

TRINITY

Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

Practice Test Material Notes

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Trinity GESE

Trinity's Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) provide a reliable and valid scheme of assessment of a candidate's ability to understand and speak English. GESE exams are divided into four stages:

- Initial (Grades 1–3)
- Elementary (Grades 4–6)
- Intermediate (Grades 7–9)
- Advanced (Grades 10–12)

Assessment

Each part of the exam is awarded a mark (A–D) based on the examiner's assessment of the candidate's ability to fulfil the tasks set. The requirements for these marks can be described briefly as follows:

A (Distinction): Very effective and comprehensible. Comprehensive and highly accurate coverage of target language and functions. No problems in interacting with examiner. Excellent overall impression.

B (Merit): Mainly effective and comprehensible. Good coverage of target language and functions. Good level of accuracy, although inaccuracies occur and occasionally affect communication. Interaction generally good, although there may be some hesitation. Good overall impression.

C (Pass): Moderately effective communication. Some coverage of and control over target language and functions. Inaccuracies tend to affect communication. Some hesitancy and requests for repetition. The candidate may need some support. Moderate overall impression.

D (Fail): Poor communication. General lack of accuracy and appropriacy. Major aspects of the task unfulfilled, even with support. Little coverage of target language and functions. Communication frequently breaks down and prevents interaction from proceeding effectively. Poor overall impression.

Elementary Stage (Grades 4–6)

GESE Elementary Stage consists of two phases, each lasting five minutes. In the first phase (topic) candidates talk about a topic they have prepared, e.g. *My summer holiday*. Candidates write the main points of the topic on their topic form, which they give to the examiner at the beginning of the exam. There are five points at Grade 5, and six at Grade 6. The examiner asks questions about the points on the topic form, not necessarily in the order in which they appear on the form. The aim is to have a conversation about a subject which the candidate is interested in and able to talk about. At all grades candidates are expected to ask the examiner at least one question during the discussion of the topic. During this phase candidates need to demonstrate that they can use the language and functions of the grade. Candidates should bear this in mind when selecting a topic.

The topic phase is followed by a conversation which is led by the examiner. Two subject areas will be chosen: these are listed in the GESE Syllabus. Again, in the conversation

phase candidates should take the opportunity to show that they are able to handle the language and functions of the grade.

Tip: It is better if candidates choose topics different from those listed in the conversation phase. Thus, at Grade 5, candidates should avoid choosing *festivals, means of transport, special occasions, entertainment, music, and recent personal experiences* as their topic. Other subjects are preferable.

As in any exam, some candidates are likely to be nervous, although most will by now have had experience of a Trinity oral exam. As far as possible, candidates should try to engage the examiner in a real conversation, using the target language and functions of the grade. If the candidate fails to use the appropriate language during the conversation phase, the examiner will try to elicit it. Candidates should be aware of this and listen out for cues they can respond to.

Grade 5

New language at this grade includes the present perfect tense used with *for* and *since* (*I've lived here for three years / since 2010*); clauses beginning with *because* (*I don't like classical music because it's boring*); and *will* for talking about the future (*I'll visit my grandmother tomorrow*). Candidates should look for opportunities to use these structures in both the topic and the conversation phases of the exam.

In the conversation phase the examiner chooses two subjects from those listed in the GESE Syllabus. Candidates should familiarise themselves with these subjects and think about what questions the examiner might ask and what answers they might give, e.g.:

Means of transport

Have you ever ridden a bike? / Yes, I've ridden a bike since I was seven.

Why don't you buy a car? / Because cars are too expensive.

Will you buy a car this year? / No, I won't buy a car this year.

Grade 6

New language at this grade includes first conditional clauses (*If you come with me to the cinema, I'll pay for the ticket*); the past continuous tense (*What were you reading this morning?*); and modal verbs, such as *must / need to / have to* (*What do you need to wear if you go to a wedding?*). Candidates should look for opportunities to use these structures in both the topic and the conversation phases of the exam.

In the conversation phase the examiner chooses two subjects from those listed in the GESE Syllabus. Candidates should familiarise themselves with these subjects and think about what questions the examiner might ask and what answers they might give, e.g.:

Money

What will you do if you win the lottery? / I'll buy a nice car.

Where were you working last year? / Last year I was working in a hotel.

Will you buy a car this year? / No, I won't buy a car this year.

Do you have to show your passport if you want to change money? / No, I don't think you have to.

Trinity GESE Test Material Notes: Elementary Stage

The aim of the Trinity GESE Test Material is to help students and teachers prepare for the requirements of the various Grades of the GESE exam. At the Elementary stage, tests consist of open-ended questions requiring a full response from the student. The examples are the sorts of questions that are likely to come up in the conversation phase of the exam. Students can work in pairs to ask and answer these questions. Make sure that each student gets a turn at both asking and answering.

Intermediate Stage (Grades 7–9)

GESE Intermediate Stage consists of three phases each lasting five minutes. In the first phase (topic) candidates talk about a topic they have prepared. In the Intermediate Stage candidates do not have to prepare a topic form for the examiner. They have to introduce the topic, outline its main points, and lead the discussion that follows. As before, it is better not to choose subject areas which the examiner may want to use in the conversation phase.

The next part of the exam is an interactive task. Here the examiner will set out a problem or seek advice about a situation. To begin with, the situation may not be entirely clear, e.g.:

Examiner: A funny thing happened to me yesterday.

Candidate: What happened to you?

Examiner: Well, I met an old friend and I was really surprised.

Candidate: Why were you surprised?

Thus, the candidate has then to ask questions to get further information from the examiner, make comments, and (in many cases) suggest a solution to the problem or proffer advice on the situation. In the interactive task the focus is on the candidate's comprehension and communication skills rather than on grammatical or lexical accuracy.

The interactive task phase is followed by a conversation which is led by the examiner. Two subject areas will be chosen: these are listed in the GESE Syllabus.

Candidates should look for opportunities to use the structures of the grade in both the topic and the conversation phases of the exam.

In the conversation phase the examiner chooses two subjects from those listed in the GESE Syllabus. Candidates should familiarise themselves with these subjects and think about what questions the examiner might ask and what answers they might give, e.g.:

Pollution and recycling

If you were in charge of cleaning up your city, what would you do? / I'd start a programme of recycling.

*Is rubbish recycled in X? / Some of it is recycled, but not all of it.
Do the people who live in X care about pollution? / Yes, they do, but they need to be helped.*

Trinity GESE Test Material Notes: Intermediate Stage

The aim of the Trinity GESE Test Material is to help students and teachers prepare for the requirements of the various Grades of the GESE exam. At the Intermediate stage, tests consist of open-ended questions or statements requiring a full response from the student, and conversation exercises.

Example: Grade 7 Conversation phase

Students can work in pairs for this exercise. Give them a minute or two to practise asking and answering the questions, and making statements and responding to them. Make sure the asker and the answerer swap roles. Then ask a few pairs to act out their conversations.

Example: Grade 7 Interactive phase

In the interactive task part of the Grade 7 exam, what students have to do is keep the conversation going by asking questions (*What did you do? / Why? / What happened then?*) or using responses that encourage the initial speaker to keep going (*Really? / That's amazing! / Oh dear!*). They don't have to solve problems or provide answers to the initial speaker – they just have to keep the conversation going by asking questions or making comments (*Really? / Oh no! / That's terrible!*) to encourage the initial speaker to continue.

Students work in pairs to act out the first conversation. Choose two or three pairs to act it out for the class. Next, students put the questions and responses in the correct order to continue the conversation.

Jenny	Cath
I'm going to talk to him again.	C What are you going to say?
I used to think mobile phones weren't necessary for kids, but I've changed my mind.	A What do you think now?
If your daughter's got a mobile, she can tell you where she is. Then you don't have to worry about her.	E That's true. But aren't mobile phones very expensive?
They're not expensive if you pay every month.	B You're right. Do you think he'll listen to you?
I don't know, but I'm going to try!	D Good for you. I'm sure you'll make him change his mind!

Finally, students work in pairs to keep a similar conversation going in the same way. Some of the questions the responder could ask include these:

*Why do you want to travel on your own?
Why aren't your parents keen on the idea?
Are you paying for yourself?*

Can you do anything to persuade them?