

ECCE Examination for the Certificate of **Competency** in English

Upcoming Changes to the ECCE to be Introduced on the May 2013 Exam

Samples Included



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Introduction

The ECCE Testing Program has completed its review of the listening and GVR (grammar, vocabulary, reading) sections of the Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English (ECCE). This ongoing process, undertaken to ensure excellence in the ECCE tests, involved:

- a review of the literature on the assessment of second and foreign language listening and reading;
- a re-examination of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scales relevant to the construction of listening and reading tests;
- analyses of item statistics on the types of listening and reading items currently in an ECCE;
- review of candidate score performance on the listening and GVR sections in past years;
- a review of feedback from stakeholders who prepare students for and/or administer the ECCE;
- field testing of different test tasks that could be used to evaluate listening and reading ability at the high intermediate level of English (B2 level of CEFR);
- a review of feedback from examinees who have taken listening or reading tests that have included different types of tasks to assess listening and reading; and,
- analyses of examinee performance on different types of listening and reading tasks and test items.

Based upon this comprehensive review, beginning in 2013 the ECCE exams will include new tasks in both the listening and GVR sections. We believe these new tasks will be well received by test takers, as well as by teachers who prepare students for the examination.

- Test takers will be able to demonstrate their listening and reading abilities on a wide variety of topics.
- Test takers will be able to demonstrate their listening and reading abilities with respect to a wide variety of spoken and written discourse types.
- Language representative of that used in public, occupational, and educational contexts is included on the exam.
- The opportunity to preview questions will facilitate focused listening to extended discourse.
- The time allowed for taking the GVR section of the test will be increased to 90 minutes.

Summary of Changes

Listening Section

- Part 2 of the listening test will have a new task: a short talk.
- Test takers will listen to four short talks.
- Each talk, by a single speaker, will last about one and a half minutes.
- There will be four, five, or six questions following each talk.
- The questions will be printed in the test booklet, along with four answer choices for each question.
- Test takers will be given about 30 seconds to preview them before the talk begins.
- The four talks will be on different topics.

There will be a total of 20 questions for this new Part 2 task. It will replace the current extended listening task, which consists of 20 questions about a radio interview related to a single event and is played in segments followed by questions delivered orally.

Note: For Part 1, the short recorded conversations followed by a question with three picture answer choices will not change.

The entire listening section (parts 1 and 2 combined) will continue to be about the same length: 30 minutes with a total of 50 questions.

GVR Section

The 2013 reading section of the GVR will have two types of reading tasks:

- **A short reading passage followed by 5 questions**

This type of task is currently part of the ECCE. Beginning in 2013, however, there will be two short passages rather than one.

- **Four short reading texts related to each other by topic, followed by 10 questions**

This new reading task will include four texts that total about 550 words. Following the related texts will be ten questions about information in the texts. Two of these new tasks will replace two current tasks in the ECCE: the advertisements followed by questions, and the longer, related passages followed by questions.

Note: There will be no changes to the grammar and vocabulary sections of the GVR.

The total number of GVR items will remain the same, but the time allowed for the GVR section will be increased from 80 minutes to 90 minutes.

Other Information about the Change

In early 2012, a complete sample ECCE Listening test and GVR test will be made available.

Format and Content of the 2013 ECCE Examinations

Changes that begin with the May 2013 examinations are shown in bold print.

Section	Time	Description	Number of Items
Speaking	15 minutes	A structured oral interaction occurs between the examinee and the oral examiner. The interaction involves a visual prompt.	4 stages
Listening	30 minutes	Part 1 (multiple choice) A short recorded conversation is followed by a question. Answer choices are shown as pictures.	30
		Part 2 (multiple choice) Short extended talks on four different topics, each followed by 4-6 questions. The questions are printed in the test booklet and time is given before each talk to preview the questions. There are four answer choices for each question. Answer choices are printed in the test booklet.	20
Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading (GVR)	90 minutes	Grammar (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of words or phrases to complete it. Only one choice is grammatically correct.	35
		Vocabulary (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of words to complete it. Only one word has the correct meaning in that context.	35
		Reading (multiple choice) A short reading passage on a topic followed by 5 questions (two passages) Four short texts related to each other by topic, followed by 10 questions (two texts)	30
Writing	30 minutes	You read a short excerpt from a newspaper article and then write a letter or essay giving your opinion on the situation or issue you read about.	1 task

An Example of the 2013 New ECCE Listening Task

This section provides an example of Part 2 of the ECCE listening section that will begin with the 2013 May administration. If you wish to experience the new Part 2 section in the same way it will be administered on the exam, we recommend following these steps:

1. **Gather the test materials:**
 - a. Questions 1–6 of the sample Part 2 listening section, available on the next page;
 - b. The audio file, available on the ECCE website, that contains the digital audio for the Part 2 sample.
 - c. a pencil for taking notes and marking your answers

2. **Turn to page 6, “2013 Sample: Listening Part 2.”**

When you begin playback of the digital audio for the Part 2 sample. You will hear the following instructions:

In Part 2 of the new style listening test, you will hear four short talks. After each talk, you will hear some questions about it. Before each talk begins, you will have time to look at the printed questions. In this sample test, you will hear only one short talk. Choose the best answer to each question from the printed answer choices.

There are six questions about this talk. If you want to, you may take notes as you listen. Please listen carefully.

3. **Once you have started the listening section audio recording, do not pause it or stop it.** The audio includes a pause after each question so that you can mark your answer on the answer sheet. By using the time permitted on the recording, you will get practice listening and responding in a set amount of time.

In Appendix 1, you will find a script of the audio for this new listening section sample.

2013 Sample: Listening Part 2

Questions 1–6

Listen to a teacher in a music class, but first look at the questions.

1. What is each student supposed to do?
 - a. perform in a concert
 - b. attend five events
 - c. write a research paper
 - d. compose a piece of music
2. What information did the teacher hand out?
 - a. a list of possible things to see
 - b. a list of all class assignments
 - c. a program for a performance
 - d. the school's website address
3. Why does the teacher want the ticket stubs?
 - a. to get the students' money refunded
 - b. to give a discount on another concert
 - c. to prove the students went to a show
 - d. to create to a class collection
4. What information can be found on the website?
 - a. the assignment requirements
 - b. the teacher's schedule
 - c. information about the musicians
 - d. a list of local performances
5. Why is the teacher talking to the class?
 - a. to invite the students to a performance
 - b. to describe an event
 - c. to explain an assignment
 - d. to announce a new website
6. What does the teacher mean when he says: 
 - a. The students' responses should be thoughtful.
 - b. The students' responses should be lengthy.
 - c. The students' responses should be entertaining.
 - d. The students' responses should include pictures.

Notes

An Example of the 2013 New ECCE Reading Task

On the following two pages (pp. 8 and 9) is an example of the 2013 New ECCE Reading Task. It contains four short reading texts related to each other by topic, followed by 10 questions.

A

To: Solutions Tech Supervisors
 From: gloria@hr.solutionstech.com
 Subject: Company Picnic

Dear Supervisors,

This is a reminder about our annual company picnic on June 15. We still need managers to volunteer to help out.

- Set up children's activities (2–4 p.m.)
- Greet employees (5–7 p.m.)
- Assist with games (5–7 p.m. or 7–9 p.m.)
- Collect food donations (5–7 p.m. or 7–9 p.m.)

We want to make this a great event for all our employees. If you can lend a hand, contact me by June 1. Please state activity and time shift preference.

Sincerely,
 Gloria Jones, Planning Committee

B

Evening at Riverside Park

All Solutions Tech Company employees and families
 June 15, 5 p.m.–9 p.m.

For even more fun and maybe starting a new tradition, we're having a circus at our annual company picnic. As usual, we'll provide lots of good food and drink and live music. Our charity event this year is a collection for the City Food Bank.

JBJ Circus will perform under the Big Tent.

- The Amazing Acrobats: The Rossi Family
- SoJo the Clown and His White Dog
- Clara and Her Dancing Horses

Also, special children's games and activities including face painting and clown magic.



Don't forget to bring along a donation for City Food Bank.

**C**

City Food Bank in Urgent Need of Donations



City Food Bank is running extremely low on canned goods and other nonperishable foods.

To meet the need, City Food Bank is urging community groups, neighborhood clubs, and local businesses to hold food drives. "We are in particular need right now because of the bad weather that hit our community. Many homes were flooded

last month, so many people who don't normally use our service came in for food assistance."

City Food Bank is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing hunger. It is the oldest food-relief agency in the Riverside area. It is located at 549 Park Road, Riverside, and donations are accepted every day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

D

Executive Profile: Jeff Blackstone Chief Development Officer, Solutions Tech Company



Jeff Blackstone, CDO of Solutions Tech Company, the largest computer-support business in Michigan, likes working with people as much as with computers.

Blackstone believes that success on the job is tied to several factors. One is that employees have fun together when they are not working. He is pleased that his company is even bringing in a circus for their annual company picnic.

Blackstone worked for several years in computer development before studying Organizational Psychology at State University. He believes some companies' employees end up just doing jobs they are good at but don't like. He thinks that is a formula for stress on a worker. At Solutions Tech, Blackstone's primary responsibility is to match employees with the kind of tasks they like and do best.

Since joining Solutions Tech eight years ago, he's been earning the praise of the employees there as well as the respect of the whole community for his support of local charities. "One of the charities that I think is so important is City Food Bank," said Blackstone. Blackstone volunteers at the Food Bank once a month. He added that he's really looking forward to the company picnic where he'll be personally helping City Food Bank build up its food supply.

2013 Sample: New Reading Task

Question 1 refers to section A on page 8.

1. What is the main purpose of section A?
 - a. to find out who needs volunteers
 - b. to get help with a company event
 - c. to encourage people to attend an event
 - d. to announce the time of a company picnic

Questions 2–3 refer to section B on page 8.

2. What should people take to the event?
 - a. an item to donate to the Food Bank
 - b. picnic food and drinks for their family
 - c. games for children to play
 - d. money to attend the circus
3. What will be available for the first time this year?
 - a. food and drinks
 - b. live music
 - c. charity collection
 - d. circus performances

Questions 4–5 refer to section C on page 8.

4. Why does the Food Bank need donations now?
 - a. this is only place hungry people can get food
 - b. food there was ruined in a recent flood
 - c. more people than usual have used it recently
 - d. it does not have any canned goods available
5. What kind of food would be an acceptable donation?
 - a. eggs
 - b. fresh fruit
 - c. bread
 - d. dried beans

Questions 6–8 refer to section D on page 8.

6. What is the main purpose of section D?
 - a. to support the activities of a local charity
 - b. to introduce a new Chief Development Officer
 - c. to clarify the business of a large computer company
 - d. to provide information about an employee
7. What did Blackstone do before working where he does now?
 - a. work with computers
 - b. teach psychology at a university
 - c. financial planning at a bank
 - d. community development
8. In the third sentence of paragraph 3, what does **that** refer to?
 - a. employees afraid of losing their jobs
 - b. employees having too much work to do
 - c. workers doing jobs that they don't like
 - d. workers doing jobs that they're not good at

Questions 9–10 refer to two or more sections on page 8.

9. Which sections include information about a company event?
 - a. A, B, and C
 - b. A, B, and D
 - c. A, C, and D
 - d. B, C, and D
10. What will Jeff Blackstone probably be doing on June 15?
 - a. setting up children's activities
 - b. collecting food donations
 - c. assisting with games
 - d. greeting employees

Appendix 1: Part 2 Listening Sample Audio Script

Example of 2013 ECCE Listening Section Task

Instructions

In Part 2 of the new style listening test, you will hear four short talks. After each talk, you will hear some questions about it. Before each talk begins, you will have time to look at the printed questions.

In this sample test, you will hear only one short talk.

Choose the best answer to each question from the printed answer choices.

There are six questions about this talk. If you want to, you may take notes as you listen. Please listen carefully.

Questions 1–6

Listen to a teacher in a music class, but first, look at the questions.

M: Good afternoon. Today, I'd like to explain one of the class requirements to you. Since you're taking this music class, I suspect that you either love listening to music, or playing it yourself, so this assignment should be easy and fun. Basically—here, everyone take one of these sheets—I'd like you to go to five different types of musical performances during this semester. On the sheet of paper that's coming around, you'll see a list of suggestions, such as: musical theater, orchestra concerts, student recitals, popular bands, opera, and so on.

So, um, in addition to attending each show, you also have to prove to me that you went. In order to do that, you need to write a paragraph explaining your reaction to what you heard and saw, I want you to use as much insight as possible. Explain your reaction, you know, so that I know how the music made you feel.

Also, you should attach the ticket stub from the performance. You won't get credit for attending a performance if you don't turn in the ticket stub.

Oh, and I wanted to tell you about a website that lists all of the performances and shows happening in our city each month. This'll be a great resource for planning which events you want to see. That website is listed at the bottom of the sheet that I passed out.

So, any questions?

- Number 1. What is each student supposed to do?
- Number 2. What information did the teacher hand out?
- Number 3. Why does the teacher want the ticket stubs?
- Number 4. What information can be found on the website?
- Number 5. Why is the teacher talking to the class?
- Number 6. What does the teacher mean when he says, "I want you to use as much insight as possible?"

Appendix 2: Answer Key

Listening Task Answer Key

1.	b.	The students were told to go to <i>five different types of musical performances</i> during the semester.
2.	a.	The teacher gave each student a sheet of paper with a list of suggested types of musical shows.
3.	c.	The teacher explained to the students that in order to <i>get credit for attending a performance</i> they had to turn in their ticket stub from the show.
4.	d.	The website <i>lists all the performances and shows happening</i> each month in the city.
5.	c.	The teacher gave the students directions on how to complete an assignment for class. The assignment is to attend five different musical performances and then write a paragraph explaining their reaction to the show. The teacher did not invite them to come to a show, but rather gave them instructions about attending performances for a class assignment.
6.	a.	When the teacher says, “I want you to use as much insight as possible,” this means that when the students write their paragraph they should give their personal thoughts about what the musical performance meant to them. “Insight” comes from a person’s mind.

Reading Task Answer Key

1.	b.	This is a memo asking managers to volunteer to help out at an annual company picnic. The purpose is not to encourage attendance at the event. And while the memo provides information about time, the times listed are the times volunteers are needed at the different activities happening at the company picnic.
2.	a.	The bottom of the flyer reminds employees to <i>bring along a donation for City Food Bank</i> .
3.	d.	The question is asking what will be available for the first time this year. The flyer states that as a <i>new tradition</i> , there will be a circus at the picnic.
4.	c.	The Food Bank is in need of donations because many more people went there recently for food supplies due to the bad weather and flooding in the area.
5.	d.	Dried beans would be a good donation because it is <i>nonperishable</i> , which means it would last long on a shelf and is not likely to spoil. Eggs, fresh fruit and bread could all decay, rot or spoil easily.
6.	d.	The main purpose of this article is to introduce Jeff Blackstone, a successful employee who works for Solutions Tech Company. The article states that Jeff Blackstone has been at the company for 8 years so it is unlikely that he is a new Chief Development Officer there.
7.	a.	The article says that Blackstone <i>worked for several years in computer hardware and software development before</i> attending State University for his current job.
8.	c.	The word, “that” is referring to the jobs that employees are assigned to do because they are good at doing them, even though they may not like doing them.
9.	b.	Section A, B, and D all refer to the same Solutions Tech <i>company picnic</i> event.
10.	b.	Both section A and B give the date of the annual company picnic as June 15. Section D explains that Blackstone will be <i>looking forward to the company picnic and the chance to personally help the City Food bank build up its food reserves</i> . Therefore, Blackstone will probably be collecting food donations on June 15 at the company picnic.

