

Exam Information: Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Specifications | Guide for Teachers | Regulations

These qualifications in English for speakers of other languages are mapped to Levels A1 to C2 in the Common European Framework of Reference

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Initial stage

Grades 1–3 (CEFR level A1–A2.1)

Introduction to the Initial stage

Candidate profile

By the end of the Initial stage, the candidate can:

- ▷ understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly in simple everyday conversation with support
- ▷ communicate in basic and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters
- ▷ use basic sentence patterns and communicate through simple phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places and possessions
- ▷ ask and answer simple questions about personal information and everyday life.

This profile is based on the level Basic User, A2, in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Exam format

The exam at each grade consists of the following:

- ▷ greetings and setting at ease
- ▷ conversation
- ▷ end of conversation and leave-taking.

Exam procedure

- ▷ The examiner begins by greeting the candidate and trying to set him or her at ease.
- ▷ The conversation is then initiated by the examiner who gives the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate both through speech and actions the range of language required at this stage.
- ▷ During the conversation, the candidate is required to display understanding through gesture and simple actions, such as moving around the room or pointing to specific objects, and by giving short responses using the language of the grade.
- ▷ At Grades 2 and 3, the candidate asks the examiner at least one simple question during the exam.
- ▷ Examiners select their own materials appropriate to the age and maturity of the candidate. These could include everyday objects and pictures which can be used to engage the candidate's interest, elicit the language of the grade and encourage the conversation to develop. The examiner may also refer to the immediate surroundings of the exam room, school or centre.
- ▷ The examiner brings the conversation to an end by thanking the candidate and saying goodbye. The candidate is expected to say goodbye.

Videos of sample exams at the Initial stage can be found on the Trinity website.

Guidance

- ▷ At the Initial stage, questions and answers play an important part in the conversation, but the examiner aims to enable the candidate to participate in a genuine two-way exchange within the linguistic limits set.
- ▷ The examiner will speak slowly and clearly throughout and will allow the candidate time to process what is heard and formulate a response.
- ▷ The examiner will provide support in the form of repetition and rephrasing.
- ▷ Candidates should ask for repetition of anything they have not heard clearly or understood. Simple phrases such as '*Can you repeat that, please?*' or '*Sorry?*' are ideal for this purpose. However, overuse of such phrases will be taken as an indication that the candidate is having persistent difficulty understanding the examiner and this will affect the assessment.

Initial stage

- ☞ Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to use the communicative skills, language functions and language items listed for the grade (and for the previous grades where applicable). Therefore, those responsible for preparing candidates for the exam should ensure that the candidates are completely familiar with the language items, understand their meaning and can use them accurately and appropriately.
- ☞ At **Grade 1**, candidates are expected to answer the examiner's questions with very short, mostly one or two word responses as well as with gestures and actions.
- ☞ At **Grade 2**, it is acceptable for candidates to answer the examiner's questions with a few words, very short responses or full sentences. Candidates are expected to provide simple descriptions of people and objects using basic phrases and sentences. In the exam, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one very simple question about personal details.
- ☞ At **Grade 3**, candidates are expected to link groups of words with simple connectors, eg '*My brother's tall and he's got black hair*'. In the exam, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one simple question about everyday life.

Assessment

At the Initial stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D. These levels can be classified as follows:

- ☞ A – Distinction (reflects an excellent performance)
- ☞ B – Merit (reflects a good performance)
- ☞ C – Pass (reflects a satisfactory performance)
- ☞ D – Fail (reflects an unsatisfactory performance).

The examiner completes an individual exam report form immediately after the exam. The exam report form provides an indication of the result of the exam and identifies key areas for improvement.

The final result is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise) six to eight weeks after the exam. For further information about the assessment of the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, please see pages 8 and 9.

Grade 1

Exam format

Total exam time: 5 minutes

The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ▶ Conversation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes).

Candidate performance

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

Communicative skills

- ▶ Exchange greetings with the examiner
- ▶ Show understanding of simple instructions through appropriate actions
- ▶ Give very short answers to simple questions and requests for information

Language requirements

Language functions

- ☞ Exchanging greetings
- ☞ Giving personal information, eg name, age
- ☞ Identifying and naming items given in the lexical list below
- ☞ Leave-taking

Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand:

- ☞ Imperatives for common actions, eg *go, come, show, point, give, touch, stand up*
- ☞ Question words *what? how many? how old?*
- ☞ Demonstratives *this, that, these, those*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use:

- ☞ The present simple tense of the verb *to be*
- ☞ Common nouns in singular and plural (regular and irregular), eg *shoe/shoes, foot/feet*
- ☞ Simple adjectives, eg *small, tall, green*
- ☞ Determiners *a, the, my, your, his, her*
- ☞ Pronouns *I, you, he, she, it, they*

Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use vocabulary related to:

- ☞ Personal information
- ☞ Immediate surroundings including classroom objects
- ☞ Basic parts of the face and body
- ☞ Common animals (domestic, farm and wild)
- ☞ Cardinal numbers up to 20
- ☞ Colours
- ☞ Everyday items of clothing
- ☞ Words relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ☞ The correct pronunciation of common words relevant to the lexical areas listed above

Grade 2

CEFR level A1

Exam format

Total exam time: 6 minutes

The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ↳ Conversation with the examiner (up to 6 minutes).

Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

Communicative skills

- ↳ Understand short, simple questions, requests and statements
- ↳ Respond with appropriate actions and positive and negative short form answers
- ↳ Contribute to the conversation using memorised phrases and short statements
- ↳ Use a basic range of words and simple phrases related to personal details and situations
- ↳ Ask for very basic personal information, eg about possessions

Language requirements

Language functions

- ☞ Indicating the position of people and objects
- ☞ Describing people, animals, objects and places very simply
- ☞ Stating simple facts
- ☞ Informing about possessions
- ☞ Asking very simple questions about personal details

Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand:

- ☞ Present simple tense questions
- ☞ Question words *who? when?*
- ☞ Present continuous tense questions
- ☞ Determiners *some, any*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use:

- ☞ Present simple tense
- ☞ *There is/are and has/have got/have you got? Do you have?*
- ☞ Question words *where? how?*
- ☞ Prepositions of place *in, on, under, between, next to*
- ☞ Determiners *their, its*
- ☞ Possessive pronouns *mine, yours, his, hers*
- ☞ Yes/no answers to present continuous tense questions

Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use vocabulary related to:

- ☞ Rooms in the home
- ☞ Household objects
- ☞ Family and friends
- ☞ Pets
- ☞ Possessions
- ☞ Days of the week and months of the year
- ☞ Cardinal numbers up to 50
- ☞ Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ☞ The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
- ☞ Basic intonation patterns for simple questions
- ☞ Contractions, eg *I've, I'm, he's*

Grade 2 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level A1.

Grade 3

CEFR level A2.1

Exam format

Total exam time: 7 minutes

The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ▶ Conversation with the examiner (up to 7 minutes).

Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grades, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

Communicative skills

- ▶ Show understanding by responding appropriately to simple questions and requests
- ▶ Use basic sentence patterns and phrases to communicate limited information related to simple everyday situations
- ▶ Exchange basic information about everyday life and activities by asking and answering simple questions
- ▶ Link groups of words in a very simple way using *and*, *and then*

Language requirements

Language functions

- ☞ Describing daily routines and times
- ☞ Giving dates
- ☞ Expressing ability and inability
- ☞ Giving very simple directions and locations
- ☞ Describing current activities of real people or those in pictures
- ☞ Describing states in the past
- ☞ Asking simple questions about everyday life

Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use:

- ☞ Present continuous tense
- ☞ *Can* and *can't*
- ☞ Prepositions of movement *from, to, up, down, along, across*
- ☞ Prepositions of time *on, in, at*
- ☞ Prepositions of place *near, in front of, behind, opposite*
- ☞ Past tense of the verb *to be*
- ☞ Link words *and, and then*

Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to understand and use vocabulary related to:

- ☞ Jobs
- ☞ Places in the local area
- ☞ Place of study
- ☞ Home life
- ☞ Weather
- ☞ Free time
- ☞ Times and dates
- ☞ Ordinal numbers up to 31st for dates
- ☞ Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ☞ The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
- ☞ The use of contractions where appropriate
- ☞ Basic stress and intonation patterns for words, short sentences and simple questions

Grade 3 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level A2.1.

Grade 4

CEFR level A2.2

Exam format

Total exam time: 10 minutes

The exam consists of two assessed phases:

- ▷ Discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- ▷ Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes).

Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grades, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- ▷ Give information about the prepared topic in a series of limited long turns about the four discussion points on the topic form
- ▷ Answer questions on the prepared topic and participate in informal discussion, during which the examiner might request more information, facts or details
- ▷ Ask the examiner at least one question about the topic area
- ▷ Take the opportunity provided to include samples of the language functions and language items listed opposite, where appropriate

In the Conversation phase

- ▷ Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately to questions
- ▷ Make appropriate contributions with short statements
- ▷ Communicate limited information in simple and direct exchanges

Language requirements

Language functions

- ☞ Talking about past events
- ☞ Talking about future plans and intentions
- ☞ Expressing simple comparisons
- ☞ Expressing likes and dislikes
- ☞ Describing manner and frequency

Grammar

- ☞ Past simple tense of regular and common irregular verbs
- ☞ *Going to* future
- ☞ *Like* + gerund/infinitive, eg *I like shopping, I like to read books*
- ☞ Adverbs of manner and frequency
- ☞ Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives
- ☞ Link word *but*

Lexis

- ☞ Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- ☞ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- ☞ Adverbs of frequency, eg *sometimes, often, never*
- ☞ Adverbial phrases of frequency, eg *every day, once a week*
- ☞ Expressions of past time, eg *yesterday, last night*
- ☞ Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ☞ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- ☞ Appropriate weak forms and intonation in connected speech
- ☞ Three different ways of pronouncing 'ed' past tense endings, eg *played, walked, wanted*
- ☞ Avoidance of speech patterns of recitation

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

Two subject areas will be selected by the examiner from the list below.

- ☞ Holidays
- ☞ Shopping
- ☞ School and work
- ☞ Hobbies and sports
- ☞ Food
- ☞ Weekend and seasonal activities

Please note, Grade 4 candidates should not select their topic from the list of subject areas above (see guidance notes on page 21).

Grade 4 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level A2.2.