
HellenicAmericanUniversity

ETECT

The English Teaching
Competency Test



HELLENIC AMERICAN UNION

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CENTER FOR EXAMINATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Sample Test

Paper 3: Essays

FREE OF CHARGE

PAPER 3: ESSAYS (SAMPLE)

Overview

Paper 3 of the ETECT measures your ability to apply theoretical knowledge of methodological principles and practices to classroom situations/contexts.

There are 2 sections in this paper, which cover the following areas:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Section 1: Language Awareness and Language Acquisition | 16 points |
| Section 2: Teaching Skills and Grammar | 32 points |
| Total | 48 points |

You must choose **one** essay topic from Section 1 and **two** essay topics from Section 2, for a total of **three** essays. Each essay is worth 16 points.

Note:

- You will have one hour and 30 minutes to complete all three essays.
- You may use pen or pencil to write your response.
- You will not be graded on the appearance of your paper, but your handwriting must be readable.
- Each essay should be approximately 200-250 words in length.
- Your essays will be assessed on content, organization, development, form, meaning, and use of language.
- Extra sheets of paper or scratch paper will not be scored. Please use *only* the space provided to write each response.

Please note: Keep your eyes on your own test booklet and answer sheet. Candidates giving or receiving help or using notes or other aids will be disqualified and will not receive a score report.

PAPER 3, SECTION 1: LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 16 POINTS

Answer **ONE** essay question from the following:

Example:

- A.** Read through the following transcript of authentic English language learner speech [transcript, e.g. /'aɪ 'juːst tuː 'plɛɪ 'fʊːtɪbɔːl ɑːn sætə'rdeɪ | 'naʊ 'aɪ 'kɛnt bɪ'kɒz 'aɪ hæv tuː 'stɑːdi 'iːŋɡlɪːs/]. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this particular learner's speech in terms of phonetics and phonology. As a teacher, what could you do to address the learner's weaknesses?
- B.** Outline the views of cognitive and developmental psychologists against the innatist view of second language development. What are some implications of these views for the second language classroom?

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PAPER 3, SECTION 2: TEACHING SKILLS AND GRAMMAR

32 POINTS

Answer **TWO** essay questions from the following:

C. What are some of the strategies learners can use to communicate effectively while speaking in English? Discuss ways that such strategies can be introduced and fostered in the classroom.

D. Read the following text from an intermediate level course book: [text] Discuss how you would deal with the vocabulary in the text. Which words (if any) would you pre-teach? Why did you decide on those words? How would you teach them?

E. What is the genre approach to teaching writing? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages you see in using this approach over other approaches.

F. “Grammar should be taught in terms of form, meaning, and use.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Justify your response with concrete examples taken from the literature and/or from your experience.

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KEY

PAPER THREE: ESSAYS (SAMPLE) KEY

The bullet points for each essay topic below provide several possible points that could be included in a candidate's response. They are by no means the only points worth mentioning.

Paper 3, Section 1: Language Awareness and Language Acquisition 16 points

Answer **ONE** essay question from the following:

A. Read through the following transcript of authentic English language learner speech [transcript, e.g. / 'aɪ 'juːst tuː 'plɛɪ 'fuːt.bəl ɑːn sætər'deɪ | 'nɑːs 'aɪ 'kɛnt bɪ'kɔːz 'aɪ hæv tuː 'stʌdi 'iːŋ.gliːs/]. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of this particular learner's speech in terms of phonetics and phonology. As a teacher, what could you do to address the learner's weaknesses?

- Strengths: speaker maintains voicing of final obstruents, e.g., bɪ'kɔːz; does not trill 'r' in Saturday; pronounces diphthongs accurately
- Speech does not demonstrate vowel reductions on unaccented syllables, e.g. / tuː/ Address by demonstrating stress-timed character of English, e.g., repeating sentences with several prepositional phrases (*I saw a man with a hat on the street*) while keeping beat with one's hand or a metronome ; practice using, e.g., Jazz Chants (Carolyn Graham) or by creating one's own
- Incorrect stress on last syllable in /sætər'deɪ/ Deal with raising awareness of primary and/or secondary stress in English, e.g., visually using different sized (or different colored) dots over words, or kinesthetically by finger tapping or hand clapping; for activities, see *Sound Foundations* (Underhill)
- Vowels in /kɛnt/ and first syllable of /fuːt.bəl/ Deal with /kɛnt/ by contrasting pair can/can't in isolation and in context; deal with /fuːt.bəl/ by contrasting vowel sounds / uː/ and /ʊ/ through minimal pair activity, e.g. using word pair, e.g. *Luke/look. pool/pull, fool/full*; additional practice playing Bingo with cards having vowel sounds in squares instead of numbers.
- /s/ instead of /ʃ/ in /iːŋ.gliːs/
- Deal with by contrasting vowel sounds / s / and /ʃ/ through minimal pair activity, e.g. using word pairs *see/she* (word-initial contrast), *push/puss* (word-final contrast)

B. Outline the views of cognitive and developmental psychologists against the innatist view of second language development. What are some implications of these views for the second language classroom?

- Innatist view of 1st language acquisition: language is innate, that is, we are born with a language-learning mechanism termed Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Once children are exposed to language, the device is triggered and parameters are set as they discover the structure of the language they hear. Best known proponent: Chomsky.
- Criticisms: does not consider the issue of the influence cognition (thought) and language development have on each other; deals with 1st language acquisition (L1) and not 2nd language acquisition (L2), e.g. Is LAD available to 2nd language learners and, if so, is it affected by one's acquisition of the L1?
- Cognitive and developmental psychologists argue that postulating LAD is not necessary, that language learning is one example of the general learning that takes place in children as they develop. They argue that, as with other forms of learning, we gradually develop a knowledge base and set of skills. As we practice these skills, automaticity develops, just as learning to drive a car requires a lot of conscious effort at first, but then becomes second nature with practice. Anderson and DeKeyser, for example, view learning of the L2 as learning another skill.
- Classroom implications: L2 learners need to use language in lots of different contexts to get the practice they need to develop automaticity and fluency. Presenting language in isolation or in isolated sentences devoid of a social context will not provide meaningful practice in a variety of social contexts.

Paper 3, Section 2: Teaching Skills and Grammar Answer **TWO** essays questions from the following:

C. What are some of the strategies learners can use to communicate effectively while speaking in English? Discuss ways that such strategies can be introduced and fostered in the classroom.

- Significant research on strategies has been conducted by Rebecca Oxford.
- Compensatory strategies help learners when they can't recall a word. These can involve using a synonym for the 'missing' word, talking around the word (circumlocution), using gestures, or using words that allow for a slight pause to gain thinking time.
- Social strategies heighten awareness of social and cultural norms, e.g. how much distance to keep between speaker and listener, how to maintain a conversation, e.g. nodding to show interest, asking questions to engage the listener, and how to use social and cultural norms in turn taking.
- Affective strategies to lower factors that create inhibition and a fear of speaking, especially in front of a group.
- In classroom: teachers find out what speaking strategies learners already use and build on that information, e.g., create an activity in which learners are given a word and have to describe it rather than say it ('cell phone' – that thing you use to text to your friends); practice rephrasing what one has said ("Can you say that in a different way?"); show video clips of interactions between L1 speakers and ask questions that address culture-specific aspects, e.g., eye contact, distance between speakers.

D. Read the following text from an intermediate level course book: [text] Discuss how you would deal with the vocabulary in the text. Which words (if any) would you pre-teach? Why did you decide on those words? How would you teach them?

- Response is text-dependent.
- In general, pre-teach vocabulary for understanding key ideas in the text or vocabulary that is either used or needed for subsequent activities, e.g., answering comprehension questions
- How to teach the words chosen will also depend on the words, e.g., concrete nouns can be presented through realia or pictures, verbs can be presented through miming or Total Physical Response (TPR). Paul Nation (New Ways in Teaching Vocabulary) has written a lot on vocabulary acquisition and activities that promote it.
- Teach words in context; encourage students to use words in their own sentences; encourage them to use online dictionary to hear and repeat pronunciation of words; use mind maps for topic-related vocabulary.

E. What is the genre approach to teaching writing? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages you see in using this approach over other approaches.

- A genre approach focuses on first raising awareness of the social function of different genres of text, e.g., editorials, science reports, persuasive essays, and then analyzing how text is organized in those different genres, e.g., for a scientific report, results of a study, how it was conducted, analysis of results, implications for further research.
- Learners study a model (or models) of the genre and are assigned various activities through which, with the help of the teacher and their peers, they familiarize themselves with its language and text organization. The final step is independent construction of a text using that particular genre. (several proponents: Hammond, Kay, Dudley-Evans).
- Advantages: Focus on social context/purpose can help learners understand why a text is organized the way it is, and why one register is used over another. Attention is drawn to form, meaning, and use of language.
- Students can learn various linguistic conventions that are used to convey certain rhetorical effects, e.g., three items in a list or three examples in order to convey a sense that an argument is strong.
- Ideally, the genres chosen for development are those that the learners will actually need.

- Learners tend to value models that they can use as a springboard.
- Using models, however, can lead to more imitation than creativity in students' writing.
- As such, it may not be ideally-suited for all levels, e.g., advanced-level learners may have already developed an implicit awareness of genre through the many types of texts they have read and the writing they have already done. Presenting them with models may be more of a hindrance than a help.
- Although use of a genre in a particular social situation is the ideal, some teachers may focus so much on linguistic analysis of the text that the communicative purpose of the text may be lost in a barrage of detail.

F. "Grammar should be taught in terms of form, meaning, and use." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Justify your response with concrete examples taken from the literature and/or from your experience.

- Agree or disagree, but justify!
- Larsen-Freeman coined the term *grammaring* to relate it better to other skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Grammaring is a process of using grammar communicatively to convey a message, e.g. how the passive can be used to mask agency for sociocultural reasons.
- Seeing grammar in context, learners become aware that course books can only present 'part of the picture'. For example, how many advanced-level course books mention the use of the simple past tense in requests like, "Did you want to contribute anything for the office party?"
- Focusing on use of language, learners come to realize, for example, that the longer certain responses are, the more polite they tend to become, e.g.,
A: Would you like to meet me for dinner tonight?
B: No./I'm afraid I can't./I would really like to, but I have other plans this evening.



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