence:
 - 6.1.1 existence/non-existence (eg *to create, to design, to produce, to appear/disappear*)
 - 6.1.2 presence/absence (eg *present, absent*)
 - 6.1.3 occurrence/(non)occurrence (eg *to occur, to take place, event*)
 - 6.1.4 discovery/non-discovery (eg *to find, to discover, to avoid, to miss*)

- 6.2 Understand and use the following ways of expressing space:
 - 6.2.1 location:
 - 6.2.1.1 nouns (eg *location, place, position, site, situation*)
 - 6.2.1.2 verbs (eg *to be situated/arranged aligned, to lie*)
 - 6.2.2 relative position:
 - 6.2.2.1 prepositions (eg *at the back of*)
 - 6.2.2.2 adverbs and adverbial phrases (eg *above, below, at the end, at the back, at the side, behind, in the background, in front, inside*)
 - 6.2.3 location (eg *remote*)
 - 6.2.4 motion (eg *to flow, to roll*)
 - 6.2.5 direction:
 - 6.2.5.1 destination (eg *Is there a direct route for London from here?*)
 - 6.2.5.2 adverbs (eg *backwards, downward(s), (anti)clockwise*)
 - 6.2.5.3 prepositions (eg *up, down, towards, for/I'm leaving for Paris*)
 - 6.2.6 arrangement (eg *pattern, set*)
 - 6.2.7 dimension:
 - 6.2.7.1 size (eg *enormous, great, huge, shallow, tiny*)
 - 6.2.7.2 verbs (eg *to become/get bigger, smaller, to increase/decrease, to grow, to shrink*)
 - 6.2.7.3 weight (eg *load, weigh*)
 - 6.2.7.4 volume (eg *content, to contain*)
 - 6.2.7.5 nouns (eg *depth, height, length, size, thickness, width*)
 - 6.2.8 temperature (eg *heat, chilly lukewarm, mild*)
- 6.3 Understand and use the following ways of expressing time:
 - 6.3.1 indications of time (eg *whenever*)
 - 6.3.2 duration:
 - 6.3.2.1 prepositions (eg *throughout, during, until*)
 - 6.3.2.2 verbs (eg *to continue, to go on*)
 - 6.3.2.2 adverbs (eg *always, for good*)
 - 6.3.3 sequence:
 - 6.3.3.1 next (eg *This is what we intend to do next*)
 - 6.3.4 simultaneousness (eg *in the meantime, meanwhile, when + subordinate clause, while + subordinate clause*)
 - 6.3.5 future reference (eg *immediately, soon, ultimately*)
 - 6.3.6 past reference (eg *in the past, originally recent(ly), lately*)
 - 6.3.7 speed (eg *rapid(ly), quick(ly), slow(ly)*)
 - 6.3.8 frequency (eg *frequent(ly), occasional(ly), daily, weekly*)
 - 6.3.9 continuity (eg *to continue*)
 - 6.3.10 permanence/intermittence (eg *permanent(ly), sporadic(ally), all/some of the time*)
 - 6.3.11 commencement/end:
 - 6.3.11.1 since (eg *I've been here since 1997*)
 - 6.3.11.2 at first (eg *initially*)
- 6.4 Understand and use the following ways of expressing number and quantity:
 - 6.4.1 number:
 - 6.4.1.1 fractions (eg *It's a quarter of what we ordered*)
 - 6.4.1.2 minus/plus (eg *It's plus five degrees*)
 - 6.4.2 quantity:
 - 6.4.2.1 determiners (eg *less, least, how much, how many*)
 - 6.4.2.2 *extra, further, plenty (of)*
 - 6.4.2.3 *per cent, sum total, whole*
 - 6.4.2.4 *to add, to subtract, to multiply, to divide*
 - 6.4.3 degree:

- 6.4.3.1 somewhat (eg *It is more expensive than we expected*)
- 6.5 Understand and use the following ways of expressing quality:
 - 6.5.1 shape:
 - 6.5.1.1 adjectives (eg *circular, crooked, curved, oval, rectangular*)
 - 6.5.1.2 nouns (eg *curve, form, oval, rectangle, shape*)
 - 6.5.2 visibility:
 - 6.5.2.1 nouns (eg *look, glance, sight, darkness*)
 - 6.5.2.2 adjectives (eg *blind, invisible*)
 - 6.5.3 audibility (eg noun phrase + *cannot be heard, silent, silence*)
 - 6.5.4 taste (eg *flavour, excellent, lovely*)
 - 6.5.5 smell (eg *odour, perfume*)
 - 6.5.6 texture (eg *smooth, weak*)
 - 6.5.7 age (eg *elderly, mature, middle-aged*):
 - 6.5.7.1 nouns (eg *adolescent, teenager, childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age, generation*)
 - 6.5.8 physical condition (eg *in/out of order, in good shape*)
 - 6.5.9 material (eg *aluminium, brass, brick, cardboard, concrete, wool(len), wood (en), cotton*)
 - 6.5.10 genuineness (eg *false, genuine, imaginary, imitation*)
- 6.6 Understand and use the following ways of expressing quality:
 - 6.6.1 quality (eg *perfect, poor, outstanding, terrible, wonderful*):
 - 6.6.1.1 verbs (eg *to deteriorate, to improve*)
 - 6.6.1.2 adverbs (eg *badly, excellently, nicely, perfectly, poorly*)
 - 6.6.2 acceptability (eg *It's just/not quite what I wanted / I cannot accept.../That will do*)
 - 6.6.3 a range of adjectives and nouns (eg *(in)correct, (un)successful, unimportant, trivial, detail, feature*)
 - 6.6.4 a range of expressions of evaluation and opinion (eg *I'm against/I cannot accept, (in)correct, false hard (ie difficult) unimportant*)

7 Linguistic competence (vocabulary)

Candidates must be able to recognise and use vocabulary in the following areas:

- 7.1 Identification of people, roles and relationships:
 - 7.1.1 description and discussion of the appearance and personality of others
 - 7.1.2 description of self and others in terms of character and skills
 - 7.1.3 description of composition of groups (eg *company personnel, department staff, work teams, business networks*)
- 7.2 Items of personal and shared interest:
 - 7.2.1 free time, hobbies and interests
 - 7.2.2 public entertainment, private pursuits, mass media, sports, reading
 - 7.2.3 making full use of facilities eg social amenities in the workplace
 - 7.2.4 discussion with others socially, descriptions of current events, progress of sporting events, contents of broadcasts, films, books
 - 7.2.5 personal views and preferences
- 7.3 Travel:
 - 7.3.1 methods of travel for personal and business purposes
 - 7.3.2 descriptions of journeys, exchanges of views on locations and modes of transport
- 7.4 Business accommodation:
 - 7.4.1 describing and exchanging views on business premises including: rooms, furnishing and fittings, interior layout and design, running costs, services and amenities

- 7.4.2 describing and exchanging views on a region in terms of communications, facilities, ease of transportation
- 7.5 Making deals:
 - 7.5.1 prices, payments, exchange rates, discounts
 - 7.5.2 negotiating/agreeing prices, quantities and basic terms and conditions
- 7.6 The workplace:
 - 7.6.1 job descriptions, pay, hours of work, free time, holidays, length of notice
 - 7.6.2 task descriptions and daily routines
 - 7.6.3 health, safety and security regulations and instructions, accident reports
 - 7.6.4 operating instructions for equipment
 - 7.6.5 predictable problems and faults with equipment, symptoms and remedies
 - 7.6.6 simple technical assessments and proposals
 - 7.6.7 income and prospects and the social life of an organisation

8 Linguistic competence (communicative skills)

Candidates must be able to:

- 8.1 On a social level:
 - 8.1.1 entertain and be entertained
 - 8.1.2 exchange factual information about own and other countries
 - 8.1.3 ask for advice about social events
- 8.2 In everyday life:
 - 8.2.1 obtain information and advice on day-to-day requirements
 - 8.2.2 express opinions on straightforward topics
 - 8.2.3 read newspaper articles on straightforward topics plus items such as advertisements and job vacancies
- 8.3 At work:
 - 8.3.1 present routine information specifying daily work requirements and handle unpredictable enquiries about it
 - 8.3.2 ask/answer questions about work roles and business background
 - 8.3.3 confirm, clarify and explain the business requirements of others
 - 8.3.4 ask for information and advice to remedy problems and complaints
 - 8.3.5 provide short reports on problems and complaints
 - 8.3.6 read routine correspondence
 - 8.3.7 read regulations and instructions

9 Linguistic competence (functions)

Candidates must be able to recognise and use the following:

- 9.1 Expressing opinions (eg *Personally, I think we should..*)
- 9.2 Expressing agreement/disagreement:
 - 9.2.1 strong agreement (eg *Exactly! Definitely! I quite agree*)
 - 9.2.2 reluctant agreement (eg *I suppose so*)
 - 9.2.3 expressing agreement with reservations (eg *That may be so*)
 - 9.2.4 expressing strong disagreement (eg *How can you say that?*)
 - 9.2.5 expressing weak disagreement (eg *I'm not sure*)
- 9.3 Communication repair:
 - 9.3.1 general (eg *Did you say X or Y? Did you mean to say..?*)
 - 9.3.2 asking for clarification (eg *What is X exactly?*)
 - 9.3.3 describing what was said (eg *I told him the meeting started at 10.30*)
 - 9.3.4 correcting oneself (eg *That's not exactly what I mean. Let me start again*)