

TRINITY

Integrated Skills in English (ISE)

Practice Test Material Notes

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Trinity ISE Examinations

Trinity's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) examinations assess all four language skills – speaking, listening, reading, and writing – as they interact with each other. In real life, these skills are seldom used in isolation from each other. Thus, a person may be listening and speaking on the phone, while checking a document and making notes. For this reason each component of the ISE exams tests more than one language skill at a time.

There are five ISE levels:

ISE 0 (equivalent to GESE Grades 3–4; CEFR / A2)

ISE I (equivalent to GESE Grades 5–6; CEFR / B1)

ISE II (equivalent to GESE Grades 7–9; CEFR / B2)

ISE III (equivalent to GESE Grades 10–11; CEFR / C1)

ISE IV (equivalent to GESE Grade 12; CEFR / C2)

The present test material relates to ISE 0, ISE I and ISE II.

There are three components of ISE exams: the controlled written examination, the portfolio, and the interview.

1. The controlled written examination

This examination is taken at a Trinity Registered Centre on fixed dates. ISE 0, I, and II each have two equally weighted tasks – a reading into writing task and a writing task.

The reading into writing task

In this task candidates read a text and then complete a piece of writing using the information provided by the reading text. The writing may be a letter, an email, notes, directions, etc.

Tip: When you are writing, think of the person who is going to read what you write. This helps you to focus on the points which are most important for your reader.

The writing task

In the writing task candidates are required to describe places, people, or things, or to write about present and past activities.

Tip: Read the instructions carefully and pay attention to the format of the writing you are asked to do. An article for a newspaper is different from an email to a friend, which is different from a report for a committee.

2. The portfolio

The portfolio is a collection of the candidate's written work which is marked by the Trinity examiner who then (in the conversation phase of the examination) asks the

candidate questions about it. Candidates should prepare and draft the portfolio well in advance of the examination, using information from reference books, internet websites, and other relevant sources. Candidates are not permitted to simply copy material from these sources: information must be presented in the candidate's own words.

Teachers may not correct candidates' work, but they are allowed to give one piece of feedback per task. Candidates may prepare several drafts of their portfolio, but only the final version should be presented to the Trinity examiner. Because candidates have several weeks to prepare their portfolios, a very high standard of linguistic accuracy (spelling, grammar, vocabulary) is expected.

Assessment

Portfolio tasks are assessed by the examiner using a grading system similar to that of GESE.

At ISE 0, I, II, and III the portfolio consists of three sections:

- **Correspondence**, e.g., emails, memos, notes, postcards, etc. This section accounts for **20%** of the portfolio marks.
- **Factual writing**, e.g., instructions, directions, reviews, articles, reports. This section accounts for **40%** of the portfolio marks.
- **Creative / Descriptive writing**, e.g., diary, story, essay. This section accounts for **40%** of the portfolio marks.

There is a choice of two tasks for each section. Candidates choose one task in each section, selected from the current Trinity list of tasks.

At each ISE level there are limits on the maximum number of words that may be used. Candidates should count the words used and write the number at the end of the section.

Tip: It is very important to keep to the word limit for each section. If the limit is exceeded, the examiner will stop marking. For example, if the candidate's correspondence is 20 words too long, the last 20 words will not be counted in assessing the mark awarded.

3. The interview

The interview consists of two phases, each lasting four minutes:

- Discussion of a topic prepared by the candidate.
- Conversation with the examiner, including discussion of the candidate's portfolio and of a subject area chosen by the examiner.

These phases are similar to the topic discussion and conversation in equivalent GESE exams.