



Spoken English for Industry & Commerce

Level 4

Information Pack

Contents: Sample Paper
 Syllabus

SPOKEN ENGLISH FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (SEFIC)



**EXAMINATIONS
BOARD**

FOURTH LEVEL

SAMPLE PAPER

SECTION A: GENERAL CONVERSATION

Introductory conversation including business-related topics. No sample material

SECTION B: SPECIAL TOPIC

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- listen to the presentation without interruption (5 minutes minimum)
- ask questions on aspects of the presentation for the discussion phase

CANDIDATE to:

- hand their written summary of the special topic to the examiner
- present the topic (10 minutes maximum)
- respond fully and appropriately to the examiner's questions

SECTION C: LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- explain procedure
- check and/or explain the word **out-sourcing**
- 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
- elicit key points
- ask any necessary follow-up questions and ask for candidate's opinion/predictions 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 as requested

Key points

- relationship between speakers and their positions in the company
- comprehension of concept of outsourcing
- John's concerns (eg unease of some staff)
- Mary's opinion (eg need for profitability)
- disadvantages of outsourcing (eg loss of staff)
- (relevant and accurate reference to at least one figure as a requisite for credit/distinction)

Discussion questions

- 1 Which of the 2 speakers do you agree with most?
- 2 Do you think John's concerns are valid?
- 3 (From your experience) does outsourcing make 'good economic sense'?

Tape script

Mary is Director of Human Resources in a large company which has recently out-sourced a number of its departments. She is talking to John, her deputy:

MARY Come in and take a seat. I've seen your e-mail message. You want to see me about our outsourcing arrangements?

JOHN Yes, that's right.

MARY Are there any problems? I know there were a few hiccups last year, but I thought everything was running smoothly now.

JOHN On the whole, yes, but some of our staff still feel uneasy about being out-sourced.

MARY But we went to great trouble to make sure that all staff were fully informed **before** any contracts were made with outside agencies.

JOHN Yes, that's true, but feedback from a questionnaire I sent round suggests that it could have been done better. There were complaints from several people about **how** they were informed.

MARY What do you mean?

JOHN It would appear that less than 40 per cent of staff were informed individually by their line managers of the new arrangements. The others found out via departmental or cascade meetings. In one department - which shall remain nameless - the staff were sent a letter informing them of our outsourcing programme.

MARY Well, perhaps that could have been handled more diplomatically, but the bottom line is that we have to be competitive. Handing over non-core business to outside companies makes good economic sense. You can't deny that. The figures for the last 6 months of trading show a 15 per cent increase in profits. That's got to be good news for all concerned.

JOHN Of course, I agree it has been extremely successful from that perspective, but I don't think we can afford to ignore the findings of other organisations who went down the same path some time ago?

MARY Are you referring to the article in the last issue of the HRM Journal? The one by Taylor and Brown?

JOHN Yes, that's the one. I've got copies with me. Here you are (handing one over). As you can see from the paragraph I've highlighted, their research covered 170 industry professionals and show that 40 per cent of staff found outsourcing stressful. And - I think this is pertinent - it also says that roughly 15 per cent of out-sourced staff leave their new employer in the first year.

MARY Why's that?

JOHN A number of reasons. Culture and personality clashes, new management styles, unsuitable job offers with the new organisation.

MARY I find that hard to believe, John. I asked someone from the IT department what they thought of the new arrangements and they had no complaints whatsoever.

JOHN That's not surprising. IT staff are in short supply. The company concerned has an agenda to keep them happy. Is it the same in the property services department?

MARY Possibly not, but what would **you** suggest we do?

JOHN Well, the outsourcing division of Jones & Willis has just launched a "People in Outsourcing" charter. They describe it as a code of practice for human resource professionals.

MARY Surely staff are already legally protected by the new Professional Employment law? It's been circulated to all staff affected. It protects staff employment rights following outsourcing including benefits, packages and salary levels. It means staff can't be made redundant after being handed over.

JOHN But I'm not sure that's enough. Going back to the questionnaire I sent out, I really don't think we can afford to be complacent. 15 per cent might not seem such a large number of staff to lose, but if that figure included some of our fast-track graduate entrants, the Board would be far from happy.

Director of Human Resources in a large company which has recently out-sourced a number of its departments. She is talking to John, her deputy:

SECTION D: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions

EXAMINER to:

- select a reading passage for the candidate
- allow the candidate 2 minutes to study the text
- remove the text and ask for a summary
- ask any necessary follow-up questions on the text
- test a selection of the underlined words as a possible indicator of credit/distinction level

CANDIDATE to:

- study the text and provide a summary
- answer any subsequent follow-up questions to demonstrate comprehension
- explain a selection of the underlined words as a possible indicator of credit/distinction level

FOREIGN FIRMS MOVE IN ON THE CITY OF LONDON

Foreign companies will own more than half the property in the City of London by 2025, according to a report published recently. Nearly 20 per cent of property in the Square Mile is owned by overseas firms, but their share is forecast to grow rapidly with the advent of the European single currency.

This report reveals that Germany is the biggest single foreign owner of City property, followed by Japan and the US. Virtually all of these overseas firms are in the financial insurance or property sector. The City controls about £500 billion of foreign-owned investments.

“In terms of foreign ownership, London is the only true world city in Europe. Neither Frankfurt nor Paris - where overseas ownership is estimated at under 5 per cent - come anywhere close” say the authors of the study.

In the past the principal attraction of London was its reputation for religious tolerance but today’s companies are likely to be more impressed by the number and diversity of its financial institutions. In addition the so-called “agglomeration factor” creates a huge pool of skilled labour, the life-blood of the financial world. However the report commissioned by Euro-Securities, a UK property agency, emphasises that companies are also drawn to London because of the language - English is the lingua franca of modern business.

Given its many advantages, most observers believe Frankfurt’s ambition to oust London and become the financial centre of the new Europe looks unrealistic, notwithstanding the UK’s decision to defer its entry to European Monetary Union in the first wave. Chances are that when London celebrates its 2000th anniversary in 2043, it will be the financial hub of Europe, even if foreign companies own most of the property.

Extended Syllabus

Spoken English For Industry and Commerce (SEFIC), General Introduction Fourth Level

Aim

The aim of this examination is to test the candidate's speaking and listening skills in English in understanding an extensive range of work or business-related information and/or instructions in order to respond using language which will be fully understood by a listener and provide evidence of clarity, variety and appropriacy.

Objectives

A successful candidate will be able to:

- select and use a register and tone appropriate to the audience and therefore be able to interact on a personal level in any social or work situation including the non-routine
- understand complex sources of information (both written and spoken) on a variety of topics
- present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects within a known field, showing evidence of organisation of subject matter and progression of ideas
- use an unrestricted range of structures with accuracy and appropriacy
- interact on a personal level, successfully maintaining social and business contacts.

Target audience

This qualification is intended for candidates who have achieved an unrestricted understanding of work or business-related English and a full 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 Effective Operational Proficiency Level or the UK National Standards (NVQ) Level 4.

Candidate progression

SEFIC Fourth Level is a suitable progression from SEFIC Third Level, and is the highest level in the SEFIC range available with LCCIEB.

Guide to assessment

Syllabus topics

- 1 Unrestricted social language within a business context
- 2 Diverse jobs, roles and relationships in a work context
- 3 Diverse work or business-related information
- 4 Varied 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 4 sections. Section A will concentrate on syllabus topics 1 and 2, Section B on topic 3, Section C on topic 4 and Section D on topic 2.

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 40-minute, one-to-one interview with an LCCIEB SEFIC examiner. The interview will consist of four sections:

- Section A (5 minutes) will be an introductory conversation encompassing a variety of business-related topics (including one of current interest) enabling the candidate to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and expressions in both familiar and unfamiliar topic areas. (The candidate's special topic will be excluded)
- Section B (15 minutes - of which the discussion will be a minimum of 5 minutes) will be a business presentation on the candidate's prepared topic. At the start of this section the candidate will provide the examiner with a written synopsis (about 200 words), using bullet points or headings and double spacing. The examiner will ask follow-up questions leading into the discussion phase where the candidate will be expected to respond fully to a wide range of questions, providing examples and clarification as appropriate.
- Section C (10 minutes) will be a listening comprehension task. The candidate will listen to a taped dialogue (played once), take notes and then relay the main points of the dialogue to the examiner. Afterwards the candidate will be required to discuss and suggest a solution to the (problematic) situation outlined by the speakers in the dialogue.
- Section D (10 minutes) will be a reading comprehension task. The candidate will be asked to study 2 or more sources of information (ie a report plus a graph or chart) supplied by the Board. Questions will be posed by the examiner to assess the candidate's comprehension and powers of deduction. The topic area covered will be different from Section C.

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. In addition to being expected to display an ability to successfully interact using an appropriate tone for the task, candidates will also be assessed on their ability to switch from topic to topic and, if necessary, adopt an appropriate register. Candidates should be aware that the examiner's language will reflect the normal speed and range of a native speaker.

Recommended reading list and support material

Title	ISBN Code
How To Pass SEFIC Advanced Student's Book	3-922514-36-7
How To Pass SEFIC Advanced Teacher's Book	3-922514-45-6

Please note the SEFIC 'Advanced' examination changed its name to SEFIC 'Fourth Level' on 1 January 1999. Centres and candidates should be assured that the How to Pass SEFIC Advanced materials can be used as preparation materials for the new SEFIC Fourth Level examination. Further grammar and vocabulary practice can be found in the following titles:

Syllabus topics and Items covered

1 Unrestricted social language within a business context

Candidates must be able to:

- 1.1 Interact freely on a range of social topics
- 1.2 Express attitude, opinion and evaluation with the target audience in mind, using appropriate tone and register

2 Diverse jobs, roles and relationships in a work context

Candidates must be able to:

- 2.1 Engage in wide-ranging discussion pertaining to their own field, including both predictable and unpredictable language
- 2.2 Respond to questions on unfamiliar or complex topics, requesting explanations or clarifications promptly and appropriately

3 Diverse work or business-related information

Candidates must be able to:

- 3.1 Make a presentation on a familiar topic, which includes:
 - 3.1.1 detailed descriptions of complex material
 - 3.1.2 specialist vocabulary
 - 3.1.3 clear evidence of planning and progression
- 3.2 Respond to a wide range of questions on their presentation, including examples and clarification as appropriate

4 Varied work or business-related operations

Candidates must be able to:

- 4.1 Understand and suggest solutions for complaints and problems
- 4.2 Provide suitable instructions and guidance
- 4.3 Interact in a work-related negotiation

5 Linguistic competence (structures)

Candidates should be able to understand and use an unrestricted range of structures.

6 Linguistic competence (concepts)

At this level candidates will be expected to display a wide range of ways of expressing:

- 6.1 Existence
- 6.2 Space
- 6.3 Time
- 6.4 Number and quantity
- 6.5 Quality
- 6.6 Evaluation

7 Linguistic competence (vocabulary)

At this level the diversity of specialisms and interests means that candidates will be more autonomous, acquiring vocabulary for their particular work needs. In the following social and work-related areas candidates must be able to recognise and use vocabulary for:

- 7.1 Items of personal and shared interest:
 - 7.1.1 personal interests
 - 7.1.2 social arrangements
 - 7.1.3 current affairs

- 7.2 Products:
 - 7.2.1 facts and data about products and services
 - 7.2.2 advice relating to products and services
 - 7.2.3 operating instructions
 - 7.2.4 evaluating products and services
- 7.3 Operational work activities:
 - 7.3.1 work requirements
 - 7.3.2 operational plans
 - 7.3.3 requests for assistance
 - 7.3.4 technical assessments
 - 7.3.5 proposals and supporting arguments
 - 7.3.6 progress reports
 - 7.3.7 complaints
- 7.4 Management activities:
 - 7.4.1 planning and organising work
 - 7.4.2 work tasks and priorities
 - 7.4.3 problem defining and solving
 - 7.4.4 requests for information and action

8 Linguistic competence (communicative skills)

Candidates must be able to:

- 8.1 On a social level:
 - 8.1.1 ask for and understand advice on how to deal with social events
 - 8.1.2 take part in formal and informal events, displaying:
 - 8.1.2.1 the ability to initiate, stimulate and maintain conversation
 - 8.1.3 exchange information on economic, political and cultural situation in own and others' countries
 - 8.1.4 assess the significance of others' views, opinions and feelings
- 8.2 In everyday life:
 - 8.2.1 deal with most aspects of daily living
 - 8.2.2 express a range of opinions on routine and non-routine matters
 - 8.2.3 deal with most contingencies
 - 8.2.4 read reports and articles from newspapers and journals including more than one source of information
- 8.3 At work:
 - 8.3.1 understand the business requirements of others
 - 8.3.2 speak on topics and answer questions at length when appropriate
 - 8.3.3 deal with all aspects of business or professional relationships and networks
 - 8.3.4 read a wide range of correspondence and work or business-related documents
- 8.4 Concerning attitudes, opinions and evaluations:
 - 8.4.1 select from a range of strategies to express attitudes, opinions and evaluations
 - 8.4.2 present own opinions and understand those of others (within own or familiar field)
 - 8.4.3 handle complaints and problems
 - 8.4.4 give instructions and guidance
 - 8.4.5 make technical/evaluative assessments
 - 8.4.6 deal with predictable conflicts
 - 8.4.7 take part in negotiations

9 Linguistic competence (functions)

Candidates must be able to:

- 9.1 Account for their views and opinions, engage in discussions about them, overcome problems which arise in the use of services.
- 9.2 When reporting and discussing topics candidates must be able to:
 - 9.2.1 introduce a theme (eg *To begin I'd like to...*)
 - 9.2.2 introduce a topic (eg *Now, I'd like to say something about...*)
 - 9.2.3 introduce a report or description (eg *I'd like to tell you about...*)
 - 9.2.4 enumerate (eg *In the first place..in the second place..*)
 - 9.2.5 exemplify (eg *for instance*)
 - 9.2.6 emphasise (eg *especially; I must stress that*)
 - 9.2.7 define (eg *that is*)
 - 9.2.8 summarise (eg *to sum up*)
 - 9.2.9 change the theme (eg *To change the subject...*)
 - 9.2.10 show that one is following (eg *I see; Yes/No (with low rise intonation) Really?*)
 - 9.2.11 interrupt, ask for the floor (eg *May I say that...;May I say something?*)
 - 9.2.12 object/protest (eg *No, I'm sorry but...*)
 - 9.2.13 indicate a wish to continue (eg *Just one moment; As I was saying...*)
 - 9.2.14 encourage someone to continue (eg *Do go on, please*)
 - 9.2.15 indicate that one is coming to an end (eg *Finally; In conclusion, I should like to say..*)