EXAMINATION FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

TEACHER’S GUIDE

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The Hellenic American Union, in cooperation with the University of Michigan, administered the Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) for the first time more than 50 years ago. Since then, the Hellenic American Union (HAU) has been committed to providing quality examination services to the EFL community. A major part of the HAU’s services is our Teacher Education seminars, offered throughout Greece to help school owners and teachers become fully aware of the nature and content of all examinations administered by the Hellenic American Union. These seminars also provide practical guidelines on teaching techniques and materials, encompassing current methodological principles in the field of Teacher Education.

Our publications, videos and the HAU newsletter “log-on” complement our extensive seminars. This particular publication, The ECPE Teacher’s Guide, is based on a collection of articles published in the “log-on” over the last years. It provides details of the content and format of the test, guidelines for classroom activities and references to other HAU publications for ECPE preparation classes.

The aim of all our publications is to ensure that the examinations administered by the Hellenic American Union are accessible and fully understood by language teachers and students in Greece. This is part of the HAU’s mission to assist both young people and adults to communicate effectively in English. The more informed language school owners and teachers are about methodology in teaching English as a foreign language, the more likely candidates will perform well on the Michigan examinations and be able to communicate successfully in an international setting where English is spoken.

The Hellenic American Union
INTRODUCTION TO THE ECPE

The Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) is an advanced-level general test of English as a foreign or second language. The ECPE tests language skills approximately equal in level of difficulty and content to those required of a university-level adult. The language of the examination is Standard American English. The ECPE was established in 1953 by language specialists at the University of Michigan’s English Language Institute (ELI) and is given each year in more than 25 countries worldwide. The certificate is recognized in many countries, including Greece, as official evidence of advanced proficiency in English for the purposes of education, employment and career advancement. The ECPE certificate is valid for the certificate holder’s lifetime. A person who is successful on the ECPE has shown approximately equivalent language ability to that of a holder of the Cambridge CPE and/or a person with a pbt TOEFL score of 567-677 or cbt TOEFL 229-300. The ECPE is an assessment instrument for Mastery Level (C2), Proficient User on the Council of Europe’s CEFR scale.

Overview of the ECPE

The ECPE is comprised of four sections: writing, listening, grammar-cloze-vocabulary-reading (GCVR) and speaking, each of which is presented in detail in its own section of this exam guide. The entire examination is administered in two separate sittings: one scheduled administration of the writing, listening and GCVR sections and one pre-arranged speaking test. The written part takes 2 hours and 25 minutes to complete, without including distribution and collection of test papers and instructions. The speaking test takes approximately 25-35 minutes and it is held on another day before or after the written part of the examination. The ECPE is administered twice a year at certified testing centers around the world. In Greece and the Balkans, the Hellenic American Union (HAU) is the sole provider of both the University of Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) and the Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English (ECCE).

SECTION BY SECTION OVERVIEW

Writing

The writing section of the ECPE involves one writing task: an impromptu argumentative or expository academic essay. Candidates choose one of two topics which are written in the test booklet in the form of a thought-provoking question or statement on a timely social or cultural issue. The written stimulus, or prompt, is of approximately 50 words. Candidates have 30 minutes to write a complete essay of approximately one and a half to two pages in length. Candidates are encouraged to spend several minutes organizing their thoughts and ideas on the subject before writing. The use of dictionaries or other support texts is not permitted. Candidates should write to the best of their ability, drawing on their own knowledge and opinions. The writing section does not, however, test in-depth knowledge on any subject area. Rather, it evaluates the candidates’ ability to express their opinions and ideas clearly in a well-organized and cohesive essay with an appropriate range of linguistic complexity and lexical sophistication.
Writing section sample item:
Candidates must choose one of two topics given as a basis for their essay.

1. Some people regard tattoos and body piercing as an extreme form of fashion. Why do you think young people are prepared to permanently damage their skin to be fashionable? Does rebellion or peer pressure play the greater role in their decision? Discuss and give examples.

2. The expression, “Show me a man’s friends, and I’ll tell you who the man is,” suggests that people are defined by the relationships they establish. To what extent do you think this is true? Offer your view providing examples or support.

Sample Essay based on writing topic 1
Considered a manifestation of poor taste and unwise behavior, tattoos are often frowned upon mainly by adults. Body piercing is also disapproved of and viewed as an act characterized by risk taking and lack of good judgment. However, despite warnings that they are bound to regret it later in life, young people worldwide indulge in this type of body art. What induces them to do so may range from fashion-related to cultural reasons, but I believe the two major factors contributing to their decision to experiment with body art are a desire to rebel and susceptibility to peer pressure.

Tattoos and body piercing as rebellious acts exemplify different forms of defiance. For some young people they represent an overt rejection of mainstream values and beauty standards. Through these acts, disillusioned youths assert their right to challenge what they consider narrow-minded views of acceptable behavior and appearance and to provide alternatives to mainstream beauty standards. They are often inspired by rebellious sports and music icons who proudly display tattoos and body piercing that convey anti-status quo messages. Other young people view body art as a way of testing the limits set by their parents or of distancing themselves from people their age who are willing to adhere to the status quo.

Young people, who may not see themselves as rebels, often overcome their initial reservations about the permanent nature of tattoos and the scarring associated with body piercing and succumb to the persuasive power of their peers. What they might normally reject seems more acceptable when it is advocated by peers whose views and actions they admire. Daring young people showing confidence and expressing enthusiasm about body art can dispel any reservations less daring ones might have. Emulating these peers fosters a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, tattoos and body piercing often reflect the rebellious tendencies of the young or their need to follow the example set by popular and influential peers. Sometimes, however, they are spontaneous acts that are not influenced by outside factors and may simply reflect the impulsiveness of youth.
Sample Essay based on writing topic 2

Sayings such as “show me a man’s friends and I’ll show you who the man is” are based on popular wisdom and they are used across cultures and continents. Therefore, they reflect a universal truth. Undoubtedly, there are always exceptions to the rule, but I believe the relationships people establish reveal a lot about their character.

People whose behavior does not meet social approval tend to have like-minded friends. For instance, there is nothing more comforting and reassuring for someone with a habit like gambling or heavy drinking than a circle of friends who succumb to the same temptations. An unreliable or aggressive person feels right at home around others with the same character traits. Similarly, people who engage in illegal activities often associate with individuals who conduct themselves the same way.

Besides friendships characterized by bad habits or illegal behavior, there are those that are based on positive values and shared interests. For example, caring and giving persons are drawn to people who can relate to these aspects of their personality. Socially and environmentally aware individuals often become life-long friends with others who care deeply about and fight for the same causes. Also, those whose intellectual pursuits are too sophisticated for the average person to comprehend develop friendships with individuals who can communicate with them on the same level.

Of course, there are always people who pursue relationships with influential or glamorous members of the community and boast about their so-called friends in order to impress. By doing so, they try to satisfy a desire to be in the spotlight. In reality, such persons are deluding themselves thinking that they can wield influence and enjoy fame simply by associating with the rich and famous. These persons’ interpretation of the saying “show me a man’s friends and I’ll show you who the man is” may suit their purposes but it does not reflect the deeper meaning of the saying.

In conclusion, when choosing friends, people are consciously or subconsciously attracted to individuals who exhibit similar behavior or possess the same character qualities. These common elements bind them together and have a lasting effect on their relationships.

Rationale

The writing section of the ECPE is designed to evaluate candidates’ ability to communicate effectively in extended academic discourse in English at the university level. The successful essay will demonstrate a high degree of fluency, an advanced level of accuracy in form, varied syntactic structures, appropriate use of topic-specific vocabulary and clear communication of ideas in a cohesive text.

Scoring

All ECPE essays are scored by trained and experienced raters at the University of Michigan’s English Language Institute. As of June, 2009, the essays will be rated on a 5-level scale: A (Honors), B (Pass), C (Minimum Pass), D (Borderline Fail) and E (Fail). If an essay is assigned a failing score (D or E) by a rater, it is re-evaluated by one or two other raters in order to determine a final score. An essay must
receive a C (Minimum Pass) or above to be successful. Please consult Table 1 for descriptors at each level. Note that while Standard American English is the official language of the ECPE, candidates are not penalized for using British English spelling or expressions in their writing.

**Preparing for ECPE writing**
A quick review of the basic elements of essay writing will keep students aware of the characteristics of an academic essay. Some points to review are:
• the development of an introductory paragraph that contains a thesis statement which guides the content and purpose of the entire essay
• the organization of an essay into paragraphs each with a single controlling idea
• the use of supporting examples for each main point
• a summary of the main ideas of the essay in a final concluding paragraph.

Preparing to write well on the ECPE means addressing the areas of academic essay writing that are sometimes overlooked in a general English language course. There are several areas to focus on both inside the classroom and in individual study.

**Grammar and mechanics**
1. The grammar and syntax of an advanced-level academic essay in English should demonstrate a range of appropriate linguistic structures and forms used with a high degree of accuracy. Students should aim to include a variety of simple and complex structures (e.g. short, relatively simple sentences as well as longer, more grammatically complex sentences) in their writing.

2. The mechanics of essay writing should not be overlooked. Students should make sure they do the following:
• indent each new paragraph when handwriting an essay
• check for spelling mistakes throughout
• punctuate carefully to demonstrate understanding of grammatical control (e.g. a comma always separates two independent clauses in a sentence).

**Discourse markers**
One of the most important aspects of writing at this level is coherence, or how the ideas in an essay are connected.

1. Linking words and phrases as well as connectors (e.g. *but*, *however*, *therefore*, etc.) are one means of achieving cohesion in writing, but less experienced writers should be particularly careful not to misuse or overuse linking devices, which can result in very awkward and unnatural writing.

2. Another approach to linking ideas in writing is to strategically repeat or juxtapose certain words and phrases so that the interconnectedness of ideas is “built into” the writing and is evident to the reader without a lot of obvious linking words. Compare the following:
• Michigan is a state in the Midwest of America. However, this area is not well known abroad.
• Michigan is a state in America’s Midwest, an area which is little known abroad.
Rhetoric and organization

1. Academic essays are organized around one main topic, idea, opinion, argument, etc. Students need to carefully consider the topic they choose to write on so that they can develop their own perspective or position on the subject, which they must then further develop and communicate logically and cohesively (i.e. the ideas must be well-connected to each other) in writing. Candidates should be careful not to repeat themselves unnecessarily in their essays and not to address unrelated or irrelevant points.

2. ECPE candidates will write either an expository or argumentative essay. It is helpful to understand the difference between these two kinds of essays.
   - An **expository essay** is an essay that explains, explores or describes a topic. For example, an essay about the process of recycling urban waste would describe and explain that process. That would be an expository essay.
   - An **argumentative essay** argues one particular opinion or point of view. For example, an essay that expresses the writer’s opinion on European immigration laws would be an argumentative essay. In an argumentative essay, the writer must express or argue their own personal opinion, but they must also be careful to acknowledge the opposing point of view in order to present a balanced argument.

3. There is always a specific purpose for writing, and every essay will have a particular tone and style that reflects that purpose. In addition to purpose, there is always an intended audience for a piece of writing. Below are some points candidates should consider about purpose, tone and audience in writing.

Writing tips for ECPE test takers!

Understanding the purpose of your essay will help you to choose the most appropriate vocabulary and structures to express your ideas well. For example, if you are trying to persuade the reader to adopt the opinion you are expressing, you should use relatively strong, purposeful, convincing language. It would not help your argument to adopt an unsure or unconvincing tone. At the same time, academic writing should not sound boastful or conceited, so you must not be inappropriately extreme. Awareness of the right tone in an argumentative essay is best understood through the reading and analysis of similar texts.

A consideration of who will read your essay, the audience, is also very important. In the context of an academic writing test of advanced-level English proficiency such as the ECPE, your audience is the examiner who will rate your essay. Keeping this in mind will help you maintain the right tone and level of formality throughout your essay. It should also remind you to adhere to the conventions of academic writing and not depart into a less academic style and to maintain an appropriately high level of vocabulary and varying grammatical complexity.

Some conventions of academic writing to keep in mind are the following:
   - single words are preferable to phrasal words (e.g. tolerate is preferred to put up with)
   - contractions (e.g. isn’t) should be avoided
   - clichés and other colloquial language (e.g. cream of the crop) should also be avoided
• academic writing should not be excessively wordy (e.g. state your ideas concisely)
• an overly personal tone is inappropriate in an academic essay
• prefer using the pronoun “one” in place of “you” when speaking in general terms (e.g. One should never underestimate a child’s potential.)
• academic essays should maintain a certain level of formality consistently throughout.

**ECPE writing activities**
Below are several activities for developing writing skills at proficiency level.

1. Text analysis activities
Students read sample essays and examine them for some of the features of academic essay writing discussed above. For example:
   • What is the main idea of the text?
   • What is the purpose of the text?
   • How is the text organized?
   • What is the main idea of each paragraph?
   • Does the conclusion summarize the main ideas? How?
   • What is the overall tone of the text?
   • Which vocabulary in particular helps express the observed tone?
   • Who is the intended audience of the text? How do you know?
   • Find examples that demonstrate the level of formality/informality of the text.

2. Text revision activities
Students revise a sample essay that they have analyzed for specific features so as to:
   • change the level of formality through vocabulary, grammar and syntax
   • change the tone of the essay
   • combine short sentences into more complex sentences
   • reduce complex sentences into simpler sentences.

3. Process writing activities
Students work on developing process writing skills, such as:
   • brainstorming ideas before writing
   • organizing and outlining ideas
   • writing a draft
   • giving feedback on a piece of writing
   • revising a draft
   • editing and proofreading.

More activities and greater support for writing development at the proficiency level can be found in the *Build Up Your Proficiency Writing Skills* (HAU 2005).
More writing tips for ECPE test takers!

- Think of everything you can that is related to the topic you will write about. Try to link the topic to words and phrases you know and build your essay on those.
- Decide from the beginning what your purpose for writing is (explaining, comparing, giving and opinion, arguing a point of view, etc.) and think about how that will guide your writing.
- Take a few minutes to organize your thoughts. Choose an approach and stick to it.
- Stay focused and don’t stray from the main points of your essay.
- Remember to provide examples and details to support each main idea.
- Keep in mind your tone and audience. That will influence your word choices and syntax.
- Carefully reread your paper when you’ve finished it and correct all misspellings and mistakes in punctuation.

Listening

The listening section of the ECPE is divided into 3 sections which together take a total of 35-40 minutes to complete. The language heard is Standard American English spoken at a normal rate of delivery by native speakers. Both male and female voices are heard. The listening section of the exam is delivered by CD which is played only once.

Part I (15-17 items)

In the first part, candidates hear short conversations. The conversations are not printed in the test booklet. Candidates must understand each conversation and choose the statement that most closely conveys its meaning from the 3 answer choices written in the test booklet. The conversations are heard only once.

Part I sample item:
Woman: Have you paid the rent yet?
Man: I was going to but the landlord went away this weekend.
Woman: You better see him on Monday or he’ll get upset.

A. He paid the rent.
B. He’ll pay on Monday. ✓
C. The landlord is already upset.

Part II (15-17 items)

For each item in Part II of the listening section, candidates hear a brief question or statement. They are spoken by either a male or female voice and do not appear in the test booklet. Candidates must understand the question or statement and choose the most appropriate response from the 3 answer choices that are given in the test booklet. The questions or statements are heard only once.
Part II sample item:

Man: How do you manage to work so much in one day?

A. I don’t waste time. ✓
B. There’s no time left.
C. I need more time.

Part III (15 items)

In the final part of the listening section, candidates listen to 3 extended texts of approximately two-three minutes in length each. The listening texts are factual in nature, of general interest and in semi-formal language. The format resembles that of a radio program: an announcer or interviewer introducing a topic and providing some background on it, then turning the topic over to be addressed by two “experts” or “journalists” who take turns providing more information or giving their opinions. After each talk, candidates are asked five questions about what was heard. Candidates may take notes as they listen.

The kinds of questions asked in Part III of the listening section require candidates to be able to:
- determine the main points, specific details or gist of the text
- understand the speakers’ opinions
- make inferences based on the information given
- understand cause and effect relationships in the text.

Part III sample items:

After hearing a radio or TV presentation on body image, candidates might be asked questions such as the following:

1. Who is more likely to suffer from body image disorders?
   a. men
   b. women
   c. both men and women

2. What does the speaker say about men who suffer from muscle dysmorphia?
   a. They used to be thin.
   b. They are already very muscular.
   c. They risk developing anorexia.

Rationale

The listening section of the ECPE tests a range of abilities at an advanced level, which involve a variety of listening skills and sub-skills. In Part I, the items are designed to test candidates’ ability to comprehend implied or directly expressed meaning in a conversational context. In Part II, candidates must demonstrate an understanding of appropriate responses to a question or statement. In Part III, what is tested is candidates’ ability to understand the main points of a lecture or a more extended text, such as one that might be encountered on radio or television.
To perform well in the listening section, candidates must have an advanced understanding of many listening sub-skills, including knowledge of conversational conventions such as turn-taking and concluding; politeness, register and appropriacy; implied meaning and purpose; segmental and suprasegmental cues; particular characteristics of extended spoken text such as stops and starts, contractions, etc.; distinction of main and secondary points; relationship of ideas in a longer text; and note-taking.

**Scoring**
In general terms, a candidate must correctly answer 60-65% of the items in the listening section in order to pass. A score below 60-65% is a failing score, and a score above 90% is an honors score.

**Preparing for ECPE listening**
The best way for candidates to improve their overall listening ability in English is to focus on a number of sub-skills of listening.

**Purpose**
In order to understand something spoken, the listener must also understand the speaker’s purpose for speaking. For example, what is the purpose of the utterance, “It’s hot in here. Is that window closed?” The speaker’s purpose is actually to ask the listener to open the window. Looking beyond the words to the purpose of an utterance will greatly help in understanding that utterance and recognizing and appropriate reply.

**Vocabulary**
A rich vocabulary is extremely helpful in understanding a listening text. The more words candidates know in a thematic area (e.g. words about employment or school), the easier it will be for them to process what they hear. It is also important to remember that the words in an utterance act together to construct meaning and should not be interpreted in isolation, but rather understood in the context of the utterance as a whole.

**Functions**
Language functions are communicative acts such as inviting someone to a party, accepting or declining an invitation, expressing regret and apologizing, etc. By understanding what people do by means of language, candidates can understand the listening text much easier.

**Inferences**
Listening comprehension also involves understanding more than what is said; that is, a listener must also decipher the speaker’s feelings or opinion in order to capture the meaning accurately or to respond appropriately. Making inferences means being able to expand what is heard to what can safely be assumed as a result.

**Prosody**
Much of the meaning of an utterance comes from how it is said, not simply what is said. Being familiar with prosodic elements that affect meaning such as stress and intonation, liaison, elision, contraction and ellipsis, greatly assists listening comprehension.
ECPE listening activities
Below are several activities for developing listening skills at proficiency level.

1. Text types & contexts
Listening to and identifying a great variety of texts will help improve students’ listening comprehension in many ways. Students should practice listening to texts such as these:
   - extended talks or presentations (monologues)
   - interviews (questions and answers)
   - conversations (dialogues)

They should also look at the different contexts these texts occur in, such as:
   - academic and professional settings (school lectures or presentations)
   - social or entertainment contexts (talk shows, interviews, conversations)
Many vocabulary and discourse features can be predicted from the context.

2. Text features
Every text has a number of features that can be identified, analyzed and discussed to help build good listening skills. For example, a recorded text can be used to identify and practice with:
   - **speaker purpose**: What is the purpose of the text? How does one know?
   - **language functions**: What functions are being expressed? What are their conventions?
   - **prosodic elements**: What prosodic elements are present? How do they affect meaning?
   - **rhetorical structure**: What kind of text is it? How is it organized and presented?
   - **vocabulary development**: What thematic area does the text deal with?
   - **making inferences**: What can one understand about the speaker or the context that was not explicitly stated in the text?

3. Transfer of other knowledge
Listening comprehension at an advanced level involves the transfer of knowledge from other areas. For example:
   - **knowledge of grammar** is very important when processing listening texts. Students practice taking a grammatical look at a listening text by transcribing it and analyzing the grammar, noticing in particular how the grammar contributes to the meaning of the overall utterance.
   - **socio-cultural knowledge**, including levels of formality and conventions of politeness such as appropriate turn-taking in a conversation, also contributes to understanding what one hears. Students practice working with socio-cultural aspects of a text by identifying key words that establish formality, politeness, etc.
   - **rhetorical knowledge**, or how information is organized and related, such as how people establish a relationship of cause and effect, create a contrast, or draw a conclusion when speaking, will help students better understand the entire message by first understanding its parts. Listening for rhetorical structures in a text and discussing how these structures effect the overall meaning can also be useful.
4. Note-taking
Learning to take notes while listening is a very important skill. Taking notes does not mean writing down as much as possible, however. It means knowing the difference between specific key information and supporting details. Students practice taking notes from any listening text by focusing on what is most important and making brief notes. They use the notes to retell the listening text or to write a brief summary of it.

Listening tips for ECPE test takers!
- Think about the kind of listening text you will hear before you listen. If it’s a longer text, prepare yourself to take notes and listen for the main points. If it’s a shorter exchange, pay attention to the speaker’s purpose and text features such as prosody before you begin listening.
- Listen carefully to the introduction of each extended text to help you establish a context for the listening and evoke any related knowledge or insight you have that will help you understand what you hear.
- Focus on the distractors and try to predict the question that will be asked.

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW ECPE SPEAKING TEST

The New ECPE Speaking Test consists of 5 stages and it is a two-on-two (two candidates and two examiners) decision making task. The three-way format (three candidates and two examiners) is used in case there is an odd number of candidates during an administration. Examiner 1 has two different information sheets, each with a description of two options on it (e.g. two job applicants for a teaching position). Candidate 1 receives one sheet and Candidate 2 receives the other. One candidate presents his/her two options and receives a recommendation from the other about which of the two options presented is the best. The second candidate also presents his/her two options and receives a recommendation. Each candidate then decides on one of his/her own two options. Of those two, they reach a consensus on one, and then present their decision to a person of high status (e.g. a member of the International Olympic Committee) and defend it.

Both examiners are present during the entire speaking test. Examiner 1 conducts stages 1-4 and Examiner 2 participates in stage 4 and 5.

The entire speaking test lasts approximately 25-35 minutes in the two-on-two format and approximately 35-45 minutes in the three-way format.

Rationale
The multi-stage, decision making New ECPE Speaking Test requires candidates to collaborate and decide on a single option and then present and defend their final decision. It allows for both extended speech from each candidate and collaborative interaction between the candidates. The stages build on each other, and in order to complete the task successfully, candidates have to display the ability to summarize, take turns, ask for clarification, weigh advantages and disadvantages, shift from an informal to a more formal speech style, make a formal presentation, and justify and defend a decision.
Candidates are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their linguistic ability. They are expected to produce spoken language that is representative of C2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

The semi-structured format of the ECPE Speaking Test promotes consistency in the administration of the test.

**Scoring**
A candidate’s linguistic ability is assessed independently by the two examiners and separately from the other candidate’s linguistic ability. The two examiners must then agree on a single score for each of the candidates.

Candidates receive a holistic score. All stages are assessed except for the planning part for the presentation (stage 4), although even then candidates are not allowed to switch to their native language.

A five-level scoring rubric A, B, C (minimum pass) and D, E (Fail) is used to assess candidate performance in three different areas:
- Discourse and Interaction (development and functional range)
- Linguistic resources (range and accuracy — for both vocabulary and grammar)
- Delivery and Intelligibility (fluency and articulation)

Please consult ECPE 2009 Speaking scoring Rubric (Condensed Version).

**A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO THE NEW ECPE SPEAKING TEST**
It is very important for candidates to understand that there is no examiner involvement during candidate-to-candidate interaction. The examiner withdraws from the task and will interject only to remind candidates not to look at each other’s information sheet or to remind them of the time remaining for the stage.

**STAGE 1: Introductions and Small Talk (3-5 minutes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Examiner 2</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides brief summary of test</td>
<td>• Sits in back of testing room until stage 4</td>
<td>• Engages in conversation with other candidate and examiner</td>
<td>• Engages in conversation with other candidate and examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• States purpose of stage</td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Answers short-response and expanded-response questions</td>
<td>• Answers short-response and expanded-response questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Initiates conversation</td>
<td>• Engagement in conversation with other candidate and examiner</td>
<td>• May make comments on partner’s responses</td>
<td>• May make comments on partner’s responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishes friendly atmosphere</td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
<td>• May ask for clarification</td>
<td>• May ask for clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks non-sensitive personal questions—from simple to more open-ended ones</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Responds to comments</td>
<td>• Responds to comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Draws candidates into conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides smooth transition to next stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## STAGE 2:
Summarizing and Recommending (5-7 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Step 1** | • Introduces task and gives instructions for stage 2  
• States purpose of stage  
• Provides clarifications if necessary  
• Hands each candidate information sheet with descriptions of two options in note form  
• Warns candidates not to look at each other’s sheets  
• Instructs candidates to keep information sheets until end of test  
• Informs candidates that note-taking is allowed during partner’s summarization  
• Allows candidates time to read descriptions and prepare summary  
• Monitors the time | • Becomes familiar with bullet points on information sheet  
• Distinguishes between positive and negative points  
• Comes up with novel language to paraphrase and connect bullet points  
• Prepares summary silently | • Becomes familiar with bullet points on information sheet  
• Distinguishes between positive and negative points  
• Comes up with novel language to paraphrase and connect bullet points  
• Prepares summary silently |
| **Step 2** | • Reminds candidates to use their own words in summary  
• Reminds candidates to listen to partner’s summary carefully to give recommendation  
• Withdraws from task  
• Monitors candidates  
• Monitors the time | • Summarizes bullet points for 2 options to other candidate in his/her own words  
• Uses connected, novel language  
• Listens to summary  
• Recommends one of other candidate’s 2 options and may provide brief reasons based on partner’s summary  
• Uses novel language | • Listens to summary  
• Recommends one of other candidate’s 2 options and may provide brief reasons based on partner’s summary  
• Uses novel language  
• Listens to summary  
• Recommends one of other candidate’s 2 options and may provide brief reasons based on partner’s summary  
• Uses novel language  
• Listens to summary  
• Recommends one of other candidate’s 2 options and may provide brief reasons based on partner’s summary  
• Uses novel language |
| **Step 3** | • Asks candidates to state which of their own two options they choose and think of reasons why | • States option | • States option |

## STAGE 3:
Consensus Reaching (5-7 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Gives instructions for stage 3  
• States purpose of stage  
• Reminds candidates not to look at each other’s information sheet  
• Withdraws from task  
• Monitors candidates  
• Monitors the time | • Participates in consensus process  
• Compares and contrasts  
• Collaborates with other candidate to assess strengths and weaknesses of 2 options  
• Maintains point of view  
• May concede arguments  
• Collaborates with other candidate to decide on one option | • Participates in consensus process  
• Compares and contrasts  
• Collaborates with other candidate to assess strengths and weaknesses of 2 options  
• Maintains point of view  
• May concede arguments  
• Collaborates with other candidate to decide on one option | • Participates in consensus process  
• Compares and contrasts  
• Collaborates with other candidate to assess strengths and weaknesses of 2 options  
• Maintains point of view  
• May concede arguments  
• Collaborates with other candidate to decide on one option |
## STAGE 4:
Presenting and Convincing (5-7 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Examiner 2</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gives detailed instructions for stage 4</td>
<td>• Gives detailed instructions for stage 4</td>
<td>• Collaborates with other candidate to prepare convincing presentation</td>
<td>• Collaborates with other candidate to prepare convincing presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• States purpose of stage</td>
<td>• States purpose of stage</td>
<td>• Decides with other candidate which two arguments s/he will present</td>
<td>• Decides with other candidate which two arguments s/he will present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allows candidates to look at each other’s sheets</td>
<td>• Allows candidates to look at each other’s sheets</td>
<td>• Thinks of more formal, novel language appropriate to task</td>
<td>• Thinks of more formal, novel language appropriate to task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors the time [preparation of presentation (2-3 min) is not assessed]</td>
<td>• Monitors the time [preparation of presentation (2-3 min) is not assessed]</td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Examiner 2</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Returns to table and introduces examiner 2 (a person of high status e.g. The Head of the Inter-High School Award Screening Committee)</td>
<td>• Returns to table and introduces examiner 2</td>
<td>• Presents option chosen* and explains two reasons for decision.</td>
<td>• Presents option chosen* and explains two reasons for decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
<td>• Leaves the table</td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tells candidates that s/he is ready to listen to presentation</td>
<td>• Tells candidates that s/he is ready to listen to presentation</td>
<td>• Uses more formal, novel language</td>
<td>• Uses more formal, novel language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>* Candidates decide between themselves who will begin presentation.</td>
<td>* Candidates decide between themselves who will begin presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Stage 5:
Justifying and Defending (5-7 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Examiner 1</th>
<th>Examiner 2</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td>• Questions each candidate about the reasons s/he provided, focusing on possible negative aspects</td>
<td>• Justifies/defends decision</td>
<td>• Justifies/defends decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors candidates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitors the time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Step 2 | | | Thanks candidates for presentation |
|--------| | | |
SAMPLE SPEAKING TASK
(Given to examinees in stage two of the test)

Examiner 1 tells the examinees that they are members of their town’s Inter-High School Award Screening Committee. The local high schools are introducing an Outstanding Student Achievement Award. The candidates have been narrowed down to four. Each committee member is given an information sheet with descriptions of two of the candidates. They must decide together which graduating student is best qualified to receive the award.

Candidate 1 Information Sheet

Outstanding Student Achievement Award

Deborah Shadd
The following list provides information about Ms. Shadd’s achievements and comments made by her teachers and classmates.

- Highest grades throughout high school
- National math competition winner
- Voted most likely to succeed by classmates
- Student representative on Educational Policy Committee
- Ambitious and competitive
- Hates to lose

Kevin Flynn
The following list provides information about Mr. Flynn’s achievements and comments made by his teachers and classmates.

- From C to straight-A student
- Part time job on weekends
- Very artistic and musically inclined
- Introduced idea of Inter-school music competition
- Not interested in sports
- Distant and arrogant at times
Candidate 2 Information Sheet

Outstanding Student Achievement Award

Mary Anne Gustafson
The following list provides information about Ms. Gustafson’s achievements and comments made by her teachers and classmates.

• In top 10% of her class
• Class president for two years
• Volunteer project coordinator
• Mayor’s award for volunteer service
• Submitted ideas for school recycling program
• Loses temper easily

Thomas O’Connor
The following list provides information about Mr. O’Connor’s achievements and comments made by his teachers and classmates.

• Scholar-athlete award twice
• Star tennis player
• Sports editor of school newspaper
• Second prize in sports-related photography competition
• Popular among students
• Excessively self-confident
Preparing for ECPE speaking
To prepare for the speaking section of the ECPE, candidates should spend as much time as possible actively engaged in real-life, interactive decision making tasks in English. This can easily be accomplished through pair- and small group work both. To make the most of their time in conversation, candidates should pay special attention to the following features of proficient speaking.

Vocabulary
Oral interaction takes place effortlessly when the speakers involved possess a wide range of vocabulary. Without the right words, active participation in extended interaction is extremely challenging and often frustrating for everyone. Being able to take part in an impromptu multi-stage decision making task means having a large and diverse active vocabulary. However, it is important that candidates not learn word lists out of context.

Speaking conventions
In a two-way decision make task, each participant assumes in turn the role of listener, speaker and collaborator. In order for the task to be completed successfully, both parties need to know their roles and the conventions that dictate their performance. For example, the party who is listening must remember to listen actively and remain engaged with what the speaker is saying asking for clarification or elaboration when necessary, and not to merely sit quietly until their turn to speak comes around again. Likewise the speaker must not deliver a monologue but should encourage and invite the interaction of their interlocutor.

Fluency
Fluency in speech means being able to participate in a speaking task effortlessly from beginning to end, taking new directions as the task develops, and contributing to the overall success of the interaction.

Accuracy
Being accurate in speech does not mean never making mistakes. Everyone—native speakers included—makes mistakes at times. Accuracy does mean, however, that the speaker demonstrates knowledge of advanced grammar and no longer makes the kind of mistakes that characterize speakers at lower levels (e.g. errors in subject-verb agreement or tense).
ECPE Speaking activities

Help students develop conversational skills for Stage 1

Provide students with opportunities to personalize the grammar and vocabulary structures they are learning and practicing in class. In other words, encourage them to use language structures and vocabulary to talk about their own lives and express opinions on everyday topics.

In addition, encourage students to ask questions of each other by creating opportunities for them to work in pairs and small groups. In everyday conversation, people listen to each other and respond, often with a question. Questions reflect genuine interest and help keep a conversation going. Well-designed mingling activities are an effective way to get students to interact and converse with each other on a variety of topics.

Many students are used to responding to questions with a short answer. Encourage them to elaborate. For example, a response of “Nothing much” to the question, “What did you do over the weekend?” can be elaborated on by adding “Nothing much because my parents wanted me to help them with the housework.”

Help students develop summarizing and recommending skills for Stage 2

Students are given two options and characteristics of each option in the form of bullet points. During the 2-3 minutes of preparation time allotted to them, they can work on developing summarizing skills by:

- Transferring the telegraphic language of each bullet point to its communicative spoken form. For example, one qualification of a candidate for a science teacher position, ‘Creative lesson plans’ could become ‘She creates interesting lesson plans for her students.’
- Noting which bullet point is clearly negative and using this information to create a contrast between it and the other bullet points while summarizing.
- Thinking about the drawbacks to bullet points which may appear to be advantages at first glance. This can also help prepared for Stage 3, when they have to reach a consensus on one option, and Stage 5, when Examiner 2 can use those drawbacks to challenge the decision the two candidates have made.
- As candidates are not permitted to look at each other’s sheet of paper with the two options on it, each must listen carefully while the other is summarizing in order to make a recommendation. While candidates are allowed to take notes, they are also permitted to ask each other to repeat or clarify information.

Help students develop skills needed to reach a consensus (Stage 3)

Examples of such skills are disagreeing in a polite way, maintaining a viewpoint (when someone disagrees with my opinion), and expanding on ideas suggested by others. One example of an activity that teachers can use to raise awareness of how to disagree politely in English is the following:

- Give students expressions for disagreeing that vary in politeness (I have to disagree with you/I see your point, but don’t you think.../You may be right, but I also think..., etc.)
• Have them work alone to reorder the expressions along a continuum from rude to less polite to very polite and then determine a principle/formula to follow when disagreeing politely in English
• Ask them to share their ideas with a partner and reach a consensus on the best formula

**Help students recognize distinctions between formal and informal registers and use them in the right situation (Stages 4-5)**

When candidates are making their presentation they are expected to use more formal language. Students can be made aware of what constitutes formal and informal language by providing them with a list of expressions (We picked A because.../ We chose A for the following reasons: ...; etc.) and asking them to work together to decide which are formal and which are informal, or both, then to justify their decision.

Once they are aware of what constitutes formal language, they can be given problem-solving activities in which they work in small groups to reach a decision, then present it in a formal way.

**Help students justify and defend a decision (Stage 5)**

Ask pairs of students to work through the first four stages of a practice speaking test, then to present their decision to the teacher, who plays the role of the official of relatively high status. The teacher in turn challenges that decision, thereby giving students practice justifying and defending their choice. As noted in the suggestions for preparing for Stage 2, students should be thinking about potential drawbacks to bullet points which appear positive at first glance. During Stage 4, when they are planning their presentation, they can look for potential drawbacks in their arguments and thus anticipate the challenges that Examiner 2 will pose.

**Conclusion**

As the activities above demonstrate, effectively preparing students for the new ECPE Speaking Test hinges on making pair and small group work activities an integral part of each lesson in order to allow students to interact and practice the types of skills needed to carry out the stages of the test. Students require more than basic conversational skills for this test. They are expected to summarize, recommend, negotiate and reach a consensus, formally present a decision, then justify and defend that decision. Telling students what they must be able to do is not enough; rather, they need practice developing each of these skills through classroom activities that allow them to use language communicatively to carry out the range of functions required by the new ECPE Speaking Test.
Speaking Test tips for ECPE test takers!
- Try to be as calm and relaxed as possible from the beginning of Speaking Test. The more natural you are, the easier you will find the interaction.
- Get a good night’s sleep the night before the speaking test. Rest will help make you confident and relaxed.
- Practice simulated decision making tasks as much as possible and draw confidence from the fact that the speaking test format is familiar to you and that you have plenty of experience conversing.
- Do not memorize what you think you should say as it will only come across as unnatural and most probably inappropriate.
- Remember to elaborate your ideas and opinions; don’t give one-word answers.

Grammar/Cloze/Vocabulary/Reading (GCVR)
The GCVR comprises one section. The four parts can be completed in succession or in any order. A total time of 75 minutes is allotted for completion of the 120 items in this section.

Grammar (40 items)
To complete each multiple-choice grammar item candidates must choose the most appropriate word or phrase from the 4 choices given in the test booklet. Grammar items may take the form of simple statements, questions or 2-part mini dialogue exchanges.

The ECPE grammar items frequently test knowledge of the following:
- subject-verb agreement
- pronoun agreement
- relative pronouns and relative clause structure
- verb tenses and forms
- modals with simple and perfect infinitives
- participles
- passive usage
- prepositions in adverbials of place, time and manner
- word forms
- reported forms: use of infinitive, gerund, subjunctive, embedded questions

Rationale
The grammar items of the ECPE test the candidates' knowledge of advanced grammatical forms that are encountered in written English or in both written and spoken English. Highly colloquial and informal language is not tested on the ECPE.
Sample grammar items:

“Why do you work so much?”
“Because hard work is the key to _____.”
A. success ✓
B. successful
C. succeed
D. be success

John would have studied art _____ for his love of science.
A. it were not
B. it was not
C. were it not ✓
D. had it not

Vocabulary (40 items)
For each multiple-choice vocabulary item, candidates must choose the most appropriate word or phrase from the 4 choices given in the test booklet to complete the sentence. Vocabulary items are given within the context of a single sentence.

Rationale
The vocabulary tested on the ECPE are lexical items common in academic discourse of general interest. Vocabulary requiring specialized knowledge in a particular subject area is not tested on the ECPE. The items are designed to test advanced vocabulary knowledge, requiring candidates to choose the most appropriate word from a range of related words, or to select the vocabulary item that best suits the given context as a collocation with the other words or phrases.

Sample vocabulary items:

The company _____ a number of luxury cars for its executives to use each year.
A. lend
B. adopts
C. leases ✓
D. detains

Sarah has been awarded a grant to _____ research on how animals communicate.
A. conduct ✓
B. contract
C. contrive
D. convince

Cloze (20 items)
The cloze passage of the GCVR section of the ECPE is a reading passage of approximately 250-300 words in length on a topic of general interest to an educated adult. The multiple-choice items tested are 20 single words that have been removed from the passage. The candidates must choose the most appropriate word from the 4 answer choices written in the test booklet to fill each blank. The correct word will fit in both grammar and meaning the immediate context of the sentence and the overall context of the passage.
In addition to knowledge of advanced grammar and vocabulary, completing a cloze passage successfully also involves the following:

- using discourse markers and connectors correctly and appropriately
- recognizing built-in redundancies of ideas (restatement) and vocabulary (synonyms)
- using redundancies to gather information
- establishing and understanding the relationship of the parts to the whole; that is considering an item at both sentence-level and discourse-level.

**Rationale**

The cloze passage tests candidates’ ability to read and understand a short prose text and to predict the grammatical type and meaning of the words within it. To do so successfully, candidates must be able to understand the text as a whole and not merely the words of the immediate context of the gap. Choosing the most appropriate word for each item requires advanced textual knowledge, such as the ability to recognize main ideas and supporting details and the relationship of ideas within the text; to synthesize information; to understand referents and the function of examples in a text; to predict which part of speech can occur at a certain point in a text; and to recognize and anticipate the semantic group of the missing word.

**Sample cloze items:**

Psychometric tests, as the term suggests, are tools for measuring the mind often used by employers as part of their (1) ____ process. There are two types of psychometric tests adopted for this (2) ____ aptitude tests and personality questionnaires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. selection ✓</th>
<th>B. own</th>
<th>C. business</th>
<th>D. job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A. situation</td>
<td>B. purpose ✓</td>
<td>C. idea</td>
<td>D. case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading (20 items)**

The reading part of the GCVR section is comprised of 4 texts with 5 multiple-choice items following each text. The reading texts of the ECPE are expository texts adapted from publications of general interest to educated adults and are similar to those that would be encountered at the college or university level. Technical or specialized texts relevant only to specific fields are not used on the ECPE. Each reading text is approximately 250-300 words in length and is on a different topic. The five items that follow each reading are comprehension questions. Answering the questions correctly requires many of the following reading comprehension sub-skills:

- reading for gist
- reading for details and specific information
- making inferences
- guessing unknown vocabulary from context
- determining the meaning of a word in a particular context
- locating information in the passage that is pertinent to the item tested
- recognizing referent words
- distinguishing fact from opinion
- establishing the author’s goal or intent.
In addition, there are a number of discourse-related skills that will help candidates with reading passages. These skills are also presented in the discussion of the cloze passage above and are useful in any reading situation. They include:

- understanding the role of discourse markers and connectors
- recognizing built-in redundancies of ideas (restatement) and vocabulary (synonyms)
- using redundancies to gather information
- establishing and understanding the relationship of the parts to the whole; that is considering an item at both sentence-level and discourse-level.

**Rationale**

In order for candidates to answer the reading comprehension questions correctly, they must be able to recognize the main ideas, supporting details and organizational pattern or argumentative method of a text; draw inferences; distinguish fact from opinion; understand the writer’s purpose and opinion; understand sophisticated vocabulary; synthesize information; and understand the function of example and detail within a text. These are similar to the academic reading skills required of a college or university level student.

**Sample reading item:**

Following a text about the use of barcodes on products, one question might be:

According to the text, what was the problem solved by the use of barcodes?

A. Prices were difficult to update.
B. Inflation was reduced.
C. There were insufficient product lines available.
D. Staff had to decide prices.

**Preparing for ECPE Grammar/Cloze/Vocabulary/Reading (GCVR)**

Preparing to do well on the GCVR section of the ECPE means developing skills and awareness in each of the four parts of the section: grammar, vocabulary, cloze and reading.

**Grammar & Vocabulary**

Choosing the right option from among the 4 answer choices of the grammar and vocabulary items means knowing what could fit and what could not fit the blank. In the grammar section, for example, if candidates can determine that a noun form is required in the blank, then some other answer choices can be eliminated. For a vocabulary item, it is possible to eliminate answer choices that do not fit the gap in meaning or appropriacy. Also, candidates should pay careful attention to the words on either side of the gap, such as prepositions or auxiliary verbs, as these play an important role in choosing the correct answer. In class, students should practice with similar grammar items at sentence level, working to identify both the part of speech needed to complete a statement or question and the role played by the words on either side of the blank. Also, a general review of advanced-level grammar through analysis of appropriate reading texts will help to improve recognition of grammar. At the same time, reading is the best way to develop vocabulary, both passive and active.
In terms of vocabulary items, students should be aware of the following points:

- The vocabulary items tested range from informal to very formal (e.g. from pull someone’s leg to compile a report).
- The words tested often demonstrate a high level of sophistication associated with both meaning and manner (Grandparents lavish attention on their grandchildren vs Grandparents give attention to their grandchildren).
- Vocabulary is sometimes used metaphorically (e.g. we’ve made it over the last hurdle).
- Multiple-choice items often require candidates to distinguish between shades of meaning (e.g. conserve and preserve).
- Understanding affixes (i.e. prefixes and suffixes) can help students understand new words by building meaning from the root and affix (e.g. reacquainted).
- Distractors are often based on phonological similarities (e.g. interject, intercept, intersect).
- Collocations and set phrases are often tested on the ECPE (e.g. reckless driving, strictly in confidence).

Cloze & Reading

There are many similar sub-skills involved in the reading and cloze parts of the ECPE and they can be focused on together. The most important thing to remember is that the cloze passage should be treated as a reading text and not simply as 20 grammar gaps to fill in. While some of the gaps in the passage are sentence-level structural items, similar to items which might be found in the grammar section, many more are actually discourse-related items. Recognizing that the cloze passage is a whole text and approaching it as a text will help students focus on the discourse-level features they might encounter.

Teachers can facilitate students’ awareness of the discourse features that are common to both cloze passages and reading texts by:

- employing pre-reading strategies such as brainstorming the topic before students begin to read.
- using visuals or discussions to help students draw on background knowledge related to the topic of the text.
- using while-reading activities to make students more aware of a text as they are interacting with it; for example, checking comprehension at various points and asking prediction questions about the remainder of the text.
- having students work on post-reading activities such as summary writing, discussion, comprehension questions of general ideas and details and questions about inferences.

Approaching a cloze passage or a reading text in this fashion will help students make the most of their reading, improving comprehension and language skills in general.
GCVR tips for ECPE test takers!

- Always read the entire cloze passage through first before attempting to answer any of the items.
- Pay attention to the words on both sides of the gap in the grammar, vocabulary and cloze sections.
- Look for collocations (words that often go together).
- In the cloze and reading passages, first read for meaning of the entire text, not just words and sentences in isolation.
- As you read, make a mental note of the main idea in each paragraph.
- Note the author’s opinions and purpose for writing the text.
- Try to guess the meaning of unknown words in a reading from the context.
- Do not leave any questions unanswered.
- Use the process of elimination to narrow down the answer choices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING</td>
<td>Tests ability to understand spoken Standard American English</td>
<td>50 items total</td>
<td>35 minutes total</td>
<td>Multiple-choice with 3 answer choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>Candidates listens to short conversational exchanges. Tests listening for gist and specific information, understanding colloquial language and implied information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td>Questions are not written in test booklet Text: listening to questions and statements Context: occupational, personal, educational Pause: 12 seconds Length: 4-8 turns, 40 words approx.</td>
<td>35 items</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple-choice with 3 answer choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III</td>
<td>Questions are not written in test booklet Text: extended talk on different topics Context: educational, formal Pause: 17 seconds Length: 500-450 words</td>
<td>15 items</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple-choice with 3 answer choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ECPE Teacher’s Guide**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCVR</td>
<td></td>
<td>120 total</td>
<td>75 minutes total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Grammar | Tests advanced grammar knowledge | 40 items |       | Multiple-choice with 4 answer choices | Text: 35 statements or exchanges  
Context: written and spoken language; educational, occupational, personal  
Length: Statements: up to 20 words  
Exchanges: 2 turns, up to 25 words |
| Cloze   | Tests sentence-level and discourse-level reading and grammar skills | 20 items | 1 reading with 20 gaps  
Multiple-choice with 4 answer choices for each |       | Context: factual; concerning scientific or social issues  
Length: 220-250 words |
| Vocabulary | Tests advanced-level vocabulary knowledge | 40 items |       | Multiple-choice with 4 answer choices | Context: occupational, educational  
Length: Sentences up to 12 words each  
Answer choices up to 7 words |
| Reading | Tests ability to understand expository texts at university level | 20 items | 4 texts each followed by 5 multiple-choice questions with 4 answer choices |       | Questions are written in test booklet  
Text: listening to questions  
Context: factual; concerning scientific, or social issues  
Length: All reading passages are between 250 – 300 words |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th># of items</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRITING</td>
<td>Tests ability to express ideas clearly in writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 minutes total</td>
<td>One of two topics to write an essay</td>
<td>Each of 2 prompts states a fact or opinion briefly (70-80 words) about a topic of current interest. Candidates should produce an argumentative or expository essay of approximately one and a half to two pages in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKING</td>
<td>Assesses candidates’ general ability to participate in a decision making task</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 minutes approx.</td>
<td>Two-on-two interaction</td>
<td>See separate section on pages 33-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Writing Scoring Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>RHETORIC</th>
<th>GRAMMAR/SYNTAX</th>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
<th>MECHANICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Topic richly, fully, complexly developed. Organization well-controlled, appropriate to the material. Connection is smooth.</td>
<td>Flexible use of a wide range of syntactic (sentence level) structures; morphological (word forms) control nearly always accurate.</td>
<td>Broad range, appropriately used.</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation errors are rare and insignificant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Topic clearly and completely developed, with acknowledgment of its complexity. Organization is controlled and shows appropriateness to the material. Few problems with connection.</td>
<td>Both simple and complex syntax adequately used; good morphological control.</td>
<td>Vocabulary use shows flexibility, is usually appropriate. Any inappropriate vocabulary does not confuse meaning.</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation errors are infrequent and not distracting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Topic clearly developed, but not always completely or with acknowledgment of its complexity. Organization generally controlled; connection sometimes absent or unsuccessful.</td>
<td>Both simple and complex syntax present. For some, syntax is cautious but accurate, while others are more fluent but less accurate. Inconsistent morphological control.</td>
<td>Adequate vocabulary, but may sometimes be inappropriately used.</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation errors sometimes distracting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Topic development is present, but limited by incompleteness, lack of clarity, or lack of focus. Probably presents only one point of view. Organization partially controlled; connection often absent or unsuccessful.</td>
<td>May have either both simple and complex syntax, but with many errors, or accurate syntax but within a limited range. Morphological control is inconsistent.</td>
<td>Vocabulary sometimes inadequate, sometimes inappropriately used, to the point where it causes confusion of meaning.</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation errors sometimes distracting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ECPE 2009 Speaking Scoring Rubric (Condensed Version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse and Interaction (Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension)</th>
<th>Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)</th>
<th>Delivery And Intelligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</td>
<td>Uses broad range of vocabulary</td>
<td>Fluent and articulate delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summarizes concisely and accurately; little to no reliance on written material</td>
<td>• Uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and effectively</td>
<td>• Often uses rate of speech and/or prosodic features to add meaning, aid listener, and/or to shift style/register appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides coherent explanations without prompting on all topics</td>
<td>• Uses a range of grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presents decisions persuasively and appropriately for varying contexts</td>
<td>Contribution to Extended Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contributes consistently and appropriately to development of interaction; very aware of listener</td>
<td>• Usually presents decisions clearly, appropriately; may occasionally show some limitations in ability to extend discourse and to provide convincing explanations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recommendations are appropriate and supported with explanations</td>
<td>• Occasionally uses decisions persuasively and appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Justifies position, regularly paraphrasing and elaborating to explain and/or clarify</td>
<td>• Communication breakdowns are rare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication breakdowns are rare</td>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understands linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</td>
<td>• “Slips of the tongue” may occur, often self-corrected; (fossilized) errors may be present throughout discourse but do not impede interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</td>
<td>Usually uses a broad range of vocabulary</td>
<td>Frequently fluent and articulate; may require minimal listener effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summarizes concisely and accurately; some reliance on written material</td>
<td>• Usually uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and usually effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides coherent explanations, usually without prompting, on all concrete and most abstract topics</td>
<td>• Usually uses grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually presents decisions persuasively, and usually appropriately for context</td>
<td>Contribution to Extended Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually contributes and appropriately to the development of the interaction; very aware of listener</td>
<td>• Errors in vocabulary and/or grammar do not cause miscommunication or interrupt the flow of discourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides recommendations that are almost always supported with explanations and are appropriate to the context</td>
<td>• Accuracy in vocabulary and/or grammar may decline with more challenging speech events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Justifies position, frequently paraphrasing and elaborating to explain and/or clarify statements</td>
<td>• Communication breakdowns usually do not occur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication breakdowns usually do not occur</td>
<td>Listening Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Almost always understands linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic information order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</td>
<td>• Occasionally uses vocabulary that are pragmatically appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually uses a range of basic and complex grammatical structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</td>
<td>Often uses moderate range of vocabulary accurately and appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adequately summarizes; may rely on written material periodically</td>
<td>• Occasionally uses idiomatic expressions and colloquial language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elaborates, often without prompting, and provide coherent explanations on almost all concrete and many abstract topics</td>
<td>• Occasionally uses incorrect collocations that may lead to vagueness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often presents decisions clearly, appropriately; may occasionally show some limitations in ability to extend discourse and to provide convincing explanations</td>
<td>• Range of vocabulary and grammatical structures extends beyond what has been provided orally and/or in writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recommendations may require minor prompting for supporting explanations; may occasionally be awkwardness to appropriateness of word choices/phrasing</td>
<td>• Gaps and/or errors in vocabulary and/or grammar, sometimes self-corrected, frequently do not hinder communication, but may rarely cause interruptions in communication flow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Justifies position adequately; usually able to paraphrase; clarity of meaning may occasionally be lacking when providing supporting details</td>
<td>• Accuracy in vocabulary and/or grammar often declines with an increase in rate of speech and/or with more challenging speech events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication breakdowns may occur during challenging speech events; usually repaired</td>
<td>• Often uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication breakdowns may occur during challenging speech events; usually repaired</td>
<td>Contribution to Extended Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Usually understands linguistic and sociolinguistic information and often understands the pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</td>
<td>• Often uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Range of vocabulary and grammatical structures extends beyond what has been provided orally and/or in writing</td>
<td>• An increase in rate of delivery may occasionally lead to a decrease in clarity of speech or comprehensibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gaps and/or errors in vocabulary and/or grammar, sometimes self-corrected, frequently do not hinder communication, but may rarely cause interruptions in communication flow</td>
<td>• Fluency may decline with more challenging speech events but this does not stop the flow of discourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accuracy in vocabulary and/or grammar often declines with an increase in rate of speech and/or with more challenging speech events</td>
<td>• Often fluent, usually articulate; may require some listener effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse and Interaction (Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension)</td>
<td>Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Usually summarizes by repeating language already provided</td>
<td>- Limited range of vocabulary</td>
<td>- Listener effort frequently required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Occasionally able, when prompted, to elaborate and provide explanations on most concrete topics; explanations frequently lack coherence and organization</td>
<td>- Frequently uses vague and/or inaccurate vocabulary</td>
<td>- Delivery is often slow and halting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Usually presents decisions by repeating language already produced</td>
<td>- Frequent use of basic structures (i.e., lack of complex sentences) that often contain errors</td>
<td>- Pausing and phrasing are often incorrect, negatively affecting intelligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to Extended Interaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frequently relies on other participants to initiate, develop, maintain discourse; rarely offers feedback or commentary</td>
<td>- Vocabulary and grammar structures used are typically repetitions of what has been provided orally or in writing</td>
<td>- Production may be word by word, resulting in a lack of sentence rhythm and flat intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Usually able to recommend; occasionally able, when prompted, to provide supporting explanations</td>
<td>- Gaps and/or errors in vocabulary and grammar may disrupt effective communication</td>
<td>- L1 influence may disrupt intelligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attempts to justify a position are usually unclear and repetitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication breakdowns may occur during any speech event and often are not repaired</td>
<td><strong>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Limitations in comprehension may often result in interruptions in exchange and in communication breakdowns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Very limited vocabulary</td>
<td>- Slow and halting delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Occasionally able, when prompted, to elaborate on concrete and familiar topics; explanations usually lack organization</td>
<td>- Production is often word by word, resulting in a lack of sentence rhythm and flat intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Usually able to present basic position on concrete topic; very little elaboration; usually repeats language already produced</td>
<td>- Errors in rhythm, stress, and intonation disrupt intelligibility, often causing considerable listener effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Frequently unable to contribute to the development of discourse on topics that have been provided; considerable reliance on interlocutors</td>
<td>- L1 influence may disrupt intelligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Usually able to state a recommendation or opinion but unable to provide supporting explanation</td>
<td>- Regular gaps and/or errors in vocabulary, grammar, and/or delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rarely able to justify and defend; attempts are almost always unclear and repetitive</td>
<td>- Gaps and/or errors frequently prevent communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Almost always unable to repair communication breakdowns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening Comprehension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extreme limitations in comprehension result in an inability to engage in extended discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PUBLICATIONS
Support materials for the ECPE
The following publications by the Hellenic American Union are very useful in helping students—either independently or with a class—to improve their language ability as they prepare to do well on the ECPE.

**ECPE Book 1**
The practice examinations accurately reflect the level of difficulty, content and format of the ECPE, providing a valuable resource for students. A Teacher’s Edition with overprinted answers is available.

**ECPE Book 2**
The practice examinations accurately reflect the level of difficulty, content and format of the ECPE, providing a valuable resource for students. A Teacher’s Edition with overprinted answers is available.

**Build Up Your Proficiency**
It is a 60-hour course that prepares students for the ECPE examination. Each of the 14 units provides systematic training on each section of the ECPE and culminates in practice test activity. The book is accompanied by a Teacher’s Notes and an audio CD.
Build Up Your Proficiency Listening Skills
An exam preparation book which focuses on developing skills and strategies for the Listening section of the ECPE examination. A Teacher’s Edition with overprinted answers is available.

Build Up Your Proficiency Writing Skills
It is a 36-40 hour exam preparation book, which focuses on developing writing skills for the Writing Section of the ECPE. Each of the 12 units has been designed to help students level to improve their writing skills through analysis of model compositions and activities which guide students through a process of thinking about how to best organise and present ideas clearly with accuracy of form. A Teacher’s Edition with overprinted answers is available.

Hellenic American Union Publications are available for sale at:

Athens
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Tel.: 2103680900

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Fragon 14, 546 26, Thessaloniki, Greece
Tel.: 2310557600

e-mail: publications@hau.gr, website: www.hau.gr/publications

Additional information for publishers and materials writers
The ECPE uses standard American English spelling and lexicon throughout all written material. The accent of the men and women recorded for the listening sections is standard American English with only slight regional variation.