

# Spoken English Tests for Business (8981)

## Qualification Handbook



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# 1 Introduction

The Spoken English Tests for Business (SETB) are stand-alone tests of spoken English in a business context. The tests are available at three stages, each of which measures candidates' performance across two levels of the City & Guilds scale of assessment of Spoken English for Business (please see page 6 for comparative levels chart and page 14 for detailed descriptors of the City & Guilds levels).

## **Stage A Preliminary/Access**

## **Stage B Achiever/Communicator**

## **Stage C Expert/Mastery**

The SET for Business is conducted as a one-to-one structured conversation between the candidate and an Interlocutor appointed by the centre. The Interlocutor manages the conversation and acts as a conversation partner for the candidate during the various parts of the test, but does not play any part in assessing the candidate's performance. The conversation is recorded onto audio cassette and is then sent to City & Guilds in the UK for assessment by examiners appointed, trained and monitored by City & Guilds.

The SET for Business contains four parts which together enable the candidate to show their ability across a range of realistic communicative needs and situations (please see page 7 for details of the form and focus of the four parts of the SET for Business).

## **Who is SET for Business for?**

### **People in business**

The SET for Business offers those involved in the world of business an internationally recognized certificate which shows their level of spoken English for a range of business purposes. A SET for Business certificate gives you, and companies with whom you work, detailed evidence of your competence in the communicative use of spoken English for general and specific business purposes.

### **Business students**

The SET for Business offers students of business an internationally recognised certificate which shows their level of spoken English in the context of the world of business. A SET for business certificate gives you targets to aim at during your studies and provides you, and prospective employers, with detailed evidence of your competence in the communicative use of spoken English for general and specific business purposes.

### **Teachers**

The SET for Business offers teachers a communicative syllabus with a useful, certificated outcome for their students of English for business purposes. The test is set in the context of internationally recognised assessment and helps teachers and learners focus on specific features of language competence at a comprehensive range of levels.

## 2 SET for Business levels in comparison to the CEF

The SET for Business is available at three stages, each of which covers two of the levels described in the City & Guilds scale of assessment of Spoken English for Business. At each level a candidate can be awarded a Pass grade or a First Class Pass. A First Class Pass grade indicates that in the opinion of the examiners the candidate's performance is clearly within the upper range of the respective level band and is close to achieving the next highest level. The table below shows the levels of the City & Guilds scale of assessment for Spoken English for Business in relation to the corresponding levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

<b>Test</b>	<b>Council of Europe (CEF)</b>	<b>SET for business level</b>	<b>Grade</b>	
Stage A	A2 Waystage	Access	First Class Pass	A2+
			Pass	A2
Stage A	A1 Breakthrough	Preliminary	First Class Pass	A1+
			Pass	A1
Stage B	B2 Vantage	Communicator	First Class Pass	B2+
			Pass	B2
Stage B	B1 Threshold	Achiever	First Class Pass	B1+
			Pass	B1
Stage C	C2 Mastery	Mastery	First Class Pass	C2+
			Pass	C2
Stage C	C1 EOP	Expert	First Class Pass	C1+
			Pass	C1



### 3 The four parts of the SET for Business

The SET for Business consists of four parts. The table below gives an overview of the format and language focus of each part. The parts are described in greater detail on the following pages.

Part	Focus	Task
<b>1 Giving personal information in response to standard prompts</b>	To respond to predictable questions about personal, work related matters	Give name and contact details
	To put candidate at their ease and elicit informal conversation on work related topics	Answer questions about own professional experiences, positions and plans
<b>2 Interacting in common business-related situations</b>	To use functional language to communicate a variety of specified messages in short role play situations	Candidate and Interlocutor play out three different situations
<b>3 Exchanging given information to achieve a task related to the world of business</b>	<b>Stage A test</b> To ask and answer questions in order to exchange factual information	Completing an informal gap activity
	<b>Stage B test</b> To ask and answer questions to exchange factual information and opinions	Collaborating to reach a joint conclusion or decision
	<b>Stage C test</b> To use English persuasively in business settings requiring negotiation	Negotiating an outcome from different starting points
<b>4 Presenting a chosen topic related to the world of business</b>	To present, with minimal prompting, and answer follow-up questions about, a topic related to a specific area of business	Presenting either: i) a topic chosen and researched by the candidate in advance of the test or ii) a topic chosen from a list (p10-13) given on the day of the test

#### Part 1: Giving personal, business-related information

The aim of this part of the test is to put candidates at ease as they answer questions about themselves and their business interests and experience. The Interlocutor begins by asking the candidate for personal contact details (name, phone number or email address).

The Interlocutor then establishes the candidate's current status: whether currently active in business or a student of a business-related discipline. Depending on the outcome the Interlocutor selects from an appropriate list of prompts and elicits information about the candidate's work or study experience to date; future plans; use of English in current or future business life; reasons for choosing a particular branch of business or business study etc.

## **Part 2: Communicating in everyday, business-related situations**

The aim of this part of the SET for Business is to test the candidate's use of functional language in a range of real-life situations in the context of the world of business. The settings, topics and language functions which may characterise these situations are listed in the syllabi on pages 10-13.

Most situations will involve face-to-face interaction, but one situation in any test may require the candidate and Interlocutor to simulate a telephone conversation.

In the preparation time allowed, the candidate is presented with descriptions of three situations, all of which will be played out in the test.

At **Stage A** the candidate is required to initiate the interaction in one of three situations and respond in the other two. Each of the three situations will be based on a single language function.

At **Stage B** the candidate is required to initiate the interaction in one of three situations and respond in the other two. One of the responses will involve more than one language function.

At **Stage C** the candidate is required to initiate the interaction in two of the three situations. Each of the situations will involve more than one language function.

## **Part 3: Exchanging information to perform a task**

The aim of this part of the SET for Business is to test the candidate's use of language to give and elicit information in order to perform a specified, business related task in collaboration with the Interlocutor. In the preparation time, the candidate is given a set of information which differs from that given to the Interlocutor. The precise nature of the information exchange varies according to the level of assessment.

At **Stage A**, the candidate and Interlocutor carry out an information gap activity. That is to say they ask and answer questions in order to elicit information missing from their respective test papers.

At **Stage B**, the candidate and Interlocutor exchange given information and their own opinions and suggestions in order to work towards a specified, joint conclusion.

At **Stage C**, the candidate and Interlocutor are presented with information and specified goals which require them to negotiate a mutually acceptable outcome.

## **Part 4: Prepared presentation**

The aim of this part of the SET for Business is to test the candidate's ability to order and maintain connected discourse to make a presentation of a chosen business-related topic.

The candidate is encouraged to choose his/her own topic, which they may prepare in advance. This enables them to demonstrate their competence in relation to their particular area of business experience or expertise. The topic could be the findings of research that they have undertaken in the course of their business studies, or it could be related to their professional life, but there must be some obvious relation to the world of business.

Examples of suitable topics are:

- A project that the candidate is engaged in
- The launch of a new product
- An aspect of current trends in the candidate's business sector or industry
- A brief case study

For a candidate who has not chosen a topic in advance, there is a choice of three business-related presentation topics given in the syllabus (pages 10-13) which may be prepared in the preparation time.

The candidate may refer to notes during the presentation but should not simply read out a prepared speech. The candidate may use visual aids such as overhead slides as they might when giving a real-life business presentation. However, they should be aware that they can only be assessed on the quality of the spoken language that is recorded in the course of the test, and any information that is conveyed only by visual means will not provide the examiners with any evidence of their ability.

For example, if the candidate shows a process diagram they would nevertheless be well advised to explain the process in words, rather than to simply say "This shows how it works" and refer to the diagram.

The Interlocutor invites the candidate to present the chosen topic and listens without interruption for a specified time before putting one or two follow-up questions based on what the candidate has said.

## 4 Syllabi

### 4.1 Spoken English Tests for Business Stage A

The candidate's own contributions may range beyond any prescribed syllabus in terms of topics discussed and language functions used. However, the SET for Business as presented at Stage A is intended to include only topics and settings which will be familiar and will require the use of simple language functions.

The standard prompts in part 1, the part 2 situations, the part 3 information exchange activity and the part 4 optional presentation topics for candidates who have not prepared a presentation in advance are based on items selected from the following:

#### Topics and settings:

**Communications:** telephone, face-to-face, email

**Company:** colleagues, departments, offices

**Export and Import:** goods, international trade

**Finance:** budgets, salaries

**Manufacturing:** factories, products, workforce

**Meetings:** discussions (formal and informal)

**Services:** banks, agencies

**Socialising and Hospitality:** meeting other business people, entertaining, visiting

**Technology:** in manufacturing, in the office

**Training:** business study, conferences and seminars

**Travel:** airports, rail stations, taxis, hotels

**Work:** occupations, personal plans and experiences

#### Language functions:

Accepting & declining

Agreeing

Asking & answering

Comparing

Describing

Explaining

Greeting

Inviting

Giving opinions

Recommending

Suggesting

Thanking

Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic for Part 4 may choose one of the following:

- a) My colleagues at work
- b) My fellow students of Business English
- c) A job I would like to do

## 4 Syllabi

### 4.2 Spoken English Tests for Business Stage B

The candidate's own contributions may range beyond any prescribed syllabus in terms of topics discussed and language functions used. However, the SET for Business as presented at Stage B is intended to include topics and settings which will be reasonably familiar and will give candidates the opportunity to use a mixture of simple language functions and functions which require the more complex language expected at the higher end of the B scale.

Some of the topics and settings and the language functions in Stage B will be the same as those in Stage A; the nature of the tasks and the performance of the candidate will determine the degree of language competence demonstrated.

The standard prompts in Part 1, the Part 2 situations, the Part 3 information exchange activity and Part 4 optional presentation topics for candidates who have not prepared a presentation in advance are based on items selected from the following:

#### Topics and settings:

**Communications:** telephone, face-to-face, email, video conferencing

**Company:** colleagues, departments, offices, roles and relationships

**Export and Import:** goods, international trade, changes in international markets

**Personnel/Human Resources:** recruitment, job applications, interviews

**Finance:** budgets, investments, salaries, profit and loss

**Management:** structures and hierarchies, policies and procedures, delegation

**Manufacturing:** factories, products, workforce, materials

**Meetings:** discussions (formal and informal)

**Services:** banks, agencies

**Socialising and Hospitality:** networking, entertaining, visiting

**Technology:** in manufacturing, in the office, past and future developments

**Training:** business study, conferences and seminars, personal goals

**Travel:** airports, rail stations, taxis, hotels

**Work:** occupations, personal plans and experiences, career development

#### Language functions:

Accepting & declining

Agreeing & disagreeing

Asking and answering

Checking

Clarifying

Complaining

Comparing

Describing

Explaining

Greeting

Inviting

Offering

Giving opinions

Recommending

Reminding

Suggesting

Thanking

Warning

Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic for Part 4 may choose one of the following:

- a) The uses of technology in my area of business
- b) An industry which is important in the country I come from
- c) A country I would like to work in

## 4 Syllabi

### 4.3 Spoken English Tests for Business Stage C

The candidate's own contributions may well range beyond any prescribed syllabus in terms of topics discussed and language functions used. However, the SET for Business as presented at Stage C is intended to include topics and settings which, while reasonably familiar to anyone with a knowledge of the world of business, will give candidates the opportunity to use a range of functions which require the more complex language expected at this level of assessment.

Some of the topics and settings and the language functions in Stage C will be the same as those in Stages A and B; the nature of the tasks and the performance of the candidate will determine the degree of language competence demonstrated.

The standard prompts in Part 1, the Part 2 situations, the Part 3 information exchange activity and Part 4 optional presentation topics for candidates who have not prepared a presentation in advance are based on items selected from the following:

#### Topics and settings:

**Communications:** telephone, face-to-face, email, video conferencing

**Company:** colleagues, departments, offices, roles and relationships, hierarchy

**Deadlines:** setting and meeting targets

**Export & Import:** goods, international trade, changes in international markets

**Personnel/Human Resources:** recruitment, job applications, interviews

**Finance:** accounts, budgets, investments, salaries, profit and loss, expenses

**Management:** structures and hierarchies, policies and procedures, delegation, problems and solutions

**Manufacturing:** factories, products, work-force, materials

**Meetings:** discussions (formal and informal), agendas

**Purchasing and Sales:** discussing and negotiating terms

**Services:** banks, agencies

**Socialising and Hospitality:** networking, entertaining, visiting

**Taxation:** income tax, VAT, customs duties

**Technology:** in manufacturing, in the office, past and future developments

**Training:** business study, conferences and seminars, personal goals

**Travel:** airports, rail stations, taxis, hotels

**Work:** occupations, personal plans and experiences, benefits and perks, pensions, job sharing, career development, promotion and setbacks, stress and remedies for stress

## Language functions:

Accepting & declining	Explaining	Thanking
Agreeing & disagreeing	Greeting	Warning
Asking & answering	Inviting	
Expressing doubt	Justifying	
Checking	Offering	
Clarifying	Giving opinions	
Commending/praising	Giving orders	
Complaining	Persuading	
Comparing	Proposing	
Criticising	Recommending	
Defending decisions	Reminding	
Describing	Specifying	
Excusing	Suggesting	

Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic for Part 4 may choose one of the following:

- a) The impact information technology has had on the business sector in which I work.
- b) My vision of the business world in the next week
- c) Why my contribution to a business project on which I have worked was valuable

## 5 Assessment and marking criteria

The Interlocutor plays no part in the assessment of candidates. The recorded tests are assessed by UK based examiners recruited, appointed and trained by City & Guilds.

The SET for Business is available at three separate stages. Each of the three stages covers two levels (please see comparative levels chart on page 6). At each level, there are Pass and First Class Pass awards, reflecting candidate performance in the test overall.

If a candidate fails to meet the standard of the lower level of the stage test for which they have been entered then no grade is awarded; there is no compensatory pass at a lower level for a candidate who narrowly fails. For example, if a candidate enters the Stage B test, the outcome may be:

Communicator: First Class Pass	B2+
Communicator: Pass	B2
Achiever: First Class Pass	B1+
Achiever: Pass	B1
No award (Fail)	

### Marking Criteria

In assessing recordings of candidates' performance the examiners apply two related sets of criteria:

1. The global descriptors which define the City & Guilds scale of assessment for spoken English for business. These are set out on the next two pages.
2. The separate analytical criteria of Communication, Accuracy, Range, Pronunciation and Fluency ('CARPF').

The analytical assessment is used as check on the global assessment, to resolve borderline cases and to decide when a candidate merits a First Class Pass grade.



## 6 Global assessment criteria

<b>Preliminary</b> <b>CEF – A1</b> <b>Breakthrough</b>	Can understand what is said provided the speaker uses very simple language, speaks very clearly, is prepared to repeat and keeps to prepared and very familiar topics. Can respond to questions about personal business details although may frequently need repetition of prompts and may need to search, not always successfully, for language to convey the intended message. Can deal with routine business and social situations provided the conversation partner plays a supportive role. Can collaborate in a simple exchange of given, factual information with repetition and prompting from a partner in the interaction. Can produce short, pre-learnt utterances to give a brief presentation of a familiar, prepared topic although may require frequent support from the listener at times. Can respond to simple, predictable follow-up prompts if these are related very obviously to the topic provided the questioner is prepared to repeat on occasions and to tolerate frequent and fairly lengthy hesitations.
<b>Access</b> <b>CEF – A2</b> <b>Waystage</b>	Can understand what is said provided the speaker uses simple language, speaks clearly, repeats if necessary and keeps to prepared and familiar topics. Can respond to questions about personal business details although may sometimes need repetition of prompts and may need to hesitate to search for language to convey the intended message. Can deal with routine business and social situations with occasional support from the conversation partner, although has a limited resource of specific vocabulary appropriate to the world of business and may need to resort to paraphrase. Can collaborate in a simple exchange of given, factual information. Can give a brief presentation of a familiar, prepared topic although may occasionally run out of language and require some support from the listener. Can respond to simple and predictable follow-up prompts related to what he/she has said provided the questioner is prepared to repeat on occasions.
<b>Achiever</b> <b>CEF – B1</b> <b>Threshold</b>	Can understand what is said in a range of familiar social and business settings although may need to request repetition or clarification of certain questions. Can respond adequately to questions about personal business interests and experiences. Can deal with common business and social situations and can convey the intended message even if register is not always appropriate or consistent. Can use language to carry out collaborative tasks exchanging information and, with some support from a partner in the interaction, working towards a joint decision. Can generally maintain discourse to make a presentation of a business-related topic although may on occasions require prompting from the listener. Can deal with interjections, although these may break the flow of the discourse and require repetition, rephrasing and clarification. Can, with some hesitation, deal with follow-up prompts which follow the direction of the discourse.
<b>Communicator</b> <b>CEF – B2</b> <b>Vantage</b>	Can understand what is said in a range of familiar social and business settings. Can respond readily and with some expansion to questions about personal business interests and experience. Can deal with common business and social situations with some sensitivity to appropriate register and can clarify any confusion which may be caused by awkwardness in expressing the intended message. Can use language effectively to carry out collaborative tasks, exchanging information and working towards a joint decision. Can maintain discourse to make a presentation of a business-related topic. Can deal with interjections, perhaps needing to ask for repetition or clarification, and can deal with little hesitation with follow-up prompts which follow the general direction of the discourse.
<b>Expert</b> <b>CEF – C1</b> <b>Operational Proficiency</b>	Can understand most of what is said in a wide range of social and business settings. Can recognise most of the nuances of what is said and respond appropriately. Can respond readily, mainly accurately and with appropriate expansion to questions about personal business interests and experience. Shows good awareness of register and can deal effectively with sensitive social and business situations, conveying the intended message with only very occasional confusion likely to be caused to a partner in the interaction. Can use language effectively in order to negotiate a desired outcome. Can maintain discourse competently to make a presentation of a business-related topic, giving examples and clarification which are helpful to a listener. Can deal with interjections and generally responds appropriately and with only a little hesitation to follow-up prompts, including some of those which may involve an unexpected change in the direction of the discourse.
<b>Mastery</b> <b>CEF – C2</b> <b>Mastery</b>	Can understand everything said in a wide range of social and business settings. Can pick up on and respond appropriately to the finer nuances of what is said. Can respond immediately, entirely accurately and with appropriate expansion to questions about personal business interests and experience. Register is consistently appropriate to context and function. Can deal tactfully with sensitive business and social situations and can convey the intended message without causing confusion to a partner in the interaction. Can use language effectively and persuasively in order to negotiate a desired outcome. Can maintain discourse with ease to make a presentation of a business related topic, giving examples and clarification wherever the listener might find this helpful. Can deal readily with interjections and respond immediately and appropriately to all follow-up prompts even when these may involve an unexpected change in the direction of the discourse.

## 7 Analytical assessment criteria (CARPF)

In deciding on a final grade, the examiner takes into account five separate analytical criteria. The assessment is made on the candidate's performance throughout the test and although one part of the test may naturally place a greater or lesser emphasis on one of the criteria, there is no special weighting given to any one of the four parts of the test or any one of the assessment criteria.

<b>Communication</b>	The candidate's effectiveness in performing a range of real-life, business-related tasks at a specified level of language competence. The demonstrated ability to convey an intended message using language appropriate to the situation.
<b>Accuracy</b>	The candidate's accurate production of general and business related lexis and of grammatical structure appropriate to the level of assessment as described. The demonstrated ability to produce utterances without errors and/or to correct errors when they occur.
<b>Range</b>	The candidate's demonstrated resource of structure and of general and business-related lexis required for the effective achievement of a range of tasks set at an appropriate level of language competence. The use of a variety of words, structures and language functions.
<b>Pronunciation</b>	The candidate's production of individual sounds and connected speech which the listener can understand with a degree of ease described at an appropriate level of language competence. The use of stress and intonation patterns to emphasize the intended message.
<b>Fluency</b>	The candidate's demonstrated ability to maintain the flow of discourse without hesitation or repetition inappropriate to a level of language competence as described. The ability to organise and deliver extended utterances and to respond appropriately to follow-up prompts.

## 8 Candidate performance report

If a candidate for the SET for Business fails the test, a Candidate Performance Report is completed by the examiner. This report highlights the area(s) in which the candidate's performance did not meet the requirements of the stage of the Business SET attempted. The Candidate Performance Report is useful in identifying any specific area(s) which candidates or teachers may wish to make the focus of future study. The report will consist of one or more of the following statements.

<b>Spoken English Tests for Business</b>		
<b>8981-41-041 (Stage A)</b>		
<b>8981-42-042 (Stage B)</b>		
<b>8981-43-043 (Stage C)</b>		
<b>Performance Codes</b>		
AA	Narrow fail	AA
AC	Failure to follow instructions	AC
DJ	Communication weak	DJ
DK	Range of language limited	DK
DL	Fluency poor	DL
DM	Pronunciation	DM
DN	Comprehension inadequate	DN
DO	Language not appropriate to business content	DO
EG	Language - mechanics	EG

These performance reports are to be interpreted in the context of the level of assessment attempted.

## 9 Administration of the examination

### Preparation for the examination

The actual examination session should not be the first such session for either the Interlocutor or the candidate. Try to run a 'mock' examination session, adhering strictly to all the rules, before the actual examination. Use the staff, accommodation and equipment which you will be using for the actual examination and keep to the timing of the examination. Note any difficulties which arise and take remedial action.

Make sure before the day of the examination that candidates know what to expect and, more particularly, that they are aware that for part 4 of the test they can prepare a presentation on a business related topic of their own choosing.

### Centre

To run the examination you need a preparation room and an examination room, an invigilator and an Interlocutor. Choose rooms that are close together and are not affected by noise and ensure that a notice such as 'exam in progress' is on the examination room door. The examination room must have two chairs and a tape recorder mounted on a table or stand at an appropriate height.

It is the responsibility of the centre to provide the best possible conditions for recording. If possible, use an external microphone mounted on a proper microphone stand (floor standing or resting on a table) as this will produce a much better recording than a built-in microphone. Make sure the microphone is directed more towards the candidate and test the recording level from the candidate's position (but ensure that the Interlocutor is also clearly recorded).

Alternatively, use separate microphones for candidate and Interlocutor. Before the test, check the recording equipment in the examination room by making a sample recording in order to assess the acoustic quality of the room and the quality of the recording. Use new cassettes rather than re-using old ones and have a second machine and a number of tapes available in case of problems.

The examination material should be handed to the Interlocutor in the examination room by the examination secretary one hour before the beginning of the examination. Only one candidate is to be admitted to the examination room at a time.

### Invigilator

The invigilator's role is to supervise the preparation room. First the invigilator must ensure that the candidate completes an entry form. The candidate is then given a preparation sheet and the use of an English-English dictionary and is told "You have  $n$  minutes preparation time, starting now".

The preparation times are the same as the total test duration, that is:

8 minutes for Stage A

12 minutes for Stage B

16 minutes for Stage C

The invigilator must not communicate further with the candidates except to tell them when to go into the examination room. The invigilator must ensure that the candidates take their completed entry forms and their preparation sheets into the examination room.

## **Interlocutor**

The Interlocutor must be a suitably qualified and experienced teacher of English with substantial experience of teaching Business English or of working through the medium of English in a real business environment.

This test cannot be administered without preparation and you must be familiar with the content and format of the test well before the actual examination session. The examination secretary will give you the examination material one hour before the exam. This time must be used for becoming familiar with the content of the test and making sure the recording equipment is working properly, that you have a sufficient supply of new tapes and that you have a second tape recorder in case of a break-down. Candidates must be recorded in the same order they appear on the attendance register.

At the beginning of the test you must:

- Collect the candidate's entry form
- Enter the candidate's name on the mark sheet

Before the first candidate's examination, switch on the tape recorder making sure the tape is wound on slightly, and record the following:

**'City & Guilds Spoken English Test for Business, Stage (A, B or C) (date) and (candidate's name)'**

**Please note: Centres must provide their own cassettes. These will not be returned to the centre.**

Record each part of the test as indicated on the examination paper. In Part 2, a candidate who contributes several correct questions or responses in the first two situations need not be questioned on the third particularly if all the time allocated for this section has been used. In Part 3 at stages B and C it is more important to move towards a conclusion than to cover all the items in the stimulus material.

At the end of each candidate's test you must record:

**'(Candidate's name) – end of test'**

Switch off the tape recorder until the next candidate is ready to begin. Hand the candidate material back to the Invigilator.

At the end of the examination session record:

**'Spoken English Test for Business, Stage (A, B or C), (date). End of examination session.'**

After the examination make sure that each candidate's Entry Form is stapled to the correct mark sheet. Sign the Attestation Form. In the event of one candidate's examination not being recorded properly, you may administer the examination again, announcing:

**'(Candidate's name) – re-recording because of technical problems.'**

This should be supported by a signed statement from the Interlocutor and the Invigilator.

### **Advice to Interlocutors**

The Interlocutor's role is to be sympathetic and supportive. The aim is to help the candidates perform to the best of their ability.

- Do not dominate the interaction.
- Do not pitch your language level too high or too low.
- Make sure you have enough tape to record a complete test on one side.
- At the end of the session rewind the tape.
- Write each candidate's name on the cassette in the order they are recorded.
- Make regular checks between candidates' tests to ensure that the tape is recording properly.

### **Part 1**

- Give the candidate every chance to give you the information, remembering that you don't need to ask all the questions.
- Do not write anything except the candidate's name.

### **Part 2**

- Read out the instructions for each situation then say 'I'll begin' or 'you begin', depending on whether the candidate or the Interlocutor should initiate the dialogue.
- Enter into the role appropriately and naturally, giving the candidate every chance to speak.
- Do not dominate the interaction.

### **Part 3**

- During the hour before the examination when you study the material, ensure that you are familiar with what is required in this part.
- Plan a few possible prompts and questions for use during the interaction.
- Avoid falling into the role of teacher ie giving corrections or providing vocabulary.
- Do not allow the candidate to see the Interlocutor preparation sheet.
- It is important to keep to the time allocated even if the task is not completed.

### **Part 4**

- You should make opportunities for the candidate to develop the topic in any way that presents itself. Candidates are not penalised for digressing to a certain extent from the topic.
- To prevent candidates from presenting a prepared speech, you should interject and ask for clarification or re-phrasing.
- When the candidate has finished, ask some follow-up questions about their topic. If they do not finish within about one minute of the allotted time for Part 4, ask them to draw to a conclusion in order to leave time for questions.

10 **Sample Papers**

**Interlocutor's Instructions**

Part 1 – One minute

Part 2 – Two minutes

Part 3 – Two minutes

Part 4 – Three minutes

**Invigilator**

The invigilator's role is to supervise the preparation room. First the invigilator must ensure that the candidate completes an entry form. The candidate is then given a candidate preparation sheet and the use of an English-English dictionary and is told "You have 8 minutes preparation time, starting now."

The invigilator must not communicate further with the candidates except to tell them when to go into the examination room. The invigilator must ensure that the candidates take their completed entry forms and their preparation sheets into the examination room.



## **INTERLOCUTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**CHECK THE TAPE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING**

*Before the first candidate's examination, record the following:*

**'City and Guilds Spoken English Test for Business, Stage A (date) and (candidate's name)'**

### **Part One (1 minute)**

*Put the first three prompts:*

- 1) What is your name? How do you spell your last name?**
- 2) Can you tell me your phone number or email address please?**
- 3) What is your occupation?**

***(Depending on the candidate's answer to this question, choose three or four questions from list A or list B below)***

### ***List A: prompts appropriate for use with candidates who are currently in business***

What time do you start work?

Which days of the week do you work?

Do you like your work? Why/Why not?

What do you like most about your work?

Will you stay in this job in the future?

Will you change work in the future?

What are the difficult parts of your work?

Do you think your work is easy? Why/Why not?

Do you need English for your work? Why/Why not?

Do you use English in your work? How?

### ***List B: prompts appropriate for candidates who are business students***

What time do you start school/college?

Which days of the week do you study?

Do you like these studies? Why/Why not?

What do you like most about your studies?

When will you finish your studies?

How many more years will you study?

What are the difficult parts of your studies?

Do you think your studies are easy? Why/Why not?

Do you need English for your business studies? Why/Why not?

Do you use English in your business studies? How?

**Part Two (2 minutes)**

Read out each of the three situations in turn and play the appropriate supporting role.

Try to make your own contributions suitably natural but brief so that the candidate has the maximum opportunity to demonstrate range and fluency. At this level, be prepared to repeat or paraphrase if the candidate has difficulty understanding the language in any of the situations.

- a) A business contact phones to ask the way to the office. Tell them.
- b) You arrive late for a business meeting. Say why you are late.
- c) You are in a hotel and would like to use the business centre. Ask where it is.

**Part Three (2 minutes)**

Lead in to this part of the test by saying: **'We each have different information. We are going to ask and answer questions to find the missing information'**.

Read out the task-specific rubric and play the role as specified. At this level, make sure that your own language is pitched at a basic level and be ready to repeat and paraphrase if the candidate has difficulty understanding any language in the task or rubric. Encourage the candidate to take the initiative in eliciting some of the information; eye contact and gesture can be effective in achieving this.

Introduce this part of the test by saying: **'I would like to visit you at the company where you work. We both have our diaries for the week. Let's ask and answer questions to find out which days are good for our meeting and decide which is the best time to meet. I'll begin'**.

	0900	Morning	1230	1330	Afternoon	1700
<b>Monday</b>	<b>0900 to 1000: Free</b>			<b>Free all afternoon</b>		
	<b>1000 to 1230: Meeting</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>0900 to 1100: Meeting</b>			<b>Meeting with accountant</b>		
	<b>1100 to 1230: Free</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Out of the office all morning</b>			<b>1330 to 1500: Free</b>		
				<b>1500 to 1700: Meeting</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Free all morning</b>			<b>1400 to 1600: Interviews</b>		
<b>Friday</b>	<b>0930 to 1100: Interview</b>			<b>Free</b>		
	<b>1100 to 1230: Free</b>			<b>Finish 1530</b>		

**Part Four (3 minutes)**

Ask what prepared presentation the candidate has chosen. This may be a topic the candidate has prepared as part of his/her course leading up to the test or one he/she has chosen from the list offered in the preparation time before the test. If a candidate has **not** prepared a project as the basis for a presentation, he/she will have been offered this choice of topics by the invigilator.

- a) My colleagues at work
- b) My fellow students of Business English
- c) A job I would like to do

Introduce this part of the test by saying: **'Now you are going to give your prepared presentation. I'll listen for about two minutes then I'll ask one or two questions about what you say. Please begin'**.

Allow the candidate to speak for about two minutes uninterrupted then interject once or twice with open questions related to what you hear.

Do not put any questions which would test specific business knowledge; this part of the test aims to test the candidate's skills in presenting and responding to prompts of a general nature.

Allow the candidate time to pause and search for language but if communication has evidently broken down, help the candidate by supplying missing language items or suggesting directions the discourse might take. Make sure that your questions are framed in language which is reasonably easy for even very basic level candidates to understand, and be prepared to clarify or paraphrase.

At the end of each candidate's test you must record:

**'(Candidate's name) – end of test'**

Switch off the tape recorder until the next candidate is ready to begin. Hand the candidate material back to the invigilator.

At the end of the examination session record:

**'Spoken English Test for Business, Stage A (date). End of examination session.'**

8981-41-041  
(EL-SETB 41)  
Serial No:

**CANDIDATE'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**Part One (1 minute)**

*In this part of the test, you are going to answer questions about your work or business studies.*

**Part Two (2 minutes)**

*In this part of the test, you and the Interlocutor are going to act out three situations.*

- a) A business contact phones to ask the way to your office. Tell them.
- b) You arrive late for a business meeting. Say why you are late.
- c) You are in a hotel and would like to use the business centre. Ask where it is.

**Part Three (2 minutes)**

*The Interlocutor would like to visit you at the company you work for. You both have your diaries for the week. Ask and answer questions to find out which days are good for your meeting and decide which is the best time to meet.*

	0900	Morning	1230	1330	Afternoon	1700
<b>Monday</b>	<b>0900 to 1000: Meeting</b>					
	<b>1000 to 1230: Free</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>0900 to 1100: Free</b>			<b>Free all afternoon</b>		
	<b>1100 to 1230: Meeting</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Free all morning</b>			<b>Visit new factory</b>		
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Conference</b>			<b>Conference</b>		
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Free all morning</b>			<b>Taxi to airport at 1500</b>		

**Part Four (3 minutes)**

*In this part of the test, you are going to give your prepared presentation. The Interlocutor will listen for about two minutes and will then ask you questions about what you say.*

*Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic may choose one of the following:*

- a) My colleagues at work
- b) My fellow students of Business English
- c) A job I would like to do

8981-42-042  
(EL-SETB 42)  
Serial No:

**Interlocutor's Instructions**

Part 1 – Two minutes

Part 2 – Three minutes

Part 3 – Three minutes

Part 4 – Four minutes

**Invigilator**

The invigilator's role is to supervise the preparation room. First the invigilator must ensure that the candidate completes an entry form. The candidate is then given a candidate preparation sheet and the use of an English-English dictionary and is told "You have 12 minutes preparation time, starting now."

The invigilator must not communicate further with the candidates except to tell them when to go into the examination room. The invigilator must ensure that the candidates take their completed entry forms and their preparation sheets into the examination room.

## **INTERLOCUTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**CHECK THE TAPE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING**

*Before the first candidate's examination, record the following:*

**'City and Guilds Spoken English Test for Business, Stage B (date) and (candidate's name)'**

### **Part One (2 minutes)**

*Put the first three prompts:*

- 1) What is your name? How do you spell your last name?**
- 2) Can you tell me your phone number or email address please?**
- 3) What is your occupation?**

***(Depending on the candidate's answer to this question, choose three or four questions from list A or list B below)***

#### ***List A: prompts appropriate for use with candidates who are currently in business***

How long have you had this job?

When did you start to do this work?

Why did you choose this occupation?

What do you like most about your work?

What are your career plans for the next five years?

What would you like to do in your profession in the future?

What special skills do people need for the job you do?

What qualifications do people need for the work you do?

Why is English useful in your work?

How do you use English in your work?

#### ***List B: prompts appropriate for candidates who are business students***

When did you begin your business studies?

How long have you studied business?

Why did you choose business studies?

What do you like most about these studies?

What are your career plans for the next five years?

What would you like to do in your profession in the future?

What special skills do people need to do the work you plan to do?

What qualifications do people need for the job you hope to have?

How do you use English in your studies?

Why is English important in your studies?

**Part Two (3 minutes)**

Read out each situation in turn and play the appropriate supporting role.

Try to make your own contributions suitably natural but brief so that the candidate has the maximum opportunity to demonstrate range and fluency.

- a) A business contact phones to apologise for missing the appointment she had arranged with you. Reply.
- b) You need to extend the deadline on the project you are working on. Ask what the possibilities are.
- c) At the company's weekly management meeting, you would like to raise a point under Any Other Business. Explain what the point is and say why you think it is important to discuss it.

**Part Three (3 minutes)**

Lead in to this part of the test by saying: **'We each have different information and are going to try to make a decision together'**.

Read out the task-specific rubric and play the role as specified.

Try to be flexible in the role play and give the candidate every chance to suggest what the best conclusion will be. Don't necessarily agree with every suggestion the candidate makes but allow him/her to explain the reasons for his/her ideas and in general aim to accept them.

Introduce this part of the test by saying: **'The company we work for is planning to invest in staff training and has identified a number of areas where investment could be made. You have one set of suggestions and I have another. Let's compare the suggestions on our two lists and decide which of them is the most appropriate. You can make other suggestions if you wish'**.

**Physical fitness training course**

**Computer training**

**People skills**

**Time management**

**Part Four (4 minutes)**

Ask what topic the candidate has chosen for his/her research project and invite him/her to present it to you as an audience interested in, but not necessarily knowledgeable about the topic.

If a candidate has **not** prepared a project as the basis for a presentation, he/she will have been offered a choice of one of the topics below by the invigilator and will have been given time to prepare. In this event, lead in to this part of the test by saying: **'I'd like you to tell me about the topic you've chosen. I'll listen to your presentation for about three minutes and then I'll ask you two or three questions about what you say. Please go ahead'**.

- a) The uses of technology in my area of business.
- b) An industry which is important in the country I come from.
- c) A country I would like to work in.

If the candidate **has** prepared a presentation, begin by saying: **'Now you are going to give your prepared presentation. I'll listen for about three minutes then I'll ask one or two questions about what you say. Please begin'**.

Allow the candidate to speak for about three minutes uninterrupted then interject two or three times with open questions related to what you hear.

Do not put any questions which would test specific business knowledge; this part of the test aims to test the candidate's skills in presenting and responding to prompts of a general nature.

If the candidate is evidently at the lower end of the Stage B assessment scale, make sure that your questions are framed in language which is reasonably easy for a pre intermediate level candidate to understand and be prepared to clarify or paraphrase.

At the end of each candidate's test you must record:

**'(Candidate's name) – end of test'**

Switch off the tape recorded until the next candidate is ready to begin. Hand the candidate material back to the invigilator.

At the end of the examination session record:

**'Spoken English Test for Business, Stage B, (date). End of examination session.'**



8981-42-042  
(EL-SETB 42)  
Serial No:

**CANDIDATE'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**Part One (2 minutes)**

*In Part One, you are going to answer a number of questions about you own areas of work or business study.*

**Part Two (3 minutes)**

*In Part Two, you and the Interlocutor are going to act out three situations.*

- a) A business contact phones to apologise for missing the appointment she had arranged with you. Reply.
- b) You need to extend the deadline on the project you are working on. Ask what the possibilities are.
- c) At the company's weekly management meeting, you would like to raise a point under Any Other Business. Explain what the point is and say why you think it is important to discuss it

**Part Three (3 minutes)**

*In Part Three, you are going to have a discussion with the Interlocutor and try to make a decision together. Your company is planning to invest in staff training and has identified a number of areas where investment could be made. You have one set of suggestions and the Interlocutor has another. Compare the suggestions on your two lists and decide which of them is the most appropriate. Make suggestions other than those on the lists if you wish to.*

- **Foreign language study trips**
- **Using the phone and email for business communication**
- **Exchanging roles with colleagues**
- **Stress management**

**Part Four (4 minutes)**

*In Part Four, you are going to give your prepared presentation. The Interlocutor will listen for about three minutes and will then ask you questions about what you say.*

*Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic may choose one of the following:*

- a) The uses of technology in my area of business.
- b) An industry which is important in the country I come from.
- c) A country I would like to work in.

8981-43-043  
(EL-SETB 43)  
Serial No:

**Interlocutor's Instructions**

Part 1 – Two minutes

Part 2 – Four minutes

Part 3 – Four minutes

Part 4 – Six minutes

**Invigilator**

The invigilator's role is to supervise the preparation room. First the invigilator must ensure that the candidate completes an entry form. The candidate is then given a candidate preparation sheet and the use of an English-English dictionary and is told "You have 16 minutes preparation time, starting now."

The invigilator must not communicate further with the candidates except to tell them when to go into the examination room. The invigilator must ensure that the candidates take their completed entry forms and their preparation sheets into the examination room.

## **INTERLOCUTOR'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**CHECK THE TAPE RECORDER IS ON AND WORKING**

*Before the first candidate's examination, record the following:*

**'City and Guilds Spoken English Test for Business, Stage C (date) and (candidate's name)'**

### **Part One (2 minutes)**

*Put the first three prompts:*

**1) Could you give me your full name please and spell your surname?**

**2) Do you have a contact phone number or email address?**

**3) What is your occupation?**

***(Depending on the candidate's answer to this question, choose three or four questions from list A or list B below)***

### **List A: prompts appropriate for use with candidates who are currently in business**

How long have you had your present job?

When did you take up your present post?

Why did you choose this occupation?

What made you decide to become a..... (candidate's occupation)?

What are your short-term and long-term career plans?

What professional plans and ambitions do you have for the future?

What particular skills do you think are required for the area of business you are involved in?

What qualifications do people need for the area of business you are involved in?

How important is English in the line of work you have chosen?

How do you use, and expect to use, English in your work?

### **List B: prompts appropriate for candidates who are business students**

When did you begin your business studies?

How long have you been studying business?

Why did you choose to study business?

What made you decide to study..... (candidate's area of study)?

What are your career plans?

What hopes and ambitions do you have for your future career in business?

What particular skills do you think people need to do the work you plan to do?

What qualifications do people need for the business you plan to be involved in?

How important is English in the line of work you have chosen?

How do expect to use English in your work?

### **Part Two (4 minutes)**

Read out each of the three situations in turn and play the appropriate supporting role.

Try to make your own contributions suitably natural but brief so that the candidate has the maximum opportunity to demonstrate range and fluency. If the situation is one in which the candidate has to initiate conversation indicate this by saying 'You start'.

- a) The business client you have taken out to dinner insists on paying the bill. Decline the offer and say on what future occasion the client can return the favour.
- b) You are going to give a presentation at a conference tomorrow. Phone the conference centre to check that all the equipment you require will be provided and explain how important this is.
- c) A colleague is obviously under stress. Find out what the problem is and suggest ways in which you might be of help.

### **Part Three (4 minutes)**

Lead in to this part of the test by saying: **'We each have different information and are going to try to negotiate an agreement'**.

Read out the task-specific rubric and play the role as specified.

Try to be flexible in the role play. Defend your own position clearly and politely, but be prepared to give way and allow the candidate to negotiate a mutually satisfactory compromise.

Introduce this part of the test by saying: **'I represent a supplier of stationery and you represent a company planning to do business with us. We each have different sets of terms we would ideally like to agree. We are going to negotiate these terms and see what agreement we can reach'**.

Payment terms	<b>30 days credit</b>
Discount	<b>No discount up to £20,000; 15% thereafter</b>
Delivery terms	<b>Free delivery on orders over £100</b>
Delivery times	<b>Within 72 hours of order</b>

### **Part Four (6 minutes)**

Ask what topic the candidate has chosen for his/her research project and invite him/her to present it to you as an audience interested in, but not necessarily knowledgeable about the topic. **'Now you are going to give your prepared presentation. I am your audience. I'll listen for about five minutes, and then I'll ask you two or three questions about what you say. Please go ahead.'**

Allow the candidate to speak for about five minutes uninterrupted then interject two or three times with open questions related to what you hear.

Do not put any questions which would test very specific business knowledge; this part of the test aims to test the candidate's skills in presenting and responding to prompts of a general nature.

If a candidate has **not** prepared a project as the basis for a presentation, he/she will have been offered a choice of the following topics by the invigilator and will have been given time to prepare.

- a) The impact information technology has had on the business sector in which I work.
- b) My vision of the business world in the next decade.
- c) Why my contribution to a business project on which I have worked was valuable

*At the end of each candidate's test you must record:*

***'(Candidate's name) – end of test'***

*Switch off the tape recorder until the next candidate is ready to begin. Hand the candidate material back to the invigilator.*

*At the end of the examination session record:*

***'Spoken English Test for Business, Stage C (date). End of examination session'***.

8981-43-043  
(EL-SETB 43)  
Serial No:

**CANDIDATE'S INSTRUCTIONS**

**Part One (2 minutes)**

*In Part One, you are going to answer a number of questions about you own areas of work or business study.*

**Part Two (4 minutes)**

*In Part Two, you and the Interlocutor are going to act out three situations.*

- a) The business client you have taken out to dinner insists on paying the bill. Decline the offer and say on what future occasion the client can return the favour
- b) You are going to give a presentation at a conference tomorrow. Phone the conference centre to check that all the equipment you require will be provided and explain how important this is.
- c) A colleague is obviously under stress. Find out what the problem is and suggest ways in which you might be of help.

**Part Three (4 minutes)**

*In Part Three, you are going negotiate an agreement. Your company is planning to buy stationery from a new supplier (the Interlocutor). Below are the terms you would ideally like to agree with the supplier. Negotiate these terms and see what agreement you can reach.*

Payment terms	<b>90 days credit</b>
Discount	<b>20% on spending over £10,000</b>
Delivery terms	<b>Free delivery on all orders</b>
Delivery times	<b>Within 24 hours of order</b>

**Part Four (6 minutes)**

*In Part Four, you are going to give your prepared presentation. The Interlocutor will listen for about five minutes and will then ask a few questions about what you say.*

*Candidates who have not chosen their own presentation topic may choose one of the following:*

- a) The impact information technology has had on the business sector in which I work.
- b) My vision of the business world in the next decade
- c) Why my contribution to a business project on which I have worked was valuable

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