

TEST OF READING

Timing: 1 hour

| PART | Main Skill Focus | Input | Response | Number of Questions |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Reading for gist and global meaning | Authentic business-related text – either a single text or 5 short, related texts (approx. 450 words in total) | Matching | 8 |
| 2 | Reading for structure and detail | Authentic business-related text (approx. 450 – 500 words) with sentence-length gaps | Matching | 6 |
| 3 | Understanding general points and specific details | Longer text based on authentic source material (approx. 500 – 600 words) | 4-option multiple choice | 6 |
| 4 | Reading – vocabulary and structure | Single business-related text with primarily lexical gaps (approx. 250 words) | 4-option multiple choice cloze | 10 |
| 5 | Reading – structure and discourse features | Single business-related text with structure and discourse gaps (approx. 250 words) | Rational deletion Open cloze | 10 |
| 6 | Reading – understanding sentence structure; error identification | Short text (approx. 150 – 200 words) Identification of additional unnecessary words in text | Proof reading | 12 |

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

Part One

This is a matching task involving either a single text or five related shorter texts. Examples are a set of related product descriptions, a set of advertisements (for instance, for different types of services), notices, book reviews, short newspaper items on related topics or a single magazine article divided into five sections.

Texts may be edited, but the source is authentic. They are identified as texts A – E.

There are eight items, each of which is one sentence, numbered 1 – 8. Each sentence is a statement which can be matched with only one of the texts. The candidate's task is to read the sentence and then scan the texts for the one to which the sentence applies. Candidates are tested on whether they can understand the language of the item and relate it to the meaning of the text, which is expressed in different language.

Preparation

- Present students with sets of related short texts (e.g. job advertisements, hotels, etc.) from newspapers, magazines, brochures.
- Longer texts may also be divided into sub-headed sections.
- Students should be encouraged to identify facts or ideas within each text, describing how the texts are similar and what differences they contain.
- The register or style of the task sentences is likely to differ from that of the texts, and students should be given practice in recognising the same information in different styles, e.g. by rewriting advertisements into objective prose.
- The task is designed to go beyond simple word-matching and students will need to practise paraphrasing.
- Activities that help students to identify target information among otherwise superfluous text (e.g. choosing what to watch from TV listings) would be beneficial.
- Above all, students should treat the task as an example of information-processing skills which are frequently employed in social and professional life.

Part Two

This is a gapped text with six sentence-length gaps. The text comes from an authentic business-related source, although it may be edited. Sources include business articles from newspapers or magazines, books on topics such as management, and company literature such as annual reports. Candidates have to read the text and then identify the correct sentence to fill each gap from a set of eight sentences marked A – H. Sentence H is the example, and one other sentence is a distractor which does not fit any of the gaps. Understanding, not only of the meaning of the text but of some of the features of its structure, is tested.

Preparation

- This task requires an overt focus on cohesion and coherence to which many students may not be accustomed.
- It would be helpful for students to reassemble texts that have been cut up, discussing why texts fit together as they do.
- It would also be useful for students to discuss why sentences do or do not fit together.
- Students could benefit from altering the cohesion of texts to make sentences that do not fit together do so, and vice versa.
- Since culture affects discourse, including the order of argument development, discussions exploring this would be beneficial.
- The cut and paste functions of word-processing, where available, could be exploited for this task.

Part Three

This task consists of a text accompanied by four-option multiple choice items. The stem of a multiple choice item may take the form of a question or an incomplete sentence. There are six items, which are placed after the text. Sources of original texts may be the general and business press, company literature and books on topics such as management. Texts may be edited, but the sources are authentic.

Preparation

- Multiple choice questions are a familiar and long-standing type of test; here they are used to test opinion and inference rather than straightforward facts.
- Correct answers are designed not to depend on simple word-matching, and students' ability to interpret paraphrasing should be developed.
- Students should be encouraged to pursue their own interpretation of relevant parts of the text and then check their idea against the options offered, rather than reading all the options first.
- It could be useful for students to be given perhaps one

of the wrong options only, and for them to try to write the correct answer and another wrong option.

Part Four

This task is a modified cloze: in other words, a gapped text in which the gaps are carefully chosen. There are ten multiple choice items, most of which test vocabulary. The text is based on authentic source material of one of the text types listed above. The candidate's task is to choose the correct option from the four available to fill each gap.

Preparation

- It is important for students to appreciate that the correct answer in each case is correct in relation to the gap itself, rather than in relation to the other three options.
- It is worth emphasising that this task tests lexical and collocational knowledge, and that the best (if not the only) route to this knowledge is to read widely within the kinds of texts that the task employs.
- It is worth discussing what aspects of linguistic knowledge are tested (collocations, fixed phrases, register, etc.).
- It might be useful to give students gapped texts and have them produce alternative words which fit or do not fit the gaps.
- Any vocabulary-building activity is likely to be helpful in preparing for this task.

Part Five

This task is an open cloze: a gapped text in which the candidate has to supply the word to fill each gap. There are ten items. Gaps are formed by rational deletion, being chosen rather than being simply those which occur if (for example) every seventh word is deleted. The focus is on structure, and coherence/cohesion in the text. Items tested may include prepositions, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, etc.

The text is based on authentic material.

Preparation

- The kinds of words which are gapped may well correspond to the kinds of errors students make; and therefore discussion of photocopied examples of students' compositions could be helpful.
- Students should be encouraged to circle the word or words in the text that dictate what the answer is, in order for them to see that such clues to the answer may be adjacent to the gap or several words distant.
- Students should brainstorm various likely words which might fit a particular gap, and then discuss why others do not fit.

- Students could be given several possible answers for a gap and discuss why the correct answer is correct.
- This task tests grammatical and structural aspects of language, and any practice in these areas should be beneficial.

Part Six

In this task, candidates identify words that have been introduced into a text in error.

This exercise can be related to the authentic task of checking a text for errors, and suitable text types therefore include letters, publicity materials, etc. The text contains twelve numbered lines, which are the test items. Further lines at the end may complete the text, but these are not test items.

Preparation

- Students should be reminded that this task represents a kind of editing that is common practice, even in their first language.
- Any work on error analysis is likely to be helpful for this task.
- A reverse of the exercise (giving students texts with missing words) might prove beneficial.

PART ONE
Questions 1 – 8

- Look at the statements below and at the five extracts from an article on the opposite page about organisations which outsource (OWOs). These are organisations which give contracts for some of their activities to be run by managed service suppliers (MSSs).
- Which article (A, B, C, D or E) does each statement 1 – 8 refer to?
- For each statement 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.
- There is an example at the beginning. (0).

Example:

0 There are signs that some MSSs are moving into foreign markets.

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 | A | B | C | D | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 1 There is a risk that outsourcing too many operations could weaken an OWO.
- 2 OWOs are finding that they need to adapt their management methods as a result of the increased outsourcing they commission.
- 3 There are different ways of assessing the total financial worth of outsourced business.
- 4 There may be improvements for an OWO's staff when it outsources services.
- 5 Despite their success in business terms, MSSs may not be high profile.
- 6 OWOs may not have consistent policies with regard to MSSs.
- 7 It is theoretically possible for the majority of an OWO's activities to be contracted to MSSs.
- 8 Outsourcing is affecting the way performance is measured in some areas of business.

2

A

Basic activities such as catering, cleaning and security were often the first to be contracted out as both the private and public sectors yielded to the 1990s philosophy of concentrating on core activities. As a result of outsourcing, many canteens have lost their institutional atmosphere and resemble high-street retail outlets, boosting both the range of products and facilities for workers and the MSSs' turnover. Profits from the growing UK outsourcing market are helping the biggest catering MSSs to expand overseas as the industry develops a global dimension.

D

There are signs that the spread of contracting out to MSSs is impacting on the way OWOs are run, generating a need for high-level staff who will be skilled at negotiating and handling relationships with partner organisations rather than simply giving internal directions. Meanwhile, many MSSs face new employment and recruitment issues as their workforces often consist of staff inherited from dozens of organisations in both the public and private sectors.

B

Estimates of the scope and value of managed service supplying vary according to the definitions used of what activities are included or excluded in calculations. Although some MSSs are large – for example, the Alfis Group is, with 200,000 employees, one of the ten biggest private sector employers in Europe – they enjoy little of the public name recognition of the OWOs for whom they work. At the same time, in fields such as IT and research, OWOs now outsource not only non-core activities but also those where they believe specialist MSSs can bring additional expertise.

E

The growth in outsourcing has coincided – and may continue to coincide – with increasing interest in the concept of the virtual organisation – one which chooses to outsource almost everything so that it can concentrate on handling relationships with its clients. However, a recent report warns that the notion of virtual organisations must be balanced against the negative possibility of 'hollow' organisations, left with only a 'fragile shell remaining'. The report also expresses concern that some large MSSs have 'gradually taken control of significant parts of public sector activities', changing the basis on which the success or otherwise of those activities is assessed.

C

The growth of outsourcing means that a number of MSSs are finding themselves drawn into the established managerial thinking of their OWOs to a point where their reputation becomes dependent on the OWO's performance – in both positive and negative ways. This and other consequences of growth are generating calls from MSSs for both the private sector and governments to think more strategically about their relationship with MSSs, rather than on a disjointed contract-by-contract basis.

Turn Over ▶

3

PART TWO
Questions 9 – 14

- Read this text taken from an article about how companies' decision-making can go wrong.
- Choose the best sentence from the opposite page 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).

Bad business decisions are easy to make

Those who make disastrous business decisions generally exhibit two characteristic types of behaviour. First they make a selective interpretation of the evidence when deciding to go ahead with a project. (0)...H...

One reason is that the people in control are determined to make their mark by doing something dramatic. (9)..... Once the leader has decided to put his or her name to a project, many in the organisation believe it politic to support it too, whatever their private doubts. (10)..... These doubters know that such a

perception will cloud their future careers. The desire to agree with the boss is typical of committees, with group members often taking collective decisions that they would not have taken individually. They look around the table, see their colleagues nodding in agreement and suppress their own doubts. If all these intelligent people believe this is the right thing to do, they think to themselves, perhaps it is. It rarely occurs to committee members that all their colleagues have made the same dubious calculation.

Responsible managers usually ask to see the evidence before reaching a decision. (11)..... Even those who consider all the evidence, good and bad, fail to take account of the fact that expert predictions are often wrong. The reason for this is that feedback is only effective if it is received quickly and often; and senior executives rarely become the experts they claim to be, because they make too few big decisions to learn much from them. So when it becomes clear that disaster looms, many executives insist on pressing ahead regardless. (12)..... The repercussions of doing so can be daunting.

So what can be done to prevent companies making bad decisions? (13)..... Another is to delegate the decision on whether or not to continue to people who are not in the thick of the decision-making, such as the non-executive directors. (14)..... But they shouldn't expect any gratitude; people who have made huge mistakes are not going to say 'Thank you, we should have paid attention to you in the first place.'

Example:

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0 | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- A** It would be far better, though, if dissidents in the organisation raised their doubts beforehand, and were listened to.
- B** They want to be recognised as having changed the company in a way that history will remember.
- C** This is not to argue that companies should never attempt anything brave or risky.
- D** Too much money has been spent and too many reputations are at stake to think about stopping at this stage.
- E** One solution is to set targets for a project and to agree in advance to abandon it if these are not met.
- F** After all, people who persistently point to potential pitfalls are seen as negative and disloyal.
- G** But they often rely only on those parts of it that support their case.
- H** Coupled with this, they insist that the failure was someone else's fault.

PART THREE
Questions 15 – 20

- Read the following extract from an article about incompetent employees, and the questions on the opposite page.
- For each question 15 – 20, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

Every organisation has its share of employees-from-hell; the lazy, deluded, hypochondriac under-performers. They are difficult to manage and miserable to work with. Their productivity is low and their ability to poison staff morale high. They are, alas, always well-entrenched and management-resistant. Interestingly, their numbers in any organisation have more to do with management's refusal to deal with the situation than with poor selection. That is, their existence in the organisation is nearly always due to a long line of weak managers who have declined to tackle the problem.

Traditionally, there are three classic ineffective ways of dealing with the incompetent. The first is to ignore the problem, hoping that it will go away. Rather than confront laziness or serious absenteeism, the manager gives the employee less work to do. This inevitably leads to frustration on the part of the good hardworking staff who see the problem employee getting away with it.

The second approach, which has traditionally been the most favoured, is to pass them on. There is usually a part of any business where people believe the poor performer can do no damage. Alternatively, poor performers can be moved to another branch in the direst

part of town, or to another town, or even to another country. A clever variant of this tactic is to herd all the incompetent employees into one part of the company that is then sold off or privatised.

There is a third approach which is to promote the incompetent. This sounds bizarre and exceedingly stupid but is not infrequently adopted. The ideal is that, although these posts are quite senior and well-paid, the actual jobs are fairly pointless ones in which incompetent people can hide without doing any serious damage. The employee is thus confirmed in his or her delusions of competence.

All three of these strategies are the result of not dealing with the problem early on. Many managers find dealing with incompetence very difficult. The scenario that all managers hate is as follows: show a subordinate a low mark on their appraisal form. The employee first wants the behaviour defined; then wants an example of when this behaviour occurred; then argues about how this incident occurred and how typical it was. The net result is a row about the past and frustration on the part of both.

A different and more successful method is the problem-solving

approach. This insists that one still shows the low score but, rather than attempting to explain it, one describes what needs to be done differently to achieve a higher score. The emphasis is on the future not the past; on a clear description of the desirable behaviour, not the incompetent behaviour. The touchy or sensitive employee normally responds to this reasonably well. Nevertheless, there are those who cannot, or will not, respond to good management. They may be unable to do the job due to ever-changing tasks fast enough. They may be distracted by problems at home or more likely they have been managed very poorly in the past.

There is really only a very limited number of things that can be done with the really incompetent. Buy them out, which may be the best solution for all concerned; raise the game by making sure they are given ever higher but reachable targets. A final strategy is to insist that they have an annual psychological test, where a disinterested outside consultant does a motivation analysis and has the power to recommend that they be let go – not encouraged to go to another part of the organisation, but into the bracing waters of the job market.

15 What criticism does the writer make of managers in the first paragraph?

- A They lose interest in the issue of incompetent employees.
- B They fail to take a firm line with inefficient employees.
- C They have little idea of what is really required of their staff.
- D They often make bad decisions when choosing new staff.

16 What is the effect of the first of the methods suggested for dealing with incompetent staff?

- A It has only a short-term effect on the problem.
- B It means that better workers will not have to work so hard.
- C It makes good workers aware that problems are being dealt with.
- D It sends a negative message to those who do their job well.

17 In both the second and third ineffective methods of dealing with incompetent employees, the managers' aim is to

- A have all of the incompetent staff working in the same part of the company.
- B improve the attitude of the incompetent staff to work by giving them promotion.
- C put the incompetent staff in a situation where they can do as little harm as possible.
- D make the work so unattractive that the incompetent staff want to leave.

18 The writer says in the fifth paragraph that employees who are given a low mark on their appraisal form will

- A demand a detailed explanation of what they have done wrong.
- B claim that special circumstances have had an effect on their work.
- C deny that their work has been in any way unsatisfactory.
- D argue that they find the work they have had to do frustrating.

19 In the sixth paragraph the writer says that when talking to an incompetent employee a manager should

- A make no reference to the most recent appraisal mark.
- B compare the work of the employee with that of more efficient workers.
- C make clear what will happen if performance does not improve.
- D explain to the employee how he or she can gain a better appraisal mark.

20 What does the writer suggest as a way to deal with incompetent employees who fail to respond even to a problem-solving approach?

- A Set them targets which it would be impossible to attain.
- B Give them a test designed to identify their strengths.
- C Pay them a sum of money to leave the company.
- D Get an outside consultant to find them another job.

Turn Over ▶

PART FOUR
Questions 21 – 30

- Read the article below about life coaching – regular meetings between a business person and a neutral consultant to discuss work-related problems.
- Choose the correct word or phrase to fill each gap from **A, B, C** or **D** on the opposite page.
- 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).

Why I Found A Life Coach

Anyone who has ever **(0)** **D** through a self-improvement book has probably learned that such books do not hold the **(21)** of personal happiness. Having read too many of them without success, I was **(22)** to staying vaguely dissatisfied for the rest of my life. But when I **(23)** a newspaper article about a new kind of consultant, called a life coach, I became curious, and decided to learn more.

I was looking for a more personal way to **(24)** my life: I'd achieved my material goals before **(25)** the support of a coach, but professional challenges, long hours and not having someone neutral to talk to were putting my work and relationships at **(26)** I realised I needed to learn how to deal with problems before they occurred.

My life coach is very good at asking me **(27)** questions which help me to discover what I'm dissatisfied with in my life, and to understand who I am. It's good to have someone you can trust and respect to **(28)** things over with.

I sometimes pick topics in **(29)** of our discussions, such as situations at work, or conflicts between me and colleagues, though I don't always **(30)** an agenda. And I know that everything I say to my coach is in the strictest confidence. I'm far better at tackling difficult situations now, and best of all, I feel much more at ease with my life.

Example:

A stared B seen C inspected D glanced

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 0 | A | B | C | D |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

- 21 A solution B answer C key D secret
- 22 A patient B resigned C tolerant D contented
- 23 A found out B came across C ran into D met with
- 24 A evaluate B account C estimate D reckon
- 25 A appointing B signing C registering D enlisting
- 26 A danger B hazard C risk D peril
- 27 A examining B probing C exploring D investigating
- 28 A talk B discuss C say D tell
- 29 A preparation B readiness C precaution D anticipation
- 30 A set B put C place D hold

Turn Over ▶

9

8

PART FIVE
Questions 31 – 40

- Read the article below about working abroad.
- 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 I T

WORKING ABROAD

An increasing number of people are finding (0) necessary to spend at least part of their working life abroad. An international career used to be something people opted into from choice, but (31) many it has now become a requirement of staying in work. You do not have to be working in a huge multi-national corporation to find (32) being asked to work abroad. Companies that not so (33) years ago reserved foreign travel for directors, are now sending middle managers and even new recruits on projects overseas.

The characteristics of international travel will vary widely. For some people it will mean that they will occasionally have to spend a (34) days in a foreign city, while for others it will mean that they will constantly be moving from (35) country to another until they eventually lose touch with (36) original national identity.

The growing demand for people with the skills and experience to work in cross-national contexts places a premium on those who have developed the skills to enable them to rise to that challenge. (37) is needed is flexibility and adaptability, both of (38) arise from a state of mind rather than from innate ability. Teamworking skills are also important and (39) is the ability to communicate effectively, especially (40) long distances, via new communications technologies, such as videoconferencing and teleconferencing.

An international career requires a variety of skills. The time to begin preparing for such a career is now.

PART SIX
Questions 41 – 52

- Read the text below about writing good covering letters.
- In most of the lines 41 – 52 there is one extra word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the meaning of the text. Some lines, however, are correct.
- If a line is correct, write **CORRECT** on your Answer Sheet
- If there is an extra word in the line, write **the extra word** in CAPITAL LETTERS on your answer sheet.
- The exercise begins with two examples, (0) and (00).

Examples 0 C O R E C T
00 Y O V

DON'T GET "FILED IN THE BIN"

- 0 When you're applying for a job, what can you do to ensure that your covering letter doesn't just get 'filed' in the rubbish bin? Firstly, you always remember that the purpose of a covering letter is there to complement your CV. This means it should flesh out and explain clearly through any points that the CV alone doesn't deal with and that therefore might otherwise be missed out by prospective employers.
- 41 For example, if you're looking to change in industries, then your letter ought to explain them why you want to make the move, what your motivation is, and what you hope to achieve. If your CV shows that you don't hold a relevant qualification that the job ad has specified it (say, a university degree or a vocational diploma), so you'll need to explain why you should still be considered. It's not easy, and often writing the letter can take twice as long as writing your CV. But because to some extent that is how it should be: a CV is a formal, with structured document that simply imparts information, whereas a letter is your chance to make an impression.
- 42
- 43
- 44
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- 49
- 50
- 51
- 52

READING ANSWER KEY**Part One**

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

Part Two

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

Part Three

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

Part Four

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

Part Five

- 31 FOR/WITH
- 32 YOURSELF
- 33 MANY
- 34 FEW
- 35 ONE
- 36 THEIR
- 37 WHAT
- 38 WHICH
- 39 SO
- 40 OVER/ACROSS

Part Six

- 41 THERE
- 42 FOR
- 43 THROUGH
- 44 OUT
- 45 IN
- 46 THEM
- 47 CORRECT
- 48 IT
- 49 SO
- 50 CORRECT
- 51 BECAUSE
- 52 WITH

TEST OF WRITING

Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

| PART | Functions/Communicative Task | Input | Response | Register |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | e.g. describing or comparing figures from graphic input, making inferences | Rubric and graphic input | Short report (medium may be memo or e-mail) (120 – 140 words) | Neutral/formal |
| 2 | <p>Report: describing, summarising</p> <p>Correspondence: e.g. explaining, apologising, reassuring, complaining</p> <p>Proposal: describing, summarising, recommending, persuading</p> | Rubric, possibly supplemented by brief input text, e.g. notice, advert | <p>Candidates choose from report (medium may be memo or e-mail) or proposal (medium may be memo or e-mail) or business correspondence (medium may be letter, fax or e-mail) (200 – 250 words)</p> | Neutral/formal |

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

For BEC Higher, candidates are required to produce two pieces of writing:

- a short report based on graphic input;
- one of the following (of the candidate's choosing):
 - a longer report;
 - a piece of business correspondence;
 - a proposal.

For definitions of these task types please see page 49.

Part One

This is a guided writing task, in which the candidate produces a brief (120-140 word) report. The task provides a realistic situation in which it is necessary to analyse graphic information and express it in words. The input may consist of graphs, bar charts or pie charts of the type frequently used in the business pages of newspapers, company reports and brochures.

Part Two

In most parts of the BEC Writing tests, all candidates are required to perform the same task because there is no danger of individuals or groups of candidates being disadvantaged by that task. The exception is BEC Higher Writing Part Two: in order to generate the range of language which is characteristic of this level of language learner, the task contains no input or minimal input, resulting in a relatively high background knowledge requirement from the candidate. In the absence of a choice of tasks this could disadvantage some candidates, so a choice of tasks is given.

Candidates choose from three options: a report, proposal or a piece of business correspondence. The task is supplied by the rubric, which provides an authentic reason for writing, and indicates for whom the piece of writing is being produced. The input is therefore more detailed and specific than that of the traditional 'essay question' task type.

There is no significant difference between the format required for proposals and reports. At this level, reports must be clearly organised and should make some attempt at report format, for example paragraphs, heading, introduction and/or conclusion. There is no particular requirement for subheadings, and some widely taught subheadings such as 'introduction', 'terms of reference', 'findings', etc. will not necessarily be appropriate for all tasks.

Preparing for the Writing Questions

The first writing task involves the kind of graphic input of information which is common in the business world, and candidates should be exposed to a wide range of examples of graphs and charts from newspapers, magazines, company literature, etc. The interpretation involved is the translating of the graphic input into prose, rather than the recommending of action. Candidates should have practice in the clear and concise presentation of written information. Specific vocabulary and phrasing should also be developed.

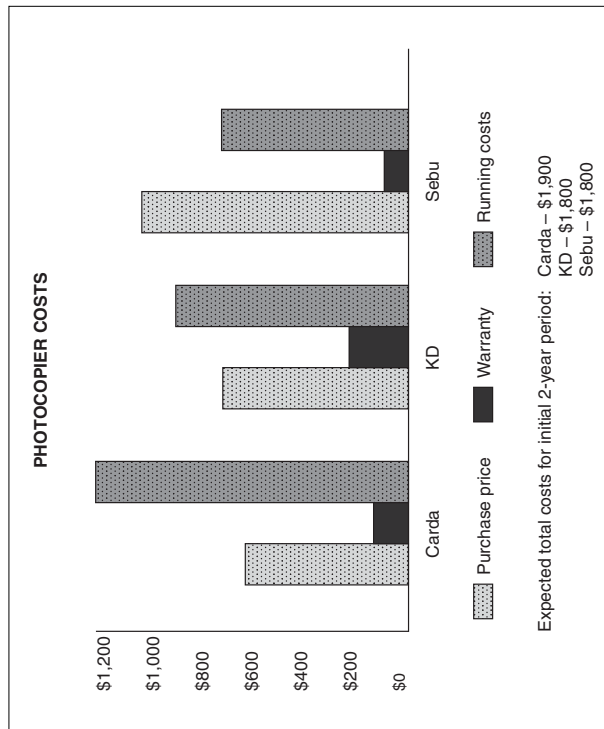
The second writing task requires candidates to plan carefully in order to be able to produce successful answers. Exposure to, and discussion of, as wide a range as possible of relevant texts would be beneficial. Candidates should be given practice in considering:

- the target reader
- the purpose of writing
- the requirements of the format (letter, report, etc.)
- the main points to be addressed
- the approximate number of words to be written for each point
- suitable openings and closings
- the level of formality required.

For the BEC Higher Writing component, candidates write their answers in pen in their question paper booklet.

PART ONE
Question 1

- The bar chart below shows the cost of buying three different photocopiers, the cost of a warranty on each machine, and their expected running costs for the first two years.
- Using the information from the chart, write a short **report** comparing the costs for the three machines.
- Write **120 – 140** words on page 3.



PART TWO
Questions 2 – 4

- Write an answer to **one** of the questions 2 – 4 in this part.
- Write **200 – 250** words on pages 5 and 6.
- Write the question number in the box at the top of page 5.

Question 2

- Your manager is keen to introduce new practices into your company. He has asked you to write a report which includes details of two practices from another company which you would suggest adopting in your own company.
- Write the **report** for your manager, including the following information:
 - what you admire about the other company
 - which two of its practices you would adopt
 - why your company would benefit from them.

Question 3

- Your company has employed an outside consultant to organise an exhibition of your products, to be held next month. His work is unsatisfactory, and your boss has now decided that you should take over full responsibility instead. Your boss has asked you to write to the consultant to explain why he has been replaced.
- Write the **letter** to the consultant:
 - giving two reasons why he has been replaced
 - telling him he will be paid for this work
 - asking him to brief you on the current situation.

Question 4

- Your company has decided to conduct an investigation into the possibility of increasing the number of ways in which technology is used throughout the organisation. You have been asked to write a proposal concerning the use of technology in your department for the Managing Director.
- Write your **proposal**, including the following:
 - a brief outline of the current uses of technology in your department
 - a description of what technological improvements could be made
 - an explanation of the benefits these changes might bring
 - recommendations for the kind of training that would be necessary.

ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

An impression mark is awarded to each piece of writing. The General Impression Mark Scheme is used in conjunction with a Task-specific Mark Scheme, which focuses on criteria specific to each particular task. This summarises the content, organisation, register, format and target reader indicated in the task.

The band scores awarded are translated to a mark out of 10

for Part 1 and a mark out of 20 for Part 2. A total of 30 marks is available for Writing.

The General Impression Mark Scheme is interpreted at Council of Europe level C1.

A summary of the General Impression Mark Scheme is reproduced below. Examiners work with a more detailed version, which is subject to regular updating.

Summary of General Impression Mark Scheme**Band 5**

Full realisation of the task set.

- All content points included.
- Controlled, natural use of language; minimal errors.
- Wide range of structure and vocabulary.
- Effectively organised, with appropriate use of cohesive devices.
- Register and format consistently appropriate.

Very positive effect on the reader.

Band 4

Good realisation of the task set.

- All major content points included; possibly minor omissions.
- Natural use of language; errors only when complex language is attempted.
- Good range of structure and vocabulary.
- Generally well-organised, with attention paid to cohesion.
- Register and format on the whole appropriate.

Positive effect on the reader.

Band 3

Reasonable achievement of the task set.

- All major content points included; some minor omissions.
- Reasonable control, although a more ambitious attempt at the task may lead to a number of non-impeding errors.
- Adequate range of structure and vocabulary.
- Organisation and cohesion is satisfactory.
- Register and format reasonable, although not entirely successful.

Satisfactory effect on the reader.

Band 2

Inadequate attempt at the task set.

- Some major content points omitted or inadequately dealt with; possibly some irrelevance.
- Errors sometimes obscure communication and are likely to be numerous.
- Limited range of structure and vocabulary; language is too elementary for this level.
- Content is not clearly organised.
- Unsuccessful attempt at appropriate register and format.

Negative effect on the reader.

Band 1

Poor attempt at the task set.

- Notable content omissions and/or considerable irrelevance.
- Serious lack of control; frequent basic errors.
- Narrow range of structure and vocabulary.
- Lack of organisation.
- Little attempt at appropriate register and format.

Very negative effect on the reader.

Band 0

Achieves nothing. Either fewer than 25% of the required number of words or totally illegible or totally irrelevant.

QUESTION 1

CANDIDATE A

Report: Photocopier Costs

Of the three types of photocopiers, Carda, KD and Sebu, the purchase price of the Carda is the lowest. It is slightly more than \$600 but its expected running cost for the first two years is the highest with its warranty cost at the mid-level of the three photocopiers.

In comparison, the purchase price of the KD is a little more than that of the Carda which is \$700; whereas the expected running cost of the KD is much less than that of the Carda which is \$1,200. However, the KD's warranty cost is the highest of the three at \$200. In comparison the Sebu's purchase price is the highest of the three, i.e. \$1000, but it costs consumers the least in warranty and running for the first two years.

What's more, the expected total cost of the Carda for the initial 2-year period is \$1,900, more than that of both the Sebu and KD, \$1,800.

In conclusion it would be advisable to buy the KD photocopier which is generally more advantageous in cost than its competitors.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Full realisation of the task set with a natural use of language and appropriate use of linkers.

Band 5

CANDIDATE B

This report was compiled to present the data about the costs of buying three different photocopiers, the cost of a warranty on each machine, and their expected running costs for the first two years. The photocopiers being described are Carda, KS and Sebu.

Certainly the most expensive one is Carda as its total cost for initial 2-year period is \$1,900. This includes running costs of \$1,200 and cost of a warranty which is \$100. The remaining part of costs – about 30% of the total costs – is the purchase price.

Total costs of both KD and Sebu photocopiers are equal, however their particular ingredients differ. KD's warranty is the most pricey and costs \$200 whereas Sebu's costs \$70. Running costs of KD and Sebu photocopiers are \$900 and \$800, respectively. Taking into consideration purchase price, the most expensive one is Sebu which costs \$1000 whereas KD's is cheaper than Sebu by \$200. Total costs for the 2-year period of these machines is \$1,800.

I trust that the above data will be useful and helpful for the buyer to make the best possible choice.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Good realisation of the task set with all content points included. Ambitious range of structure and vocabulary, which is not always successful. Generally well-organised with evidence of internal cohesion.

Band 4

CANDIDATE C

This report compares the costs of three photocopiers, called Carda, KD and Sebu.

Firstly, we will consider running costs. Far the highest is Carda's (\$1200) followed by KD's which is equal to \$1000 and the lowest one at the moment is Sebu's (\$600). It also has the lowest warranty cost which is about \$100. That is very close to the cost of Carda machine, which is just a bit higher (\$630). But KD's cost is for about 100 percent higher than the mentioned two. If we look at purchase prices and start with the highest we firstly have to mention Carda. It's purchase price is \$600, moving to KD with a price of about \$700 and finish with the highest purchase price which is \$1200 and comes from Sebu.

If we analyse the facts I mentioned above we can calculate the expected total costs for initial 2-year period. Carda has the highest total cost which is \$1900, so it would be cheaper buying the other two, which both have a total price of \$1,800.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

This is a well-organised response to the task which displays internal coherence. All content points are covered. The register is more informal than might generally be considered appropriate, but is used consistently. There are errors but these are generally non-impeding.

Band 3

CANDIDATE D

The upper is the comparison of the costs of 3 different photocopiers, including the purchase price, warranty costs and expected running costs for initial 2-year. From that, we can see Carda gets the highest expected total costs of \$1,900. The others, KD and Sebu are likely the same reaching \$1,800.

The reason why Carda is the most expensive is due to its running costs, which covers more than 60 percent in the expected total cost. While KD and Sebu cost lower than that, no more than \$1,000. In which Sebu's cost in running cost is only \$800 around. But Sebu's buying cost the highest over \$1,000. At the same time, Carda costs only \$600, KD \$700 or so. As to the cost of a warranty on them, KD is more than \$200, Carda \$120 and Sebu less than \$100.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Inadequate attempt at the task set due mainly to the low level of language. Errors sometimes obscure communication *'the upper', 'in which Sebu's cost in running cost is only \$800'*. However, the major content points are addressed and the writing has reasonable organisation.

Band 2

QUESTION 2

CANDIDATE E

Report on the introduction of new practices.

The report sets out to describe the most attractive features of the Olive Garden chain restaurants Staff Management policies and to suggest introduction of several items into the restaurant department of the Hinton Firs hotel. The presented information has been obtained during the Assistant Manager's visit to the former company.

It was found that one of the American chain restaurants is exposed to an exceptionally innovative management that has recently developed a new policy in order to maintain high standards in all aspects of the service provided to their guests.

It seems that two of its recently introduced practices may be well borrowed and implemented in our business.

Firstly, all the waiting staff are exposed to a check-up before starting their lunch and dinner shifts so as to ensure maintenance of hygiene and compliance with the company's dress code.

Secondly, the evening briefings conducted on a regular basis in order to inform the staff about the basic changes in the menu and wine supplies have proved effective, and therefore could be applied in our restaurant department as well.

It is clear that a successful introduction of the two procedures is sure to reflect on the quality of such service in issues of the waiting staff's better awareness and an improvement in the hotel's image.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Good organisation and realisation of the task set; all content points are included. Natural use of language with a wide range of vocabulary and reasonably accurate use of structure and cohesive devices.

Band 4

CANDIDATE F

The purpose of this report is to establish which practices should we accept in our company from company "Johnson". The company Johnson is well respected company in Europe. They owe their success to innovation and team work. This is a well organised company with 300 employees. All their employees know what is expected from them. The company is divided into departments; Production, finances, marketing and sales.

They have strict behavior rules which includes non smoking and clothing policies. In spite of these strict rules there is an open-level management. Every two weeks the main director receives employees that come with new ideas and they are rewarded if the idea is accepted. Johnson has also a complain service in which personnel can come to express their dissatisfaction.

In our company I would strongly suggest that we also adopt open-level management where we could widen our perspectives and get new ideas.

I also recommend a complain service center where we could find out how to motivate our staff.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Inadequate attempt at the task set. All content points addressed but not always adequately dealt with. Errors (particularly of spelling) are numerous and sometimes obscure communication.

Band 2

QUESTION 3

CANDIDATE G

Dear Mr Jones

My name is Svenja Pietzonka, I am an employee of a company Ardo, where you were employed. I have been given this unpleasant job of contacting you and explaining why you have been replaced. Another reason for writing you is to inform you that I will take over your responsibility and to ask for your help.

The reasons for your replacement are, as you can assume, that you didn't know our products well enough. You obviously didn't quite understand which are the features of our products that attract potential customers and what our marketing strategies are. This led to the lack of ideas that you had. We know that you introduced a few ideas, but we think you would agree that none was satisfactory. We hope that you understand why we decided so.

We confess that your failure to succeed is also our fault. We should have introduced you to our products better and we should have let you know what the objectives of our company are and which market strategies we use to achieve them. Taking all these factors into account, we agreed that we should pay you the work you have done.

I would like to ask you if you could brief me on the current situation. You probably know that it is extremely hard to start a project when someone was working on it before you, so I honestly hope that you will be prepared to assist me with your help.

I am looking forward hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely
Svenja Pietzonka

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Good achievement of the task set, mainly due to tone and content, which would have the desired impact on the target reader. However, there are some non-impeding errors and an occasional awkwardness in expression.

Band 4

CANDIDATE H

Dear sir,

Thank you for the work you have done to organise an exhibition. Most things are kept in order in the initial stage of the whole process and your job is confirmed and phrased by our boss to some extent. However, there still remains some shortcomings. As is known to all, you are a very excellent consultant in many respects. You have lots of experience in advising. But that it is based on outside conditions does not fit us very much. The policies, the strategies seem a bit different from what we own. And that causes some barriers among our people. So with the development of the process, the organising work may not be well done. To avoid such shortcomings, we may appreciate someone with local experience in the next stage of the process. Probably he will be helpful to the co-operative work, and accepted by the inside ones. He may not be as creative as you but somehow suits the situation now.

We will pay you according to your creative work and helpful advice and you will be thanked for your favour in our company.

As I will take your place and hopefully I intend to get some help from you. If you could brief the work on the current situation, I shall be very grateful. Thank you very much again.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Regards.

Jessica Choi
Company Adviser

EXAMINER COMMENTS

All content points are included. Reasonable register and format. However, an ambitious attempt at language results in frequent impeding errors and lack of clarity.

Band 2

QUESTION 4

CANDIDATE I

Purpose

As requested, the purpose of this proposal is to describe and analyse the possible use of technology in the Marketing Department.

Current use of technology

Up to now the members of our department have taken advantage of technological equipment i.e. computers, in order to launch our products most successfully. Not only have we arranged promotional and advertising campaigns but we have also conducted market research via the internet so as to meet our consumers growing demands.

Technological Improvements

In our work we have used computer software and hardware which has already become obsolete and urgently needs modernisation. Therefore, the purchase of up-to-date programmes and equipment is of prime importance.

Benefits

There is no denying that these improvements will bring vast profits to the company. Our team will be able to work faster, more effectively and make greater use of technological innovations. Moreover, our company will be more likely to easily overcome fierce competition in the market.

Training

It seems obvious that our staff does not possess the knowledge of how to use new software. Thus, training on the use of modern programmes would be recommended as necessary.

Conclusion

To sum up, it seems obvious that the introduction of new technology into the Marketing Department will enable the company to gain huge profits. Our position in the market will be strengthened.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Very good realisation of the task with good use of structure and vocabulary. Well-organised and cohesive with natural use of language.

Band 5

CANDIDATE J

The purpose of the proposal is to explain why our Design Department need to improve technology in our department regarding the introduction of more portable PCs and laser printers, and recommend some necessary training.

As designers in Design Department, it is our routine job to design our product consistent with the requirement of our clients. With the expanding of our company, we receive more orders. Most of our equipment, fax machines, color boards, etc. perform less help to us with our heavy workload. Our efficiency was affected.

There is therefore an urgent need for us to buy some more computers. Because, so many things can be done by computers, you can choose colors, textile types, etc on them. And it is amazing to see the whole process on computer. Furthermore it is faster and quality is improved too.

We usually attend some seminars or shows abroad. And we feel it is very inconvenient to take many design papers, and documents with us, and sometimes they are in a mess. So I think we should buy some portable computers for our designers, if possible.

Besides that, it is paramount for us to get the latest information from all over the world. We could get them through internet with our portable computers anywhere, any time.

As our routine work has little connection with computers and internet, most of us can't use them freely. So it is necessary for us to bring in some training courses of computers and internet.

EXAMINER COMMENTS

Reasonable achievement of task set. All content points are included and the organisation is satisfactory. However, an ambitious attempt at the task results in errors of structure and vocabulary, although these are mainly non-impeding.

Band 3

TEST OF LISTENING

Time: approx. 40 minutes including 10 minutes' transfer time

| PART | Main Skill Focus | Input | Response | Number of Questions |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Listening for and noting specific information | Informational monologue | Gap-filling requiring limited written responses (i.e. no more than 3 words) | 12 |
| 2 | Listening to identify topic, context, function speaker's opinion, etc. | 5 short monologues linked by theme or topic, from 5 different speakers | Multiple matching | 10 |
| 3 | Listening for gist, specific information, attitudes, etc. | Conversation/interview/discussion between 2 or more people | 3-option multiple choice | 8 |

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

Part One

This is a sentence-completion, gap-filling or note-taking task. The candidate has to supply only the key words of the answer, which will not be more than three words per item.

The spoken text lasts about two to three minutes and is a monologue (or a single long turn by more than one speaker). The text is heard twice. It is informational and focuses on a series of identifiable facts. Topics might involve instructions, changes in arrangements or instructions, the programme for an event or meeting of some kind or details of the organisation of an event. The setting for the task could be someone giving information over the telephone, or a speaker addressing a roomful of delegates at a conference or people on a training course.

Listening tasks may be based on recorded material taken from authentic sources or more usually on scripted material. There are twelve items, which are distributed evenly throughout the text, so that candidates have time to record their answers. Answers to items may be numbers or amounts of money, but these will not involve the candidate in any calculations. Items of information are tested in the same order in which the information occurs in the text. Correct spelling of the words in the answer is expected.

Part Two

This is a matching task based on five short extracts linked by theme or topic and spoken by five different speakers, in monologue form. The texts last a total of approximately three to four minutes.

There are two tasks for each of the five extracts. These tasks relate to the content and purpose of the extracts, and candidates are asked to do any combination of the following: identify speakers, interpret context, recognise the

function of what is said, identify the topic, understand specific information, identify a speaker's opinion or feelings.

The series of extracts is heard twice, and candidates must attempt both tasks during this time. It is for the candidates to decide whether they choose to do the first task the first time they listen to the text, and the second task the second time, or whether to deal with the two tasks for each extract together. For each task, they have a list of eight options to choose from.

Materials for this task are scripted, and relate to a business topic or situation.

Part Three

This task consists of a dialogue, usually with two or more speakers. There are eight items, which are three-option multiple choice. The task relates to a topic of interest or concern in the world of work. The text is heard twice.

Preparing for the Listening Paper

All listening practice should be helpful for students, whether authentic or specially prepared. In particular, discussion should focus on:

- the purpose of speeches and conversations or discussions
- the roles of speakers
- the opinions expressed
- the language functions employed
- relevant aspects of phonology such as stress, linking and weak forms, etc.

In addition, students should be encouraged to appreciate the differing demands of each task type. It will be helpful not only to practise the task types in order to develop a sense of familiarity and confidence, but also to discuss how the three

task types relate to real life skills and situations.

- The first is note-taking (and therefore productive), and students should reflect on the various situations in which they take notes from a spoken input. They should also be encouraged to try to predict the kinds of words or numbers that might go in the gaps.
- The second is a matching (with discrimination) exercise, featuring differing styles and registers.
- The third involves the correct interpretation of spoken input, with correct answers often being delivered by more than one speaker.

In all three tasks, successful listening depends on correct reading, and students should be encouraged to make full use of the pauses during the test to check the written input.

PART ONE
Questions 1 – 12

- You will hear the introduction to a seminar, called the Business Master Class, about the use of Information Technology in the workplace.
- As you listen, for questions 1 – 12, complete the notes, using up to three words or a number.
- You will hear the recording twice.

THE BUSINESS MASTER CLASS

SEMINAR NOTES
Arrangements for participants

- The event will take place over
 - Seminar organised by
 - The title of the last session will be
 - To use the New City Hotel car park, delegates must obtain a
- Dr Sangalli**
- Dr Sangalli has advised many
 - The name of his consultancy is
 - He is the author of
 - In Europe, he is the best-known

The Business Master Class

Two problems for companies:

- to become more
 - to establish new
- Two outcomes of session:
- design your own
 - take away documents containing actual

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PART TWO
Questions 13 – 22

- You will hear five different business people talking about trips they have recently been on.
- For each extract there are two tasks. For Task One, choose the purpose of each trip from the list A – H. For Task Two, choose the problem described from the list A – H.
- You will hear the recording twice.

TASK ONE – PURPOSE

- For questions 13 – 17, match the extracts with the purposes, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the purpose stated.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|--------------------------------|
| 13 | ..... | A | to supervise staff training |
| 14 | ..... | B | to hold job interviews |
| 15 | ..... | C | to introduce new policy |
| 16 | ..... | D | to visit possible new premises |
| 17 | ..... | E | to observe working practices |
| | | F | to meet a new manager |
| | | G | to sign a new contract |
| | | H | to deal with a complaint |

TASK TWO – PROBLEM

- For questions 18 – 22, match the extracts with the problems, listed A – H.
- For each extract, choose the problem described.
- Write one letter (A – H) next to the number of the extract.

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 18 | ..... | A | I forgot a document. |
| 19 | ..... | B | My hotel was noisy. |
| 20 | ..... | C | I was late for a meeting. |
| 21 | ..... | D | I didn't understand some figures. |
| 22 | ..... | E | The service at my hotel was bad. |
| | | F | I had some wrong information. |
| | | G | I didn't have an interpreter. |
| | | H | I experienced computer problems. |

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Turn Over ▶

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PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30

- You will hear part of a conversation between a management consultant and the Human Resources Manager of Jenkins, a company which manufactures children's clothing.
- For each question **23 – 30**, mark one letter **A**, **B** or **C** for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 What is said about the ownership of Jenkins?

- A** The founder has sold the company to someone else.
- B** Jenkins has merged with another company.
- C** There has been no change of ownership.

24 What does the Human Resources Manager see as the main external threat to Jenkins?

- A** Their retailers are becoming less willing to pay their prices.
- B** Consumers are buying more top-of-the-range children's clothes.
- C** More and more companies are producing children's clothes.

25 The Human Resources Manager sees the company's main strength as the fact that

- A** it has several long-term contracts.
- B** it makes products of high quality.
- C** its distribution system is efficient.

26 The Human Resources Manager believes that Jenkins's main weakness at present is that

- A** the machinery is inadequate for current requirements.
- B** the management style is out of line with modern demands.
- C** the relations between management and workers are poor.

27 According to the Human Resources Manager, why do many machinists choose to leave?

- A** They think that they can get better paid work elsewhere.
- B** They feel that too much is expected of them.
- C** They lack confidence in the company's future.

28 When working to produce a batch of clothes

- A** each team is responsible for a particular operation.
- B** each member of the team produces a complete item.
- C** each person carries out one part of the production process.

29 What change has been made to the range of goods?

- A** A smaller number of different items is produced.
- B** Each item is now made in smaller quantities.
- C** Fewer new styles are introduced each year.

30 What is said about the machinists?

- A** More of their work is falling below the required standard.
- B** Some of them are earning less than they used to.
- C** They have to spend longer learning to operate new machines.

You now have ten minutes to transfer your answers to your Answer Sheet.

LISTENING ANSWER KEY

Part One

- 1 THREE DAYS
- 2 GLOBAL CONFERENCES PLC
- 3 TOMORROW'S SOFTWARE/
TOMORROWS SOFTWARE
- 4 PERMIT
- 5 LARGE CORPORATIONS
- 6 LOGIC SOLUTIONS
- 7 INTELLIGENT CHANGE
- 8 IT ANALYST
- 9 CUSTOMER(-)DRIVEN
- 10 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES/
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES
- 11 FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
- 12 (REAL-LIFE) CASE STUDIES

Part Two

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

Part Three

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

TAPESCRIPT

PART ONE. QUESTIONS 1 to 12.

F: Good morning everyone and welcome. Thanks for coming. My name is Jane Watson and I look forward to meeting you all personally. Some of you are here just for today, others, I know, will be attending for all three days. I'm just going to say a few words on behalf of my company who have organised this event, Global Conferences plc. As you know today's seminar is The Business Master Class to be conducted by our distinguished guest who I will introduce in a moment. But first a few quick points of organisation which perhaps you'd like to note. All the sessions will take place in this hotel except for the last session on Tomorrow's Software, which will be at the New City Hotel. We will meet there at 2pm and this will give us a chance to see in action some of the things we have been discussing. A map with directions to the New City Hotel is available from me if you wish to make your own way. Alternatively there will be a bus going there at 1.30pm. There is limited car parking at the New City Hotel so if you wish to drive there you will need a permit. You can get one from the conference office.

Now to the reason we are all here. We are very fortunate to have a seminar today led by Dr Martin Sangalli, one of the most prominent and well-respected commentators in the world business community. He has been asked to advise many large corporations. He is a specialist in the strategic use of information technology in banking, pharmaceuticals and retail. He has his own company called Logic Solutions which consults with some of the biggest names in the world of

business. He is also an adviser to Intertel and a non-executive director of Global Conferences.

Thousands of business and technology managers have benefited from reading his best-selling book, Intelligent Change. Always inspiring and thought-provoking, his ideas have helped hundreds of organisations to gain a glimpse of the future. He is Europe's most famous IT Analyst. Dr Sangalli – welcome.

M: Thank you Jane for that flattering introduction. I hope I can live up to it. So to begin. There are two main difficulties facing all corporations today. Firstly, how to make themselves more customer-driven. Secondly, and as a result of that, is the question of how to go about the major task of developing and implementing new organisational structures. This is a senior management session and is designed to provide you with two things. I hope that by the end of the session you will be equipped to design your own framework for action. To help you do this you will also be able to take away documentation of real-life case studies that I have been involved in. So, if you would like to look at the screen...

PART TWO. QUESTIONS 13 TO 22.

M: Of course, I was looking forward to it. I mean, it meant seeing the results of quite a lengthy process to find the right person, which I myself had invested quite a lot of time in. It's a demanding post, with a lot of responsibility. I think the potential we thought we'd spotted is being realised, and that she's going to deliver the sort of new initiatives we hoped for. She's already got the team adapting to her approach. But I did feel a bit stupid in the meeting,

sitting there without the right figures. I just can't believe I didn't pick up the chart. I could still see it, sitting on my desk.

F: Well, the whole thing was a serious challenge, and if I'm honest I didn't really feel up to it in the first place. It wasn't a good time to be going away from the office, and I certainly didn't feel happy, being asked to present pretty different ideas at this stage of the game. I completely understand that the last thing they wanted was to have someone dropping in from above, as it were, and saying, oh, well, we've decided to change the rules, etcetera. They'd been applying the system as it was in good faith. And then I was just so tired. What with the wedding celebration going on in the hotel, I definitely didn't get enough rest, and that left me disorientated and so I under performed.

M: I wasn't happy to be going out there when there was so much that had to be dealt with, just left there on my desk. My secretary's extremely good, but she can't do the impossible, obviously. But it was clearly crucial to get some kind of idea of what it looked like, whether we were on to the right kind of thing. Getting the right location and space is vital. I'm more or less convinced that this is right for what we want. It will attract customers. The trouble is, I had out-of-date architect's plans with me, so I kept getting confused about the dimensions. But the hotel staff were really helpful when we were trying to get the up-to-date stuff faxed through.

F: It's the first time I've been over there since we decided to go ahead with the expansion and I must say I was impressed with the number of really good candidates there were. It really is a good region, in terms of being able to attract and recruit the right people and I'm confident we chose the right people. I wish the same thing was true for the other branches. What I just can't believe is that I managed to set such a bad example by arriving a whole hour after we should have started. I felt like a real fool, going on about heavy traffic, when I'd never accept that kind of excuse myself!

M: They said it was all different, and they certainly weren't wrong! I could hardly believe some of it! It's definitely eye-opening to see what policy can mean in reality. But the way they're applying it, I mean the actual techniques, really is impressive. I didn't say anything, of course, just took my notes, and I will be drawing up my report as soon as I can. I'll definitely be recommending that some of their ways of going about things get applied in the other branches. It was confusing at the same time, I have to admit. They were showing me all these graphs, different models of analysis, and I couldn't really follow that way of presenting the data. And then that guy's accent! Great hotel, though.

PART THREE. QUESTIONS 23 TO 30.

F: Good morning, nice to meet you. Do sit down.

M: Thank you.

F: Now you're Human Resources Manager of Jenkins, aren't you? Give me some background on the company – so I get a general picture.

M: Stephen Jenkins founded the company nearly thirty years ago, and named it after himself, and he ran it for a long time. Last year one of our competitors proposed combining, with the idea that separately the two companies were too small to survive. They were probably right, but anyway Stephen turned down the offer. Then, because he was getting on, he handed over the day-to-day running to his daughter, Catherine, while retaining full control himself.

F: And you make children's clothes, don't you? Aren't there problems in the sector?

M: Well, we mostly sell to retail chains, which sell them under their own brand labels. Things aren't as easy as they were, what with cheap imports, and the more expensive children's boutiques making inroads at the top end of the market. But we position ourselves in the middle range, so we're not too badly affected. We're under increasing pressure to cut our profit margins, though, because of growing competition between high street retailers.

F: What would you say is the company's strength?

M: It certainly helps that we supply those large retailers I mentioned, and in fact some of them have been customers for years. I suppose, though, that we wouldn't have survived this long if it wasn't that we don't send anything out unless it meets very exacting standards. Our customers appreciate that, plus the fact that we aim to keep the time from order to delivery very short, and they're prepared to pay a premium for it.

F: What about weaknesses?

M: Well, we've got a poor record in providing training on the machines we're currently using. And I have to say that Stephen used to run the company in a very old-fashioned, autocratic way, which alienated a lot of the workers. Despite Catherine's more enlightened approach, it's an uphill struggle to try to change attitudes and improve co-operation.

F: Never an easy task!

M: No.

F: You mentioned on the phone that there's a problem with a particular group of workers.

M: Yes, there's very high turnover among the machinists, that's the people who actually make the clothes. They say they're faced with unreasonable demands all the time, like having to learn to operate several machines instead of just one or two. Many of them think they could get an easier job for the money, because there are plenty of other jobs on offer locally. The reasonably healthy state of our order books gives them a certain amount of job

security, but they just don't seem to care.

F: How's their work organised?

M: We've changed to a 'sectionalised flow' approach, which means the machinists work in teams. Rather than each machinist being assigned a complete item of clothing, the work is divided into batches involving various operations, each of them undertaken by one machinist. As that person finishes, the work is passed on to the machinist responsible for the next stage.

F: Has that had any impact on what you produce?

M: Yes, it's enabled Catherine to introduce a policy of rapid diversification of the product range, so the number of itemised clothes has leapt. That's the total number of different styles, in all the different sizes. And that's reduced batch sizes: long runs on an item are a thing of the past. At least half the styles used to be carried through from one year to the next, but now only a quarter are, so as you can see, it's had quite an impact on the rate of change.

F: What's the effect on the machinists?

M: That policy was part of a raft of changes, one of which is that the machinists are now paid on a piecework basis, rather than at an hourly rate. They're furious about that, though to be fair, the rate that's paid for learning to use a new machine has been calculated so as to make sure that no-one loses out in the short term. And they're also aggrieved because so much is new, and far more batches of work fail quality inspections and have to be redone.

F: Now tell me something about training...

TEST OF SPEAKING

Time: 16 minutes

| PART | Format/Content | Time | Interaction Focus |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate.</p> <p>Giving personal information and expressing opinions.</p> | About 3 minutes | The interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves and to express personal opinions. |
| 2 | <p>A 'mini-presentation' by each candidate on a business theme.</p> <p>Organising a larger unit of discourse. Giving information and expressing and justifying opinions.</p> | About 6 minutes | The candidates are given prompts which generate a short talk on a business-related topic. |
| 3 | <p>Two-way conversation between candidates followed by further prompting from the interlocutor.</p> <p>Expressing and justifying opinions, speculating, comparing and contrasting, agreeing and disagreeing, etc.</p> | About 7 minutes | The candidates are presented with a discussion on a business-related topic. The interlocutor extends the discussion with prompts on related topics. |

A DETAILED LOOK AT THE TASKS

Part One

For this part of the test, the interlocutor asks the candidates questions on a number of personal or work-related subjects.

Part Two

In this part, each candidate's task is to choose one topic from a set of three, and to talk about it for one minute. Candidates have one minute in which to prepare, and should use this time to make brief notes. While one candidate speaks, the other listens, and then asks a question at the end of the talk. Candidates may make notes while listening to their partner. Each candidate is given a different set of three tasks from which to choose.

It is wise to structure the one-minute talk, with an introduction and conclusion (however brief these must, of necessity, be), and to make the structure explicit when giving the talk, in order to show some evidence of planning. Candidates should approach the task as if giving a presentation in a business environment.

Examples of topic areas include: advertising, career planning, communications, customer relations, finance, health and safety, management (personnel, production, transport, etc.), marketing, recruitment, sales, technology, training and travel.

Part Three

This is a two-way collaborative task based on a prompt which is given to both candidates. The prompt consists of several sentences presenting a business-related situation followed by two discussion points. Candidates are given time to read the prompt and then discuss the situation together.

Candidates need to approach the task as a simulation, imagining themselves in a work environment, faced with a real situation to discuss, and on which they should try to reach decisions. The opinions they express, however, will be their own, as they are not required (as in some kinds of role play) to assume particular attitudes or opinions.

Preparing for the Speaking Paper

Candidates should be made familiar with the seating arrangements and paired assessment procedures that the Speaking test employs. Any speaking practice should be of benefit, in particular paired and small group work.

- Activities designed to develop fluency will be of considerable benefit, as the students need to demonstrate as wide a range of language as possible within the time limits of the test.
- It should be noted that the test is designed to minimise the possibility of attempts to use rehearsed speech, and that examiners will quickly identify it.

- For Part Two, candidates need to develop the ability to prepare effectively for their 'long turn'. They should be given help in building up a range of discourse features to make their speech both coherent and cohesive. It is also important for them to listen to each other's talks, and be ready to ask relevant questions.
- For Part Three, candidates will benefit from practice in simulations where they are placed in a work environment and required to collaborate whilst discussing and deciding issues. They should be helped to build up a range of resources for turn-taking and the general negotiating of ideas and opinions.

Task Sheet 2

A: Advertising: how to advertise a new product effectively

B: Staff management: the importance of assessing staff performance effectively

C: Product Development: the factors involved in deciding when to withdraw a product from the market

BEC Higher—PART TWO

Task Sheet 1

A: Time management: the importance of punctuality in all aspects of work

B: Recruitment: how to ensure that job advertisements attract appropriate applicants

C: Customer relations: how to set up an effective customer services system

BEC Higher—PART TWO

Staff Relocation

Your company needs to relocate several members of staff to a new branch opening in another part of the country. You have been asked to submit ideas on how to make relocation attractive for staff.

Discuss, and decide together:

- which types of financial incentives the company could offer to staff
- what information staff would need to know about the new location

BEC Higher – PART THREE

ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING

Candidates are assessed on their own performance and not in relation to each other, according to the following analytical criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. These criteria are interpreted at Higher level. Assessment is based on performance in the whole test and is not related to particular parts of the test.

Both examiners assess the candidates. The Assessor applies detailed, analytical scales, and the Interlocutor applies a Global Achievement Scale which is based on the analytical scales.

Grammar and Vocabulary

This refers to range and accuracy as well as the appropriate use of grammatical and lexical forms. At BEC Higher level a range of grammar and vocabulary is needed to deal with the tasks. At this level grammar is mainly accurate and vocabulary is used effectively.

Discourse Management

This refers to the coherence, extent and relevance of each candidate's individual performance. Contributions should be adequate to deal with the BEC Higher level tasks. Candidates should produce utterances which are appropriate in length.

Pronunciation

This refers to the candidates' ability to produce comprehensible utterances. At BEC Higher level, meanings are conveyed through the appropriate use of stress, rhythm, intonation and clear individual sounds, although there may be occasional difficulty for the listener.

Interactive Communication

This refers to the candidate's ability to take an active part in the development of the discourse. At BEC Higher level, candidates should be sensitive to turn-taking throughout most of the test and hesitation should not demand patience of the listener.