

Level 3 English for Business



International
Qualifications from EDI

Annual Qualification Review

2012

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Pass Rate Statistics	1
General Strengths and Weaknesses	1
Teaching Points by Syllabus Topic	3
Further Guidance	6
Examples of Candidate Responses	7

INTRODUCTION

The annual qualification review provides qualification-specific support and guidance to centres. This information is designed to help teachers preparing to teach the subject and to help candidates preparing to take the examination.

The reviews are published in September and take into account candidate performance, demonstrated in both on demand and series examinations, over the preceding 12 months. Global pass rates are published so you can measure the performance of your centre against these.

The review identifies candidate strengths and weaknesses by syllabus topic area and provides examples of good and poorer candidate responses. It should therefore be read in conjunction with details of the structure and learning objectives contained within the syllabus for the qualification found on the website.

The review also identifies any actual or proposed changes to the syllabus or question types together with their implications.

PASS RATE STATISTICS

The following statistics are based on the performance of candidates who took this qualification between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012.

Global pass rate 85.8%

Grade distributions

Pass	22.2%
Merit	50.3%
Distinction	13.3%

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Successful candidates

- were able to indicate that they had read and understood the information given in the text
- demonstrated a level of proficiency in written English appropriate to Level 3
- were able to use their own words rather than to copy large sections of the given text
- applied an appropriate examination technique by allocating sufficient time to attempt each question, whilst saving time to carry out a final proofreading of the responses
- for each task, made a careful selection of material, from that given, to satisfy the requirements of each task, particularly the needs of the receiver of the document
- adopted an appropriate tone and style for the documents produced
- had a knowledge of the standard business conventions of the layout of documents, and were able to apply these to the tasks
- demonstrated a knowledge of modern business practice, particularly how the use of ICT has influenced business communication.

Unsuccessful candidates

- did not appear to have a proficiency in English appropriate to Level 3 in terms of demonstrating an understanding of the information given and producing accurate communicative English
- did not devote an equal time to each task, leaving some tasks rushed, incomplete or missed
- made many careless errors that were not corrected through proof reading
- copied a large amount of text, making little attempt to adapt it for the required purpose, or paraphrase using “own words”
- were not able to apply business conventions and used inappropriate layouts of documents
- showed little or no appreciation of the communicative aspects of English and used an inappropriate tone or style in the documents produced.

TEACHING POINTS BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

There are eight syllabus topics.

- 1 Composing a business letter
- 2 Drafting an internal report
- 3 Business-related text comprehension
- 4 Business-related text and data conversion and reformulation
- 5-8 Linguistic competences

Topics 5 – 8 are tested in each question. At this level all aspects of linguistic structures and concepts are expected to be accurate. Topics 1 – 4 are tested in turn by four questions. All questions are compulsory and carry equal marks.

Syllabus Topic 1: Letter

Candidates are given a role and a context. They must then produce a business letter which could initiate communication with someone, or respond to a communication already received. It is always assumed that headed notepaper is used so candidates do not have to design letterheads, but all other components of the layout of a business letter should be used.

The teaching points for candidates are:

- there are certain accepted conventions for the layout of a business letter which candidates should follow. Such conventions are highlighted in standard textbooks. The opening (salutation) and close (valediction) must be in agreement. Paragraphs should be used, the letter must be dated and it should be clear who has produced the letter, usually with the name, position and/or job title, which should appear under the writer's signature. A subject heading is required
- as in all documents, only appropriate information should be included in the letter. There will often be asides, confidential comments, repetition and specific instructions which will appear in the task but which should not be included in the letter
- an appropriate style or tone must be adopted, which is affected by the relationship of the writer and the recipient.

Syllabus Topic 2: Internal report

Responses to this question vary. A significant factor is the adoption of an appropriate layout. At this level, there is not a prescribed format but all reports must include headings and subheadings if necessary under which the selected and gathered information is grouped. What is most important is that the recipient or reader can access the information and refer to relevant sections when necessary.

Candidates must also ensure that the headings are appropriate. Sometimes the candidate is not required to make recommendation; the report could assist someone else to do so, e.g. a Board of Directors. However, when recommendations are required, these should be clearly stated and specific.

The teaching points for candidates are:

- as is the case with all business documents, the report should be fit for the purpose for which it is intended

- unlike other documents, the report might not be always read from beginning to end in its entirety. Reports should be produced in such a way that sections can be easily located when specific information is required by the reader
- for the reason highlighted above, a report is never written in an “essay” style in continuous prose; it should always be structured using headings, paragraphs, and, if necessary, sub-headings. Points should be listed in a consistent manner, for example using numbers or “bullets”
- the traditional headings (i.e. Terms of Reference, Procedure, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations) should not always be used automatically, particularly in an informal report; an appropriate structure that satisfies the needs of the recipient should be used
- it is never appropriate to copy large amounts of the information given; information should always be summarised and put into the candidate’s own words, as far as this is possible. However, candidates must not attempt to paraphrase everything. Proper nouns, names, dates etc can be taken into the report from the source of information.

Syllabus Topic 3: Comprehension

Candidates with weak English skills find this the most testing question. They are required to read some complex text and then produce answers to questions on this. The text contains information of a business or commercial nature but candidates with no previous knowledge of the topic are not at a disadvantage. All information required is included in the text, although there is often one question in which candidates are asked to give an opinion or judgement on one of the issues raised in the text.

The teaching points for candidates are:

- for this question in particular, it is clearly demonstrated that this is a test of **reading** as well as **writing**. Candidates must read the text carefully and check for understanding before any written responses are produced
- as well as acquiring an understanding of the text, candidates must read very carefully the requirements of each question to ensure the responses are appropriate to the question. Responses that are inappropriate will gain no marks, however accurate the English might be
- candidates must not “lift” sections of the given text, but should use **own words** as far as possible. The aim of this section is to ensure that the candidates can demonstrate their understanding of the issues and language of the text rather than simply to identify where relevant information is located in the text
- the marks per question might vary and candidates must take this into account; it is a guide to how long or complex an answer should be.

Syllabus Topic 4: Reformulation

In this question, information is produced from a variety of sources and the candidate must consider the information given, and convert it (making an appropriate selection of what is relevant) into a document (or possibly two documents) used for a different purpose. For example, someone’s informal ideas might be converted into a memo giving specific instructions to staff. Instructions about changes to working conditions might require a memo to staff being produced, but also a notice to be placed for staff to see.

The teaching points for candidates are:

- this question is referred to as a task of reformulation; information given in one style or format must always be adapted to produce a document (or documents) to fill the requirements of the recipients
- in this question in particular, stronger candidates will be comfortable in reading or producing informal idiomatic English. Information given could include instructions in more idiosyncratic language.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- The importance of an appropriate examination technique, especially concerning time management, cannot be overstated. If a question is not attempted, 25 marks are immediately not available.
- Whilst there is a wide range of general business English textbooks available, a book in the Macmillan Testbuilder Series has been dedicated to providing guidance and practice for this examination, “LCCI English for Business, Level 3 Testbuilder”, (Macmillan; ISBN:9780230733923).
- Whilst there are many international conventions in the use of Business English, it is accepted that there can be cultural differences in various parts of the world in the way the language is used. Examiners will accept such differences as long as a consistent approach is adopted.
- Candidates are allowed to produce answers by means of a word processor. However, any typographical errors made are penalised.
- Americanised spelling (e.g. “Color” for “Colour”) is accepted as long as it is adopted consistently throughout the paper.
- Candidates should be encouraged to allow time for checking their answers. When answers are produced within time constraints, it is inevitable that some errors will be made. Such errors can easily be corrected when a final proof reading takes place.
- Many candidates make notes before attempting to produce the final versions of the business documents. This is encouraged as it can assist in ensuring that the points raised are in an appropriate order. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient time to produce a full draft answer before the final version is produced, but any notes or preliminary versions should be crossed through so it is clear which is the version to be marked.

EXAMPLES OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The examples are taken from the Series 3 2012 paper. Question 2, the report question, was as follows.

Question 2

Situation

You are employed by a company that runs a large chain of coffee shops. The company is now looking for an opportunity to start a new range of shops. The Company Manager, Mr Michael Lateste, said this to you.

“When I was in America on holiday recently, I noticed that there were many shops selling frozen yoghurt. We visited a shop called *Pinkberry* which seemed to be doing very good business. There don’t seem to be many of these shops outside America, so I’d like you to look into the possibility of investing in them ourselves. I really want to know what they are, what the American experience is and what are the advantages and disadvantages of investing in these shops. See what you can find out and let me have a report so I can introduce the ideas to our Development Committee. Don’t make any recommendations, that’s their job, but make clear, separate lists of the advantages and disadvantages to help the committee make its decision.”

As you are preparing your report, the company’s Marketing Manager says this to you:

“I hope you’ll be able to find out all kinds of good things about frozen yoghurt shops but please remember the possible downside. There have been other American ideas that simply didn’t work overseas. A few years ago we were all going to make our fortunes from Juice Bars, then the trend was for doughnut shops. Neither of these has been successful outside America. However, I should say that the modern style coffee bars also began in America and they’ve done well everywhere.”

The results of your research are as follows:

American Experience

Several “chains” established – one of the most successful *Pinkberry* – founder of Starbucks coffee shops invested \$27.5 million in this in 2007 – other chains followed – became quite “trendy” for young people – seen as healthy alternative to bars selling alcohol or coffee shops.

What are frozen yoghurt shops?

These are shops selling a frozen-milk product. Yoghurt is seen as a healthy food and can be given all kinds of flavour, like ice-cream. This type of yoghurt is sold in a frozen form, so freezer and chilling equipment is needed. It can be sold alongside a range of toppings, such as fruit or chocolate chips. The shops need not be large – sites can be as small as 100 square metres.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Sites need not be large – little equipment needed – no cooking involved – so little staff training needed – product seen as healthy and fat-free – but often American products do not do well outside America – product is frozen so it might not have a great appeal in cold weather – people rarely buy other products alongside yoghurt (as they do in coffee bars) – but not much competition at the moment – few frozen yoghurt shops open yet.

Task

Write the report as requested using an appropriate style. **(25 marks)**

The following answers show three varying responses to the question.

Answer (A) shows a clear Distinction response.

Answer (B) shows a competent Pass response.

Answer (C) shows a Fail response.

Answer (A)

To: Company Manager (Mr Michael Lateste)
From: A Candidate
Subject: Potential of frozen yoghurt shops
Date: 7 June 2012

Introduction

I was asked to investigate the potential for shops selling frozen yoghurt in this country.

Frozen yoghurt shops

Shops sell this product to people in cafes. The basic product can be sold in various flavours and items such as fruit or chocolate can be added. As the product is frozen, some freezer/chilling equipment is required.

The American Experience

These shops have become popular in the United States of America, where the owner of Starbucks coffee chain invested \$27.5 million in the “*Pinkberry*” chain in 2007. Many other chains have followed this and their shops have become popular alternatives to bars and coffee shops.

Advantages of investing

- The shops need not be large – they can be as small as 100 square metres.
- Little complicated equipment is needed, only a freezer/chiller.
- Staff do not need extensive training as little food preparation is required.
- The product is seen as healthy.
- Currently there is little competition outside the USA.

Disadvantages of investing

- American ideas are not always successful outside that country (eg Juice Bars and doughnut shops did not travel well).
- The product is frozen, so might not have a great appeal in cold weather.
- There is little opportunity for “adding value” to the product as customers rarely purchase other items with it.

This is an excellent response and is of a very clear Distinction standard.

- The layout is appropriate. On this occasion the report does not use the traditional “standard” headings (eg Terms of Reference, Procedures, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations). In an informal internal report, these headings do not add to clarity.
- The material has been placed into a sensible order, first giving an explanation as to what frozen yoghurt shops are, before going on to give the findings.
- The candidate resisted the temptation to give recommendations as these were not requested.
- The contents of the report have been placed under suitable headings in a consistent style. The original material came in a variety of formats including notes and full sentences.
- The report avoids repetition, although some ideas were mentioned more than once in the stimulus material (eg that yoghurt is seen as “healthy”).
- In general, the report is clear, concise and helpful for a reader.

Answer (B)

Report on Frozen yoghurt Shops

American Experience

1. Several chain have been established.
2. Most sucessful is "Pinkberry" – founded by Starbucks
3. Trendy by young peoples
4. healthier than bars or coffee shop.

Frozen Yoghurt

1. Its a frozen milk product.
2. Sold in many flavours and topping
3. Sites need not be big – 100 square meters

Advantages

1. small sites – can be up to 100 square metres
2. Little equipment is needed as no cooking
3. Little staff trainings needed.
4. Healthy product
5. Not much competition.

Disadvantages

1. Product is frozen so has little appeal in winter
2. Not much competition – little public interest
3. Often American Products dont do well outside of America.
4. Not much chance to sell other products, like ice cream.

Conclusions

There are advantages and disadvantages to selling Frozen Yoghurt

A Candidate
7 June 2012

There are a number of issues and errors in this report but there were some good features. The candidate has used a suitable layout with headings and numbered points and the main issues were raised. Such strengths brought the response into a Pass grade but the issues highlighted below prevented the answer from achieving a Merit Grade.

- The layout was acceptable but it could have been better. The candidate did sign and date the report but it is more clear if the report begins with a "memo" style heading so it is clear for whom the report is written.
- The candidate stuck closely to the original order of material. It would have been better to start with a definition of frozen yoghurt shops before going on to describe the American experience.
- Some of the numbered points are full sentences, others are not. There is inconsistency in the use of full stops at the end of the numbered points.
- The conclusion adds nothing to the report and is not necessary.
- There is confusion in plural usage. "People", "equipment" and "training" are given plural forms but "chain" and "coffee shop" remain singular when a plural form was required.

- The American forms of “flavour” and “Metres” are used, which is acceptable. However, both “meter” and “metre” are used.
- Some of the points are too concise and not sufficiently developed.
- The apostrophe is missed in “it’s” and “don’t”.

Answer (C)

Terms of Reference

When I visited America recently, I noticed that there were many shops selling frozen yoghurt. We visited a shop called Pinkberry which seemed to be doing very good business., There don't seem to be many of these shops outside America.

Proceedures

See what you can find out and let me have a report so I can introduce the ideas to our Develment Comittee.

Findings

American Experience

1. Seven chains established
2. Pinkberry
3. Starbucks invested
4. trendy
5. healthy

What are frozen Yoghurt

1. Frozen-milk product
2. heathly
3. equipment
4. It can be sold alongside a range of toppings such as fruit or chocolate chips

Advantages and Disadvantages

1. sites not large
2. little equipment – no cookings
3. so little staff training
4. healthy and fat free
5. but often American products do well outside America
6. cold weather
7. not much competition
8. few frozen yoghurt shops open yet

Conclusions

I hope you'll be able to find out all kinds of good things about frozen yoghurt shops but please remember the possible downside.

Recommendations

We should invest \$27.5 million in this.

It is interesting to note that a first impression of this answer might be that it does not look very different from Answers (A) and (B). It is often the case that responses to the Report question fail because they adopt an essay style rather than report style using headings and listed points. Whilst it is true that this might appear to be a more promising attempt to produce a report, in fact, it is full of deficiencies and is well below Pass standard.

- “Standard” headings have been used but not correctly. In the “Terms of Reference” the candidate copied verbatim the first part of the given text, which is totally inappropriate. The ideas under “Procedures” (which was incorrectly spelled) were something like Terms of Reference, but again were copied from the text. The “Findings” are actually findings but very badly expressed. The “Conclusions” are really part of Terms of Reference, but, again, are copied, whilst the “Recommendations”, which were not requested, are totally inappropriate.
- As indicated above, the “Findings” are not adequately expressed. They are so brief as to be meaningless.
- It was in the instructions that separate lists of advantages and disadvantages were required but in this case they were listed together under one heading.
- Most of the report was copied from the given text and no attempt was made to reorganise the material or place it into a sensible order. Despite this high level of copying, there were many errors in spelling and other aspects of English.

EDI

International House
Siskin Parkway East
Middlemarch Business Park
Coventry CV3 4PE
UK

Tel. +44 (0) 8707 202909

Fax. +44 (0) 2476 516505

Email. enquiries@ediplc.com

www.ediplc.com

© Education Development International Plc 2009.
All rights reserved. This publication in its entirety is
the copyright of Education Development
International Plc. Reproduction either in whole or
in part is forbidden without the written permission
from Education Development International Plc.



Supporting learning
and performance