TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Specifications from January 2026

Exam Information

Speaking & Listening



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ALTE Q209

Quality audited by the Association of Language Testers in Europe

Charity number England & Wales: 1014792 | **Charity number Scotland:** SC049143
Patron: HRH The Duke of Kent KG | **trinitycollege.com**

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Online edition, October 2025

Foreword

Welcome to the qualification specifications for Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English for speakers of other languages. It is a working document that is widely used in the classroom as well as in the exam.

Guidance for teachers is provided in the introduction to each stage, which gives advice about preparation for the exam and how it will be conducted. Further support and sample exams can be found on our website. Please check **trinitycollege.com/GESE** to make sure you are using the current version of this document.

General introduction

About Trinity College London

Trinity College London, established in 1872, is a leading internationally recognised awarding organisation (exam board), publisher and independent education charity. We specialise in the assessment of communicative and performance skills covering music, drama, combined arts and English language.

With over 850,000 candidates a year in more than 60 countries worldwide, Trinity qualifications are specifically designed to help people progress. We inspire teachers and learners through the creation of assessments that are enjoyable to prepare for, rewarding to teach and that develop the skills needed in real life.

At the heart of Trinity's work is the belief that effective communicative and performance skills are life enhancing, know no boundaries and should be within reach of us all. We exist to promote and foster the best possible communicative and performance skills through assessment, content and training that is innovative, personal and authentic.

About Trinity's English language exams

Trinity's exams in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are organised into four suites.

These share a common philosophy, but provide different learners with the opportunity to choose a qualification that most suits their individual needs.

International ESOL exams – available worldwide:

- Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) (this booklet)
- Integrated Skills in English (ISE) exams

UK ESOL exams – available in the UK only:

- ESOL Step 1 and Step 2 exams
- ESOL Skills for Life exams

Trinity has been setting standards and testing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for over 80 years. Our qualifications are accepted by universities and employers worldwide.

About the Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Aim

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English provide a reliable and valid scheme of assessment through which learners and teachers can measure progress and development, whether for educational and vocational purposes or as a leisure activity.

Age and entry requirements

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English are intended for candidates who have learnt English as a foreign, second or additional language. Candidates must be aged five years or above at the time of the exam. There is no upper age limit.

Entry for Trinity exams constitutes acceptance of the professional judgement of the examiners. Candidates may enter at any grade without having previously taken any other Trinity exam.

Applications for exams will be accepted by Trinity on the condition that candidates are examined according to the requirements of the qualification specifications. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that they and the candidates are following the current booklet and regulations.

Candidates cannot enter for more than one grade in the same exam session. There is no restriction on candidates entering for different levels of assessment in other Trinity exam suites, or on candidates entering for exams of other awarding organisations.

Once candidates have been submitted for an exam no changes to the entries are permitted. Should an exceptional circumstance arise after this time, for example a natural disaster, health issue or bereavement, please contact your National/Area Representative or Trinity's central office. Written evidence may be required.

Examiners reserve the right not to examine candidates who are late and arrive after the end of the timetabled exam session.

If a candidate does not reach the level required to pass and wishes to resit an exam, a minimum of one month must elapse before the candidate may enter again. Regulations for exams taken for UK visa purposes are different – for more information see trinitycollege.com/SELT.

Candidate entries received after the relevant closing date cannot be guaranteed and will be subject to a surcharge. These dates can be obtained from National/Area Representatives and Trinity's central office.

Trinity Online* gives approved individuals and centres in the Trinity network worldwide direct access to their own candidate information held on Trinity's central database. It makes exam administration quicker and easier, and results can be viewed, analysed and printed out for quality assurance and reporting.

Prohibited items

Candidates are not permitted to bring unsuitable items into the exam, including:

- live animals (excluding guide dogs)
- weapons/dangerous objects, eg knives (or replicas)
- electronic devices.

* Trinity Online is available in English and in a range of languages: you can select the default language of your choice. Check availability for your location.

Framework

This series of 12 progressively graded exams is designed for speakers of languages other than English and sets realistic objectives in listening to and speaking with English speakers. The 12 grades provide a continuous measure of linguistic competence and take the learner from absolute beginner (Grade 1) to full mastery (Grade 12).

Progress is marked by:

- increasing evidence of the use of communicative skills
- greater linguistic demands categorised under functions, recommended grammar, lexis and phonology
- an increasing degree of independence which allows the candidate to initiate and take control of the interaction.

A major benefit of a graded exam system is that it provides a motivational tool with which to encourage learners to develop and progress by acknowledging small steps. All learners make progress at different rates, and a graded system ensures that at every stage of their development there is an opportunity for them to mark that progress.

There is a Graded Examination in Spoken English appropriate to all learners, whatever their level of ability in communicating in English.

Exam format

The exams take the form of a one-to-one oral assessment between the candidate and an examiner. This is available in three delivery modes: face-to-face with a visiting examiner, online in registered centres or, for Grades 1 to 4 only, online at home. The exam at each stage, and with increasing demands at each grade, replicates real-life exchanges in which the candidate and the examiner pass on information, share ideas and opinions and debate topical issues.

Examiners tailor the speaking test to a study, work or everyday life setting, based on candidate background and preference.

The four stages

The 12 Graded Examinations in Spoken English are organised in four development stages. The four stages are designed to give a framework to the teaching and learning progression, and the tasks in the different stages are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their abilities in a number of different discourse types.

- At the Initial stage (Grades 1–3) the conduct of the exam is initiated by the examiner. Grades 2 and 3 have been mapped to the first common reference level **(Basic User)** in the Common European Framework of Reference.
- At the Elementary stage (Grades 4–6) the candidate introduces a topic of their own choice. The examiner directs the discussion using the points prepared by the candidate. Then the examiner moves on to the Conversation phase, selecting two subject areas for discussion from the list provided. Exams at the Elementary stage provide a bridge from the first to the second common reference level **(Basic User** to **Independent User)** in the Common European Framework of Reference.

- At the Intermediate stage (Grades 7–9) the candidate initiates and maintains a discussion on a topic of their own choice. This is followed by the interactive task initiated by the examiner and then maintained by the candidate, and the exam ends with a conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner from the list provided. Exams at the Intermediate stage have been mapped to the second common reference level **(Independent User)** in the Common European Framework of Reference.
- At the Advanced stage (Grades 10–12) the exam begins with a formal presentation of a topic leading into a candidate-led discussion of the presentation. The candidate-controlled interactive task is followed by the listening task, and the exam ends with a conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner from one of the lists provided. Exams at the Advanced stage have been mapped to the third common reference level **(Proficient User)** in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Exam overview

Initial Grades 1–3 (5–7 minutes)	Elementary Grades 4–6 (10 minutes)	Intermediate Grades 7–9 (15 minutes)	Advanced Grades 10–12 (25 minutes)
–	–	–	Topic presentation
–	–	–	Topic discussion
–	–	Topic discussion	Interactive task
–	Topic discussion	Interactive task	Listening task
Conversation	Conversation	Conversation	Conversation

The above timings include time for the candidate to enter and leave the room and for the examiner to complete the individual exam report form.

About the phases

The Conversation phase

This is an opportunity for a realistic exchange of information, ideas and opinions.

- The Conversation phase is a meaningful and authentic exchange of information, ideas and opinions, rather than a formal 'question and answer' interview.
- From the Elementary stage onwards, the examiner selects two subject areas for discussion as provided in the information for the particular grade.
- The subject areas have been carefully selected to offer a progression from the familiar to the less familiar and from the 'concrete' to the 'abstract'.
- At each grade the candidate is expected to take more responsibility for initiating and maintaining the conversation.

- From Grade 2, the candidate is expected to ask the examiner questions. These questions should arise naturally out of the conversation and will be used to further the interaction.
- The assessment of this phase takes into account the ability of the candidate to use the communicative skills, language functions and grammatical structures appropriate to the grade.

The Topic phase

Before the exam the candidate prepares a topic of their own choice and in the exam this is used as a basis for the discussion.

- Trinity's philosophy is that candidates should be given every opportunity to demonstrate to the examiner what they **can** do in English. This includes giving them the opportunity to talk about a topic which is of personal interest to them and which they feel confident talking about.
- Candidate choice is important and in selecting their own topic candidates have a degree of autonomy and control over this phase of the exam.
- The topic provides the candidate with the opportunity to show they can link sentences together to talk about a subject at some length.
- This phase gives the candidate the opportunity to use the communicative skills, language functions and recommended grammatical structures appropriate to the grade.

The Interactive phase

An initial prompt from the examiner gives rise to an interaction controlled and maintained by the candidate.

- All the exam phases are 'interactive', but this is the phase in which the candidate's own initiating skills are of paramount importance in determining the successful outcome of the task.
- The interactive task provides the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate their ability to take control through the use of questioning techniques and language functions associated with requesting information, seeking clarification and encouraging further detail.
- At the Intermediate stage, candidates start to demonstrate their independence as users of English. This autonomy is further developed at the Advanced stage.
- The interactive task requires the candidate to initiate 'turns' in the conversation and control the direction of the interaction.
- This phase requires an authentic exchange of information and opinions, with the language functions listed at each grade arising naturally out of the task.

The Listening phase

Three short spoken passages prompt the use of high level listening skills, such as deduction, prediction and inference.

- The Listening phase is introduced at the Advanced stage only.
- The listening passages are non-specialist and do not relate to the specific subject areas provided for the Conversation phase. It is considered important at this stage to introduce an unknown element into the exam for which the candidate cannot prepare specifically in terms of language content.

- The listening task is intended to be solely a test of listening. The candidate is required to give only very brief verbal responses indicating comprehension achieved through the use of high level listening skills.
- The candidate needs to show recognition of the context, participants and register.

About the assessment

General

It is an essential characteristic of Trinity exams wherever they are conducted, that grading is carried out by a qualified Trinity examiner who is trained, standardised and monitored regularly to ensure impartiality and consistency of assessment.

In every exam, the examiner assesses the use made of the language of the particular grade and that of all preceding grades.

The outcomes for each grade assume mastery of the outcomes of the previous grades. It is therefore important when preparing candidates for a particular grade that attention is paid to the previous grades. Candidate performance is rated holistically, taking a range of features into account including lexis, grammar and pronunciation.

All phases of the exam at each stage are given equal importance in the overall assessment.

Candidate assessment

The candidate's performance in the exam is measured by means of one overall criterion, task fulfilment. This is assessed in each phase of the exam.

The assessment of each **task fulfilment** criterion is based upon the candidate demonstrating ability in the following areas:

- use of communicative skills
- use of functions
- grammatical, lexical and phonological appropriacy, range and accuracy
- fluency.

More detailed descriptions of task fulfilment are available to show how the examiner assesses all exam phases at the four stages. These **performance descriptors** can be downloaded from the Trinity website.

The examiner assesses the candidate's performance in each phase of the exam by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D. In simple terms, 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).

Reporting the assessment

Provisional results are available within two days of the exam session. Finalised results are typically issued within one or two weeks (maximum four weeks) of the exam session.

Exam report forms

The exam report form provides an indication of the result of the exam. This is not a confirmed result and candidates achieving a pass should await the arrival of the certificate before making any claims about the result of the exam.

The exam report form gives the following information:

- An assessment of the candidate's performance in each phase of the exam under the task fulfilment criterion.
- An indication of the key areas where the candidate could make improvements, if they were awarded a C or D in a given exam phase.
- An indication of the overall result of the exam stated simply as Pass or Fail.

Centres who wish to find out the level of pass may use the **GESE Conversion tables** provided on the Trinity website.

Sample exam report forms can also be found on the Trinity website.

Certificates

After the overall result has been calculated and checked, a certificate is generated if the candidate has achieved a pass level. The certificate states the level of pass as follows:

- **Pass with Distinction**
- **Pass with Merit**
- **Pass**

Certificates for successful candidates are usually sent to exam centres for distribution within four weeks after the completion of the GESE exam session. Certificates for GESE exams taken at UK Secure English Language Test (SELT) centres are usually sent within seven days of the exam.

Your centre can advise whether you will be issued with an e-certificate.

Replacement certificates are available, although an administration fee will be charged. All replacement certificates issued later than six months after the date of the exam will be marked 'Duplicate'. Exact candidate details must be provided prior to a certificate being replaced. The Trinity website contains more details on how to obtain a replacement certificate.

Exam stage and grade: Detailed guide

Overview

The information about GESE is divided into the four stages, from Initial to Advanced. At the beginning of each stage there is an introduction that outlines the candidate profile expected by the end of the stage. These profiles relate to the common reference levels in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe, 2020). The introduction to each stage is followed by individual grade pages which give details of the requirements of the particular grades.

Layout

The contents of this booklet are organised as below.

Introduction to each stage

- Candidate profile – describes what the candidate can do by the end of the stage
- Exam format – outlines the content of the exam
- Exam procedure – describes the way in which the exam is conducted
- Guidance – offers advice on preparation for the exam
- Assessment – gives general information on the assessment relevant to the stage.

Individual grade pages

- Exam format – outlines the exam phases and gives timings
- Candidate performance – describes the communicative skills, language functions and language items the candidate is expected to demonstrate. For Grades 4 to 11, the subject areas for the Conversation phase are also given.

Regulations

- These give information on areas including **entry requirements**, **results and certificates, special needs** and the **appeals procedure**. In entering candidates for the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, centres agree to abide by Trinity's regulations and, therefore, they must ensure that they and the candidates are completely familiar with the regulations set out in this booklet.

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 A2 (Basic User) 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 setting them 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 expected at this stage.
- During the conversation, the candidate is required to display understanding through gesture and simple actions, such as pointing to specific objects, and by giving short responses using appropriate language.
- 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 and their purpose for taking the exam. These could include everyday objects and pictures which can be used to engage the candidate's interest, elicit appropriate language 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 can be found on the Trinity website.

GESE Initial stage videos ›

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.
- Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to use the communicative skills as listed for the grade and recommended language items (and for the previous grades where applicable). Those responsible for preparing candidates for the exam should ensure that candidates are completely familiar with the recommended language items so they are able to successfully demonstrate the communicative skills and language functions of the grade.
- 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. If a candidate is awarded a C or D in a given exam phase, the exam report identifies a key area for improvement.

The final result is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise). For further information about the certificates and the assessment of the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, please see About the assessment.

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 communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use – or, where appropriate, understand – the language items below.

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 items

Functions

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

Recommended grammar

The candidate can **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 can **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 can **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 candidate can pronounce 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 communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use – or, where appropriate, understand – the language items below.

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 items

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

Recommended grammar

The candidate can **understand**:

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

The candidate can **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 can **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 candidate can:

- Pronounce words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
- Use basic intonation patterns for simple questions
- Use contractions, eg *I've, I'm, he's*

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 communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

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 items

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

Recommended grammar

The candidate can **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*, *then*

Lexis

The candidate can **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 candidate can:

- Pronounce words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
- Use contractions where appropriate
- Use basic stress and intonation patterns for words, short sentences and simple questions

Elementary stage

Grades 4–6 (CEFR level A2.2–B1.2)

Introduction to the Elementary stage

Candidate profile

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

- understand the main points of clear speech on familiar matters
- enter into conversation, express personal opinions and exchange information on familiar subjects of personal interest or related to everyday life
- demonstrate a sufficient range of language to describe experiences and events and give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

This profile is based on the level B1 (Independent User) in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Exam format

The exam at each grade consists of the following:

- greetings and setting at ease
- discussion of a prepared topic
- conversation on two subject areas
- end of conversation and leave-taking.

Exam procedure

- The examiner begins by greeting the candidate, setting them at ease.
- The examiner asks the candidate to confirm what they are going to talk about. In face-to-face exams the candidate gives their topic form to the examiner.
- During the **Topic phase**, the examiner randomly selects one of the discussion points on the topic form and asks the candidate questions and makes comments to facilitate a spontaneous discussion about the prepared topic. This continues until at least four points on the topic form have been covered. During the Topic phase, the candidate asks the examiner at least one question related to the topic. This phase lasts up to five minutes.
- The examiner then closes this phase of the exam and moves on to the conversation.
- During the **Conversation phase**, the examiner selects two subject areas from topics listed for the grade and engages the candidate in genuine conversation. During the conversation the candidate gives information, makes statements and responds as appropriate. In addition, at **Grade 5** the candidate must ask the examiner at least one question related to the subject areas being discussed and at **Grade 6** the candidate must ask at least two questions. This phase lasts up to five minutes.
- The examiner brings the conversation and the exam to an end.

Videos of sample exams can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Elementary stage videos ›

Guidance

Discussion of a prepared topic

The purpose of the Topic phase is to give candidates the opportunity to display their English language competency while talking about self-selected and personally relevant topics.

- When **choosing the topic** for discussion, candidates should prepare to speak on a topic they are personally interested in, knowledgeable about and able to discuss with the examiner.
- Please note that the topic should **not** be chosen **directly** from the list of subject areas for the Conversation phase. Instead, candidates should be strongly encouraged to prepare a **personalised** topic. This is to enable candidates to show a wide range of language throughout the exam.
- The personal aspect is an important feature of all Trinity exams. Therefore, candidates should be discouraged from selecting the same topic as their peers. Teachers should ensure that if groups of learners do decide to use the same topic, eg football, every effort is made to personalise the content.
- The topic should provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their English language competency. Candidates should be encouraged to incorporate recommended language items for the grade into their contributions.
- When **preparing the topic**, candidates are advised to think carefully about the amount of material necessary for their topic, bearing in mind the time available. They should prepare enough material to sustain a discussion of the topic for up to five minutes, but not more.
- Candidates **must not** prepare their topic as a written script, as this will inevitably lead to a memorised recitation and result in the candidate not being prepared to use spontaneous spoken English. Recitation will have a negative effect on the assessment of this phase.
- In preparing their topic, candidates are advised to anticipate questions the examiner might ask. They should be prepared to give further examples, explanations and clarifications as requested by the examiner.
- Before the exam, the candidate must complete a **topic form** (which can either be a Trinity topic form or one they have made themselves) and bring it to the exam room. The topic form is designed to promote a spontaneous discussion which **must not** include or rely on a memorised recitation.
- The candidate must complete the Trinity topic form (or their own version) with the required number of points for discussion (four discussion points for Grade 4, five for Grade 5, six for Grade 6). One short sentence or phrase will suffice for each point. The candidate should prepare enough material about these points to sustain a discussion of up to five minutes, but no more. Examples of completed topic forms are provided as appendices 1 and 2.
- At all Elementary grades, the examiner will ask the candidate to talk about at least four of the discussion points on the topic form.
- The examiner will refer to the discussion points on the topic form in no particular order. Therefore, all of the points should be thematic and provide an opportunity for discussing different aspects of the topic. Topic forms must not include such general points as 'Introduction', or 'What I did next...'.
- The topic form can be written by a person other than the candidate as written skills in English are not being assessed in these exams. However, the content of the form should have originated from the candidate.

- As the topic form is crucial for the execution of this phase, the phase will not take place if the information contained on the form is not made available to the examiner.
- It is a requirement of the exam that candidates ask the examiner relevant and appropriate questions throughout the Topic phase. At all Elementary grades, the candidate must ask the examiner at least one question about the topic.
- Candidates may bring suitable pictures, photos, diagrams or other useful objects to illustrate the topic and aid the discussion with the examiner. (NB Unsuitable objects include live animals, knives, controlled substances, etc).
- Please note that a candidate who fails to prepare a topic for discussion cannot be assessed for task fulfilment for this phase. The phase will be voided and this will result in a fail being awarded for the exam as a whole.

The Conversation phase

The purpose of the Conversation phase is to give candidates the opportunity to participate in a genuine and interesting exchange of information, ideas and opinions, while demonstrating their ability to use relevant language suggested for the grade.

- The Conversation phase consists of a discussion of **two** of the subject areas listed for the relevant grade. Although the examiner will only select two of the subject areas listed, candidates need to be prepared to talk about all of them.
- Candidates are encouraged to contribute as much as they can to the conversation and make every effort to show the examiner the range and quality of the language that is relevant for the particular grade.
- Candidates **must not** memorise or recite responses to the examiner's questions as this will lead to the candidate being unable to take part in a genuine conversation with the examiner.
- At each grade, candidates are expected to use the communicative skills, language functions listed for the grade and recommended language items. Those responsible for preparing candidates for the exam should ensure that candidates are completely familiar with the recommended language items so they are able to successfully demonstrate the communicative skills and language functions of the grade.
- At **Grade 5**, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one question related to the subject areas in this phase.
- At **Grade 6**, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least two questions related to the subject areas in this phase.

Assessment

At the Elementary stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D for task fulfilment for the Topic and Conversation phases. In simple terms, 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 combination of the two letter grades, ie the one awarded for the **topic** and the one awarded for the **conversation** provides the overall level of achievement.

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. If a candidate is awarded a C or D in a given exam phase, the exam report identifies a key area for improvement.

The final result is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise). For further information about the certificates and the assessment of the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, please see About the assessment.

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 communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

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

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 items

Functions

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

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

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

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- 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 candidate can:

- Use the correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Use appropriate weak forms and intonation in connected speech
- Use three different ways of pronouncing 'ed' past tense endings, eg *played, walked, wanted*
- Avoid 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, candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 4 subject areas.

Grade 5

CEFR level B1.1

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 communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately to questions
- Give information about the prepared topic in a series of linked long turns about the five discussion points on the topic form
- Answer questions on the prepared topic, and participate in an informal discussion of the topic, during which the examiner will request more information, facts or details
- Respond to requests for clarification and give reasons for making particular statements
- Ask the examiner at least one question about the topic area

In the Conversation phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately to questions
- Respond to requests for clarification and give reasons for making particular statements
- Ask the examiner at least one question about a subject area

Language items

Functions

- Talking about the future – informing and predicting
- Expressing preferences
- Talking about events in the indefinite and recent past
- Giving reasons
- Stating the duration of events
- Quantifying

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

- Present perfect tense including use with *for, since, ever, never, just*
- Connecting clauses using *because*
- Will referring to the future for informing and predicting
- Adjectives and adverbials of quantity, eg *a lot (of), not very much, many*
- Expressions of preference, eg *I prefer, I'd rather*

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- Expressions relating to past and future time, eg *two days ago, in the future*
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can:

- Correctly pronounce vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Use the combination of weak forms and contractions, eg *I've been to...*
- Avoid speech patterns of recitation

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

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

- Festivals
- Means of transport
- Special occasions, eg birthday celebrations
- Entertainment, eg cinema, television, clubs
- Music
- Recent personal experiences

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 5 subject areas.

Grade 6

CEFR level B1.2

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 communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately to questions
- Give information about the prepared topic in a series of sustained turns about the six discussion points on the topic form
- Make the sequence of events clear by referring back to previous events and forward to forthcoming events
- Answer questions on the prepared topic, and participate in informal discussion of the topic, responding to the examiner's requests for more information, facts or details
- Ask the examiner at least one question about the topic area

In the Conversation phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately to questions
- Provide information and offer opinions where appropriate
- Start to play a limited part in initiating and maintaining the conversation
- Ask the examiner at least two questions about the subject areas

Language items

Functions

- Expressing and requesting opinions and impressions
- Expressing intention and purpose
- Expressing obligation and necessity
- Expressing certainty and uncertainty
- Describing past actions over a period of time

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

- Zero and first conditionals, using *if* and *when*
- Present continuous tense for future use
- Past continuous tense
- Modals connected to the functions listed above, eg *must, need to, might, don't have to*
- Infinitive of purpose

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- Further expressions relating to future time, eg *the day after tomorrow, in a year's time, in … years' time*
- Common phrasal verbs
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can:

- Use correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Use sentence stress to clarify meaning
- Use basic intonation and features of connected speech at sentence level
- Use intonation patterns of more complex question forms
- Avoid speech patterns of recitation

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

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

- Travel
- Money
- Fashion
- Rules and regulations
- Health and fitness
- Learning a foreign language

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 6 subject areas.

Intermediate stage

Grades 7–9 (CEFR level B2.1–B2.3)

Introduction to the Intermediate stage

Candidate profile

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

- understand complex and extended speech used in the discussion of reasonably familiar subjects
- communicate with some spontaneity and engage in extended conversation by giving clear descriptions and expressing and explaining views on most general subjects
- initiate, maintain and end the discourse with effective turn-taking
- demonstrate a sufficient range of language to produce stretches of discourse, using some complex sentence forms and without much searching for words, while correcting most of their mistakes.

This profile is based on the level B2 (Independent User) in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Exam format

The exam at each grade consists of the following:

- greetings and setting at ease
- candidate-led discussion of a prepared topic
- interactive task
- conversation on two subject areas
- end of conversation and leave-taking.

Exam procedure

- The examiner begins by greeting the candidate, setting them at ease.
- The candidate is invited to introduce the topic and initiate the discussion by giving information on the topic. During the **Topic phase**, the discussion is led by the candidate who provides most of the input. This is in the form of sustained long turns. The candidate is responsible for engaging the examiner in discussion of the topic and must be prepared to ask and answer questions, handle interruptions and respond to requests for clarification. This phase lasts no more than five minutes.
- The examiner brings the Topic phase to a close and introduces the **Interactive phase** by informing the candidate of what they are required to do. The examiner provides an oral prompt to which the candidate has to respond by questioning the examiner in order to find out more information and by making comments. Once the examiner has set up the situation, the candidate takes responsibility for maintaining the interaction. The phase lasts up to four minutes. This phase will not continue if the candidate fails to initiate or to maintain the interaction.

- The examiner then initiates a conversation on two of the subject areas selected from the list provided. During the **Conversation phase**, the candidate and examiner share responsibility for maintaining the interaction. This phase lasts up to five minutes.
- The examiner indicates the end of the conversation and exam.

Videos of sample exams can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Intermediate stage videos ›

Guidance

Candidate-led discussion of topic

The purpose of the Topic phase is to give candidates the opportunity to display their English language competency while talking about self-selected and personally relevant topics.

- When **choosing the topic**, candidates should select a topic of their own choice and plan the areas of the topic which they would like to inform the examiner about and discuss. As with the previous stage, candidates should prepare to speak on a topic they are personally interested in, knowledgeable about and able to talk about.
- Please note that the topic should **not** be chosen **directly** from the list of subject areas for the Conversation phase for the particular grade. Instead, candidates should be strongly encouraged to prepare a **personalised** topic. This is to enable candidates to show a wide range of language throughout the exam.
- The topic should provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their language proficiency. Candidates should be strongly encouraged to incorporate relevant language suggested for the grade.
- When **preparing the topic**, candidates are advised to think carefully about the amount of material necessary for their topic, bearing in mind the time available. They should prepare enough material to sustain a discussion of the topic for up to five minutes, but not more.
- One of the main objectives of the Topic phase is to allow the candidate and examiner to have a spontaneous discussion about a subject that interests the candidate. Therefore, candidates **must not** prepare their topic as a written script as this inevitably results in a memorised recital which prevents the candidate from demonstrating the necessary communicative skills. Recitation will have a negative effect on the assessment of this phase.
- In preparing their topic, candidates are advised to anticipate questions the examiner might ask.
- They should be prepared to give further examples, explanations and clarifications as requested by the examiner.
- At this stage, candidates are not required to complete a topic form. However, candidates are strongly encouraged to produce some **brief notes, mind maps or diagrams** to help them remember what they want to discuss in the exam. These notes should be brought to the exam and shared with the examiner. They will facilitate the discussion of the topic and allow the examiner to make relevant contributions. Notes, diagrams, etc, do not form part of the assessment.
- Please note that a candidate who fails to prepare a topic for discussion cannot be assessed for task fulfilment for this phase, and this may result in a fail being awarded for the exam as a whole.

The Interactive phase

The purpose of the Interactive phase is for candidates to demonstrate their ability to take control over and maintain the interaction while expressing the language functions of the grade.

- In the Interactive phase, the emphasis is placed upon the candidate's ability to use **functional** language rather than upon the accurate use of grammar and other language resources.
- In addition to general functions such as requesting information, some of the language functions listed for the particular grade should arise naturally from each task prompt. Therefore, candidates must be able to understand and use the language functions of the grade to take a full part in the exchange.
- It is important that, once the examiner has set up the situation, the **candidate takes responsibility** for the interaction by asking questions and commenting on the examiner's responses. The interaction will take the form of multiple turns, with the examiner's turns being much shorter than those of the candidate.
- In some cases the interaction may involve role play but the examiner and candidate are free to 'be themselves' so as to create as authentic an exchange as possible.
- In the Interactive phase, the responsibility for maintaining the interaction is the candidate's. If a candidate fails to maintain the interaction of this phase, the examiner will not intervene and take control. In such a case, the phase will not extend to the full four minutes and the candidate's performance will not be rated highly.
- Candidates may ask the examiner to repeat the initial oral prompt if necessary.

Those responsible for preparing candidates for the Interactive phase are strongly advised to help them practise:

- question formations using a range of grammatical structures
- expressing the language functions of the grade in a variety of ways
- holding conversations which naturally result in the use of the language functions of the grade
- strategies to maintain the flow of conversation
- taking the initiative and controlling the direction of the conversation.

The Conversation phase

Interactive prompts can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Intermediate stage prompts ›

The purpose of the Conversation phase is to give candidates the opportunity to participate in a genuine exchange of information, ideas and opinions, while demonstrating their ability to use the relevant language suggested for the grade.

- The Conversation phase consists of a discussion of **two** of the subject areas listed for the relevant grade. Although the examiner will only select two of the subject areas listed, candidates need to be prepared to talk about all of them.
- At the Intermediate stage, candidates will be capable of maintaining and sustaining the conversation.

Although candidates' interests may still limit the scope and direction of the conversation, they will be expected to:

- take more responsibility for the content
- contribute opinions and ideas as well as information on the subject areas listed for the grade
- maintain the flow of the exchange
- demonstrate to the examiner the range and accuracy of language at their command.

Assessment

At the Intermediate stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D for task fulfilment for the Topic, Interactive and Conversation phases. In simple terms, 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 Fai**l (reflects an unsatisfactory performance)

The combination of the three letter grades, ie the one awarded for the **Topic**, the one awarded for the **Interactive task** and the one awarded for the **Conversation** provides the overall level of achievement. Please note that candidates who achieve two D band awards will not pass the exam overall irrespective of the third band awarded.

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. If a candidate is awarded a C or D in a given exam phase, the exam report identifies a key area for improvement.

The final result is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise). For further information about the certificates and the assessment of the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, please see About the assessment.

Grade 7

CEFR level B2.1

Exam format

Total exam time: 15 minutes

The exam consists of three assessed phases:

- Candidate-led discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 4 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- Show understanding by responding appropriately to the examiner
- Communicate a variety of facts, ideas and opinions, and account for these, about a chosen topic linked across a series of extended turns
- Engage the examiner in discussion of the topic
- Be prepared to ask and answer questions about the content of the topic
- Handle interruptions or requests for clarification throughout the discussion of the topic

In the Interactive phase

- Take control over the interaction
- Maintain the discourse by asking for information and making comments
- Help the discussion along by inviting comment from the examiner
- Take and give up turns when appropriate to do so

In the Conversation phase

- Show understanding by responding appropriately to the examiner
- Share responsibility for the maintenance of the interaction with the examiner
- In case of a breakdown in communication, show awareness and take basic steps to remedy it

Language items

Functions

- Giving advice and highlighting advantages and disadvantages
- Making suggestions
- Describing past habits
- Expressing possibility and uncertainty
- Eliciting further information and expansion of ideas and opinions
- Expressing agreement and disagreement

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

- Second conditional
- Simple passive
- *Used to*
- Relative clauses
- Modals and phrases used to give advice and make suggestions, eg *should/ought to, could, you'd better*
- Modals and phrases used to express possibility and uncertainty, eg *may, might, I'm not sure*
- Discourse connectors, eg *because of, due to*

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- Appropriate words and expressions to indicate interest and show awareness of the speaker, eg *Really? Oh dear! Did you?*
- Simple fillers to give time for thought, eg *well..., um...*
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can use:

- The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Rising intonation to indicate interest and surprise as appropriate
- Falling intonation to indicate the end of a turn
- Intonation and features of connected speech beyond sentence level

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

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

- Education
- National customs
- Village and city life
- National and local produce and products
- Early memories
- Pollution and recycling

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 7 subject areas.

Grade 8

CEFR level B2.2

Exam format

Total exam time: 15 minutes

The exam consists of three assessed phases:

- Candidate-led discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 4 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- Communicate facts, ideas, opinions and explain viewpoints about a chosen topic linked across a series of extended turns
- Maintain coherence and cohesion throughout the phase by organising discourse
- Engage the examiner in discussion of the topic
- Be prepared to ask and answer questions about the content of and examiner's views on the topic
- Handle interruptions by using recovery strategies
- Respond to the examiner's contributions and requests for further information, clarifications and explanations

In the Interactive phase

- Take control over the interaction
- Maintain the discourse by asking for information and commenting on the responses obtained
- Help the discussion along by encouraging comment and opinion from the examiner
- Take, give up and offer turns when appropriate to do so

In the Conversation phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- Share responsibility for the maintenance of the interaction with the examiner
- Follow up on comments from the examiner in order to develop the conversation
- In case of a breakdown in communication, take steps to repair it

Language items

Functions

- Expressing feelings and emotions
- Expressing impossibility
- Reporting the conversation of others
- Speculating
- Persuading and discouraging

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

- Third conditional
- Present perfect continuous tense
- Past perfect tense
- Reported speech
- Linking expressions, eg even though, in spite of, although

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- Cohesive devices, eg *so, to continue, in other words, for example*
- Reporting verbs, eg say, tell, ask, report, advise, promise
- Appropriate words and expressions to encourage further participation
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can use:

- The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Rising and falling intonation to indicate giving up and offering turns
- Stress, intonation and pitch relevant to the language functions listed above
- Stress and intonation to indicate emotion

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

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

- Society and living standards
- Personal values and ideals
- The world of work
- Unexplained phenomena and events
- National environmental concerns
- Public figures past and present

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 8 subject areas.

Grade 9

CEFR level B2.3

Exam format

Total exam time: 15 minutes

The exam consists of three assessed phases:

- Candidate-led discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 4 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Topic phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- Communicate facts, ideas, opinions and attitudes about a chosen topic sustained across a series of extended turns
- Maintain coherence and cohesion throughout the phase by organising the discourse
- Highlight significant points
- Paraphrase where necessary in order to maintain the discourse
- Engage the examiner in discussion of the topic
- Handle interruptions without undue effort by recapping and recovering

In the Interactive phase

- Take control over the interaction
- Maintain the discourse by asking for information and expanding on the responses obtained
- Develop the discussion by encouraging comment and opinion from the examiner
- Take, keep, give up and offer turns when appropriate to do so

In the Conversation phase

- Show understanding of the examiner by responding appropriately
- Share responsibility for the maintenance of the interaction with the examiner
- Follow up on comments from the examiner in order to develop the conversation
- In case of a breakdown in communication, use paraphrasing and circumlocution

Language items

Functions

- Expressing abstract ideas
- Expressing regrets, wishes and hopes
- Expressing assumptions
- Paraphrasing
- Evaluating options
- Hypothesising
- Evaluating past actions or course of events

Recommended grammar

The candidate can use:

- Mixed conditionals
- Verbs followed by gerund and/or infinitive, eg *forget, stop, go on, remember*
- More complex forms of the passive with modals
- *Should/must/might/could* + perfect infinitive
- Correct verb patterns after *wish* and *hope*

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic area
- Vocabulary specific to the subject areas
- Cohesive devices to recap and recover, eg as I was saying, anyway...
- Hesitation fillers, eg I mean, you know
- Stock phrases to gain time for thought and keep the turn, eg well, let me think...
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can use:

- The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- Rising and falling intonation for keeping, giving up and offering turns
- Stress and rhythm to highlight and emphasise main points and ideas
- Intonation and pitch to convey attitude

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

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

- Dreams and nightmares
- Crime and punishment
- Technology
- Habits and obsessions
- Global environmental issues
- Design

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 9 subject areas.

Advanced stage

Grades 10–12 (CEFR level C1.2–C2)

Introduction to the Advanced stage

Candidate profile

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

- understand arguments, inferences, changes in register and emphasis in extended, complex and sometimes unstructured speech, even when delivered at fast native speed
- express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning
- control the direction of a spoken interaction and maintain its flow with ease, relating skilfully to the contributions of the listener
- exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of complex language structures, vocabulary and language functions
- produce speech at word, sentence and discourse level which rarely deviates from an internationally intelligible model.

This profile is based on the level C2 (Proficient User) in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Exam format

The exam at each grade consists of the following:

- greetings and setting at ease
- formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate
- discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner
- interactive task
- listening task
- conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner
- end of conversation and leave-taking.

Exam procedure

- The examiner begins by greeting the candidate, setting them at ease.
- The examiner invites the candidate to deliver their formal topic presentation. The candidate provides the examiner with a brief outline of the topic in note form.
- The candidate then gives a **formal oral presentation** of the prepared topic. This is in the form of a well-structured presentation with an effective logical structure which helps the examiner to notice and remember significant points. The examiner makes notes during the presentation to facilitate the following discussion. The examiner does not interact with the candidate in this phase of the exam. This phase lasts up to five minutes.

- The candidate brings the formal topic presentation to a logical conclusion and initiates the **discussion of the topic presentation** by inviting questions and comments from the examiner. During this phase, the candidate and examiner participate in an authentic discussion of the ideas and opinions raised in the presentation. This phase lasts up to five minutes.
- The **Interactive phase** is then introduced by the examiner who informs the candidate of what they are required to do. The examiner provides an oral prompt to which the candidate has to respond by questioning the examiner in order to find out more information and by making comments. Once the examiner has set up the situation, the candidate takes full responsibility for maintaining the interaction. This phase lasts up to five minutes. It will not continue if the candidate fails to initiate or to maintain the interaction and the candidate's performance will not be rated highly.
- The examiner then introduces the **Listening phase** and informs the candidate of the requirements for the two different task types. The examiner orally presents three short pieces of discourse. The candidate is required to suggest possible endings for the first two texts, and to identify participants, contexts or settings related to the third text. Only short verbal responses from the candidate are required. This phase lasts up to three minutes.
- The examiner then initiates a **conversation** on two of the subject areas selected from one of the lists provided. At Grade 12, there are no specific subject areas and the examiner selects any two subjects for discussion that are appropriate for the individual candidate. This phase lasts up to six minutes.
- The examiner indicates the end of the conversation and exam.

Videos of sample exams can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Advanced stage videos ›

Guidance

Exams at this stage demand a high level of language proficiency and conversational ability. Candidates will be well motivated and have particular reasons for wanting to be fluent in English. Normally, candidates will be mature and experienced enough to handle abstract concepts and to contribute to discussions on matters of major importance in today's world. Please note that at the Advanced stage the examiner will make challenging statements so that candidates can display their English proficiency.

Formal topic presentation

The purpose of this phase is to give candidates the opportunity to display their English language competency while delivering a formal oral presentation on a self-selected and personally relevant topic.

- At the Advanced stage, candidates are required to deliver a five-minute formal presentation on a topic of their own choice. Candidates are advised to select their topic carefully. The topic should be discursive in nature and allow the candidate to demonstrate the communicative skills and relevant language suggested for the grade. Actual knowledge is not assessed in this phase of the exam.
- Please note that the topic should **not** be chosen **directly** from the lists of subject areas for the Conversation phase for the particular grade. Instead, candidates should prepare a personalised topic. This is to enable candidates to show a wide range of language throughout the exam.

- As this is a **formal** presentation, it should have an effective and identifiable structure which engages and maintains the examiner's interest. Therefore, candidates are required to introduce the topic, highlight and develop particular points and bring the presentation to an appropriate conclusion.
- Adherence to the timing of this phase is very important. Candidates are strongly advised to ensure the presentation lasts up to but no longer than five minutes. Candidates are responsible for concluding the presentation within the stated timing. Presentations which extend beyond the time allocated will be stopped and the candidate's performance will not be rated highly.
- Candidates are required to produce brief notes in the form of a **handout** for the examiner to facilitate the presentation. These notes should be brought to the exam and shared with the examiner. These notes will not be taken into account in the assessment. Candidates will have produced their own brief notes for personal use and these do not have to be shown to the examiner. As the presentation is oral, the use of complete written scripts in the presentation is not allowed. Recitation of a memorised script will have a negative effect on the assessment of this phase. Please note that no phones, tablets or laptops are permitted in the exam room.
- During the presentation, the examiner will make notes for the following discussion on points which they wish to raise in order to gain clarification or further information about the views and ideas expressed. Please note that the examiner is not collecting examples of the candidate's language for assessment purposes.
- At the end of the formal topic presentation, candidates are required to initiate the Topic discussion phase by asking if the examiner has any questions and inviting comment.

Discussion of topic presentation

The purpose of the Topic discussion phase is for the candidate and examiner to have an authentic discussion on the ideas and opinions given in the formal topic presentation.

- When preparing for the topic discussion, candidates should try to anticipate the contributions of the examiner and think of ways of expanding and developing the topic beyond the limitations of the formal presentation.
- The topic discussion is intended to be a genuine discussion. There should be a real exchange of ideas and opinions, with the candidate being able to challenge the examiner and respond to their contributions. Candidates must also be ready to justify, exemplify and elaborate on the ideas and opinions given in the presentation.
- The topic discussion is intended to be about the actual presentation rather than on the general theme of the topic.
- The candidate is expected to be proactive in the discussion and not simply respond to the contributions of the examiner. Therefore, candidates are required to invite questions and comments from the examiner at the end of the formal topic presentation and throughout the Topic discussion phase.
- A candidate who fails to prepare a formal topic presentation cannot be assessed for this phase or for the Topic discussion phase. These two phases will be voided and this will result in a fail being awarded for the exam as a whole.

The Interactive phase

The purpose of the Interactive phase is for candidates to demonstrate their ability to take control of and maintain the interaction while demonstrating their ability to use the language functions of the grade.

- The guidance for this phase is the same as that given in the Intermediate stage Guidance notes.
- At the Advanced stage, in addition to expressing the language functions of the grade, candidates are also required to demonstrate their control of grammar and other language resources.

Interactive prompts can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Advanced stage prompts ›

The Listening phase

The purpose of the Listening phase is for candidates to demonstrate high level listening skills such as prediction, deduction and inference. The candidate needs to show recognition of the context, participants and register.

There are two types of listening tasks which require different responses from the candidate:

- **Type 1: require the candidate to provide a suitable ending**
- **Type 2: require the candidate to identify participants, contexts or settings**

- Candidates are presented with three listening tasks – two of type 1 and one of type 2.
- Candidates are expected to respond with very short, precise responses and should not give lengthy replies.
- The listening tasks are not related to any of the given subject areas for the Conversation phase.
- This is to provide an unknown element which candidates at this stage are expected to be able to handle.
- Candidates are not required to read or write anything in this phase, and the taking of notes is unnecessary given the nature of the task.
- Please note that the listening texts will not be repeated by the examiner even if they are requested to do so.

Listening task samples can be found on the Trinity website. **GESE** Advanced stage tasks ›

The Conversation phase

The purpose of the Conversation phase is to give candidates the opportunity to participate in a genuine exchange of information, ideas and opinions, while demonstrating their ability to use relevant language suggested for the grade.

- The Conversation phase involves a detailed discussion of **two** subject areas as selected by the examiner for the relevant grade.
- Although the majority of Advanced stage candidates are adults, Trinity appreciates that some school age learners may be ready in linguistic terms to take an Advanced grade exam. Therefore, at **Grade 10** and **Grade 11** the subject areas are provided in two different lists which are designed to take account of different levels of maturity. Centres should decide which list is most appropriate for their candidates and provide practice in discussing the subject areas

EITHER from list A (for teenagers/less mature candidates) **OR** from list B (for adults/more mature candidates). The centre should inform the examiner prior to the start of the exam session which list has been prepared. If the centre does not do this, the examiner will use their discretion.

- At **Grade 12**, there are no specific subject areas and candidates should be prepared to discuss any two subjects that the examiner deems appropriate. Therefore, candidates should be able to make use of a wide range of vocabulary relating to all other previous subject areas as well as other subjects of general or topical interest.

At the Advanced stage, candidates will be expected to:

- engage the examiner in a meaningful discussion on complex and abstract topics
- influence the direction of the exchange
- maintain the flow of the exchange
- demonstrate their ability to use a range of complex language flexibly and effectively.

Assessment

At the Advanced stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D for task fulfilment for the Formal topic presentation, Topic discussion, Interactive, Listening and Conversation phases. In simple terms, 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 combination of the five letter grades, ie the one awarded for the **Formal topic presentation**, the **Topic discussion**, the **Interactive task**, the **Listening task** and the **Conversation** provides the overall level of achievement. Please note that candidates who fail to prepare a formal topic presentation or who achieve three D band awards will not pass the exam overall irrespective of the other bands awarded.

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. If a candidate is awarded a C or D in a given exam phase, the exam report identifies a key area for improvement.

The final result is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise). For further information about the certificates and the assessment of the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, please see About the assessment.

Grade 10

CEFR level C1.1

Exam format

Total exam time: 25 minutes

The exam consists of five assessed phases:

- Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- A candidate-led discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 5 minutes)
- Listening phase (up to 3 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 6 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Formal topic presentation phase

- Give a formal presentation, discursive in nature, on a chosen subject, with an identifiable structure and sequence, using discourse connectors and cohesive devices
- Introduce the presentation, develop particular points, give supporting reasons and examples
- Conclude the presentation by inviting questions and comments from the examiner

In the Topic discussion phase

- Initiate and engage the examiner in a discussion of some of the points made
- Share the responsibility with the examiner for the maintenance of the discussion
- Respond to the examiner's requests for clarification or elaboration
- Be prepared to defend a point of view and develop an argument further

In the Interactive phase

- Take responsibility for the direction and maintenance of the interaction
- Utilise turn-taking conventions to ensure that the interaction flows and develops naturally
- Relate their own contributions closely to those of the examiner

In the Listening phase

- Understand a range of spoken texts and recognise implicit meaning
- Use contextual, grammatical and lexical cues to identify attitude, mood and intentions and anticipate what follows
- Use knowledge of grammar, lexis and register to identify context and participants from a piece of discourse

In the Conversation phase

- Share the responsibility with the examiner for the maintenance of the conversation
- Offer new contributions to influence the direction of the conversation
- Participate without much obvious searching for expressions

Language items

Functions

- Developing an argument
- Defending a point of view
- Expressing beliefs
- Expressing opinions tentatively
- Summarising information, ideas and arguments
- Deducing

Grammar expectations

The candidate can use:

- A broad range of complex structures to express thoughts clearly
- A high degree of grammatical accuracy, although minor errors may occur when attempting to use a combination of structures across sentence boundaries

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- A range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- Modifying words, eg *basically, quite, certainly*
- Intensifiers, eg *absolutely, completely, totally*
- Tentative expressions, eg *I may be wrong but..., don't you think it might be...*
- Signposting words, eg *firstly, finally*
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can use:

- The correct pronunciation of topic and subject-area specific vocabulary
- Sounds with minimal interference from the first language
- A range of stress and intonation patterns, pitch and volume to:
  - engage and maintain the examiner's interest
  - signal the provision of new information
  - indicate discourse structure.

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

Two subject areas will be selected by the examiner from the appropriate list below. The centre should inform the examiner which list has been prepared by the candidate (see **lists**).

List A

- Roles in the family
- Communication
- The school curriculum
- Youth behaviour
- Use of the internet
- Designer goods

OR

List B

- International events
- Equal opportunities
- Social issues
- The future of the planet
- Scientific developments
- Stress management

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 10 subject areas.

Grade 11

CEFR level C1.2

Exam format

Total exam time: 25 minutes

The exam consists of five assessed phases:

- Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- A candidate-led discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 5 minutes)
- Listening phase (up to 3 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 6 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Formal topic presentation phase

- Give a formal presentation, discursive in nature, on a chosen subject, with an identifiable structure, using discourse connectors and cohesive devices and showing controlled use of organisational patterns
- Introduce the presentation, develop particular points, expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, and integrate sub-themes fluently
- Bring the presentation to an appropriate conclusion by inviting questions and comments from the examiner

In the Topic discussion phase

- Initiate the discussion and encourage the examiner to comment and give their opinion on the ideas provided in the presentation
- Take responsibility for the maintenance of the discussion
- Be prepared to justify the ideas and opinions given in the presentation
- Respond to challenges made by the examiner spontaneously and appropriately

In the Interactive phase

- Take full responsibility for maintaining the flow of conversation by changing its direction when a particular line of questioning dries up
- Negotiate towards a logical conclusion to the interaction

In the Listening phase

- Understand inferences and pick up on phonological clues
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise a range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms

In the Conversation phase

- Take responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation
- Anticipate the direction of the conversation and cope with topic shifts
- Demonstrate the ability to infer and extract meaning from vague or imprecise language
- Evaluate and challenge statements and arguments made by the examiner

Language items

Functions

- Justifying an argument
- Inferring
- Expressing caution
- Expressing empathy and sympathy
- Challenging arguments and opinions
- Evaluating different standpoints
- Expressing reservations

Grammar expectations

The candidate can use:

- A broad range of complex structures, used flexibly and effectively in combination and contrast
- A high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to identify

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- Vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- A good range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- Signposting expressions, eg *I'd like to begin with..., conversely..., to conclude...*
- Vague and imprecise language, eg *a bit more, a hundred people or so*
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can use:

- The correct pronunciation of topic and subject-area specific vocabulary
- Various features of pronunciation which only occasionally deviate from an internationally intelligible model
- A range of stress and intonation patterns, pitch and volume to convey subtle shifts in meaning and attitude

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

Two subject areas will be selected by the examiner from the appropriate list below. The centre should inform the examiner which list has been prepared by the candidate (see **lists**).

List A

- Independence
- Ambitions
- Stereotypes
- Role models
- Competitiveness
- Young people's rights

OR

List B

- The media
- Advertising
- Lifestyles
- The arts
- The rights of the individual
- Economic issues

Please note: Candidates should **not** select their topic from this list of Grade 11 subject areas.

Grade 12

CEFR level C2

Exam format

Total exam time: 25 minutes

The exam consists of five assessed phases:

- Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 5 minutes)
- Candidate-led discussion of the topic presentation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes)
- Interactive phase (up to 5 minutes)
- Listening phase (up to 3 minutes)
- Conversation on two subject areas selected by the examiner (up to 6 minutes)

Candidate performance

In addition to the communicative skills and language items of the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the communicative skills outlined below. To achieve this, candidates should be able to use the language items below.

Communicative skills

In the Formal topic presentation phase

- Present a complex topic with a high degree of linguistic formality to the examiner, who will probably be unfamiliar with the subject matter
- Present a clear argument with an effective logical structure which helps the examiner to notice and remember significant points
- Bring the presentation to a logical conclusion by inviting questions and comments from the examiner

In the Topic discussion phase

- Initiate the discussion and actively seek ways in which to engage the examiner in a meaningful exchange of ideas and opinions
- Take full responsibility for the maintenance of the discussion
- Be able to deal effectively with the examiner's input by responding to a variety of conversational gambits and handling in-depth questioning

In the Interactive phase

- Control and sustain the discussion at all times
- Actively encourage the examiner's collaboration in the task
- Direct the interaction towards a successful conclusion

In the Listening phase

- Understand texts on abstract and complex topics which may be of a specialist nature beyond their own field
- Understand virtually everything heard when delivered at natural native speaker speed
- Identify implicit meaning

In the Conversation phase

- Take full responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation
- Hold a discussion unconstrained by linguistic limitations, without showing signs of having to restrict what they want to say
- Introduce their contribution into the joint discourse with natural turn-taking and referencing
- Demonstrate the ability to make an unobtrusive substitution for a word or expression they are unable to recall

Language items

Functions

- Asserting
- Denying
- Softening and downplaying propositions
- Contradicting
- Implying
- Affirming

Grammar expectations

The candidate can use:

- A comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis and eliminate ambiguity
- Differing linguistic forms to reformulate ideas and convey finer shades of meaning
- Complete and consistent grammatical control of highly complex language at all times

Lexis

The candidate can use:

- A good command of a very broad lexical repertoire
- A wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

The candidate can:

- Pronounce individual sounds so as to be fully understood by the examiner, with only a rare sound that deviates from an internationally intelligible model
- Use stress and intonation patterns which are recognisably specific to English without any lapses in intelligibility

Subject areas for the Conversation phase

There are no specific subject areas for Grade 12. Candidates should be able to make use of a wide range of vocabulary items relating to subject areas of all previous grades as well as other subjects of general or topical interest.

At this grade, candidates are expected to be able to enter into discussion on any subject that the examiner deems appropriate for the individual candidate. The age of the candidate will be taken into account when the examiner makes their choice.

Policies

Candidates with special needs

Trinity is committed to creating an inclusive environment where candidates with special needs are able to demonstrate their skills and feel welcomed. We aim to make our exams accessible to all. We treat each learner individually when considering how we can achieve this aim, recognising that requirements vary. Candidates can be assured that we do not compromise on the standard of marking or allow the quality of exams to be affected in any way.

All provision is tailored to the particular needs of each candidate. In order to be most beneficial, as full an explanation as possible of the required provision should be given. The need and request for provision should be made on the appropriate form available to download from trinitycollege.com/language-csn.

For enquiries please contact language-csn@trinitycollege.com.

Equal opportunities

Trinity is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all, and will not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of any characteristic.

Child protection

Trinity is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the candidates that we work with. All posts, including examiners, are subject to a safer recruitment process, including the disclosure of criminal records and vetting checks. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and promote safeguarding and safer working practice across all parts of our work.

Candidate Identification Policy

Trinity has established procedures for candidate identification. These are all detailed in the Candidate Identity Documentation Policy for English Language Exams. For information about exams for UK visa purposes see trinitycollege.com/SELT.

Exams taken for UK visa purposes

Candidates wishing to take their GESE exam to fulfil the language requirement for a UK visa must take their exam at a Secure English Language Test (SELT) centre. Details of Trinity's SELT centres and information about SELTs can be found at trinitycollege.com/SELT.

Exceptional circumstances

All exams are assessed on the basis of the performance given on the day of the exam without regard to any external circumstances.

When a candidate infringes exam regulations, wherever possible, the exam will continue without comment by the examiner so that candidate performance in other parts of the exam is unaffected.

The exam report form will normally be returned by the examiner to Trinity at the end of the exam, rather than being emailed to the Centre Representative, so that a decision can be taken about the validity of the exam. Trinity reserves the right to award no marks for invalid parts of an exam. The outcome of referred exams will be reported to the Centre Representative as soon as possible after the matter has been considered.

Exam monitoring

All exams will be recorded for monitoring and research purposes. Recordings of exams are retained at Trinity's central office and not made available to centres or candidates. Trinity reserves the right to allow Trinity monitors into the exam room while the exam is in progress in order to observe the conduct of the exams.

These procedures are an essential feature of Trinity's commitment to the consistency of marking and administration by its examiners and are in no way detrimental to the candidate. Every effort will be made to give advance notice of such monitoring sessions, and arrangements will be discussed with the centre involved, wherever possible. Entrance for the Trinity exams constitutes acceptance of all the quality assurance procedures.

In normal circumstances, no other person is permitted to be present in the exam room. Special arrangements apply, with prior authorisation, in cases where candidates with special needs or under 10 years old require assistance.

Exam delivery

Exams take place at registered exam centres, or in the case of GESE Home, in the candidate's home. Tests for UK Visas, British Citizenship or Leave to Remain must take place in a registered Secure English Language Test (SELT) centre in the UK.

Trinity works with centres to ensure that the exam session is delivered at the mutual convenience of the centre and the examiner. During the planning process, the centre may be approached regarding alternative dates for delivery.

Trinity reserves the right not to conduct an exam session in the following circumstances:

- exam entries are not received prior to the specified closing dates – closing dates are available from your National/Area Representative or Trinity's central office
- exam fees are not paid in full by the closing date
- the minimum fee required by Trinity in order to cover the costs of an examiner visiting an exam venue is not met – details of the minimum fee required can be obtained from your National/Area Representative or Trinity's central office
- centres have not used the correct fees for their exam session.

Trinity takes every effort to ensure the delivery of its exams on the dates and at the locations planned. However, there may on occasion be exceptional circumstances that mean we are not able to meet our commitment. This would include, for example, lack of examiner availability, national strikes, labour disputes, industrial disruption, natural disasters, widespread disruption of international travel, terrorist attacks, acts of war or pandemics.

Results review and appeals procedure

Anyone who wishes to question their exam result should refer to trinitycollege.com/results-enquiry for full details of our results review and appeals process.

Customer service

Trinity is committed to providing a high-quality service for all our users from initial enquiry through to certification. Full details of our customer service commitment can be found at trinitycollege.com/customer-service.

Malpractice policy

Trinity requires its registered exam centres to report any suspected malpractice by candidates, teachers or examiners. In situations where a centre is found to be inadequate or to be guilty of malpractice, either in terms of provision of facilities or in administration, the exam centre may be required to suspend all of its activities relating to Trinity exams until the cause of the problem is identified and rectified, if appropriate. In extreme circumstances, the centre may have its registered status withdrawn.

In the very rare cases or circumstances where a centre or individual may be suspected of malpractice, Trinity will aim to minimise any inconvenience caused to any affected candidate, and would like to thank candidates, teachers and centre staff for their kind co-operation in reporting any suspected incident of cheating, thereby assisting Trinity in upholding the quality and integrity of its exam process.

Data protection

Trinity is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom under data protection legislation. Please see trinitycollege.com/data-protection for the most up-to-date information about Trinity's data protection procedures and policies.

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Appendix 1

Graded Examinations in Spoken English
Topic form links

Blank forms

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Sample completed forms

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Appendix 2

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON

GESE and the Common European Framework of Reference

GESE was linked to the Common European Framework of Reference in a calibration project and research report. The table below gives an overview of how the GESE Grades map onto the CEFR levels.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)	Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)
–	Grade 1
A1	Grade 2
A2	Grade 3
	Grade 4
B1	Grade 5
	Grade 6
B2	Grade 7
	Grade 8
	Grade 9
C1	Grade 10
	Grade 11
C2	Grade 12

The CEFR is the result of research by a number of leading applied linguists and pedagogical specialists from the Council of Europe. It provides a detailed model for describing and scaling language use and the different kinds of knowledge and skills required.

The framework is intended to stimulate reflection on objectives and methods, to facilitate communication and to provide a common basis for curriculum development, the elaboration of syllabuses, exams and qualifications, thus contributing to easier international educational and vocational mobility.

(*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, Council of Europe, 2020)

For more information on how Trinity's English Language qualifications map onto the CEFR, see trinitycollege.com/about-us/recognition/english-language/cefr-alignment.

Appendix 3

Summary of language items for each grade

Below is a summary of the language suggested to fulfill the communicative skills and language functions required for each grade. For Grades 4 to 11, the subject areas for the Conversation phase are also given. For full details of the expectations for of each grade, please refer to the individual grade pages.

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology
1	◗ Exchanging greetings ◗ Giving personal information, eg *name, age* ◗ Identifying and naming items given in the lexical list ◗ Leave-taking	**Understand:** ◗ Imperatives for common actions, eg *go, come, show, point, give, touch, stand up* ◗ Question words, eg *what? how many? how old?* ◗ Demonstratives, eg *this, that, these, those* **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*	◗ 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 list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of common words relevant to the lexical areas listed

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology
2	◗ 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	**Understand:** ◗ Present simple tense questions ◗ Question words *who? when?* ◗ Present continuous tense questions ◗ Determiners *some, any* **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	◗ 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 list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed ◗ Basic intonation patterns for simple questions ◗ Contractions, eg *I've, I'm, he's*

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology
3	◗ 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	◗ 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*, *then*	◗ 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 list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed ◗ The use of contractions where appropriate ◗ Basic stress and intonation patterns for words, short sentences and simple questions

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
4	◗ Talking about past events ◗ Talking about future plans and intentions ◗ Expressing simple comparisons ◗ Expressing likes and dislikes ◗ Describing manner and frequency	◗ 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*	◗ 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 list of language functions	◗ 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	◗ Holidays ◗ Shopping ◗ School and work ◗ Hobbies and sports ◗ Food ◗ Weekend and seasonal activities

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
5	◗ Talking about the future – informing and predicting ◗ Expressing preferences ◗ Talking about events in the indefinite and recent past ◗ Giving reasons ◗ Stating the duration of events ◗ Quantifying	◗ Present perfect tense including use with *for, since, ever, never, just* ◗ Connecting clauses using *because* ◗ *Will* referring to the future for informing and predicting ◗ Adjectives and adverbials of quantity, eg *a lot (of), not very much, many* ◗ Expressions of preference, eg *I prefer, I'd rather*	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic area ◗ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas ◗ Expressions relating to past and future time, eg *two days ago, in the future* ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ The combination of weak forms and contractions, eg *I've been to...* ◗ Avoidance of speech patterns of recitation	◗ Festivals ◗ Means of transport ◗ Special occasions, eg *birthday celebrations* ◗ Entertainment, eg *cinema, television, clubs* ◗ Music ◗ Recent personal experiences

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
6	◗ Expressing and requesting opinions and impressions ◗ Expressing intention and purpose ◗ Expressing obligation and necessity ◗ Expressing certainty and uncertainty ◗ Describing past actions over a period of time	◗ Zero and first conditionals, using *if* and *when* ◗ Present continuous tense for future use ◗ Past continuous tense ◗ Modals connected to the functions listed, eg *must, need to, might, don't have to* ◗ Infinitive of purpose	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic area ◗ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas ◗ Further expressions relating to future time, eg *the day after tomorrow, in a year's time, in … years' time* ◗ Common phrasal verbs ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ Sentence stress to clarify meaning ◗ Basic intonation and features of connected speech at sentence level ◗ Intonation patterns of more complex question forms ◗ Avoidance of speech patterns of recitation	◗ Travel ◗ Money ◗ Fashion ◗ Rules and regulations ◗ Health and fitness ◗ Learning a foreign language

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
7	◗ Giving advice and highlighting advantages and disadvantages ◗ Making suggestions ◗ Describing past habits ◗ Expressing possibility and uncertainty ◗ Eliciting further information and expansion of ideas and opinions ◗ Expressing agreement and disagreement	◗ Second conditional ◗ Simple passive ◗ *Used to* ◗ Relative clauses ◗ Modals and phrases used to give advice and make suggestions, eg *should/ought to, could, you'd better* ◗ Modals and phrases used to express possibility and uncertainty, eg *may, might, I'm not sure* ◗ Discourse connectors eg *because of, due to*	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic area ◗ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas ◗ Appropriate words and expressions to indicate interest and show awareness of the speaker, eg *Really? Oh dear! Did you?* ◗ Simple fillers to give time for thought, eg *well..., um...* ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ Rising intonation to indicate interest and surprise as appropriate ◗ Falling intonation to indicate the end of a turn ◗ Intonation and features of connected speech beyond sentence level	◗ Education ◗ National customs ◗ Village and city life ◗ National and local produce and products ◗ Early memories ◗ Pollution and recycling

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
8	◗ Expressing feelings and emotions ◗ Expressing impossibility ◗ Reporting the conversation of others ◗ Speculating ◗ Persuading and discouraging	◗ Third conditional ◗ Present perfect continuous tense ◗ Past perfect tense ◗ Reported speech ◗ Linking expressions, eg *even though, in spite of, although*	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic area ◗ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas ◗ Cohesive devices, eg *so to continue, in other words, for example* ◗ Reporting verbs, eg *say, tell, ask, report, advise, promise* ◗ Appropriate words and expressions to encourage further participation ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ Rising and falling intonation to indicate giving up and offering turns ◗ Stress, intonation and pitch relevant to the language functions ◗ Stress and intonation to indicate emotion	◗ Society and living standards ◗ Personal values and ideals ◗ The world of work ◗ Unexplained phenomena and events ◗ National environmental concerns ◗ Public figures past and present

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Recommended grammar	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
9	◗ Expressing abstract ideas ◗ Expressing regrets, wishes and hopes ◗ Expressing assumptions ◗ Paraphrasing ◗ Evaluating options ◗ Hypothesising ◗ Evaluating past actions or course of events	◗ Mixed conditionals ◗ Verbs followed by gerund and/or infinitive, eg *forget, stop, go on, remember* ◗ More complex forms of the passive with modals ◗ *Should/must/might/could* + perfect infinitive ◗ Correct verb patterns after *wish* and *hope*	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic area ◗ Vocabulary specific to the subject areas ◗ Cohesive devices to recap and recover, eg *as I was saying, anyway...* ◗ Hesitation fillers, eg *I mean, you know* ◗ Stock phrases to gain time for thought and keep the turn, eg *well, let me think...* ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ Rising and falling intonation for keeping, giving up and offering turns ◗ Stress and rhythm to highlight and emphasise main points and ideas ◗ Intonation and pitch to convey attitude	◗ Dreams and nightmares ◗ Crime and punishment ◗ Technology ◗ Habits and obsessions ◗ Global environmental issues ◗ Design

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Grammar expectations	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
10	◗ Developing an argument ◗ Defending a point of view ◗ Expressing beliefs ◗ Expressing opinions tentatively ◗ Summarising information, ideas and arguments ◗ Deducing	◗ A broad range of complex structures to express thoughts clearly ◗ A high degree of grammatical accuracy, although minor errors may occur when attempting to use a combination of structures across sentence boundaries	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ A range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms ◗ Modifying words, eg *basically, quite, certainly* ◗ Intensifiers, eg *absolutely, completely, totally* ◗ Tentative expressions, eg *I may be wrong but..., Don't you think it might be...* ◗ Signposting words, eg *firstly, finally* ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of topic and subject-area specific vocabulary ◗ Sounds with minimal interference from the first language ◗ A range of stress and intonation patterns, pitch and volume to: – engage and maintain the examiner's interest – signal the provision of new information – indicate discourse structure	**List A** ◗ Roles in the family ◗ Communication ◗ The school curriculum ◗ Youth behaviour ◗ Use of the internet ◗ Designer goods OR **List B** ◗ International events ◗ Equal opportunities ◗ Social issues ◗ The future of the planet ◗ Scientific developments ◗ Stress management

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Grammar expectations	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
11	◗ Justifying an argument ◗ Inferring ◗ Expressing caution ◗ Expressing empathy and sympathy ◗ Challenging arguments and opinions ◗ Evaluating different standpoints ◗ Expressing reservations	◗ A broad range of complex structures, used flexibly and effectively in combination and contrast ◗ A high degree of grammatical accuracy, errors are rare and difficult to identify	◗ Vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas ◗ A good range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms ◗ Signposting expressions, eg *I'd like to begin with..., Conversely..., To conclude...* ◗ Vague and imprecise language, eg *a bit more, a hundred people or so* ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ The correct pronunciation of topic and subject-area specific vocabulary ◗ Various features of pronunciation which only occasionally deviate from an internationally intelligible model ◗ A range of stress and intonation patterns, pitch and volume to convey subtle shifts in meaning and attitude	**List A** ◗ Independence ◗ Ambitions ◗ Stereotypes ◗ Role models ◗ Competitiveness ◗ Young people's rights OR **List B** ◗ The media ◗ Advertising ◗ Lifestyles ◗ The arts ◗ The rights of the individual ◗ Economic issues

Summary of language items for each grade

Grade	Functions	Grammar expectations	Lexis	Phonology	Subject areas for the Conversation phase
12	◗ Asserting ◗ Denying ◗ Softening and downplaying propositions ◗ Contradicting ◗ Implying ◗ Affirming	◗ A comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis and eliminate ambiguity ◗ Differing linguistic forms to reformulate ideas and convey finer shades of meaning ◗ Complete and consistent grammatical control of highly complex language at all times	◗ A good command of a very broad lexical repertoire ◗ A wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms ◗ Phrases and expressions relating to the list of language functions	◗ Produce individual sounds so as to be fully understood by the examiner, with only a rare sound that deviates from an internationally intelligible model ◗ Stress and intonation patterns which are recognisably specific to English without any lapses in intelligibility	◗ There are no specific subject areas for Grade 12

Appendix 4

Regulatory information

Regulated titles and qualification numbers

Qualification	Regulated title	Qualification number
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 1	N/A	N/A
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 2	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 1) (GESE Grade 2) (A1)	603/3537/3
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 3	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 2) (GESE Grade 3) (A2.1)	603/3538/5
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 4	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 2) (GESE Grade 4) (A2.2)	603/3539/7
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 5	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 3) (GESE Grade 5) (B1.1)	603/3540/3
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 6	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (Entry 3) (GESE Grade 6) (B1.2)	603/3541/5
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 7	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 7) (B2.1)	603/3542/7
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 8	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 8) (B2.2)	603/3543/9
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 9	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 9) (B2.3)	603/3545/2
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 10	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 10) (C1.1)	603/3546/4
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 11	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 11) (C1.2)	603/3547/6
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 12	TCL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International Speaking and Listening (GESE Grade 12) (C2)	603/3548/8

Qualification type

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) qualifications are a one-to-one, face-to-face, oral assessment between the candidate and an examiner. GESE exams are available at 12 levels, from Grade 1 to Grade 12. GESE Grades 1–12 have been calibrated to pre-A1 to C2 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Objectives

Trinity's GESE qualifications provide evidence of the candidates' proficiency in speaking and listening in English. They complement general English language courses and are designed to develop communicative skills and build confidence. Trinity's GESE qualifications provide a reliable and valid scheme of assessment through which learners and teachers can measure progress and development, whether for educational and vocational purposes or as a leisure activity.

Total qualification time

The time it takes each candidate to prepare for the exam is dependent on where the learning is taking place and on the needs and experience of the individual candidate. The total qualification time (TQT) is a guide and is split as follows:

Qualification	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Independent learning hours (ILH)	Total qualification time (TQT)
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 1 & 2	100	25	125
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 3 & 4	100	25	125
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 5 & 6	100	25	125
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 7, 8 & 9	100	25	125
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 10 & 11	100	30	130
Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grade 12	100	30	130

Assessment methods

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English are individually assessed by an external examiner selected, trained and moderated by Trinity. The candidate's performance in the exam is measured by means of one overall criterion, task fulfilment. This is assessed in each phase of the exam.

The examiner assesses the candidate's performance in each phase of the exam by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D:

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

Attainment levels

The 12 grades provide a continuous measure of linguistic competence and take the learner from absolute beginner/pre-A1 on the CEFR (Grade 1) to full mastery/C2 on the CEFR (Grade 12).

Recognition

Trinity College London is an international exam board regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and by Qualifications Wales. Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English are regulated by these authorities within the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), and are recognised by other education authorities in many countries around the world.

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English are also audited by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) and hold the ALTE Q mark.

Trinity Graded Examinations in Spoken English conducted at registered SELT centres are accepted by the UKVI for some UK visa categories.

Minimum age and other entry requirements

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English are suitable for adults and for children aged 5 and over. When taken as an International ESOL exam, GESE can be tailored to reflect the context in which a candidate predominantly uses English, ie GESE for school or GESE for work. GESE for work is suitable for a young person or adult aged 14 or above who uses or is preparing to use English in a work-related setting, including in vocational schools. SELT candidates take GESE. The format of the exam is the same in all cases. There is no requirement to have passed lower grade levels or other qualifications; however, the grades represent a system of progressive mastery and the outcomes for each level assume mastery of the outcomes of previous grades.

Trinity is committed to making its exams accessible to all, and each candidate is treated individually when considering how assessments can be adapted for those with special needs.

Progression

While, for some learners, Graded Examinations in Spoken English represent personal goals and objectives, they can also be used as a progression route towards a higher level of English study, preparation for further or higher education, to provide proof of language level to prospective employers, or for immigration.