

PASS **Cambridge** **BEC** Higher

An examination preparation course
Updated for the revised exam

PRACTICE TESTS

with audio CD and Answer key

Pass Cambridge BEC Higher Practice Tests

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**Russell Whitehead
Michael Black**



Introduction

The Cambridge Business English Certificate

The Cambridge Business English Certificate (BEC) is an international Business English examination which offers a language qualification for learners who use, or will need to use, English for their work. It is available at three levels: Preliminary, Vantage and Higher.

The Cambridge BEC Higher Examination

The Cambridge BEC Higher examination is made up of four tests.

Reading (60 minutes)

There are six reading tasks. They test skills such as reading for gist, global meaning and detail, and knowledge of vocabulary, structure and discourse features.

Writing (1 hour 10 minutes)

There are two writing tasks. The first tests your ability to write concisely, describing or comparing graphic information. The second, longer task tests your ability to, for example, summarise, recommend, persuade, evaluate, explain.

Listening (approximately 40 minutes)

There are three listening tasks. These test your ability to understand monologues and dialogues by making notes of specific information; identifying topic, function, opinion, etc; and interpreting arguments and opinions.

Speaking (16 minutes)

The speaking test includes conversation, a mini-presentation and a discussion, with an examiner and another candidate.

Pass Cambridge BEC Higher Practice Tests

This Practice Test book (and CD) aims to provide useful support for students preparing to take the Cambridge BEC Higher examination. It consists of:

- **Three complete practice tests:** each practice test includes the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking tests and advice on how to approach each task.
- **Preparation:** two pages before each practice test to enable students to focus on key writing skills by looking in detail at model sample answers.
- **Tapescripts:** the content of the Listening tests.
- **Answer key:** answers to all the Reading and Listening tests and sample answers for the Writing test.

Recommended approach

We recommend you work through the tests in order. Before you start each test, complete the activities in each Preparation section. You may find it useful to keep a record of useful words, phrases and grammatical structures you come across.

Pass Cambridge BEC Higher Practice Tests



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Writing skills

Two-word business expressions

- 1 Many common business expressions consist of two words, e.g. *customer service*. Match the words below.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 blue-chip | a) chain |
| 2 distribution | b) company |
| 3 job | c) control |
| 4 marginal | d) channel |
| 5 market | e) cost |
| 6 mission | f) margins |
| 7 profit | g) satisfaction |
| 8 stock | h) segmentation |
| 9 supply | i) statement |

Proposal writing

- 2 Read the sample Writing Test question and answer on the opposite page and look at the notes below.

- 1-4 Standard top section
 5 An often used heading to explain why the proposal or report has been written.
 9-15 Note that the two proposals are introduced (line 10), and set out in separate paragraphs, with *one* and *secondly* to mark each one clearly.
 17-20 Note that the writer gives reasons for the suggestions regarding implementation, i.e. *as the process is likely to take two or three months and since the positions are unlikely to attract people living outside this area*. These explanations make the proposal far more convincing than simply writing *The recruitment of new staff should be given top priority*.
 21 Note the way of moving from recruitment to the discount scheme: both a new paragraph and the introductory phrase *as regards*.
 25-27 This section gives a disadvantage, as required by the task. Note that by dealing with the objection, the proposal ends positively.

Note the use of headings for each section of the proposal.

Note the range of common business expressions, e.g. *customer loyalty, repeat orders, natural wastage, customer retention*.

Note the attempt to avoid repeating words, e.g. the use of *personnel* and *staff*; *customer retention* and *customer loyalty*; *as* and *since*.

Note the attempt to avoid using words given in the task, e.g. *customer loyalty* (4) instead of *to retain customers*.

Question 3

- Too many customers purchase from your company once only, and the Sales Manager has asked staff to think of ways to retain more of them.
- Write your proposal for the Sales Manager,
 - suggesting a reason for the lack of repeat orders
 - putting forward one or two ways to retain customers
 - outlining how your ideas could be implemented
 - mentioning one or two possible disadvantages of your ideas.
- Write 200 – 250 words on the separate answer paper provided.

1 To: Customer Services Manager

2 From: Geraldine Salmon

3 Date: March 21

4 Subject: Customer loyalty

5 Background

6 The proportion of customers placing repeat orders has halved in the last two

7 years, to 12 per cent. One possible cause is the reduction in our sales

8 personnel through natural wastage.

9 Proposals

10 I suggest two ways of improving the customer retention rate.

11 One is to recruit three new sales people, to return to the full complement that

12 we had until two years ago. This would relieve the pressure on all sales staff,

13 allowing them to devote more time to maintaining relationships with customers.

14 Secondly I propose offering corporate customers a discount in return for a

15 commitment to buy goods to a certain value within a set period.

16 Implementation

17 The recruitment of new staff should be given top priority, as the process is

18 likely to take two or three months. Advertising the vacancies in local

19 newspapers is probably the most effective way of reaching potential applicants,

20 since the positions are unlikely to attract people living outside this area.

21 As regards the discount scheme, perhaps a small group comprising staff from

22 Finance, Production and Sales could work out a viable scheme, which would

23 be attractive to customers but still give adequate profit margins.

24 Possible drawback

25 Clearly both schemes, particularly the recruitment of new staff, would entail

26 considerable costs. However, increasing the level of repeat orders would lead

27 to savings on advertising, and in the long run should improve profits.

PRACTICE TEST 1: READING

PART ONE

Questions 1 – 8

How to approach Reading Test Part One

- In this part of the Reading Test you match eight statements with five short texts.
- First read each short text and then read the sentences to see which ones refer to the text.
- Make sure you read each text for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Look at the sentences below and at the five sections from an article about benchmarking on the opposite page.
- Which section of the article does each sentence refer to?
- For each sentence 1 – 8, mark one letter (A, B, C, D or E) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

Example:

- 0 Benchmarking exercises most often take place in a single industry. (Answer: B)
- 1 Ideas that emerge from a benchmarking exercise may be better than any current practice.
- 2 In some cases companies receive information without knowing which organisation produced it.
- 3 Certain methods of benchmarking generally do not impose restrictions on the kinds of knowledge that can be shared openly.
- 4 One goal of benchmarking is to solve problems common to companies in a variety of fields.
- 5 Benchmarking exercises can enable all participants to make improvements in their operations.
- 6 Benchmarking exercises may lead to an improvement in contacts with other people.
- 7 It may be a weakness of benchmarking that organisations imitate others.
- Some forms of benchmarking do not restrict the availability of data to those organisations taking part.

A Benchmarking involves establishing minimum standards of performance and quality, based on identifying the best method and practice followed in other organisations. These standards can then be used as yardsticks to measure the organisation's current costs, production, management and customer focus, and identify areas where they fall short of norms. According to its supporters, benchmarking raises awareness of innovations and best practice, thus helping all companies taking part in benchmarking exercises to increase their competitiveness: by imitating best practice they may be able to reduce their costs or improve their customer service.

B There are a number of approaches to benchmarking. Typically, exercises are carried out by companies working within the same field or sector, as in the International Motor Vehicle Programme. Between 1985 and 1990 this brought together car manufacturers from Europe, the USA and Japan with the aim of introducing the western companies to Japanese production methods. As benchmarking by competitors can be very sensitive, in some cases data is mediated through a neutral body, such as a business school, to protect confidentiality and make sure that no trade secrets are revealed.

C There are also instances of companies in widely different industries comparing their management practices, to see how others have dealt with difficulties in internal communications, supply chain management, and other areas where practice is transferable from company to company without affecting competition between rivals, in other words, topics where confidentiality is not at issue. To a certain degree this practice has been aided by the development of internet websites dedicated to the sharing of information, sites which, being in the public domain, are universally accessible. Of course, this means that only certain types of data are provided.

D Unlike benchmarking exercises with competitors, which run the risk that participants may want to take what they can and give away as little as possible, benchmarking between the divisions or business units of a single company is far less likely to lead to the withholding of information. As a by-product, co-operation among different sections of the company may well be enhanced, both through increased understanding of how others operate, and by simply being able to put a face to a name, and know who to talk to about a particular work-related problem.

E Learning from the successes and failures of others can of course be very valuable. On the other hand, critics claim that by concentrating on existing best practice, companies simply seek to emulate other businesses. Content to achieve the best of what is being done at the moment, they do not attempt to move beyond it to reach the best possible. However this ignores the creative aspect of the process: learning about other organisations' operations may well spark off fresh ideas, as in a brainstorming session, and lead into the realm of true innovation.

PART TWO

How to approach Reading Test Part Two

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a text with gaps in it, and choose the best sentence to fill each gap from a set of eight sentences.
- First read the text for overall meaning, then go back and look for the best sentence for each gap.
- Make sure the sentence fits both the meaning and the grammar of the text around the gap.

Questions 9 – 14

- Read the text on the opposite page from an article about how a company reduced its transport costs.
- Choose the best sentence from below to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap 9 – 14, mark one letter (A – H) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

- A** Before the review, transport was eating up 3 per cent of the company's UK sales revenue.
- B** Nevertheless, the situation was not helped by the fragmented nature of the haulage industry.
- C** More than 60 did so, and their quotes were then analysed.
- D** Among the terms they included in these contracts were requirements for improvements in costs, flexibility and reliability.
- E** None had come into logistics as part of a management career.
- F** But hauliers at the other end of the scale were not automatically excluded.
- G** These results horrified the company, as they were far worse than had been anticipated.
- H** Some transport they could not account for at all.

Route to big delivery savings

There are few areas left within the world's largest businesses where one close look can deliver instant savings of 1 per cent of sales. For Rhodia, the chemicals arm of French conglomerate Rhône-Poulenc, scrutiny of the company's transport costs in the UK led to just such savings. Management consultants A.T.Kearney were commissioned to review the company's operations. They scoured order books, invoices and transport logs at the company's fourteen UK sites. (0) Surprising as it may seem, there were simply no records.

A.T.Kearney's initial survey found that transport accounted for 10 per cent of the company's traceable spending in the UK, and that during a 12-month period, 235 different hauliers had moved products for the company. The company were also running a 30-strong fleet of their own. (9) In a more positive light, though, they meant that the opportunity to improve was huge.

Transport buying was being dictated by the backgrounds of the buyers, rather than rational criteria. (10) Instead, they were typically former drivers or site workers who bought transport from a network of contacts built up over many years.

Even where buyers were seeking the cheapest transport, their task was complicated by numerous different

tariffs for different measures. For A.T.Kearney, the solution lay in a comprehensive, standardised tendering process. During the following weeks, all the company's existing suppliers, Rhodia's own fleet, and others were invited to tender for business. (11) Modelling of these responses began: what if this part of the business was given to X, and this part to Y – what does it do to costs?

Rhodia then went back to the most promising applicants and offered them deals for packages of business. (12) In this way the company ensured that they got the best possible arrangement. Inevitably, this process favoured large suppliers. (13) For example, a driver with his own lorry, who had been transporting goods for the company for years, submitted a tender. A sub-contracting arrangement was made for him with one of the final suppliers.

Today, Rhodia have five main hauliers, who account for 90 per cent of the company's transport spending. All rates are standardised: the whole system is a very simple one. But perhaps the most extraordinary outcome from this monumental number-crunching exercise was the bottom line impact. (14) The new set-up has delivered savings of more than 25 per cent. And the company is confident of achieving even more savings.

PART THREE

Questions 15 – 20

How to approach Reading Test Part Three

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a longer text and answer six questions.
- First read the questions. Try to get an idea of what the text will be about. Then read the text for general understanding.
- Then read the text and questions more carefully, choosing the best answer to each question. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Read the article on the opposite page about interim managers who work for companies on short assignments and the questions below.
- For each question 15 – 20, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

15 What does John Tiernan like about interim management?

- A the opportunities to have extended holidays
- B the chance to learn from other people's mistakes
- C the contact with a number of different companies
- D the knowledge that the work he is doing is important

16 Concerning the way that he gets jobs, John Tiernan believes that

- A he would benefit from being on a computer database.
- B the agency knows him well through personal contact.
- C he would benefit from meeting more interim managers.
- D the agency treats him better than other agencies would.

17 What did John Tiernan find about his assignment with Jarvis Porter Group?

- A The task proved different from what he had been asked to do.
- B The customer service staff did not co-operate with him.
- C He thought it unnecessary to close the division down.
- D Customer service was worse than he had expected.

18 According to the writer, which type of communication is uncommon for interim managers?

- A maintaining close contact with the company's Chief Executive
- B getting to know people at all levels in the company
- C receiving feedback from somebody outside the company
- D sending regular reports to the agency about the work being done

19 What reason is given for some companies' resistance to using interim managers?

- A Interim managers may not be concerned about the company's future.
- B It is difficult to justify the cost of an interim manager.
- C The company has to rely on the agency's choice of interim manager.
- D Interim managers can lower the morale of staff.

20 What point is made about interim management in the last paragraph?

- A There are too few agencies to meet the demand.
- B There is inconsistency in what agencies deliver.
- C Too few companies are aware of the benefits.
- D There are too few good interim managers.

John Tiernan has spent five years trouble-shooting as an interim manager, hired on short-term assignments by a variety of companies to sort out its problems. He has no desire to return to the certainties of a permanent position, because now, whichever company he is working for, he is perpetually involved in a meaningful task that's critical to the business at that time. Though he admits that sorting out the aftermath of other people's misjudgments can be frustrating. At first he found the gaps between jobs traumatic, but now he has got used to them, so when a job ends he simply books a holiday.

Mr Tiernan is part of a relatively small pool of managers used by agency BIE. Whereas most suppliers of interim managers have large databases, which they tap into in order to match a manager's qualifications and experience with a client company's requirements, BIE tries to develop a good understanding of its managers' personalities and of how they are likely to fit into a company through interviews and from feedback on their previous assignments. He is very happy with the way the agency treats him, though he admits that he has no idea how this compares with other agencies. One advantage he finds of being one of a small number of managers is that they can get to

know each other well, through the agency's social and professional development activities.

Interim jobs are frequently highly pressured and can be uncomfortable. John Tiernan was recently brought in to improve customer service at a division of Jarvis Porter Group, a printing and packaging company. Initial resistance from staff fairly soon melted away, but then Mr Tiernan realised that the division's trading position was unsustainable, and it soon became clear that what was needed was a shutdown, not a rescue. Mr Tiernan managed the closure, in which about 250 jobs were lost.

The secret is always to keep channels of communication open. Making oneself known to the whole range of employees is useful, although it may not be enough to prove one's value to the company. Keeping the company's Chief Executive informed is essential for the interim manager's actions to be understood and accepted. Agencies, too, often like to keep track of what their managers are doing for their clients, though few have gone as far as W&S. This Dutch agency arranges for its interims to be assisted by expert 'shadow managers' back at base, who act as a sounding board for their ideas and actions.

Client companies hire interim managers to deal with temporary situations, such as mergers or delays in filling senior posts. Although interim managers don't come cheap, inaction may be even more costly, and if the company has established a good relationship with an agency, it can trust in the latter's ability to supply someone suitable. The interim manager arrives without corporate baggage or vested interests, which may be an advantage in the effect they have on staff, but the potential downside, which deters some companies from using them, is a fear that having only a short-term commitment to the company, they might not have its long-term interests at heart.

Interim management providers' defence is that the success of the system is precisely due to the reputation of managers such as Mr Tiernan. But there are fears that the growing demand for interim managers is encouraging too many new agencies to be set up, and the absence of uniform practices is endangering quality and leading to an overall fall in standards. Whatever happens, though, it looks as though interim managers are here to stay.

PART FOUR

Questions 21 – 30

How to approach Reading Test Part Four

- This part of the Reading Test tests your vocabulary.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Look at the four possible answers for each gap and cross out any obviously incorrect words.
- Then read both before and after each gap to decide which word should go in it. The word needs to fit both the meaning and the grammar.
- After completing all the gaps, read the whole text again to check your answers.

- Read the article on the opposite page about how companies can attract and retain good quality staff.
- Choose the best word from below to fill each gap.
- For each question 21 – 30, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- There is an example at the beginning (0).

Example: (Answer: D)

0	A beating	B excelling	C outdoing	D winning
21	A getting	B making	C setting	D running
22	A particular	B total	C full	D short
23	A press	B drive	C send	D despatch
24	A up	B out	C in	D by
25	A careless	B unconcerned	C indifferent	D uninterested
26	A take	B suppose	C have	D assume
27	A propose	B offer	C provide	D supply
28	A trust	B meaning	C confidence	D sense
29	A enhance	B heighten	C magnify	D elevate
30	A looks	B believes	C regards	D thinks

Finding and keeping tomorrow's high-fliers

To gain competitive advantage, organisations need to attract and retain potential high-performers who can develop and implement (0) ... strategies. They need people with a genius for (21) ... things done quickly and effectively, which includes completing projects on time, and inspiring and leading colleagues. In (22) ..., they need the ability to ensure a company's success. Such people can (23) ... their organisations to great heights.

However, many of those who stand (24) ... because of their talent leave because their employers are (25) ... to their agendas. In fact, many organisations need a clearer idea of what motivates such people.

Money is not particularly effective as a motivator, because high performers tend to (26) ... a good financial package for granted. Empowerment is particularly significant for new talent, however, and wise employers (27) ... high performers the opportunity to feel that they 'own' a project.

The challenge of the work is another essential motivator for high-fliers, who need to feel that their employer has a strong (28) ... of how the job contributes to their career development. High performers should also have a platform for self-development, to enable them to (29) ... their skills.

Above all, high performers want to feel that the organisation they work for (30) ... them as special. If they find that it is not interested in them as people but only as high-performing commodities, it will be hardly surprising if their loyalty is minimal.

An organisation which bears all this in mind is in a better position to keep its high-fliers, both present and future.

PART FIVE

Questions 31 – 40

How to approach Reading Test Part Five

- This part of the Reading Test tests your grammar.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Then read the text again, and write down one word for each gap. Make sure the word fits both the meaning and the grammar.

- Read the article below about how individuals can exert power in business.
- For each question **31 – 40**, write one word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. There is an example at the beginning (**0**).

Example:

0 T O

The Power Principle

Real power in a company amounts (**0**) ... having the ability to get the objectives you want, through direct action or persuasion. And the truth is that anybody can wield enormous power if they know how. Power comes from understanding all the key players and what objections they might put (**31**) ... your way. Treat it like a game of chess: you need to be thinking many moves (**32**) ... of your rivals and opponents.

People need to feel they have choices, and it is very (**33**) ... better that you present your plan with several options (**34**) ... than just one. However, only one should be credible, or the others should lead to the same objectives, (**35**) ... as to be sure of achieving the result you want.

Identify the ultimate decision-maker and anticipate their likely reaction to your proposal. If you feel it won't be favourable you need to work out a strategy to convince them otherwise, either by soliciting influencers – people who can persuade the key decision-maker – (**36**) ... by changing their minds directly.

But do not ask them directly. You will find (**37**) ... very difficult to turn your proposal into reality if they say no. Even the (**38**) ... enlightened of people do not like (**39**) ... seen to change their minds or to have made a wrong judgement. And this means that (**40**) ... was a relatively simple job of convincing them of the merits of your plan becomes an uphill struggle of getting them to admit they were wrong.

PART SIX

Questions 41 – 52

How to approach Reading Test Part Six

- This part of the Reading Test tests your ability to identify additional or unnecessary words in a text.
- Most lines contain one extra word that makes the sentence incorrect.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to identify the words that are incorrect.
- Then read the text again, and write down the extra words. Remember there will be only one extra word in a line, and some lines are correct.

- Read the advertisement below about a company which lets offices.
- In most lines there is one unnecessary word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the sense of the text. Some lines are correct.
- For each numbered line **41 – 52**, find the unnecessary word and then write the word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. If a line is correct write CORRECT on your Answer Sheet. There are two examples at the beginning (**0**) and (**00**).

Example:

0 C O R R E C T
00 B E S T

Prestigious but inexpensive offices

- 0** In some towns business premises are at a premium, with scarce office space rapidly
00 being used up. So what do you do best if you need a base for a start-up company but
41 either cannot find a suitable location or cannot afford the overheads? One solution for
42 which ever more new businesses are opting is to use the services of an office provider,
43 a company applied with business premises, generally in prestigious locations. Its
44 subscribers can both save money by working from home, while impressing their own
45 customers by using the premises such as their business address. Offices can also be
46 hired for as short a time as an hour, or for any other period, making it possible for
47 subscribers to hold meetings in rather more professional-looking surroundings than
48 their own home. In addition, office providers offer secretarial and the reception
49 facilities, thus are making these services available without the normal delays and costs
50 arising from having to recruit and employ staff. The flexibility of monitoring the
51 system means that your changing requirements can be accommodated without some
52 difficulty, allowing you to concentrate yourself on growing your business. Just choose
the services you require.

PRACTICE TEST 1: WRITING

PART ONE

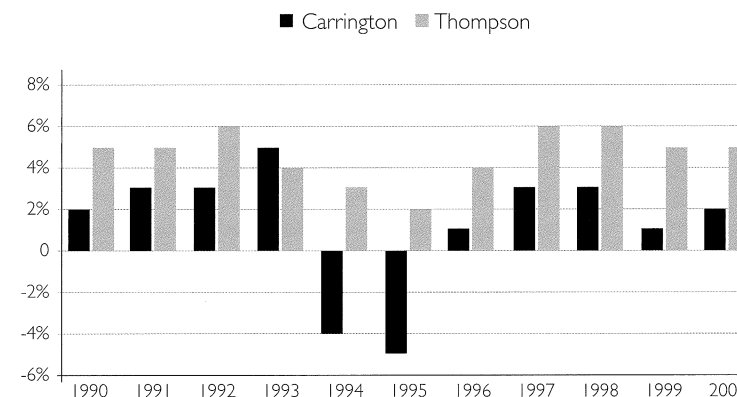
How to approach Writing Test Part One

- This part tests your ability to write a short report expressing information which you are given in graphic form, such as bar charts, pie charts and graphs.
- Read the instructions carefully so that you know what you are required to do: this is usually to describe or compare the information in the graphic input. Underline the keywords in the instructions.
- Make an outline plan of the report.
- Start with a brief description of what the report is about.
- You can use suitable headings if you wish.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You should not invent any information for this part.
- Check that you have written your answer in 120–140 words (multiply the number of lines by the average number of words per line: don't waste time counting every word).
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer: Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 20–25 minutes on this part.

Question 1

- The chart on the opposite page shows the annual percentage change in turnover of two companies, compared with the previous year, from 1990 to 2000.
- Using the information in the chart, write a short report describing and comparing the changes in turnover for the two companies during the 11-year period.
- Write 120 – 140 words.

Percentage change in turnover, compared with previous year



PART TWO

How to approach Writing Test Part Two

- In this part you have a choice of three tasks: a report, proposal and piece of business correspondence.
- Look through the three tasks and choose the one which you think you could do most easily.
- Read the task again, underlining the key words. You should note exactly what you are required to do, and who you are writing to.
- The second paragraph of the instructions summarises what you should write, who you are writing it for, and the three or four points that must be included.
- Make an outline plan, with notes for each point. It is best to follow the order of the 3 or 4 points that are stated, as you will lose marks if you leave any out.
- Write your text.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You will need to invent some information for this part.
- If you write the report or proposal, you should use suitable headings.
- If you write the business correspondence, you should include suitable openings and closings (e.g. *Dear Mrs Smith* and *Yours sincerely* with your signature), but no addresses.
- Make sure the level of formality is appropriate given who you are writing to.
- Check that you have written your answer in 200–250 words.
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer. Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 40–50 minutes on this part.

Answer **ONE** of the questions 2, 3 or 4 below.

Question 2

- The Marketing Director of your organisation is concerned about the level of sales in the region where you work, and has asked you for a report explaining the situation.
- Write your **report** for the Marketing Director;
 - briefly comparing sales with those of a year ago
 - giving reasons for the present situation as regards sales
 - saying what you are doing to improve the situation
 - expressing your confidence in the future.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 3

- The organisation you work for has a suggestion scheme which staff are asked to contribute to. You have an idea for improving the way in which new staff are recruited, and have decided to send a proposal to Ms Cartwright, who administers the suggestion scheme.
- Write your **proposal**,
 - outlining the present way in which new staff are recruited
 - describing your idea for improving the method
 - explaining how your idea can be introduced
 - outlining any disadvantages your idea might have.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 4

- This is part of a letter sent to you by Mr Sharrold, one of your organisation's customers:


I was shocked to be spoken to so rudely on the telephone by a member of your sales staff, particularly as my reason for calling was to point out mistakes in the goods that had been despatched to me.

- Write a **letter** to Mr Sharrold,
 - apologising for what has happened
 - saying what you have done to deal with his complaint
 - explaining why the mistakes were made
 - offering compensation.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

PRACTICE TEST 1: LISTENING

PART ONE


Questions 1 – 12



How to approach Listening Test Part One

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a monologue, e.g. a presentation.
- Before you listen, read the notes. Think about what you are going to hear.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- You should write words that you hear, without changing them. They must fit the meaning of the notes.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.
- Check that you have used no more than three words in each numbered space.

- You will hear part of an awards ceremony for design consultancies.
- As you listen, for questions 1 – 12, complete the notes using up to three words or a number.
- You will hear the recording twice.



Prizewinners announced by: William Taylor
His present job title: (1)
He won an award for his work on an exhibition of (2)


Internal Communications Award
Consultancy: Steppart
Client: Farlands
type of communications system designed: (3)
requirements: easy to use
consistent with client's (4)
outcomes: reduced spending on (5) and
had an unexpected effect on client's (6)

Corporate Identity Award
Consultancy: J3
Client: Coffee Cabina
outlets have been (7)
outcomes: great improvement in (8)
unusually fast achievement of (9)

Packaging Award
Consultancy: Tamka
Client: Starbury Ice Creams
Brief: to target a different (10)
to encourage (11) consumption
judges were impressed by label's (12) design

PART TWO

Questions 13 – 22



How to approach Listening Test Part Two

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to five short monologues, spoken by five different speakers.
- There are two tasks for each of the five monologues. For each task you must choose one out of eight options.
- You can either do one task the first time you listen and the other task the second time, or deal with the two tasks for each monologue together.
- Within each monologue, the information for each of the two tasks may come in either order.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Check you have not used the same option more than once within each task.

- You will hear five different people talking about a meeting they have attended.
- For each extract there are two tasks. For Task One, choose the topic to be discussed at the meeting from the list A – H. For Task Two, choose the speaker's comment on the meeting from the list A – H.
- You will hear the recording twice.

TASK ONE – TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED

- For questions 13 – 17, match the extracts with the topics to be discussed at each meeting, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the topic to be discussed at the meeting.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

13	.....	A	reducing production costs
14	.....	B	a possible merger
15	.....	C	staff morale
16	.....	D	putting a new idea into production
17	.....	E	change in market strategy
		F	internal reorganisation
		G	problems in supply chain
		H	organisation of staff training

TASK TWO – COMMENT ON THE MEETING

- For questions 18 – 22, match the extracts with the speakers' comments on the meetings, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the comment on the meeting.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 18 | A Not all the relevant information was made available. |
| 19 | B I disagreed with the conclusion that was reached. |
| 20 | C The chairperson lost control of the meeting. |
| 21 | D A few of the participants didn't listen to each other. |
| 22 | E I didn't say everything I wanted to say. |
| | F The meeting was dominated by one person. |
| | G The decision made at the meeting was later ignored. |
| | H I was not convinced that the decision taken reflected the majority view. |

PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30



How to approach Listening Test Part Three

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a long conversation or interview and answer eight questions.
- Before you listen, read the questions. Think what the recording will be about.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not make an immediate decision. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.

- You will hear a radio interview with Carolyn Whitcombe about the business consultancy which she runs.
- For each question 23 – 30, mark one letter A, B or C for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 How does Carolyn describe her consultancy?

- A It aims to help companies of a particular size.
- B It offers advice and practical assistance.
- C It concentrates on certain specialities.

24 According to Carolyn, how has the work of her consultancy changed?

- A It involves producing more documentation for clients.
- B It includes a larger number of complicated projects.
- C It entails using computers more than in the past.

25 What is Carolyn's approach to organising the work of the consultants?

- A She puts together people with strengths in different fields.
- B She forms teams on the basis of how well people work together.
- C She ensures each consultant can deal with a wide range of issues.

26 Carolyn sees solutions to problems as being

- A a long-term benefit for an individual company.
- B a blueprint for a range of companies.
- C a source of temporary value.

27 What did the consultancy help the supermarket chain to do?

- A spread sales more evenly through the year
- B anticipate likely sales more accurately
- C standardise sales across its stores

28 What is the utility company planning to do?

- A increase the amount of information it stores about its customers
- B develop new channels of communication with its customers
- C expand the range of products on offer to its customers

29 The consultancy is developing abroad by

- A working in partnership with existing companies.
- B taking over companies in other countries.
- C opening branches to be staffed by its existing employees.

30 Why did Carolyn set up her own consultancy?

- A She wanted to work independently.
- B She wanted to work on a greater variety of projects.
- C She felt she could do better than the company she worked for.

PRACTICE TEST 1: SPEAKING

PART ONE: INTERVIEW

How to approach Speaking Test Part One

- In this part of the test you answer questions about yourself and about business topics, and express personal opinions.
- Phase One focuses on factual, personal information; Phase Two requires you to express opinions on business-related matters. You will be asked one question in each phase.
- Before the exam, think of answers to possible questions about your work, and about business in your country. Below are some questions you might need to answer.
- In the exam, listen carefully to the questions. Make sure you answer what the examiner asks you. Ask the examiner to repeat a question if necessary. Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says.
- Try to give more than just basic answers, and give examples to show what you mean.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business. If you do not know an answer, say so, and try to speculate.

Practise answering these questions.

Phase One:

- Can you tell me about your work and why you are learning English?
- Can you tell me about your studies and what you like best about them?

Phase Two:

- In what ways are work patterns changing in your country?
- What effects does the tourism industry have on your country?

PART TWO: INDIVIDUAL MINI-PRESENTATION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Two

- In this part of the test you give a short talk (approximately one minute) on a business topic.
- You choose one of three topics and have one minute to prepare your ideas. In this time make brief notes to give you a structure and some key words.
- When you talk, make the structure clear; for example by giving a brief introduction and conclusion, and using linking words and phrases to introduce each section.
- Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says. You will have to ask the other candidate a question about their presentation after they have spoken.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business, so if you don't know much about a topic, just say what you can about it.

Choose one of these three topics and prepare a short (about one minute) talk about it.

Candidate 1

- A **Staff management:** the importance of training and development for staff retention
- B **Customer Services:** how to meet and exceed customers' expectations of service
- C **Finance:** how to identify potential areas for reductions in costs

Candidate 2

- A **Public Relations:** the importance to a company of having a clear ethical policy
- B **Purchasing:** the factors involved in selecting a supplier of goods or services
- C **Recruitment:** how to ensure the interviewing of job applicants is effective

PART THREE: DISCUSSION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Three

- In this part of the test you work with the other candidate. The examiner gives you a card which presents a scenario and task to discuss. You need to have a serious discussion of the task, with the type of interaction which would be appropriate to a work environment.
- You and the other candidate should try to imagine yourselves in a work environment, faced with a real situation to discuss and you should try to reach some decisions.
- You have about 30 seconds to prepare your ideas. Use this time to ensure you understand the task.
- Listen to the other candidate and respond to what they say. Do not just give your own opinions, or just agree with the other candidate.
- Try to make more than just basic comments.
- Following your discussion with the other candidate, the examiner will ask you questions on the same topic. Develop your answers, and give examples to show what you mean. Listen to what the other candidate says.

Practise discussing this task, and the questions which follow it, with a partner:

OPENING A NEW BRANCH ABROAD

The company you work for wants to enter new markets by opening a new branch abroad. You have been asked to make suggestions concerning this.

Discuss, and decide together:

- how the company could find out information about the new markets
- what training the staff for the new branch would need
- how the new branch could be promoted

Follow-up questions:

- What is the most important factor when considering opening a branch abroad?
- In what other ways can companies build up business abroad?
- What kinds of companies benefit most from trading with different countries?
- Would you like to work abroad for your company?
- Do you think business will become increasingly global in the future?

Writing skills

Headings for reports

- 1 For a report investigating an existing situation or something that has happened, the following are common headings. Match each of the headings to one of the topics below.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1 Terms of reference | a) What the reader should do |
| 2 Methodology | b) Why the report was written |
| 3 Background | c) How the writer found out what had happened |
| 4 Findings | d) What the writer has discovered |
| 5 Conclusions | e) History or description of the situation being reported on |
| 6 Recommendations | f) Summary of information or arguments, and the case for further action |

Report writing

- 2 Read the sample Writing Test question and answer on the opposite page and look at the notes below.

- 1–4 Standard headings to begin a short report
 4 Subject should be concise and helpful.
 5 Headings make it clear what each section is about, and reflect (in the same order) the 4 bullet points giving details of what you are required to cover.
 6 Nowadays the active form (*I have asked, I led*) is often used, particularly in reports written for known readers.
 6–8 The 3 main elements of the method (questionnaire, focus group and records) are referred to later.
 10–12 Several phrases are used to show knowledge of standard vocabulary concerned with this topic.
 14–17 Note the use of a complex sentence to relate two points.
 18–22 This paragraph goes into some detail about the poor management mentioned in 16.
 24 Shows the writer has weighed up both the pros and cons of what they are going to propose.
 28–31 Bullet points are used to draw attention to each recommendation.

Note the use of headings to structure the report. They reflect the four bullet points listing what should be included, and so *Symptoms* and *Possible causes* are more appropriate than *Findings*.

Note that the writer's personal opinion is expressed only in the *Recommendations* section.

Question 4

- The Managing Director of your organisation is concerned about the poor level of staff motivation and has asked you to write a report on the situation.
- Write your report for the Managing Director,
 - outlining how you carried out your research
 - describing the symptoms of the poor motivation
 - suggesting possible causes
 - proposing how to improve the level of motivation.
- Write 200 – 250 words on the separate answer paper provided.

1 To: Shelley Howells

2 From: Jerry Handley

3 Date: 3 October

4 Subject: Staff motivation

5 Method

6 I have asked all staff to fill in a questionnaire, and 45 per cent of them did so. I

7 led a focus group discussion with six of those who returned the questionnaire,

8 and examined staff absence records.

9 Symptoms

10 The main symptoms of poor motivation that I found are rising rates of

11 absenteeism and staff turnover; poor time keeping and the loss of several long-

12 term customers.

13 Possible causes

14 Although in the questionnaire most people identified the level of pay and

15 benefits as their main area of dissatisfaction, the in-depth focus group

16 discussion concluded that this is less important than poor management and the

17 'blame culture'.

18 Many perceive management as being carried out by a combination of threats

19 and criticism, with an almost total absence of encouragement and praise.

20 Several people claimed that their treatment by managers means that they

21 dread coming in to work, and makes them unwilling to ask for help or to admit

22 mistakes.

23 Recommendations

24 Despite the difficulty of radically changing management style, this is the most

25 pressing requirement if the loss of customers is to be stemmed. Other changes

26 are also required, to give staff greater 'ownership' of their work. I therefore

27 recommend:

28 • Managers should attend training by an external body, such as a consultancy.

29 • Team work should be introduced wherever possible, to give staff at all levels

30 greater responsibility for organising their work and checking its quality.

31 • Increased opportunities for training and job rotation should be created.

PRACTICE TEST 2: READING

PART ONE

Questions 1 – 8

How to approach Reading Test Part One

- In this part of the Reading Test you match eight statements with five short texts.
- First read each short text and then read the sentences to see which ones refer to the text.
- Make sure you read each text for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Look at the statements below and at the five extracts from a text about corporate ownership of planes on the opposite page.
- Which extract (A, B, C, D or E) does each statement 1 – 8 refer to?
- For each sentence 1 – 8, mark one letter (A, B, C, D or E) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

Example:

- 0 It has recently become cheaper to own a plane. (Answer: E)
- 1 The expense of plane ownership is seen as unacceptable by large numbers of people.
- 2 Increased business travel is leading to greater interest in plane ownership.
- 3 Company-owned planes are less luxurious than might be expected.
- 4 Rules concerning flights may slow down privately owned travel.
- 5 The justification for plane ownership is related to senior management pay levels.
- 6 Plane ownership may be taken as a sign of a business being poorly run.
- 7 Competition is increasing among businesses which sell planes.
- 8 Plane ownership enables more rapid access to many places.

A Regular European business travellers view travelling on commercial airlines as inefficient and inconvenient. Mostly it is not the airlines' fault but the infrastructure they have to work with. Private aircraft are being bought primarily not to save money on tickets but to save time. Scheduled flights in Europe cover only 10 per cent of the destinations available. Delays, more likely than not in European travel these days, waste precious time. The number of hours top executives with huge salaries waste has a direct impact on cost-effectiveness.

B The gradual completion of Europe's single market means that more and more executives are criss-crossing Europe looking for business. With European domestic air fares extremely high, a corporate jet looks more attractive for executives flying three or four times a month. Even some of Europe's smaller companies are investigating it. However, the larger European airports operate priority regulations which govern slot allocation for take-off and create delays; airlines have first priority, chartered flights come second, air taxis third and business jets are fourth on the list. Smaller airports pose problems of access and a risk of inadequate ground handling.

C Most businesses will not discuss their corporate aircraft or even reveal whether the already high-earning chief executive has an aircraft, for fear of shareholder reaction. There is still some stigma attached to ownership of a business jet. With new planes costing anything from \$5 million upwards plus extra comforts in the interior, many companies feel they can't justify the expense to shareholders and employees. For some European managers a private jet is seen as an unacceptable perk indicating serious problems in a company's management.

D The market for private aircraft divides into two sectors: the no-expense-spared rich man's plaything – the popular image – and the serious business tool owned by corporations. Manufacturers deliver the former as what is called a 'green' aircraft – a plane that is unfinished except for a green corrosive-resistant paint which covers the bare metal. Owners personalise the plane with telephones, dining areas and even cinemas. The latter sector is very different and planes are normally bought with straightforward seating.

E Fractional ownership of aircraft has opened up the market, as the low acquisition costs and predictable monthly fees are more palatable to shareholders, and to first-time buyers. Some of the biggest names in the business jet industry have launched their own fractional ownership schemes. Several smaller companies are also getting in on the act and are trying to beat the larger companies down the runway by offering cheaper prices. Yet critics claim that fractional ownership is untested and faces the customer with a wide range of liabilities.

PART TWO

How to approach Reading Test Part Two

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a text with gaps in it, and choose the best sentence to fill each gap from a set of eight sentences.
- First read the text for overall meaning, then go back and look for the best sentence for each gap.
- Make sure the sentence fits both the meaning and the grammar of the text around the gap.

Questions 9 – 14

- Read the article on the opposite page about management buyouts of companies.
- Choose the best sentence from below to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap 9 – 14, mark one letter (A – H) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

- A Including them in any buy-out discussions can improve the new company's future prospects.
- B In such circumstances it is easy for the new board to make the same mistakes as the old.
- C Possibilities for realising these include decision-making, setting goals, and offering the chance of a future stake in the new company.
- D Whatever its origins, those lower down the corporate ranks can often be left out of the equation, wondering what is to become of them.
- E Nobody benefits if the company fails to meet its objectives.
- F Yet the new start represents a golden opportunity.
- G This requirement is particularly relevant when a company has failed or when staff have lost faith in the previous management.
- H Internal MBOs can also be particularly unsettling for employees.

M

anagement buy-outs

Involving staff in management buy-out (MBO) negotiations can help smooth the path for the future.

career development, will in the long-term be advantageous to the entire company.

Employees are becoming increasingly familiar with the fluctuations and instability that their working environments can present. It's not just mergers and acquisitions that can upset the situation. (0). In some cases, the MBO takes place to save an ailing company. In others, it is the result of senior management and board disagreements, or is to prevent a hostile takeover bid. (9). This insecurity can be very damaging.

One of the most important factors, often not considered during the process of an MBO, is the reaction of the workforce, yet it is those employees who more often than not can make or break the future success of any new management team. (10). By maintaining channels of communication across the floor, new management teams could find the rank and file a useful ally in the bid to take over. Showing those employees that a buy-out could be to their advantage, creating new opportunities for promotion or

The challenge for new management teams should be to reinspire employees. (11). If the new team doesn't engage old employees in future plans or consider the contribution they can make, the idea that the MBO was meant to save everyone is lost. In this situation, long-term employees begin to see the new management team and shareholders as the only beneficiaries in the buy-out and feel in the end that the only people saved are those at the top of the corporate ladder. (12). This will mean that the rescue will fail before it has really started.

It is depressingly common for new MBO teams not to learn from the past. (13). If the new team can find innovative ways to involve staff actively in various aspects of the buy-out process, the benefits are manifold. (14). A package with such components can gain their support and be invaluable in building success for the venture, and is one that enlightened MBO teams tend to adopt.

PART THREE

Questions 15 – 20

How to approach Reading Test Part Three

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a longer text and answer six questions.
- First read the questions. Try to get an idea of what the text will be about. Then read the text for general understanding.
- Then read the text and questions more carefully, choosing the best answer to each question. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Read the article on the opposite page about innovation in business and the questions below.
- For each question 15 – 20, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

15 According to the first paragraph, a few years ago companies

- A trusted in technology to improve existing products.
- B chose to focus heavily on marketing activities.
- C expected that growth would increase steadily.
- D believed they needed to produce new goods.

16 What problem is indicated in the second paragraph?

- A Insufficient attention to brand identity damages company profits.
- B A lack of product diversity reduces a company's appeal.
- C Business leaders are not attracted to slow-performing companies.
- D Slow reactions to business trends reduce investors' interest.

17 According to the third paragraph, it would be a mistake to

- A rely on future benefits in business planning.
- B deny the benefits of pursuing innovation.
- C neglect the importance of strategic issues.
- D predict the outcomes of innovations.

18 According to the fourth paragraph, companies should ensure that

- A their approach to risk management is fully new.
- B the progress of an innovation is as speedy as possible.
- C their new products are radically different from competitors'.
- D the benefits of participating in teamwork are fully acknowledged.

19 What is suggested in the fifth paragraph?

- A The steps involved in innovation must be tackled in sequence.
- B Market forces should be a company's primary consideration.
- C The types of innovation sought must be appropriate to a company.
- D Elements of chance should be assumed in decision-making.

20 Doubt is expressed in the final paragraph as to whether

- A most businesses realise the conditions required for innovation.
- B businesses should trust in benefits which they did not predict.
- C the majority of businesses are able to innovate successfully.
- D businesses should expect individual staff to generate ideas.

Not long ago innovation was The Big Idea in marketing circles. Now, however, it's hard to see the benefits of this rush to innovate. Indeed if anything, companies seem to be drawing back from innovation, not charging ahead. But just a few years ago many companies were combining a commitment to create entirely new product categories through innovative technologies – working to hugely ambitious growth targets – with a root-and-branch organisational overhaul designed to free up creativity and speed new product roll-outs.

The result was that as resources were shifted away from core businesses, sales and profits faltered, share prices slumped and CEOs were ousted. Now the mantra is a more conservative focus on the top brands, the top retail customers and the top markets. It's being rewarded in many cases by healthier share prices. This sustained effort to cut long tails of smaller brands and focus marketing resource on existing leaders seems to be paying off.

So were we wrong to pinpoint innovation as key to long-term market success? Surely not. But we might have underestimated the enormous complexity of this beast. The term 'innovation' may be simple enough but it spans a vast landscape, including the type and

degree of innovation, marketing purpose, management process and market circumstance – not all of which are well understood.

Take 'type' of innovation. Are we talking about new products only? Or new processes, new channels, underlying technologies, organisational structures and business models? When should the innovation involve a new brand? Or take 'degree'. Are we aiming for blue-sky inventions that will transform markets and create new categories? Or marginal tweaks in, say, formulation or packaging that give us an excuse to advertise something 'New! Improved!?' Likewise, is the marketing purpose of the project to steal a march on competitors and drive incremental growth, or to update an obsolete product line and play catch-up to competitors? As one business news editorial complained, 'innovation' is often just 'simple proliferation of similar products'. Then there's process. What is the best way to manage this particular innovation? Is it to employ creative revolutionaries and set them free, or is disciplined risk management, requiring the careful testing and sifting of options to pick winners, a better approach? In larger organisations, has senior management really made time spent in cross-functional teams a

recognised element of successful career paths? What time frames (eg payback periods) and degrees of risk is senior management comfortable with? And does the organisation have a culture that fits the chosen approach? Does it 'celebrate failure', for example, or is it actually a risk-averse blame culture (despite what the CEO says in the annual report)?

Successful innovation requires clearing two hurdles. First, it needs the right project with the right degree of innovation to fit with the right marketing purpose, the right innovation process, corporate culture and market circumstance. Second, it needs senior managers that understand the interplay between these different factors, so that rather than coming together simply by chance, they are deliberately brought together in different ways to meet different circumstances.

Clearing Hurdle Two can happen 'by accident'. Clearing Hurdle One requires real skill. We can all point to admirable, inspiring innovations. But how many companies can we point to and say, 'these people have mastered the art of innovation'? Brilliant innovations are a wonderful thing. Expert innovation management is even better and much rarer.

PART FOUR

Questions 21 – 30

How to approach Reading Test Part Four

- This part of the Reading Test tests your vocabulary.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Look at the four possible answers for each gap and cross out any obviously incorrect words.
- Then read both before and after each gap to decide which word should go in it. The word needs to fit both the meaning and the grammar.
- After completing all the gaps, read the whole text again to check your answers.

- Read the text on the opposite page about decision-making.
- Choose the best word from below to fill each gap.
- For each question 21 – 30, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- There is an example at the beginning (0).

Example: (Answer: D)

0	A officiated	B administered	C organised	D institutionalised
21	A overestimate	B exaggerate	C outnumber	D supersede
22	A advise	B propose	C suggest	D recommend
23	A removed	B gone	C missed	D lost
24	A understood	B meant	C granted	D assumed
25	A usually	B naturally	C typically	D generally
26	A distinguishing	B categorising	C indicating	D identifying
27	A ranking	B arranging	C collecting	D sorting
28	A record	B account	C order	D evidence
29	A numbered	B counted	C measured	D listed
30	A building	B lifting	C growing	D boosting

Decisions, decisions ...

Poor decisions are commonplace. In fact, they are often (0) ... In the workplace, poor decisions (21) ... good ones in many situations. While management consultants (22) ... companies on many aspects of running a business, basic decision-making is often (23) ... out of the equation.

Professor Larry Phillips, who teaches at the London School of Economics, says: 'Because we make decisions all the time, it is (24) ... that we know how to do it.' It is a skill which is supposed to come (25) ..., but many of us would fare better with coaching.

Psychologist Rob Yeung of consultancy Kiddy & Partners says millions of pounds are lost in business because the wrong people are hired. 'Although businesses may be quite good at (26) ... the terrible candidates from the mediocre ones, they aren't very good at (27) ... those who are just good from those who are excellent.'

And many businesses have procedures that repress good decisions. Phillips says: 'One of the most commonplace problems is that people are held to (28) ... without the requisite responsibility to meet that authority. That creates tremendous anxiety.' For instance, you will see manufacturing departments which are (29) ... by the sales income they achieve – but the sales price is set by someone else. Managers will often be blamed by their bosses for a downturn in commercial activity when the true culprit is market conditions. 'There is a failure to understand variability,' says Phillips, who bemoans the (30) ... tendency to judge companies by their last quarter's results alone.

PART FIVE

Questions 31 – 40

How to approach Reading Test Part Five

- This part of the Reading Test tests your grammar.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Then read the text again, and write down one word for each gap. Make sure the word fits both the meaning and the grammar.

- Read the text below about improving employability through personal branding.
- For each question **31 – 40**, write one word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. There is an example at the beginning (**0**).

Example:

0 1 5

Personal branding

Today's society (**0**) ... geared increasingly towards the individual, and that means you have to find ways to stand (**31**) ... from the crowd in order to compete. Developing your personal brand is one way.

Branding has moved a long way (**32**) ... it meant simply building recognisable product names. Brands now represent whole worlds of meaning. And that's just (**33**) ... you need to do if you want to be visible among the masses.

'We live in a competitive climate, not least in the world of work,' says Helen Trevaskis, identity consultant for brand consultancy Smith and Milton. 'Employers are (**34**) ... just looking for skills, but for different qualities too. More young people have degrees, and you'll find many other candidates with the (**35**) ... skills and qualifications as you.'

Personal branding is a form of self-presentation, but it must be done naturally, making it more (**36**) ... just superficial. 'You need to (**37**) ... a good look at yourself and ask fundamental questions,' says Trevaskis, 'such (**38**) ..., who am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses? From the answers, decide where you want to be positioned in the world, and precisely (**39**) ... you want others to see you.'

Over time, you can learn to create your own brand identity to make (**40**) ... more memorable. It's a particularly useful exercise at times of change in your career.

PART SIX

Questions 41 – 52

How to approach Reading Test Part Six

- This part of the Reading Test tests your ability to identify additional or unnecessary words in a text.
- Most lines contain one extra word that makes the sentence incorrect.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to identify the words that are incorrect.
- Then read the text again, and write down the extra words. Remember there will be only one extra word in a line, and some lines are correct.

- Read the text below about customer service.
- In most lines there is one unnecessary word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the sense of the text. Some lines are correct.
- For each numbered line **41 – 52**, find the unnecessary word and then write the word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. If a line is correct write CORRECT on your Answer Sheet. There are two examples at the beginning (**0**) and (**00**).

Example:

0 A S

00 C O R R E C T

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 0** Customer service has become such as an important competitive
- 00** differentiator that it really is no longer solely the responsibility of
- 41** a small group of individuals staffing around a complaints desk.
- 42** Customer service is included every employee's responsibility, and it
- 43** should be a proactive rather than resulting a reactive strategy. Excellent
- 44** service wins and keeps up customers. Service means extras – in terms
- 45** of product, care and information – customised to meet for the similar
- 46** needs of a group of customers. It has become so relatively complex
- 47** and inclusive, extending from order planning to postsales service,
- 48** that a cross-functional team of staff and managers is often one needed
- 49** for service delivery. Some more things haven't changed. The three
- 50** 'F's of service still apply. It has yet to be fast, flexible, and come
- 51** from the first person the client contacted. However by today, the first
- 52** person may be a computer, and fast now means instantaneous.
- Flexibility remains key to survival.

PRACTICE TEST 2: WRITING

PART ONE

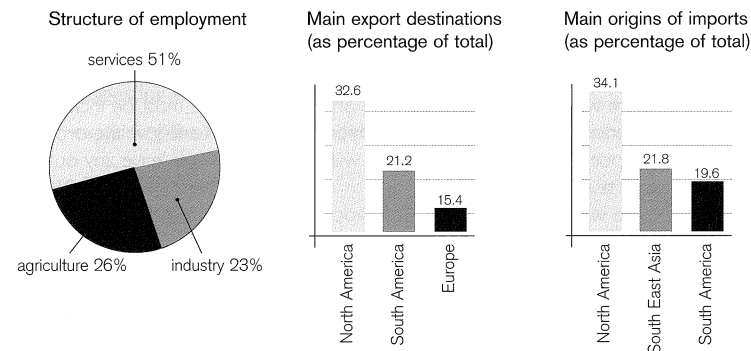
How to approach Writing Test Part One

- This part tests your ability to write a short report expressing information which you are given in graphic form, such as bar charts, pie charts and graphs.
- Read the instructions carefully so that you know what you are required to do: this is usually to describe or compare the information in the graphic input. Underline the keywords in the instructions.
- Make an outline plan of the report.
- Start with a brief description of what the report is about.
- You can use suitable headings if you wish.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You should not invent any information for this part.
- Check that you have written your answer in 120–140 words (multiply the number of lines by the average number of words per line: don't waste time counting every word).
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer: Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 20–25 minutes on this part.

Question 1

- The charts on the opposite page show three aspects of a region's economy: the structure of employment, the main destinations for exports, and the main origins of imports.
- Using the information from the graphs, write a short report describing the three aspects of the region's economy.
- Write **120 – 140** words.

Regional economy



PART TWO

How to approach Writing Test Part Two

- In this part you have a choice of three tasks: a report, proposal and piece of business correspondence.
- Look through the three tasks and choose the one which you think you could do most easily.
- Read the task again, underlining the key words. You should note exactly what you are required to do, and who you are writing to.
- The second paragraph of the instructions summarises what you should write, who you are writing it for; and the three or four points that must be included.
- Make an outline plan, with notes for each point. It is best to follow the order of the 3 or 4 points that are stated, as you will lose marks if you leave any out.
- Write your text.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You will need to invent some information for this part.
- If you write the report or proposal, you should use suitable headings.
- If you write the business correspondence, you should include suitable openings and closings (e.g. *Dear Mrs Smith* and *Yours sincerely* with your signature), but no addresses.
- Make sure the level of formality is appropriate given who you are writing to.
- Check that you have written your answer in 200–250 words.
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer. Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 40–50 minutes on this part.

Answer **ONE** of the questions 2, 3 or 4 below.

Question 2

- The managing director of your company has decided to review the company's staffing situation. You have been asked to write a report concerning this.
- Write your **report** for the managing director, including the following information:
 - a description of the company's recruitment methods
 - an outline of the company's training programme
 - an evaluation of the current situation
 - one or two recommendations for improvement.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 3

- Your department has recently been found to be less efficient than others in the company, and your head of department wishes to make improvements. You have been asked to make a proposal concerning this.
- Write your **proposal** for the head of department,
 - outlining the current problems in efficiency
 - giving reasons for the lack of efficiency
 - suggesting ways of improving efficiency
 - explaining the resources needed to implement these improvements.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 4

- A business college has invited your company to give a presentation to its students. Your managing director has asked you to give the presentation and to write to the college about it.
- Write a **letter** to the head of the college,
 - introducing yourself and accepting the invitation
 - outlining the content you propose for the presentation
 - explaining the benefits your presentation will have for students
 - detailing your practical requirements concerning the presentation.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

PRACTICE TEST 2: LISTENING

PART ONE

Questions 1 – 12

How to approach Listening Test Part One

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a monologue, e.g. a presentation.
- Before you listen, read the notes. Think about what you are going to hear.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- You should write words that you hear, without changing them. They must fit the meaning of the notes.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.
- Check that you have used no more than three words in each numbered space.

- You will hear a business lecturer talking about a company called SC Foods.
- As you listen, for questions 1 – 12, complete the notes using up to three words or a number.
- You will hear the recording twice.

Early history

Company set up as a group of (1)

Moved into (2) in 1990

Opened first (3) in London

Current activities

➤ making a total of (4)

➤ supplying products to (5) and.....

Recent achievements

➤ contract to supply (6) signed

➤ popular (7) produced

➤ first (8) released

Future plans

➤ to form partnership with an (9)

➤ to develop new (10)

Values

Recent article praised SC's commitment to (11)

Won award for (12)

PART TWO

Questions 13 – 22

How to approach Listening Test Part Two

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to five short monologues, spoken by five different speakers.
- There are two tasks for each of the five monologues. For each task you must choose one out of eight options.
- You can either do one task the first time you listen and the other task the second time, or deal with the two tasks for each monologue together.
- Within each monologue, the information for each of the two tasks may come in either order.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Check you have not used the same option more than once within each task.

- You will hear five different people talking about managers.
- For each extract there are two tasks. For Task One, decide which problem they mention from the list A – H. For Task Two, choose the recommendation made from the list A – H.
- You will hear the recording twice.

TASK ONE – THE PROBLEM ABOUT THE MANAGER

- For questions 13 – 17, match the extracts with the problems, listed A – H.
- For each extract, decide which problem about the manager the speaker describes.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

13	.....	A	not keeping up with IT developments
14	.....	B	being away from the office too often
15	.....	C	not praising achievements
16	.....	D	being obsessed with cost-cutting
17	.....	E	not understanding how long tasks take
		F	being poor at delegating
		G	not listening to suggestions
		H	being neglectful of detail

TASK TWO – THE RECOMMENDATION MADE

- For questions 18 – 22, match the extracts with the recommendations made, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the recommendation each speaker makes.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

18

19

20

21

22

- A attend an internal seminar
- B refer to a book
- C talk to another manager
- D change working hours
- E attend a residential course
- F use a piece of software
- G call a meeting
- H re-arrange office space

PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30



How to approach Listening Test Part Three

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a long conversation or interview and answer eight questions.
- Before you listen, read the questions. Think what the recording will be about.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not make an immediate decision. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.

- You will hear a discussion between Clive, the owner of a bicycle accessories business, and Rose, a business advisor.
- For each question 23 – 30, mark one letter A, B or C for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 Rose suggests that when Clive appraises his business, he should highlight

- A the scope of his after-sales service.
- B the speed of his delivery system.
- C the quality of his product range.

24 In the medium term, Clive says his main aim is to

- A increase his number of multiple retailer stockists.
- B improve his standing against competitors.
- C broaden the skills base of his staff.

25 What is Clive's long-term goal?

- A to replace existing goods with higher quality goods
- B to boost his profile through association with sport
- C to build and maintain a stronger brand image

26 What point does Rose make about advertising in newspapers?

- A The effect of the message may be slight.
- B The message must be repeated frequently.
- C The possibilities for message design are limited.

27 Why does Clive think advertising in guidebooks would be effective?

- A Guidebooks generally only carry a few advertisements.
- B Copies of guidebooks are often kept for several years.
- C Several people usually read each copy of a guidebook.

28 What aspect of direct mail worries Clive?

- A the cost of buying lists of consumers
- B the time needed to produce a mailshot
- C the difficulty of measuring effectiveness

29 What does Rose advise about preparing a mailshot?

- A All visual features should be consistent.
- B Only high-quality stationery items should be used.
- C The letter should have a directly personal style.

30 Rose says a widespread problem about exhibitions is that

- A exhibitors' normal routines are disrupted by participating.
- B organisers lack accurate knowledge of markets.
- C visitors rarely place orders at an exhibition.

PRACTICE TEST 2: SPEAKING

PART ONE: INTERVIEW

How to approach Speaking Test Part One

- In this part of the test you answer questions about yourself and about business topics, and express personal opinions.
- Phase One focuses on factual, personal information; Phase Two requires you to express opinions on business-related matters. You will be asked one question in each phase.
- Before the exam, think of answers to possible questions about your work, and about business in your country. Below are some questions you might need to answer.
- In the exam, listen carefully to the questions. Make sure you answer what the examiner asks you. Ask the examiner to repeat a question if necessary. Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says.
- Try to give more than just basic answers, and give examples to show what you mean.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business. If you do not know an answer, say so, and try to speculate.

Practise answering these questions.

Phase One:

- Can you tell me about your present job and your plans for the future?
- Can you tell me about your course of studies and why you chose this course?

Phase Two:

- How important is English in your country?
- What impact does technology have on business in your country?

PART TWO: INDIVIDUAL MINI-PRESENTATION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Two

- In this part of the test you give a short talk (approximately one minute) on a business topic.
- You choose one of three topics and have one minute to prepare your ideas. In this time make brief notes to give you a structure and some key words.
- When you talk, make the structure clear; for example by giving a brief introduction and conclusion, and using linking words and phrases to introduce each section.
- Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says. You will have to ask the other candidate a question about their presentation after they have spoken.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business, so if you don't know much about a topic, just say what you can about it.

Choose one of these three topics and prepare a short (about one minute) talk about it.

Candidate 1

- A **Time Management:** the importance of managing time effectively during the working day
- B **Human Resources:** the importance of appraisal in maintaining staff motivation
- C **Marketing:** the factors involved in building a brand image

Candidate 2

- A **Career Development:** the importance of work experience when studying for business qualifications
- B **Business Strategy:** the importance of quality in maintaining a competitive edge
- C **Travel:** how to respond effectively to differences in business customs on foreign trips

PART THREE: DISCUSSION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Three

- In this part of the test you work with the other candidate. The examiner gives you a card which presents a scenario and task to discuss. You need to have a serious discussion of the task, with the type of interaction which would be appropriate to a work environment.
- You and the other candidate should try to imagine yourselves in a work environment, faced with a real situation to discuss and you should try to reach some decisions.
- You have about 30 seconds to prepare your ideas. Use this time to ensure you understand the task.
- Listen to the other candidate and respond to what they say. Do not just give your own opinions, or just agree with the other candidate.
- Try to make more than just basic comments.
- Following your discussion with the other candidate, the examiner will ask you questions on the same topic. Develop your answers, and give examples to show what you mean. Listen to what the other candidate says.

Practise discussing this task, and the questions which follow it, with a partner:

STAFF TRAINING REVIEW

The organisation you work for plans to review the training it currently provides for staff and to make improvements. You are part of the team that has been appointed to contribute to the review.

Discuss, and decide together:

- how to evaluate the training currently provided
- how to set about meeting training needs

Follow-up questions:

- Do you think all members of a company should receive training?
- Are there types of training which are not appropriate for a company to provide for staff?
- What training would you most like to receive?
- How can the effectiveness of training be measured?
- Do you think the kinds of training that companies provide will change in the future?

Writing skills

Useful phrases

- 1 The following phrases and sentences are often used in business letters. Match the ones that have a similar meaning.

- 1 I am afraid ...
 - 2 I would appreciate it if ...
 - 3 I hope you agree to this suggestion.
 - 4 I would be happy to give you any further help you require.
 - 5 I am very sorry for not answering your letter sooner.
 - 6 If you would like more details ...
 - 7 Please deal with this as soon as possible.
- a) I trust this proposal is acceptable to you
 - b) If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.
 - c) Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying.
 - d) I very much regret ...
 - e) I trust you will give this matter your urgent attention.
 - f) Should you require any further information ...
 - g) I would be grateful if ...

Letter writing

- 2 Read the sample Writing Test question and answer on the opposite page and look at the notes below.

- 1 Use the name of the addressee, as you are given it.
- 2–8 Deals with the first sub-bullet. This paragraph gives information about your organisation which is likely to be relevant to the market research company, i.e. core activity and size.
- 9–12 Deals with the second sub-bullet. The most general point (*The local economy is booming*) comes first.
- 13–21 This deals with the third sub-bullet, and as each new staff position is dealt with at some length, it is worth writing a paragraph on each one.
- 18 Note *also* to indicate the new point.
- 21 Note the reference to information given in the extract from Mr Berry's letter.
- 22–24 Note the friendly ending, *Yours sincerely* to go with *Dear Mr Berry*, and a signature.

Note the use of various words and phrases to avoid repetition, e.g. *train, help, coach; intend, plan; recruit, take on*.

Note the length of sentences, and the range of sentence structures.

Question 2

- This is an extract from a letter you have received from George Berry, who works for a market research company.

We are carrying out market research into how organisations see their prospects in the next twelve months, and would appreciate your answers to a few questions. Your answers will of course be treated as confidential.

- Write your letter to Mr Berry,
 - describing your organisation
 - predicting external changes that will affect your organisation
 - outlining changes that you expect your organisation to introduce.
- Write 200 – 250 words on the separate answer paper provided.

1 Dear Mr Berry

2 Thank you for your letter. Zephyr Communication is a small company providing
3 tailor-made training courses in business communication skills for organisations
4 in both the private and public sectors. We sometimes help individuals, for
5 instance to write a report or prepare for a staff appraisal. In other cases we
6 coach groups within a single company, and might cover customer service,
7 negotiating skills, giving presentations, and so forth. We currently number four
8 full-time staff: one administrator and three trainers.

9 The local economy is booming, and we confidently expect a rise in demand for
10 our services as a result. In particular, we are in negotiation with two companies
11 planning to open call centres in the region, to provide training in telephone
12 skills for their new staff.

13 As our business grows, we intend to make our operations more streamlined. In
14 particular we are in the process of recruiting a new part-time staff member to
15 take responsibility for creating and updating training materials, and exploring
16 new ways of using computers, videos and other equipment in our training
17 sessions.

18 We also plan to take on a part-time marketing specialist, with a view to
19 expanding the geographical reach of our advertising. If this generates a
20 sufficient amount of new business, we will consider setting up a branch office in
21 another location. This is unlikely to take place within the next year however.

22 I hope this answers your questions, and wish you success in your research.

23 Yours sincerely

24 Carol-Ann Dobson

PRACTICE TEST 3: READING

PART ONE

Questions 1 – 8

How to approach Reading Test Part One

- In this part of the Reading Test you match eight statements with five short texts.
- First read each short text and then read the sentences to see which ones refer to the text.
- Make sure you read each text for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Look at the sentences below and at the five newspaper items about companies on the opposite page.
- Which company does each sentence refer to?
- For each sentence 1 – 8, mark one letter (A, B, C, D or E) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

Example:

- 0 Analysts expect a change in senior management in this company. (Answer: A)

- 1 This company's strategy has not yet led to the expected increase in turnover.
- 2 This company is seeking external funding to meet its present needs.
- 3 This company's name will continue to be used despite a change in the company structure.
- 4 The price of shares in this company has begun to rise.
- 5 This company claims that its sales have been affected by external factors.
- 6 This company is thought likely to lose its independence to a competitor.
- 7 Analysts disagree with this company's predictions regarding its share price.
- 8 This company is taking steps to reduce its expenditure.

A

Habgood

Habgood, the pharmaceutical company, saw its share price plummet yesterday, following a cut in its corporate credit rating. Investors were unnerved by the group's shrinking access to capital and its wish to fund ambitious expansion plans. Although the sector as a whole has been weak for some time, Habgood is looking particularly vulnerable, and may well prove to be a target for takeover from within the industry. Analysts would not be surprised if Jerry Greenway, the company's chief executive, and architect of its strategy of expansion, were to step down.

B

KK Leyton

Truck manufacturer KK Leyton has said that its unit sales rose by a modest 1.3 per cent in the last six months, compared with 1.7 per cent in the same period last year. The company blames the economic downturn in its main markets and increasing pressure from larger competitors. However, grounds for guarded optimism came in the form of an announcement that the company is about to roll out a cost-cutting programme which should help to protect its profit margins. Analysts believe this will strengthen KK Leyton's position until conditions improve.

C

Meadowsweet

Discount clothing retailer Meadowsweet, whose 240 stores are mostly in Scotland and northern England, is set to merge with rival Marika Clothing, with slightly fewer stores in the south of England. Making the announcement, Elaine Tungate, Meadowsweet's chief executive, said that the two brands would be kept distinct, and each would retain its existing management team for the time being. Marika is targeted at female shoppers aged 25 to 45 while Meadowsweet is aimed at the over-45s, which, according to Ms Tungate, makes it an 'ideal merger' and 'a natural fit'.

D

Crofts

Crofts' ambitious plans massively to increase the number of its cafés are continuing to raise questions about profitability, and as a result shares are still trading below their level of a year ago. Andrew Hughes, Crofts' chairman, anticipates a speedy recovery, because of the company's focus on customer satisfaction. His optimism is not shared by analysts, though, who point out that the new outlets are simply taking customers from existing cafés, with the result that, contrary to Crofts' confident forecast when the plans were initially unveiled, income is static and same-store sales have been falling all year.

E

Downing Energy

Downing Energy is to spin off its subsidiary Forthland Resources and adopt a new holding company structure. At the same time it will take the name Forthland Energy. Carol Mortimer, Downing's CEO, said that splitting the companies will mean each being able to focus on what it does best. Both are already in discussions with their banks about extending their credit facilities – essential if they are to survive their present difficulties. The announcement led to a small rally in Downing's share price, reversing the steady decline of recent days.

PART TWO

Questions 9 – 14

How to approach Reading Test Part Two

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a text with gaps in it, and choose the best sentence to fill each gap from a set of eight sentences.
- First read the text for overall meaning, then go back and look for the best sentence for each gap.
- Make sure the sentence fits both the meaning and the grammar of the text around the gap.

- Read the text on the opposite page from an article about company culture.
 - Choose the best sentence from below to fill each of the gaps.
 - For each gap 9 – 14, mark one letter (A – H) on your Answer Sheet.
 - Do not use any letter more than once.
 - There is an example at the beginning, (0).
- A Find out how performance is appraised, and what opportunities exist for training and development.
- B The reality may be quite different.
- C By doing this you can get a good feel for the place.
- D That is why it can be helpful to adopt a fairly structured approach in the interview.
- E If you have the opportunity to talk informally, ask what they most like or dislike about the company.
- F People who value autonomy may be stifled.
- G Then in the interview you can ask specific questions about aspects of the culture that are important to you.
- H If you join a company with a corporate culture that you find uncomfortable, you could find yourself demotivated and dissatisfied.

Thinking of moving to another company? First check its corporate culture

Finding the right cultural 'fit' is vital to a successful career move. (0) ... And once you fall into this state, it may be difficult to get yourself out of it. Hence the importance of taking the time to find out as much as possible about what the organisation is like – before committing yourself to a move.

The trouble is that organisational culture is hard to assess – especially from only a brief meeting. (9) ... Don't make the common mistake of many candidates and rely solely on your intuition, as you might easily miss important clues.

The best results come from researching the company beforehand, consciously observing the environment and people's behaviour. (10) ... Planning them in advance reduces the risk of forgetting to mention something significant.

For instance, in the interview, ask to see the company's mission statement. It can be illuminating, setting out the organisation's long-term direction and goals, its underpinning beliefs and values. However mission statements are frequently aspirational. (11) ... Ask to what extent the organisation feels that it achieves its mission statement.

Ask to see the organisation and departmental chart. A steep hierarchy or highly centralised structure is often bureaucratic and inflexible. (12) ... Conversely, those who like clear career paths and lines of decision-making are unlikely to feel comfortable in a flat or decentralised structure.

The degree to which an organisation has systems for managing its staff is indicative of the value placed on developing and nurturing its people. (13) ... If these are limited, staff are unlikely to count for much in the company, and joining the organisation could lead you nowhere in the long term.

Staff are your best source of information about the corporate culture. (14) ... After all, personal impressions based on experience will give you greater insight into the reality of working there than anything else.

Corporate cultures do not change overnight, so it is worth trying to find a culture that will suit you from the outset. If you join a company that encourages and rewards behaviour you do not personally value, it could be a career move you live to regret.

PART THREE

Questions 15 – 20

How to approach Reading Test Part Three

- In this part of the Reading Test you read a longer text and answer six questions.
- First read the questions. Try to get an idea of what the text will be about. Then read the text for general understanding.
- Then read the text and questions more carefully, choosing the best answer to each question. Do not choose an answer just because you can see the same words in the text.

- Read the article on the opposite page about a food group's event for its managers and the following questions.
- Each question has four suggested answers or ways of finishing the sentence (A – D).
- Mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

15 Why were there troubles with the policy mentioned in the first paragraph?

- A Profit margins were set at too low a level.
- B There were difficulties with getting enough supplies.
- C Investors doubted whether it would lead to long-term success.
- D The group misjudged the attitude of its customers.

16 The main purpose of the event which is described in the second paragraph is to

- A devise methods for achieving an improvement in sales.
- B gain the managers' commitment to company plans.
- C ask for feedback from managers on company policy.
- D give managers a chance to learn from each other.

17 For Mr Hammond, what is unusual about this event?

- A the amount of active involvement by delegates
- B the participation of television presenters
- C the large number of speeches being made
- D the small amount of planning which is required

18 The purpose of the first part of the event is to

- A explain how the group intends to expand.
- B outline changes in the organisation of the group.
- C show the relevance of certain functions to the managers.
- D allow managers to find out how their responsibilities will change.

19 What does Carol Brinkley say about the question and answer session?

- A She felt that Mr Hammond performed well in difficult circumstances.
- B She learnt more than she expected about the company's goals.
- C She would have liked to hear more on some subjects.
- D She changed her attitude towards Mr Hammond.

20 What did Mr Hammond learn from the event?

- A He needs to change his normal management style.
- B Morale in the group was lower than he had realised.
- C There was more opposition to his plans than he expected.
- D The managers can contribute many effective new ideas.

Chadwick's, the struggling high street food retailer, has been having a horrible time. Not only did its recent takeover of cash-and-carry chain DeeDee create more problems than it solved, but its risky move into organic-only, own-label frozen vegetables nudged prices up and alienated traditional customers. Sales fell sharply, with dire effects on suppliers who had geared up to meet Chadwick's much larger orders – not to mention the group's profits. As a result investors lost their initial confidence in the plan and the share price tumbled. The architect of this policy, the former Chief Executive, abruptly departed last January, and Carl Hammond was brought in to pick up the pieces.

Mr Hammond sees the corporate culture as a major barrier to a revival in the group's fortunes, and is making strenuous efforts to change it. Today's event is one part of the process: the delegates – over a thousand of them – are all managers, whose attitude to company policy is crucial to its implementation. By setting out his recovery strategy face to face, he hopes to get the managers on board, and equip them to carry the right messages back to the group's 20,000 employees. He believes this

is essential if the group is to turn around its declining sales.

The format he has chosen is one that Mr Hammond has no experience of. 'Normally I use traditional conference-style presentations with speeches, or television studio arrangements with well-known TV journalists to tease out the issues,' he says. 'These are quite easy to organise but they are not participatory. Today's event is much less predictable, but ironically it's been a nightmare to choreograph everything in such a way as to encourage spontaneity.'

First, delegates are sent to booths around the hall to learn from senior managers about the effects of the takeover on each part of the business, and why some functions, such as finance and logistics, are being integrated at group level. The senior managers then fire questions at the delegates to reinforce the learning process. Done at breakneck speed, it keeps everyone on their toes, and there's a definite buzz in the hall.

Several other activities follow, and after lunch comes the main event, a 20-minute session in which Mr Hammond answers questions from delegates, covering pay scales, investors' attitudes to the recovery strategy, possible job

losses, and so on. The reaction of one store manager, Carol Brinkley, sums it up: 'It was quite demanding, with lots of people eager to ask questions, so he didn't always go into as much depth as perhaps he should have done. But at least everything that I was hoping to find out was touched on, and he came across as being quite approachable and willing to accept criticism.'

Mr Hammond believes the event was effective in getting important messages across to a large number of people, and in raising their morale, which had been appallingly low. The questions that he was asked confirmed his belief that many managers were unhappy with what had been going on in the group and were optimistic about the new strategy – though few of the suggestions which they made took the broader picture into account. He admits that the novel format pushed him outside his comfort zone. 'I'm a control freak, like most chief executives,' he says. 'But now I realise that the group depends on the managers to keep it going: my role is to provide them with the tools.' For a control freak it is a remarkably 'hands-off' message.

PART FOUR

Questions 21 – 30

How to approach Reading Test Part Four

- This part of the Reading Test tests your vocabulary.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Look at the four possible answers for each gap and cross out any obviously incorrect words.
- Then read both before and after each gap to decide which word should go in it. The word needs to fit both the meaning and the grammar.
- After completing all the gaps, read the whole text again to check your answers.

- Read the article on the opposite page about an accountancy franchise.
- Choose the best word from below to fill each gap.
- For each question 21 – 30, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- There is an example at the beginning (0).

Example: (Answer: A)

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 0 | A category | B type | C class | D variety |
| 21 | A consolidating | B amalgamating | C incorporating | D integrating |
| 22 | A looked | B approaching | C forthcoming | D anticipated |
| 23 | A range | B coverage | C size | D extent |
| 24 | A enquiries | B surveys | C investigations | D interrogations |
| 25 | A blend | B merger | C mix | D union |
| 26 | A directs | B targets | C focuses | D aims |
| 27 | A means | B power | C capacity | D competence |
| 28 | A launch | B embark | C engage | D initiate |
| 29 | A refers | B cites | C indicates | D points |
| 30 | A followed | B continued | C pursued | D proceeded |

A successful network of accountancy franchisees

TAXASSIST DIRECT is an accountancy franchise which probably has more business-minded franchisees than most in the white collar (0) ... Already, over 130 business professionals have joined the company as franchisees, (21) ... the brand's strong position within the UK management franchise sector.

Continued acceleration in network growth is (22) ... for the next few years, with the company expecting to achieve nationwide (23) ... within four years. As it receives around 100 (24) ... a month from would-be franchisees, this target looks realistic.

TaxAssist Direct's franchise network contains individuals from a broad (25) ... of professional backgrounds, including accountancy, banking, business and management. The company's initial and ongoing training programme (26) ... to ensure that new franchisees are well-grounded in accounting practices and running their own business.

New franchisees generally start from home to minimise early overheads, then establish a staffed office to expand their (27) ... for taking on work. Many of those who started working from home within the last six months are now ready to (28) ... on the next stage of business development.

Clive Marshall, one such franchisee, (29) ... the company's openness as being one of the deciding factors in making him choose to work with TaxAssist Direct. 'They really stood out in the quality of information they gave,' he explains. 'At every juncture, they answered my questions promptly by phone and then (30) ... up in writing. I was very impressed with the operation and the people.' Many of TaxAssist Direct's franchisees are equally enthusiastic, which seems to guarantee the company's continued success.

PART FIVE

Questions 31 – 40

How to approach Reading Test Part Five

- This part of the Reading Test tests your grammar.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to predict the words that might fill the gaps.
- Then read the text again, and write down one word for each gap. Make sure the word fits both the meaning and the grammar.

- Read the article below about communicating clearly.
- For each question **31 – 40**, write one word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. There is an example at the beginning (**0**).

Example:

0 S O O N □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Write clearly to prevent problems later

Business communication has never been quicker. Faxes, emails and text messages can be written and sent almost as (**0**) ... as the thought has occurred to the writer.

Yet messages sent with too (**31**) ... consideration can cause serious problems, (**32**) ... as damage to budgets or business relationships. They can also lead to long and expensive disputes. Because many contractual relationships between organisations are based on a series of communications, (**33**) ... a single detailed agreement, those communications must be prepared carefully to ensure they are clear and unambiguous. Problems can be avoided if a (**34**) ... basic rules are followed.

The favoured style in English, these days, is that communications should be accurate, brief and clear. Everyone they are devised (**35**) ... should be able to understand them easily, and (**36**) ... should anyone who may have to deal

with them at a later stage. Use plain language without unnecessary words, and write positively (**37**) ... a negative is necessary.

Avoiding ambiguity is surprisingly difficult. For instance, 'Priority should be given to on-time delivery' does not specify (**38**) ... party has the relevant obligation, but 'Company X must deliver on time' is unambiguous.

Make sure the subject and purpose of the document are apparent, and that the communication follows a logical structure. Short sentences, with one idea per sentence, are easier to understand and considerably (**39**) ... prone to ambiguity.

Tips like these may seem like common sense, but if they were more widely observed, (**40**) ... would be far fewer disputes. Clear business communication can really pay off.

PART SIX

Questions 41 – 52

How to approach Reading Test Part Six

- This part of the Reading Test tests your ability to identify additional or unnecessary words in a text.
- Most lines contain one extra word that makes the sentence incorrect.
- Read the whole text quickly to find out what it is about. As you read, try to identify the words that are incorrect.
- Then read the text again, and write down the extra words. Remember there will be only one extra word in a line, and some lines are correct.

- Read the article below about a chain of cafés.
- In most lines there is one unnecessary word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the sense of the text. Some lines are correct.
- For each numbered line **41 – 52**, find the unnecessary word and then write the word in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet. If a line is correct write CORRECT on your Answer Sheet. There are two examples at the beginning (**0**) and (**00**).

Example:

0 C A L L E D □ □ □ □
00 C O R R E C T □ □ □ □

Hard times for café chain

- 0** It has been a terrible year for café operator called Dawkin. Less than 12
00 months ago it took over the Cafeza chain, with its 16 sites, but it is rumoured
41 that half of those are yet to be closed in the next few months, because of falling
42 turnover. What's more, the company is still recovering from the sudden
43 resignation of its Managing Director in April. While Dawkin operates 84 cafés,
44 and had plans to reach up 150 by the end of next year. This is looking less and
45 less achievable, given that the company's poor financial position and limits on
46 its short-term debt facilities. Worst of all news, perhaps, Dawkin has just
47 announced that its rival Highway has built it up a shareholding of just over 5%,
48 redoubling speculation that Dawkin's days as an independent operator are being
49 numbered. Roughly equal in size, the two have long been competing for the
50 number five slot in the overcrowded café market. There are now rumours of a
51 deal between the two, which would provide them complementary coverage,
52 Dawkin being strong in London and other big cities, and unlike Highway concentrating its efforts outside the major population centres.

PRACTICE TEST 3: WRITING

PART ONE

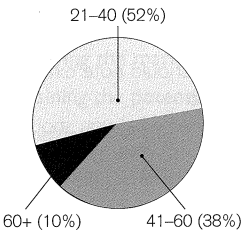
How to approach Writing Test Part One

- This part tests your ability to write a short report expressing information which you are given in graphic form, such as bar charts, pie charts and graphs.
- Read the instructions carefully so that you know what you are required to do: this is usually to describe or compare the information in the graphic input. Underline the keywords in the instructions.
- Make an outline plan of the report.
- Start with a brief description of what the report is about.
- You can use suitable headings if you wish.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You should not invent any information for this part.
- Check that you have written your answer in 120–140 words (multiply the number of lines by the average number of words per line: don't waste time counting every word).
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer: Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 20–25 minutes on this part.

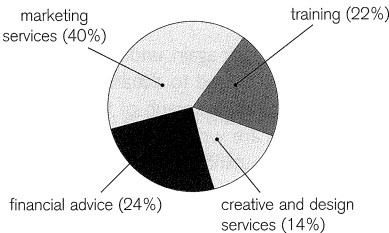
Question 1

- The charts on the opposite page show responses to questions in a recent survey of 100 independent consultants, about their age, type of business activity and marketing tools.
- Using the information from the graphs, write a short report describing the situation for independent consultants.
- Write 120 – 140 words.

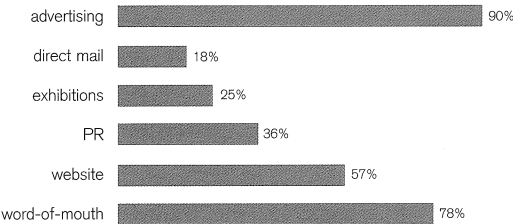
What age group are you in?



What type of business are you in?



What marketing tools do you use?



PART TWO

How to approach Writing Test Part Two

- In this part you have a choice of three tasks: a report, proposal and piece of business correspondence.
- Look through the three tasks and choose the one which you think you could do most easily.
- Read the task again, underlining the key words. You should note exactly what you are required to do, and who you are writing to.
- The second paragraph of the instructions summarises what you should write, who you are writing it for, and the three or four points that must be included.
- Make an outline plan, with notes for each point. It is best to follow the order of the 3 or 4 points that are stated, as you will lose marks if you leave any out.
- Write your text.
- Try to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- You will need to invent some information for this part.
- If you write the report or proposal, you should use suitable headings.
- If you write the business correspondence, you should include suitable openings and closings (e.g. *Dear Mrs Smith* and *Yours sincerely* with your signature), but no addresses.
- Make sure the level of formality is appropriate given who you are writing to.
- Check that you have written your answer in 200–250 words.
- After writing, read what you have written, correct mistakes and make improvements. If you want to add anything, use a sign, e.g. *. Put a line through anything you want to omit. You should not rewrite your answer.
- Make sure the examiner will be able to read your answer. Use a pen and your normal handwriting (do not write in capital letters).
- You should spend about 40–50 minutes on this part.

Answer **ONE** of the questions 2, 3 or 4 below.

Question 2

- Your company recently sponsored an event and the head of marketing has asked you to write a report about it.
- Write your **report** for the head of marketing,
 - outlining the reasons for choosing to sponsor the event
 - describing the positive outcomes of sponsoring the event
 - explaining the disadvantages that resulted from sponsoring the event
 - making recommendations concerning future sponsorship activity.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 3

- The managing director of the company you work for has invited suggestions for new regional markets the company could consider entering. You have decided to put forward a proposal concerning this.
- Write your **proposal** for the managing director,
 - identifying the market you propose
 - explaining the potential advantages of this market
 - suggesting how the company should approach entering this market
 - mentioning risks that might be associated with this market.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

Question 4

- The organisation you work for has identified a number of training needs and has decided to commission external trainers to provide the necessary training. The head of Human Resources has asked you to contact a local training company about this.
- Write a **letter** to the head of the training company, including the following information:
 - an introduction to your organisation
 - a description of your company's training needs
 - an outline of the form you think the training should take
 - details of practical considerations relating to the training arrangements.
- Write **200 – 250** words.

PRACTICE TEST 3: LISTENING

PART ONE

Questions 1 – 12

How to approach Listening Test Part One

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a monologue, e.g. a presentation.
- Before you listen, read the notes. Think about what you are going to hear.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- You should write words that you hear, without changing them. They must fit the meaning of the notes.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.
- Check that you have used no more than three words in each numbered space.

- You will hear a part of a radio programme about stress and work.
- As you listen, for questions 1 – 12, complete the notes using up to three words or a number.
- You will hear the recording twice.

STRESS

► Good stress

Good stress enables high performers to (1)
People have a period of (2) each day.

► Bad stress

Causes of bad stress include:

- too few (3)
- too many (4)
- too much (5)
- not having proper (6)

► Recent survey results

- more complaints about amount of (7)
- fewer complaints about lack of (8)
- small organisations have higher (9)
- large organisations have difficulties with (10)

► Before going on holiday

Email information about (11) to colleagues.
Talk about (12) to a line manager.

PART TWO

Questions 13 – 22

How to approach Listening Test Part Two

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to five short monologues, spoken by five different speakers.
- There are two tasks for each of the five monologues. For each task you must choose one out of eight options.
- You can either do one task the first time you listen and the other task the second time, or deal with the two tasks for each monologue together.
- Within each monologue, the information for each of the two tasks may come in either order.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Check you have not used the same option more than once within each task.

- You will hear five different people talking about selling.
- For each extract there are two tasks. For Task One, decide which view about selling the speaker expresses from the list A – H. For Task Two, choose the mistake the speaker describes making from the list A – H.
- You will hear the recording twice.

TASK ONE – VIEW

- For questions 13 – 17, match the extracts with the views, listed A – H.
- For each extract, decide which view the speaker expresses.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

13	A Clients' choices are driven by quality more than price.
14	B You should never criticise your competitors when talking to clients.
15	C Clients value a fully positive attitude in sellers.
16	D You should never forget the importance of cost.
17	E Clients may require you to include apparently unprofitable incentives.
	F You should develop a relationship with clients before attempting to negotiate.
	G Clients appreciate the social benefits of doing business.
	H You should find out as much as possible about a client's business.

TASK TWO – MISTAKE

- For questions 18 – 22, match the extracts with the mistakes, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the mistake the speaker describes making.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 18 | A I didn't get details of the deal in writing at the time. |
| 19 | B My nervousness damaged the client's trust in my company. |
| 20 | C I missed an opportunity to close a deal at a certain stage. |
| 21 | D My eagerness to close a deal meant that I forgot important information. |
| 22 | E I failed to make the client feel important enough. |
| | F My approach didn't emphasize the special features I had to offer. |
| | G I ignored a suggestion concerning entertainment. |
| | H My way of asking for comments was wrong. |

PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30



How to approach Listening Test Part Three

- In this part of the Listening Test you listen to a long conversation or interview and answer eight questions.
- Before you listen, read the questions. Think what the recording will be about.
- Note all possible answers as you listen for the first time. Do not make an immediate decision. Do not worry if you do not know the answers. You will hear the recording a second time.
- Listen for overall meaning. Do not choose an answer just because you hear the same words in the recording as in the question.
- Decide on your final answer only after you have listened for the second time.

- You will hear a discussion between two consultants, George and Karen, about communication.
- For each question 23 – 30, mark one letter A, B or C for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 George says he has found that managers are reluctant to

- A admit they have problems.
- B attend workshops on communication.
- C involve themselves in matters of concern to staff.

24 Karen mentions a difficulty caused by one member of staff who

- A criticised a colleague for creating unnecessary complications.
- B resented the fact that Karen had been promoted.
- C disguised the reasons for his complaint.

25 Karen says that managers should communicate with staff about problems

- A on an informal basis.
- B within a consistent timetable.
- C away from the business premises.

26 When working with another department, George recommends

- A establishing what each department's role is clearly in advance.
- B keeping the other department informed about your input.
- C accommodating the other department's requirements.

27 Karen thinks that the best way to check you have been understood is to

- A request a summary from the other person.
- B complete a set of notes of the outcomes.
- C repeat the main points you have made.

28 George says that processes used in internal organisation

- A should be subject to constant and careful monitoring.
- B are influenced by specific management functions.
- C can lead to inconsistent external communication.

29 Karen thinks that company departments should

- A recruit communication specialists.
- B provide training in communication for staff.
- C establish cross-departmental communication teams.

30 George suggests that successful communication depends on

- A the vision of the CEO.
- B company-wide policy.
- C middle-management decisions.

PRACTICE TEST 3: SPEAKING

PART ONE: INTERVIEW

How to approach Speaking Test Part One

- In this part of the test you answer questions about yourself and about business topics, and express personal opinions.
- Phase One focuses on factual, personal information; Phase Two requires you to express opinions on business-related matters. You will be asked one question in each phase.
- Before the exam, think of answers to possible questions about your work, and about business in your country. Below are some questions you might need to answer.
- In the exam, listen carefully to the questions. Make sure you answer what the examiner asks you. Ask the examiner to repeat a question if necessary. Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says.
- Try to give more than just basic answers, and give examples to show what you mean.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business. If you do not know an answer, say so, and try to speculate.

Practise answering these questions.

Phase One:

- Can you tell me about the work experience you have had and your ambitions?
- Can you tell me about why you are learning English and how much you use English at work?

Phase Two:

- How important is international trade to your country?
- What impact does advertising have on consumers in your country?

PART TWO: INDIVIDUAL MINI-PRESENTATION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Two

- In this part of the test you give a short talk (approximately one minute) on a business topic.
- You choose one of three topics and have one minute to prepare your ideas. In this time make brief notes to give you a structure and some key words.
- When you talk, make the structure clear, for example by giving a brief introduction and conclusion, and using linking words and phrases to introduce each section.
- Speak to both the examiner and the other candidate, and listen to what the other candidate says. You will have to ask the other candidate a question about their presentation after they have spoken.
- Remember that you are being tested on your ability to speak in English, not on your knowledge of specific areas of business, so if you don't know much about a topic, just say what you can about it.

Choose one of these three topics and prepare a short (about one minute) talk about it.

Candidate 1

- A **Management Skills:** the factors involved in ensuring a meeting achieves its aims
- B **Strategic Planning:** the factors involved in managing change effectively
- C **Human Resources:** how to organise an effective induction programme for new staff

Candidate 2

- A **Career Planning:** the factors involved in choosing a business qualification
- B **Marketing:** the importance of advertising in promoting a brand
- C **Information Management:** how to ensure a company's information about its customers is appropriate

PART THREE: DISCUSSION

How to approach Speaking Test Part Three

- In this part of the test you work with the other candidate. The examiner gives you a card which presents a scenario and task to discuss. You need to have a serious discussion of the task, with the type of interaction which would be appropriate to a work environment.
- You and the other candidate should try to imagine yourselves in a work environment, faced with a real situation to discuss and you should try to reach some decisions.
- You have about 30 seconds to prepare your ideas. Use this time to ensure you understand the task.
- Listen to the other candidate and respond to what they say. Do not just give your own opinions, or just agree with the other candidate.
- Try to make more than just basic comments.
- Following your discussion with the other candidate, the examiner will ask you questions on the same topic. Develop your answers, and give examples to show what you mean. Listen to what the other candidate says.

Practise discussing this task, and the questions which follow it, with a partner:

IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS

Your company is falling behind new arrivals in the markets, and the managing director is concerned to increase competitiveness. You have been asked to suggest ways of improving the company's competitiveness.

Discuss, and decide together:

- how to evaluate the threats posed by competitors
- what steps might be taken to improve competitiveness

Follow-up questions:

- Is staff morale an important aspect of competitiveness?
- What contribution can training make to competitiveness?
- What effects does increased competition have on suppliers?
- How important are new products for maintaining competitiveness?
- Is globalisation likely to affect competitiveness in the future?

TAPESCRIPTS

Practice Test 1

Part One (CD Track 01)

One (CD Track 02)

- F Good evening, and welcome to our sixth annual design awards ceremony. As chair of the panel of judges, I saw the work of a great many design consultancies, and was very impressed by its range and quality. We had great difficulty selecting the winners, but with that now done, let me introduce William Taylor, who's going to announce the prizewinners.

William Taylor started his career as Chief Executive of the design consultancy he founded ten years ago, but since selling that he's been working freelance. He modestly describes himself as a publicist, though in fact his scope is far greater than that suggests. His work is eye-catching, witty and extremely effective. He was last year's prizewinner in our exhibitions category, for the digital media gallery that he had designed. His major project at the moment is to design an exhibition of photography, and we look forward to seeing the results. Ladies and gentlemen – William Taylor.

- M Thank you. Our first award this evening is in the Internal Communications category, and this goes to the Steppart Consultancy for their work for travel chain Farlands. The consultancy's original brief was to develop an effective internal communications system of memos and newsletters, but they concluded that an intranet would be far more effective. So with the client's agreement, Steppart rewrote their brief. Not only did the new system have to be user-friendly, its design also had to reflect Farlands' brand values – bright, colourful and synonymous with fun. It succeeded in full, overcame all the company's communications problems, and allowed it to make the predicted savings on postage and paper. What was not foreseen, however, was the strong sense of involvement and even excitement that the innovation also created, which greatly enhanced Farlands' internal culture. So today's first prizewinner is the Steppart Consultancy.

The winning consultancy in our Corporate

Identity category is J3, for their work for Coffee Cabina, whose outlets provide such good cups of coffee and cakes. When Coffee Cabina decided to re-brand, two years ago, it had nine stores with three separate identities. Since it launched its new identity, the company has refitted all its existing stores and a further dozen are about to be opened. While operating costs have risen by 15 per cent, profitability has increased by over 40 per cent. Since hitting the streets, the new design has led to a steady rise in the number of new customers, and most of the stores reached the sales potential which was forecast for them within two to three weeks, instead of the standard four to six months. Ladies and gentlemen, the J3 Consultancy.

Now we turn to packaging, and this award goes to consultancy Tamka for its work for Starbury Ice Creams. Starbury decided to launch a range of premium ice creams, to complement its existing range, and identified this as an opportunity to aim at a more mature market segment than the children who comprised the majority of its existing customers. This was made part of Tamka's brief. Another challenge for the designers was to attract year-round sales, unlike the seasonal consumption which the existing range depended on. The new premium ice creams have quickly become established, and the company strongly believes that this was helped by the excellent packaging which Tamka designed for them. The designs challenge every tradition, from the shape and material of the ice cream containers to the minimalist feel of the label. The panel was very taken by this, and by the coherent approach which the designers took to every aspect of the design package. So the award in the packaging category goes to Tamka.

Part Two (CD Tracks 03–04)

Speaker 1

I think the worst meeting I ever attended was one where there was an awful lot of talk, in fact the chairperson bent over backwards to make sure everyone had their say, and clearly a lot of people felt strongly about the proposal on the table. We

seemed to be pretty evenly divided on it, so it really needed a vote, but the chair chose to 'take the feeling of the meeting' instead, and I felt he was unduly influenced by the opinions of one or two very vocal people. And it was a pretty important matter, too, because our design department had come up with a range of materials that would entail radically changing the manufacturing process. We agreed to go ahead with it, but we were taking a real risk.

Speaker 2

Well, we once had a meeting about how to get raw materials exactly when we needed them: you see, sometimes they'd come in very soon after we'd placed an order, and would fill all our storage space, and at other times production would have to stop because we'd run out of what we needed. I reckoned that we should renegotiate the agreement we had with the company concerned, to build in a time-scale. And that was what we decided to do, but it turned out that in fact they weren't really interested, because in their terms we were too small a customer. Oddly enough, one of our purchasing assistants knew about this, but hadn't been invited to the meeting. Still, it helped us when we drew up the agreement with a different firm.

Speaker 3

The company had recently been taken over, and we were selling in overseas markets for the first time. A new department was set up, which a number of people moved into from domestic sales. But they simply weren't up to the new demands. For instance, they weren't aware of cultural differences in how people negotiate, and as a result, our foreign sales just weren't happening. So we had a meeting about how to get the input we needed, and the outcome was that we decided to find a company that could provide an in-house seminar for us. The trouble was, some people had made up their minds about the best method before the meeting and though it was all very polite, they just ignored what the others said. Honestly, I was pretty annoyed.

Speaker 4

I wish everyone who chaired a meeting was trained in how to do it. For one thing, they really ought to make sure everyone gets the chance to say what they think, because otherwise people start wondering if there's any point in having a meeting, and that can be bad for morale. I was once in a

project group, and we had a meeting to consider improvements to the way one particular division was structured. Well, the Chief Executive decided to attend, which wasn't a good idea, because the project leader, who was chairing the meeting, kept asking the CE what he thought, so some people more or less gave up. It's not that any of the project group particularly disagreed with the decisions, but they felt their opinions weren't being taken seriously.

Speaker 5

Our board of directors was in talks with one of our competitors about amalgamating, and the Managing Director called a meeting of the workforce to explain the implications. He started by saying that the synergies in the new relationship would mean we could cut costs, particularly in bulk purchasing of supplies, and anyone whose job disappeared would be offered retraining. But people didn't believe him and thought there would be mass redundancies. It got completely out of hand. Everyone was determined to have their say, people were shouting, and eventually the MD gave up and walked out. It was the most chaotic meeting I've ever attended, but at least we all felt a bit better for having let off steam! In fact demand for our products rose, and nobody was laid off after all.

Part Three (CD Tracks 05–06)

- M Today my guest is Carolyn Whitcombe, whose business consultancy is now celebrating its tenth anniversary. Welcome to the studio, Carolyn.
- F Thank you.
- M What exactly does your consultancy do, Carolyn?
- F We provide various business-to-business services, but whereas some consultancies focus on a particular niche, we prefer to have a broader palette. A lot of our clients tend to be small and medium enterprises. It could be someone wanting to know the best sources of finance for their particular business, or a company wanting solutions to a problem; in which case they might ask for recommendations, or commission us to do the work for them.
- M Has the company evolved in its ten years of existence?
- F Oh yes. When we started, companies generally

asked us to analyse a particular situation, and write a report. For instance, on what IT system they ought to install to meet their particular needs. These days we're far more likely to select the system, install it and train their staff. We've gone from an intellectual, analytical business doing small pieces of work to big, complex teams solving big, complex problems.

- M Presumably the same people don't always work together.
- F No, it depends on the particular jobs we're dealing with at the time. All our consultants come in as and when we need them. That gives me great flexibility in forming teams, so I can make sure that all the expertise required for a particular job is covered. And of course, it helps if there are no interpersonal issues stopping people from co-operating productively.
- M The solutions that your teams come up with, do they generally have a long life cycle?
- F Everything's changing so fast nowadays, that if you make three- or five-year plans they're really not much use. Any business without momentum fails, and that generally applies to our solutions too. It's OK to say there's something that'll work for you now, but you can't assume it'll work for another company, or even for the same company in a few years' time.
- M Could you give us some examples of your work?
- F Well there's a supermarket chain which had problems with stock management because sales of lots of items vary enormously, depending on the weather. We set up a system for them to use 14-day weather forecasts, covering all regions of the country, and compare them with weather patterns and sales figures for the same period the previous year, which helps the retailer to judge how consumers will react in different regions. A software system then sorts out orders, deliveries, storage space, shelf space, and so on.
- M So consumers aren't faced with empty shelves.
- F Exactly. And we're currently working with a utility company in the north of England. It already sells gas and electricity, and wants to build on its existing customer base by adding insurance and other financial services. Of course the company knows all its customers' names and addresses, so it can easily contact them. Our role is to advise both on software

they need and on the design of e-mails and other communications which the company will send to its customers.

- M Do you have only domestic clients?
- F Mainly, though we're currently expanding abroad. We considered transferring staff from this country to foreign outposts, but realised we'd have difficulty finding out about local markets, not to mention laws and regulations. So instead we're looking for organisations similar to us in certain other countries, and aiming to share our resources. We can send consultants to them if they're needed for a particular job, and vice versa. It'll increase our pool of experts.
- M And finally, what made you decide to start up a consultancy in the first place?
- F I was employed by a business consultancy myself, and enjoyed the variety. One week you were designing a staff satisfaction survey, and the next streamlining financial systems. But my employers missed a lot of opportunities, because they weren't as flexible as they could be. That was where I felt I scored, and the only way I could make use of that was to start my own business. I was scared of losing the security of full-time employment, but it certainly paid off in the long run.
- M Carolyn Whitcombe, thank you very much.
- F Thank you.

Practice Test 2

Part One (CD Track 07)

One (CD Track 08)

Hello everybody. Right, today's company in our series of company studies is SC Foods, which represents a great success story in the UK food sector. I'm sure all of you are acquainted with their products, but how many of you know its history? It grew out of a family business that comprised a couple of shops selling locally produced food in the eastern region. Simon Clement, the second son, decided to develop the market for this produce, and opened a series of takeaway restaurants in towns and cities in an ever-widening radius round the shops, trading as SC Foods. Growth was spectacular throughout the 1980s, and in 1990, Clement took the business a stage further, bringing in many more staff and beginning exporting, a daring step in unpredictable times - but it paid off.

Within three years, demand was such that he moved his head office to London and set up a production plant there. Two more were to follow in other major cities, and the company now looks very different from its humble origins.

These days, production has overtaken serving food, and sales are strong for SC's range. Their 130 lines have become familiar sights on dining tables at home. But that's only part of the business, and, while they avoid direct competition with high street restaurants, the books are full of orders from schools - an area of rapid growth - and hotels - a fairly new type of client.

Clement just seems to keep doing things right. He has just finalised an agreement that will add government offices to his list of clients, and is in discussions with representatives of the film industry. The company's profile continues to rise, with great interest being shown in the recipe book they published in the spring, with its compilation of cookery ideas from the newspaper series that's been going for some time. The SC name is also becoming more familiar, as advertising moves beyond the trade press to a wider audience, with a TV ad transmitted for the first time.

While many would sit back and enjoy their success at this point, Clement's restlessness continues - he's already entered negotiations with an equipment retailer to establish a kitchenware brand as a joint venture. Such brand extension is also being considered for the production of health drinks, which Clement feels would fit SC's image better than branding cakes or sweets.

What lies behind this success, apart from Clement's own drive and vision? His ability to buck the market has earned him respect and recognition throughout the business community, and he can often be heard on the radio in interviews seeking his reactions to economic trends. The company's dedication to quality was complimented at length in last month's Business Times, and this is probably the key to its prosperity. Another crucial factor is the value Clement attaches to his people. This was recognised with first place in the training programme category in the prestigious Business Development Awards this year, although Clement himself claims that it is his continual innovation that enables SC to keep moving forward.

OK, well, are there any questions at this point ...

Part Two (CD Tracks 09-10)

Speaker 1

I remember this manager I worked under once - he really was pretty inefficient. I think the problem was that he was a bit of a control freak and driven by all these targets he used to set himself. The silly thing was that it meant not that much really got done satisfactorily, cos he wouldn't pass tasks on to anyone else, for fear they wouldn't take the time to do it perfectly, so projects were always running behind. And of course it's very difficult to deal with people like that, since you're not in a position to suggest anything to them, but I think they do need to consult if not someone then something - there are programmes you can use now that help to prioritise and allocate work in the course of a project.

Speaker 2

I honestly don't know what managers are taught on all these courses they go on, or what they're supposed to qualify anyone to do. I'm thinking in particular of one manager in my organisation who seems to spend his whole time with his nose in some book or other - when what he actually needs to do is deal with his people, get them all in together for a session to air their problems and discuss ways to move forward. As it is, he's got this office full of staff trying their best to do good work, but without real guidance. You can't run a business only on paper, and he doesn't give his staff enough recognition for the quality of their work.

Speaker 3

Well, the last line manager I had certainly caused problems - but it wasn't as if there weren't solutions available. Other managers in the same company didn't run into the same problems as she did. But then they did make use of what was on the doorstep - the company ran a weekly series of workshops, and they were great. They were only about an hour long, but she should have made the effort - the one on communication, for example, would have shown her ways to overcome her seeming inability to hear what ideas people were coming up with. As it was, the way she simply ignored such input caused a lot of resentment. And that's no way to run a department.

Speaker 4

Well, they all talk about management being about facilitating processes and empowering staff, don't they? But in my experience the reality can be very

different indeed. I knew one manager who I think just didn't appreciate how much management had moved on since he'd originally trained. He approached absolutely everything in the same way, itemising financial aspects, without seeing the bigger picture – all he wanted to do was implement savings. It was disastrous when it came to considering upgrading computers, for example, as it's so difficult to calculate that sort of thing in those terms. Looking back, I think what he needed to do was to change his whole approach. I'm not sure he'd have taken advice from his colleagues, but he should have caught up a bit on his reading, taken his own time to mull over some of the newer ideas.

Speaker 5

I've heard managers being criticised for spending too long out at conferences, and losing touch with what's going on in front of their noses. But one manager in my firm was present, it's just that she didn't pay enough attention. So while our competitors would be installing new databases and upgrading their networks, she'd not bother to check out what was available, and keep us all slaving away on very time-consuming jobs. I don't know if she thought she was saving the company money, but if she did she was much mistaken. Ironically, she went to some training sessions, so she must have heard other ideas, but without much effect. She should have simply moved her desk out of the corner, and become part of the section, so that she could have appreciated how cumbersome some of the procedures were.

Part Three (CD Tracks 11–12)

- F OK, Clive, now you've said that at this stage in our consultation process you want to talk about promoting the business ...
- M Yes.
- F And I would say the place to start is establishing what it is you mean by 'the business'.
- M Uh-huh.
- F So the first step is to carry out an appraisal.
- M Like an analysis?
- F Yes, considering all aspects of your operation, strengths and weaknesses, and so on, so you can get clear in your own head what your selling points should be. The possibilities for what you might focus on are pretty wide. People often tend to have a strong belief in

their products, although these days expectations are generally so high that differentiation can be tough to establish on that front. In your case being able to get the goods to customers quickly is likely to have a greater impact and so be something worth drawing attention to – it represents the kind of service that will make the goods easier to sell, and so give you a wider appeal.

- M Interesting.
- F And you should also think ahead a bit, and specify what you're looking to achieve through greater publicity.
- M Right. I've been thinking in terms of improving the customer base. Bike accessories is a surprisingly competitive area but I'm satisfied that we're positioned reasonably well – although I would like to be selling in higher volumes, getting more bulk orders through chains. I've got some very capable staff who'd welcome the challenge of testing their skills in handling bigger deals.
- F And further into the future?
- M I think basically bringing in product improvements. Obviously, cycling as a sport plays a key role in the market – people expect ever better equipment, and I need to be upgrading what I produce all the time, so that eventually the whole range is what I'd currently term 'best'.
- F That all makes sense. Now, you referred to the idea of newspaper advertising in our meeting last week.
- M As one way to go.
- F It's a popular form of advertising, of course, but not without its pitfalls – although I certainly wouldn't want to ignore its many advantages. Bear in mind that most people do not read a paper from cover to cover nor for any length of time. They flick through and dip into it for about ten or twenty minutes and may therefore miss your advertisement. A significant proportion of them won't be interested in your message anyway, however brilliantly you design it. And of course papers have very skilled design departments who'll do their best to give you a striking layout. Papers tend not to be kept for very long – people leave them behind on trains and in cafés. You can seek to compensate for this by publishing repeats and variations as often as you wish, of course, but you could find you're chasing ever lower returns.

M I'd also wondered about guidebooks. I thought they could be a safe bet, despite having a fairly low circulation. I've noticed a fair number of ads in this year's edition of the tourist guide for the region, for example, and I feel that it's a type of publication that people tend to leave lying around for others to read, or borrow, so the exposure could be quite effective throughout the year.

- F Good point. Moving onto direct mail ...
- M Now I've been having some doubts there, Rose.
- F Oh?
- M Yeah, I mean, in terms of resources. I understand that it can impact quite well, although the percentage rates I hear quoted don't strike me as particularly impressive. But assembling the whole thing seems pretty labour-intensive. There's so much else to be getting on with, without trying to plough your way through some endless list of potential consumers, most of whom may not be interested anyway.
- F Well, that's certainly something to take into account, but I'd still recommend you to seriously consider doing a mailshot.
- M I'm not ruling it out.
- F And if you do, make sure you take an effective approach, because that envelope and its contents will be saying a lot about you. Your letter could be short and concise or long and explanatory, but it should attract attention to the quality of your operation and generate orders or at least enquiries. And to make people get as far as reading it, you need the right packaging, with colour, fonts and graphics all reflecting the right image for your operation. Impact is everything with a mailshot.
- M OK. And the last possibility was exhibitions.
- F Yes, now here I would just urge caution. As with any industry, there are a lot of cowboys operating in the exhibitions field, with unsuitable venues or unrealistically high costs, and you have to make sure that what's on offer really is of value to you. There again, be clear about what that value might be, because you're unlikely, even at the best run exhibition, to be flooded with orders – people are looking around, comparing – so it's really for you to decide as an individual if participating, being away from your office, would pay off or not.
- M Hmm, there's plenty to think about, and I think ...

Practice Test 3

Part One (CD Track 13)

One (CD Track 14)

I want to start by saying that stress doesn't always deserve its negative image. There is such a thing as good stress. Try telling a racing driver or stage actor – 'high performers' – that stress is all bad and they'll look at you blankly, because they know they wouldn't be able to meet challenges without it. Stress is what gives them their success, but this is also true to some extent for all of us. The technical term for stress in general is 'arousal'. You need to be sufficiently aroused to get up in the morning and go to work. As the hours go by, you become more alert until you reach your optimum performance, which is when you can do your best work.

But bad stress exists too in the workplace. A very common cause is dealing with impossible standards which have been set within an unrealistic timescale. If resources are inadequate, bad stress will result. These days stress can often also be due to our circumstances. Competition and the drive for innovation means that many of us feel we cannot handle the sheer number of changes confronting us in our working lives, creating feelings of apprehension and demotivation. And there are other reasons for stress too. Today's fluid jobs market can mean that individuals are given excessive responsibility. Knowing that the buck stops with you can lead to difficulties in making decisions, or just in concentrating on the task in hand. A final cause of stress I'd like to mention is one where staff are not in a position to point the finger of blame at senior management. While you may be complaining bitterly of being overworked, you may not be taking a good hard look at your own shortcomings. A feeling of being overworked could be due to not setting and using appropriate priorities – if you're not organising your workload sensibly and tackling things in a logical order, you've perhaps only yourself to blame.

We conducted a survey recently of 500 companies and the results made interesting reading. Generally speaking, dissatisfaction concerning stress levels is on the increase. Long hours continue to be a major subject of resentment, and we also heard a substantially higher number of staff expressing their unhappiness about travel – more people seem to

have to go to more places more often than when we last conducted a survey. On the other hand, the question of not receiving recognition seems to have reduced in urgency, perhaps due to improved communications systems within organisations. We were interested to see that the issue of staff morale fared quite well in companies with under 50 employees, where a relatively happy picture was painted. However, an interesting problem facing major employers is the question of recruitment, with applicants appearing to shy away from them in favour of friendlier, more intimate environments, even if pay levels are lower there.

Finally, a few words of advice relevant to this time of year, as many people get ready for their holidays. Ironically, preparing for a holiday can be stressful, with fears of everything going wrong in your absence. So prepare the ground by making sure your colleagues are up-to-date about your current projects – send them all an email before you set off. Back this up by having a quiet word with your boss to inform him or her of possible problems, so that he or she will know what to do should anything go wrong. That way, you should be better able to relax away from it all.

Part Two (CD Tracks 15–16)

Speaker 1

I love selling – I think it's the essence of business. Two competitors can have products of equal quality, but the one with the better sales force will win out every time. But it's a complex operation, negotiating successfully, especially since you're often having to pitch without having as much information at your fingertips as you'd like about the client's business. And sometimes you need to set aside fixed ideas about price and maybe meet demands to add in some extras, ways to secure the deal that might seem to damage your margin. Of course, you can get it wrong sometimes – once I approached a client very demanding, pushing him to give me responses without accommodating his very different attitude to negotiating, and it just alienated him.

Speaker 2

I'm learning all the time about how to improve techniques, but there's only so much you can control on a technical basis. I mean, the price and quality you're offering are probably a given, and your client's going to be making their own calculations about how they compare with the

competition. So a lot of it comes down to how you put yourself over, and if that's confident and presuming a good outcome to your discussions, I think you've got a winning approach. But you still have to stay alert to the possibility of making mistakes. I was once so involved in all the toing and froing you get in closing a deal, you know, all the phone calls, that I forgot to keep or ask for proper notes, and they were able to really sting me.

Speaker 3

You can read all the books you want, but they won't tell you how to deal with any particular client. Some people spend so much time studying their competitors that they almost seem to know more about them than their own products, and it's a waste of time, cos you have to sell your plus points, not their minuses – that's something you don't refer to. For all you know, your client's already got a good relationship with your strongest rival. Never assume anything. I really misread a client once. I was talking away, listing all our special features in far too much detail, and completely missed the point that the client just wasn't in a hurry. He wanted to take it nice and slow, and was dropping hints about good dinners which passed me by at the time, cos most customers aren't so interested in that.

Speaker 4

Despite what anyone says, you'll never really know how your client runs their business, only what they tell you, and they may tell you all sorts of things to try and bring down the price, upgrade the offer, and so on, within your margins. You can't know what discussions they have already been in with your competition either. So you need to work on building up an understanding between you, to give you some kind of a basis to work from. Which is, of course, easier said than done. The larger the deal, the more anxious you can become, and once I got overwhelmed by that, so much so that the client clearly thought that not only was I an idiot, but that my firm must be pretty useless too. Not my most successful day!

Speaker 5

Selling is a science, not an art-form. The easy bit is cost and calculation, which anyone can do, but your offerings don't mean anything in themselves, you have to see them in context, and that means how the client sees them. So if you don't do your homework on the client's set-up, you're talking to

the wind – information is power. Mind you, I've taken that logic a step too far in the past. I'm still embarrassed when I remember the time I was so keen to make the client understand all the particular ways in which my offer suited him so very perfectly that I didn't stop to consider the fact that he was basically saying yes already. I actually prolonged the process so much that I ended up in danger of blowing the whole thing!

Part Three (CD Tracks 17–18)

F George, you said you'd be interested in talking about communication sometime.

M Yeah, just chatting, you know.

F Well, I'm not too busy just now.

M Oh, good. The thing is, Karen, I've been feeling rather frustrated lately. I mean, I get these managers who are apparently only too willing to show up for these workshops I run ... and I have them draw up lists of obstacles they face at work, and communication is always there. But it seems just to be paying lip service, rather than probing the underlying factors. And I have observed that in many companies there is still an air of deference towards managers and people find it hard to be honest because managers keep employees' real issues at arm's length.

F Oh, it can be terrible, can't it? I remember one time, when I'd been made the test manager at an IT company, and a member of my team, this guy Dave, came and complained that a colleague wasn't pulling her weight on a project she was on. When I investigated, I understood that Dave had probably really been expressing his dissatisfaction that he hadn't been included in the project himself.

M Very tricky, that kind of thing. And there's no obvious solution.

F Well, I guess there are always ways to try and prevent problems building up in the first place. You need to create a space for people to talk, really talk. And to do that you have to cultivate a relationship where people feel they can be honest. You have to make some time as appropriate, according to need, to have, say, lunch or coffee with each of your people in the canteen or rest area. If you're impatient or don't take time to listen, invariably you won't get an accurate impression of any given situation – and in the end you'll suffer for it.

M Yes, that's something not everyone fully appreciates. Especially when people are needing to collaborate across different departments, which seems to be increasingly common. If you find yourself working jointly on a project with another department, you can often get mix-ups about completion dates, about who has what area of responsibility. It can get very irritating. You should try to be clear as you go along the way about what role each department is taking, what it is you're contributing, and what you expect from the other department – but the message doesn't always get through.

F Oh, certainly – giving out messages is the easy part. The question is whether your message got through. And it's your responsibility to make sure it does! After all, meetings and conversations can often go on for ages, and correspondingly so can any notes you or others make to capture the points. In fact, the end result can change the nature of discussions along the way, so you're better off having your opposite party repeat back to you what they think you've achieved overall. If you say it yourself, you may simply be reinforcing the impression they had as opposed to your own.

M Right. It all comes down to the processes that the company uses to run itself internally, as a bureaucracy. Until recently, communication in companies was seen as the exclusive territory of the PR and marketing departments. But that's come to an end, hasn't it, with new forms of communication – so you've got something like investor relations being termed 'financial management' – though what that means in practice is hard to say. I'm not sure who's controlling what anymore, and I think this can mean you get fragmented or contradictory manifestations of the company being sent to the outside world. But I wouldn't like to be asked to propose a solution!

F No! Well, actually, it's all in the system you set up, isn't it? Everyone's plunging into team after team, weaving functions together, regardless of whether it can all be knitted in like that. But you're actually only in one department, and you can only do what you've been equipped to do, and we can't all be experts in the field of communications, but we can all get better than we are, which is where some effective skills input and support to empower people can really make a difference.

- M Yeah, but decisions to that effect have to be made and delivered by someone. So you have the reality of an organisation on the one hand, and its figurehead chief executive on the other. The leader can take something forward on paper, according to where he or she'd like to see everything going, but can't control how that's expressed down the line. So effectively it's the middle sections of the hierarchy that calls the shots, however illogical that seems.
- F I think you're right. And then I suppose we should ...

ANSWER KEY

Practice Test 1

Writing skills

Exercise 1

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2 d | 3 g | 4 e | 5 h |
| 6 i | 7 f | 8 c | 9 a |

Test 1: Reading

Part One

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 E | 2 B | 3 D | 4 C |
| 5 A | 6 D | 7 E | 8 C |

Part Two

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 9 G | 10 E | 11 C | 12 D |
| 13 F | 14 A | | |

Part Three

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 15 D | 16 B | 17 A | 18 C |
| 19 A | 20 B | | |

Part Four

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 21 A | 22 D | 23 B | 24 B |
| 25 C | 26 A | 27 B | 28 D |
| 29 A | 30 C | | |

Part Five

- 31 IN
32 AHEAD
33 MUCH
34 RATHER

- 35 SO
36 OR
37 IT
38 MOST
39 BEING
40 WHAT

Part Six

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 41 CORRECT | 47 CORRECT |
| 42 CORRECT | 48 THE |
| 43 APPLIED | 49 ARE |
| 44 BOTH | 50 MONITORING |
| 45 SUCH | 51 SOME |
| 46 CORRECT | 52 YOURSELF |

Test 1: Writing

Part One (Sample answer)

This report summarises changes in the turnover of two companies, Carrington and Thompson in the years 1990 to 2000.

In that time, Thompson's turnover increased by between 2 and 6 per cent every year. Carrington's greatest rise was 5 per cent, and its turnover fell in two years. Only in one year did this company's growth exceed that of Thompson.

Initially the trend was towards rising turnover; the pattern for Carrington mirroring that for Thompson but with a year's delay: while Thompson's increase peaked in 1992, Carrington's did so the following year. In the subsequent decline, Thompson's turnover continued to rise, although at a slower rate, whereas Carrington's fell.

Both recovered in 1996 and 1997, with no change in the next year. In 1999 both companies saw reduced growth, and in the final year Carrington's recovered, while Thompson's was static.

Part Two (Sample answer)

Question 3 / Proposal

To: Ms Cartwright
From: Jeremy Dunne
Date: 24 May
Subject: Staff recruitment

Background

At present staff recruitment depends entirely on advertising in the local newspaper. This is expensive, and generates very few applications. In several cases no appointment has been made because of the applicants' unsuitability.

Proposal

As existing staff are familiar with the work and with the type of people required, they are well placed to recruit new workers among people they know. As an incentive, anyone who introduces a person who is appointed – either at that time or to a subsequent vacancy – could be given some reward, possibly financial. This is likely to lead to more successful recruitment, and as a by-product may give existing staff a greater sense of responsibility for the company. Further, if employees have friends and relations working in the same place, they are likely to get increased job satisfaction.

Introduction of procedure

The idea could be explained at a general meeting of the workforce, so that any questions can be dealt with there and then. A written outline of the procedure could then be displayed on noticeboards. It would be worth introducing this system when there are vacancies to be filled, so that it gets off the ground immediately.

Possible disadvantage

There is a risk of ill feeling if a staff member introduces someone whose application is unsuccessful. If it is made clear that appointments cannot be taken for granted, I feel that this danger would not outweigh the advantages of the scheme.

Test 1: Listening

Part One

- 1 PUBLICIST
- 2 DIGITAL MEDIA
- 3 (AN) INTRANET
- 4 BRAND VALUES
- 5 POSTAGE ... PAPER
- 6 INTERNAL CULTURE
- 7 REFITTED
- 8 PROFITABILITY
- 9 SALES POTENTIAL
- 10 MARKET SEGMENT
- 11 YEAR-ROUND
- 12 MINIMALIST

Part Two

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 13 D | 14 G | 15 H | 16 F |
| 17 B | 18 H | 19 A | 20 D |
| 21 F | 22 C | | |

Part Three

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 23 B | 24 B | 25 A | 26 C |
| 27 B | 28 C | 29 A | 30 C |

Practice Test 2

Writing skills

Exercise 1

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 b | 2 c | 3 e | 4 d |
| 5 f | 6 a | | |

Test 2: Reading

Part One

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 C | 2 B | 3 D | 4 B |
| 5 A | 6 C | 7 E | 8 A |

Part Two

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 9 D | 10 A | 11 G | 12 B |
| 13 F | 14 C | | |

Part Three

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 15 D | 16 A | 17 B | 18 D |
| 19 C | 20 C | | |

Part Four

21 C 22 A 23 C 24 D
25 B 26 A 27 D 28 B
29 C 30 C

Part Five

31 OUT 36 THAN
32 SINCE 37 TAKE / HAVE
33 WHAT 38 AS
34 NOT 39 HOW
35 SAME 40 YOURSELF

Part Six

41 AROUND 47 CORRECT
42 INCLUDED 48 ONE
43 RESULTING 49 MORE
44 UP 50 YET
45 FOR 51 BY
46 RELATIVELY 52 CORRECT

Test 2: Writing

Part One (Sample answer)

These charts summarise three elements of the economy of a certain region: its employment structure, largest export markets and major sources of imports.

Structure of employment

Services form by far the largest sector, accounting for fractionally over half the workforce (51%). The remainder is divided almost equally between agriculture (26%) and the smallest sector, industry (23%).

Export markets

The main destination of the region's exports is North America, which purchases almost a third. The next largest market is South America, with 21.2%, with Europe in third place with 15.4%.

Sources of imports

When it comes to the origins of the region's imports, however, the picture is somewhat different. While North America still leads, with 34.1%, the second largest source is South East Asia, which provides

21.8% of imports. South America accounts for 19.6%.

Part Two (Sample answer)

Question 4 / Letter

Dear Mrs Cardew

I am writing regarding your invitation to our company to give a presentation at your college. I am Deputy Head of Finance here, and would be pleased to give the presentation.

I understand that the presentation will be open to all of your students, and I hope that the following topic will be of general interest. I propose to talk about the importance of careful financial management, focusing on the potentially disastrous results of poor financial, managerial and ethical decisions. They affect both the businesses which make them, and the communities in which those businesses are located. I shall include many genuine examples from the world of business, which will reinforce the importance of the subject.

This will, I hope, show your students that finance does not simply consist of 'number crunching', and will give them some understanding of the legal and ethical principles involved. In addition, I intend to present the students with practical problems to solve, as a follow-up to the presentation, and this activity should help them to apply principles and develop their judgement.

The whole session will last around two hours. I would be grateful if it could be held in a room with tables which the students could sit round in groups of about six, and I would also like an OHP to be available, please.

With many thanks
Yours sincerely

Karen Petherick

Test 2: Listening

Part One

1 TAKEAWAY RESTAURANTS
2 EXPORTING
3 PRODUCTION PLANT
4 130 LINES
5 SCHOOLS ... HOTELS
6 GOVERNMENT OFFICES
7 RECIPE BOOK
8 TV AD
9 EQUIPMENT RETAILER
10 HEALTH DRINKS
11 QUALITY
12 TRAINING PROGRAM(ME)

Part Two

13 F 14 C 15 G 16 D
17 A 18 F 19 G 20 A
21 B 22 H

Part Three

23 B 24 A 25 A 26 A
27 C 28 B 29 A 30 C

Practice Test 3

Writing skills

Exercise I

1 d 2 g 3 a 4 b
5 c 6 f 7 e

Test 3: Reading

Part One

1 D 2 E 3 C 4 E
5 B 6 A 7 D 8 B

Part Two

9 D 10 G 11 B 12 F
13 A 14 E

Part Three

15 D 16 B 17 A 18 B
19 C 20 A

Part Four

21 A 22 D 23 B 24 A
25 C 26 D 27 C 28 B
29 B 30 A

Part Five

31 LITTLE 36 SO
32 SUCH 37 UNLESS
33 NOT 38 WHICH / WHAT
34 FEW 39 LESS
35 FOR 40 THERE

Part Six

41 YET 47 IT
42 CORRECT 48 BEING
43 WHILE 49 CORRECT
44 UP 50 CORRECT
45 THAT 51 THEM
46 NEWS 52 UNLIKE

Test 3: Writing

Part One (Sample answer)

These three charts give information gained in a survey of independent consultants.

Age

Slightly over half the respondents (52%) were aged 21–40. This figure declined to 38% for the age group 41–60, while only 10% were older.

Business activity

The largest number were in marketing services, with 40% of those surveyed. Financial advice came a long way behind, at 24%, closely followed by training, at 22%. The smallest category was creative and design services, employing 14% of the consultants.

Marketing tools

Most of the consultants use several marketing tools. Only three methods are used by over half of the sample: advertising, at 90%, word-of-mouth (78%), and, some way behind, website (57%). 36% use PR, and only a quarter use exhibitions. The least popular option is direct mail, used by only



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

H I G H E R

Candidate Name

If not already printed, write name
in CAPITALS and complete the
Candidate No. grid (in pencil).

Candidate's Signature

Centre No.

Candidate No.

Examination Title

Centre

**Examination
Details**

Supervisor:

If the candidate is ABSENT or has WITHDRAWN shade here

0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

Instructions

Use a PENCIL (B or HB).

Rub out any answer you wish to change with an eraser.

For Parts 1 to 4:

Mark one box for each answer.

For example:

If you think C is the right answer to the question,
mark your answer sheet like this:

0	A	B	C
---	---	---	---

For Parts 5 and 6:

Write your answer clearly in CAPITAL LETTERS.

Write one letter in each box.

For example: 0 ENGLISH

1	A	B	C	D	E
2	A	B	C	D	E
3	A	B	C	D	E
4	A	B	C	D	E
5	A	B	C	D	E
6	A	B	C	D	E
7	A	B	C	D	E
8	A	B	C	D	E

9	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
10	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
11	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
12	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
13	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
14	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

15	A	B	C	D
16	A	B	C	D
17	A	B	C	D
18	A	B	C	D
19	A	B	C	D
20	A	B	C	D

21	A	B	C	D
22	A	B	C	D
23	A	B	C	D
24	A	B	C	D
25	A	B	C	D
26	A	B	C	D
27	A	B	C	D
28	A	B	C	D
29	A	B	C	D
30	A	B	C	D

Turn over for Parts 5 and 6



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