

## GESE Initial steps

Guide for teachers, Grades 1-3





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## What is Trinity College London?

Trinity College London is an independent international exams board, fully accredited in England as an awarding body. Trinity provides qualifications in the English language, music and performing arts throughout the world.

Trinity has been examining since the 1870s and now over half a million people each year take one of our exams.

At Trinity, we believe in recognising the achievements of every learner. Each journey starts with a first step – including the journey of learning English. In this booklet, you will learn how Trinity recognises the achievements of learners of English at the beginning of their journey.



## The Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

The Graded Examinations in Spoken English are designed for all learners of English. There are 12 grades in total, so whatever your student's level of English there is an exam that they can take – and should pass!

Learners of English – particularly children – like to know that they are progressing and that the language they have learnt can be used in a real-life situation. Trinity recognises this and values the positive motivational effect of an exam which encourages further learning.

Each GESE exam is conducted in person by a Trinity examiner. All Trinity examiners are highly trained and experienced. They will travel to your country, normally to your school, to meet your students. The exam consists of a one-to-one conversation with the examiner during which the students demonstrate that they can communicate in English.

The 12 grades of GESE are divided into four stages:

Initial	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6	Grades 7-9	Grades 10-12
5-7 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	25 minutes
			Topic presentation
			Topic discussion
		Candidate-led discussion of topic	Interactive task
	Topic discussion	Interactive task	Listening task
Conversation	Conversation	Conversation	Conversation

Since, for many, the journey of learning English begins at an early age, this booklet has been prepared to help teachers of young learners prepare their students for the Initial stage, Grades 1-3. Teachers of older learners may find the techniques outlined in this booklet helpful, but should bear in mind that the materials are designed specifically for younger learners.

Full details of all Trinity's ESOL exams can be found in the latest edition of our syllabuses or on our website [www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol)



## GESE Grade 1 – Introduction

Grade 1 is a conversation with a Trinity examiner, which lasts up to 5 minutes. During this time the examiner will exchange greetings with the candidate, ask simple questions and give simple instructions.

Like all the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, it will be a friendly and enjoyable experience. The examiner will use pictures or objects to help the candidate produce the language they need to demonstrate. At Grade 1, candidates do not have to use full sentences when they talk to their examiner. They show that they understand the examiner by responding appropriately to their questions or instructions. Page 6 lists what candidates need to be able to understand and use in order to pass their exam.

Teachers can easily introduce exam practice into students' general English classes. Students can practise for their exam in class, for example, by talking to each other and playing educational games focusing on the language items required for Grade 1. At the end of the exam, candidates feel more confident because they have been able to understand someone they have never met before who does not speak their language. They see that the English they have learned is real and useful. Trinity's aim is that candidates leave the exam room smiling and looking forward to their next English lesson.



# GESE Grade 1 – Language for Grade 1

## Format

*Total time:* 5 minutes

The examination consists of one assessed phase:

- Conversation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes).

## Candidate performance

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the examination.

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### Communicative skills

- Exchange greetings with the examiner
- Show understanding of simple instructions through appropriate actions
- Give very short answers to simple questions and requests for information

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### Language functions

- Exchanging greetings
- Giving personal information, e.g. name, age
- Identifying and naming items given in the lexical list below
- Leave-taking

---

### Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand**:

- Imperatives for common actions, e.g. *go, come, show, point, give, touch, stand up*
- Question words *what? how many? how old?*
- Demonstratives *this, that, these, those*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- The present simple tense of the verb *to be*
- Common nouns in singular and plural (regular and irregular), e.g. *shoe/shoes, foot/feet*
- Simple adjectives, e.g. *small, tall, green*
- Determiners *a, the, my, your, his, her*
- Pronouns *I, you, he, she, it, they*

---

### Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- Personal information
- Immediate surroundings including classroom objects
- Basic parts of the face and body
- Common animals (domestic, farm and wild)
- Cardinal numbers up to 20
- Colours
- Everyday items of clothing
- Words relating to the language functions listed above

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### Phonology

- The correct pronunciation of common words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
-





## GESE Grade 1 – Example practice materials

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare for a Trinity GESE Grade 1 exam with your students. Below there are sample materials and questions for some of the language in the syllabus. Please use the examples below to help you develop your own materials for exam practice.

Please note the suggestions given in this document are only examples of some of the many ways of practising for the real exam. The suggestions are NOT models to be memorised. Examiners will use a range of methods and questions to help the candidates demonstrate the required language of Grade 1. Therefore, teachers who want to practise a real Grade 1 exam should use a range of pictures, objects and questions for preparing.



# Introductions

## Examiner materials/gestures

[No materials needed in this section]

## Examiner questions

- *Hello!*
- *What's your name?*
- *How are you?*
- *How old are you?*

Introductions: Which language items are we testing?  
Please check the criteria listed on page 6.

There is a sample below

---

### Communicative skills

- ✓ Exchange greetings with the examiner
- ✓ Give very short answers to simple questions and requests for information

---

### Language functions

- ✓ Exchanging greetings
  - ✓ Giving personal information, e.g. name, age
-



Look at the vocabulary wheel below. You will see pictures of some of the Grade 1 vocabulary. Show this to your students and ask them what each section represents. Do they know the English name of all of the pictures? Ask your students to name the items.



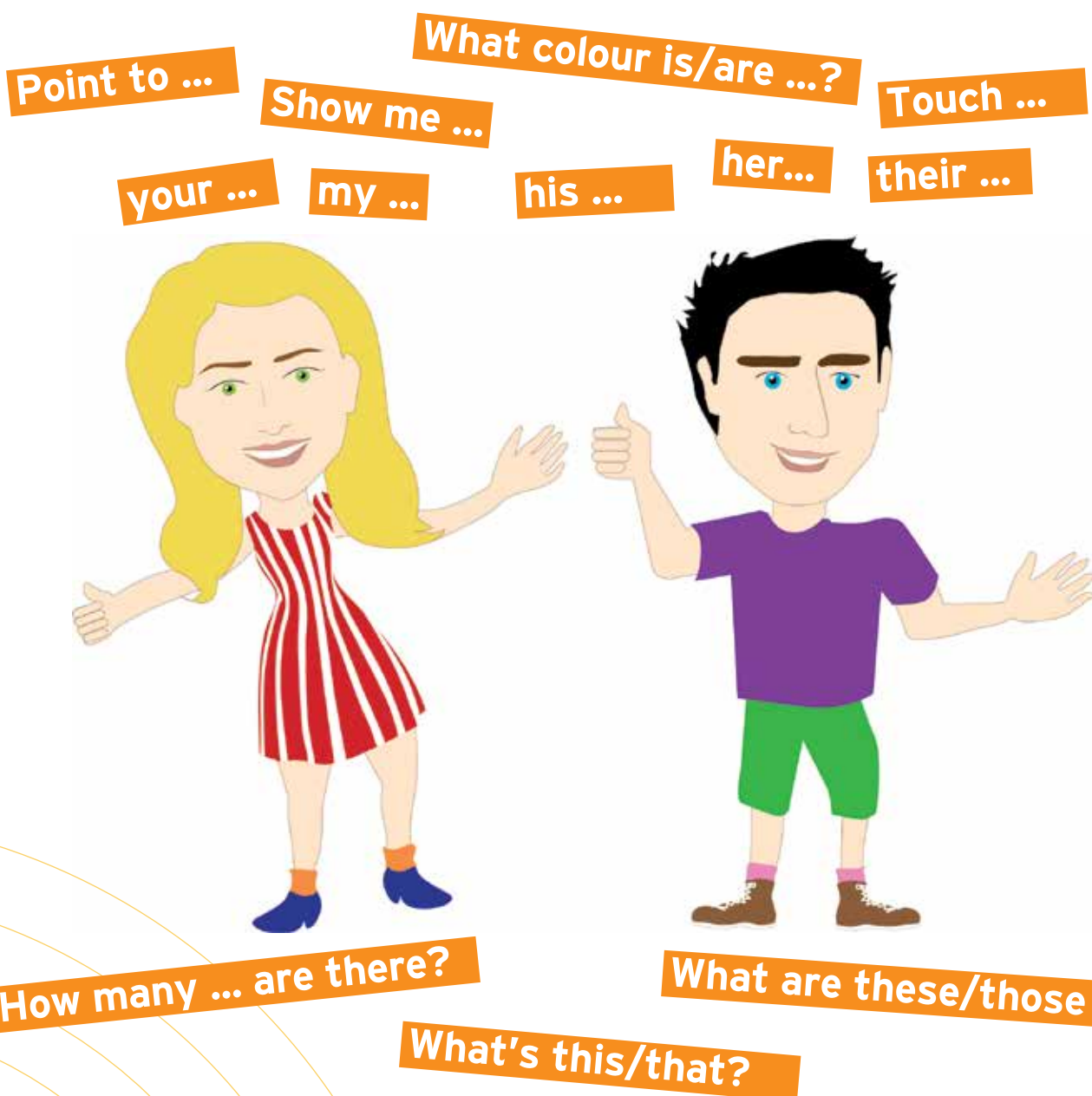
(Colours, immediate surroundings including classroom objects, exchanging greetings, common animals (domestic, farm and wild), cardinal numbers up to 20, basic parts of the face and body, everyday items of clothing)

## Vocabulary

Practising: clothes, colours, parts of the body, determiners, imperatives, question words

- Draw this picture on your black/white board, using different colours for clothes and the body. You do not need to write the words.
- Use the picture as a student quiz, or play games using the instructions on the picture. You can also ask students to draw their own picture of a man and woman to use as a quiz. What language are we testing?

Please check the criteria listed on page 6.



Practising: numbers, question words, colours, simple adjectives, determiners

## Numbers

### Examiner materials/gestures

Examiner shows the number chart

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

### Examiner questions

- *How old are you?*
- *Point to (student's age).*

Examiner points to a correct number

- *Is this 13?*

Examiner points to an incorrect number

- *Is this 15? Point to 15.*

Examiner points to another number

- *What's this?*

Numbers: What language are we testing?

Please check the criteria listed on page 6.



## Colour and Size

### Examiner materials/gestures

Examiner shows some coloured pens



### Examiner questions

- Look.

Examiner points to the pens

- What are these?
- How many pens are there?
- Point to the green pen.

Examiner point to an incorrect pen

- Is this the blue pen? What is it?
- Give me the blue pen.

Examiner points to another pen

- Is this your pen?
- Touch the big pen.
- Give me the small pen.
- Show me the red pen.

Examiner points to the other pens

- What colour are these pens?

## GESE Grade 2 – Introduction

Grade 2 is a conversation with a Trinity examiner, which lasts up to six minutes. During this time, the candidate has the opportunity to show how much they have progressed since their Grade 1 exam. They are now able to use English at level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Grade 2 exam is a friendly and communicative experience and the candidate will use short phrases and statements and ask their examiner a question. The list of what learners should be able to do is longer (see below and page 15). The language in Grade 2 reflects the way students learn English in the classroom. Because the candidate asks at least one question during the conversation, they start to understand that language is a two-way communication and can begin to see the advantages of learning English.

## GESE Grade 2 (CEFR A1) – Language for Grade 2

### Format

*Total time:* 6 minutes

The examination consists of one assessed phase:

- Conversation with the examiner (up to 6 minutes).

### Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the examination.

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#### Communicative skills

- Understand short, simple questions, requests and statements
  - Respond with appropriate actions and positive and negative short form answers
  - Contribute to the conversation using memorised phrases and short statements
  - Use a basic range of words and simple phrases related to personal details and situations
  - Ask for very basic personal information, e.g. about possessions
-

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**Language functions**


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- Indicating the position of people and objects
  - Describing people, animals, objects and places very simply
  - Stating simple facts
  - Informing about possessions
  - Asking very simple questions about personal details
- 

**Grammar**


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The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand**:

- Present simple tense questions
- Question words *who? when?*
- Present continuous tense questions
- Determiners *some, any*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- Present simple tense
  - *There is/are* and *has/have got/have you got? Do you have?*
  - Question words *where? how?*
  - Prepositions of place *in, on, under, between, next to*
  - Determiners *their, its*
  - Possessive pronouns *mine, yours, his, hers*
  - Yes/no answers to present continuous tense questions
- 

**Lexis**


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The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- Rooms in the home
  - Household objects
  - Family and friends
  - Pets
  - Possessions
  - Days of the week and months of the year
  - Cardinal numbers up to 50
  - Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed above
- 

**Phonology**


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- The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
  - Basic intonation patterns for simple questions
  - Contractions, e.g. *I've, I'm, he's*
-

## GESE Grade 2 – Example practice materials

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare for a Trinity GESE Grade 2 exam with your students. Students can prepare for their Grade 2 exam in their English classes, for example, by asking each other questions in the classroom and making sure that they understand the answers.

It can be useful for teachers and students to work together to create wall charts of samples of the language required for Grade 2. In order to make the exam practice as authentic as possible, you can use these materials to play the role of the examiner, asking the suggested questions and adding your own to elicit the required language from your students. The practice exam materials and questions have been divided into three different examples. Please use the examples on pages 17-20 to help you develop your own materials for exam practice, and remember there are many possible ways of preparing for the exam.

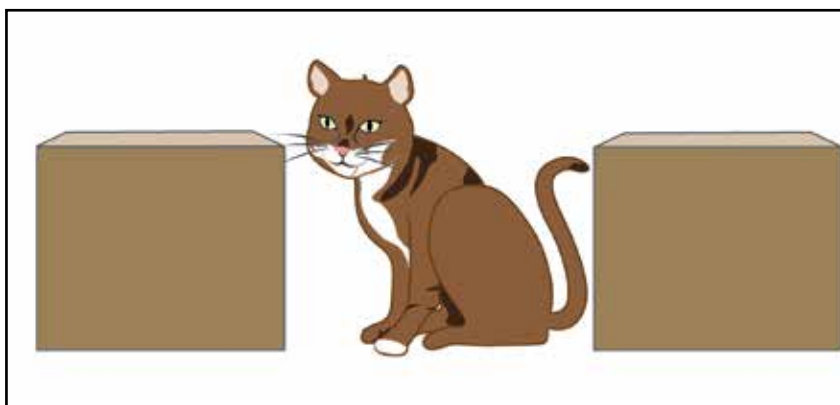
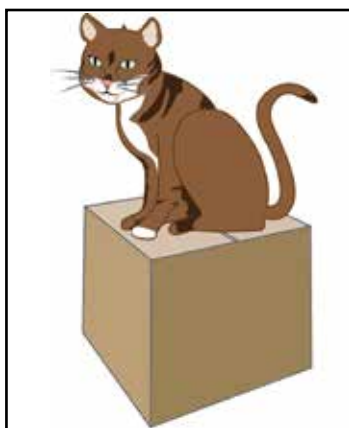
Please note the suggestions given in this document are only examples of some of the many ways of practising for the real exam. The suggestions are NOT models to be memorised. Examiners will use a range of methods and questions to help the candidates demonstrate the required language of Grade 2. Therefore, teachers who want to practise a real Grade 2 exam should use a range of pictures, objects and questions for preparing.



## Prepositions

### Examiner materials/gestures

Using flashcards



### Examiner questions

- Look at this cat. Where is it?

Examiner points to incorrect picture

- Is it on the box?  
- Where is it?

Prepositions: What language are we testing?  
Please check the criteria listed on pages 14-15.

## Rooms, household objects, prepositions, present continuous

Before the activity, ask your students:

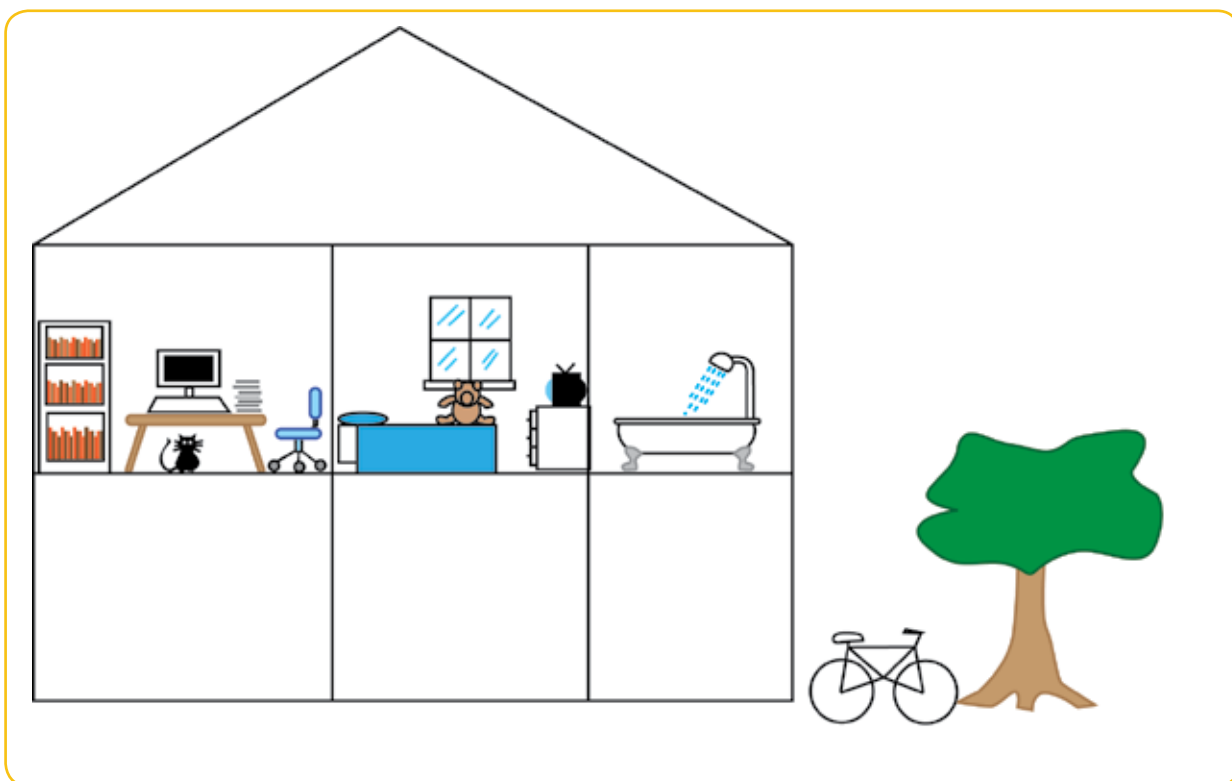
- *Do you live in a house or a flat?*
- *How many rooms are there?*
- *What rooms are there in your house/flat?*
- Put your students into A/B pairs and give them either the A or B half of this picture (or a similar picture).
- Tell the students not to show each other their pictures.
- They must describe their rooms and furniture to their partner.
- Their partner must describe what they hear.

Remember, they need to use the correct prepositions! At the end, ask the class:

- *Where are the cats?*
- *Where is the teddy bear?*
- *Where are the flowers?*
- *Where is the tree?*
- *Where is the woman?*
- *Is the woman sleeping?*
- *Is she eating?*
- *Is she drinking?*
- *Is she watching TV?*
- *Have you got a computer? Where is yours?*



## A. Describe your house!



## B. Describe your house!



Home/Rooms: What language are we testing?  
Please check the criteria listed on pages 14-15.

## Present continuous

### Examiner materials/gestures

Using flashcards

Examiner points to a mixture of correct and incorrect pictures, asking...

### Examiner questions

- Look at these pictures
- Is he ...ing?
- Is she ...ing?
- Are they ...ing?





## GESE Grade 3 – Introduction

Grade 3 is the final exam in the Initial stage of the GESE exams. This means that the learner has reached A2.1 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This exam lasts up to seven minutes and now candidates are able to have a more complex conversation with their examiner.

A Grade 3 speaker of English can describe their daily routines and other events to the examiner, give simple directions and describe what people are doing. They can also say the names of different common jobs and talk about what they do in their free time, using the grammar of the grade (see page 23).

The Grade 3 exam is a stimulating communicative experience with the candidate talking more with the examiner. Like all the GESE grades, the examiner does not read a script and the examiner and the candidate have a real conversation. This means that the examiner enjoys meeting their candidates and the candidates enjoy talking – in English. And when the learner has completed the GESE Initial stage, it is time to start thinking about the next stage – Elementary stage. Next stop: Grade 4.

# GESE Grade 3 (CEFR A2.1) – Language for Grade 3

## Format

Total time: 7 minutes

The examination consists of one assessed phase:

- Conversation with the examiner (up to 7 minutes).

## Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grades, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the examination.

### Communicative skills

- Show understanding by responding appropriately to simple questions and requests
- Use basic sentence patterns and phrases to communicate limited information related to simple everyday situations
- Exchange basic information about everyday life and activities by asking and answering simple questions
- Link groups of words in a very simple way using *and*, *and then*

### Language functions

- Describing daily routines and times
- Giving dates
- Expressing ability and inability
- Giving very simple directions and locations
- Describing current activities of real people or those in pictures
- Describing states in the past
- Asking simple questions about everyday life

### Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- Present continuous tense
- *Can* and *can't*
- Prepositions of movement *from*, *to*, *up*, *down*, *along*, *across*
- Prepositions of time *on*, *in*, *at*
- Prepositions of place *near*, *in front of*, *behind*, *opposite*
- Past tense of the verb *to be*
- Link words *and*, *and then*

### Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- Jobs
- Places in the local area
- Place of study
- Home life
- Weather
- Free time
- Times and dates
- Ordinal numbers up to 31<sup>st</sup> for dates
- Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed above

### Phonology

- The correct pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas listed above
- The use of contractions where appropriate
- Basic stress and intonation patterns for words, short sentences and simple questions

## GESE Grade 3 – Example practice materials

### Examples for practising Grade 3

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare for and practise a Trinity GESE Grade 3 exam with your students. Students can prepare for their Grade 3 exam in their English classes, for example, by asking each other questions in the classroom and making sure that they understand the answers. It can be useful for teachers to give the class lots of activities for asking questions and finding out information from their other students in the class.

In order to make the exam practice as authentic as possible, you can use these materials to play the role of the examiner, asking the suggested questions and adding your own questions to elicit the required language from your students. The practice exam materials and questions have been divided into four different examples – these four examples are only suggestions. Please use the examples below to help you develop your own materials for exam practice, and remember there are many possible ways of preparing for the exam.

Please note the suggestions given in this document are only examples of some of the many ways of practising for the real exam. The suggestions are NOT models to be memorised. Examiners will use a range of methods and questions to help the candidates demonstrate the required language of Grade 3. Therefore, teachers who want to practise a real Grade 3 exam should use a range of pictures, objects and questions for preparing.

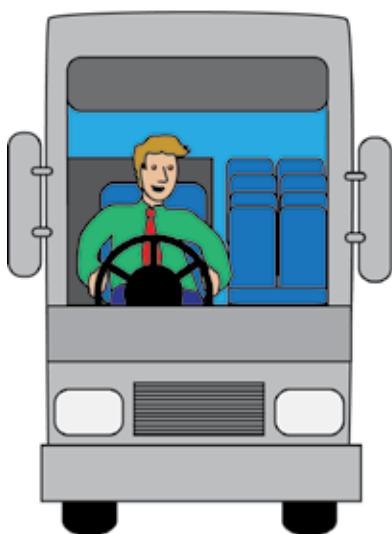




## Jobs/Family jobs

### Examiner materials/gestures

Examiner shows the student pictures of different jobs



### Examiner questions

- Tell me about your family. What are their jobs?
- Look at these pictures. What jobs can you see?
- What's her job?
- And his?
- Do you have a question for me?



## Places in the local area

### Examiner materials/gestures

If a window with a view is available

### Examiner questions

- *Tell me about your house. Is it near this school?*
- *Walking from this school to your house, what can you see? A park? Some shops?*
- *Look out of the window. What can you see?*
- *Do you have a question for me?*

What language are we testing?

Please check the criteria listed on page 23.



## Time, Daily routines, Place of study, Free time

### Examiner materials/gestures

### Examiner questions

- *Tell me about your daily routine. What time do you go to school?*
- *What subjects do you study at school?*
- *What time does school finish?*
- *What do you do in your free time?*
- *What do you do with your brother/sister/parents/friends?*

Time, Daily routines, Place of study, Free time: What language are we testing?  
Please check the criteria listed on page 23.



## Free time, Present continuous, Can/can't

### Examiner materials/gestures

Examiner points to different activities



### Examiner questions

- Look at these pictures of free time activities.

- What are they doing?

- What's she doing?

- What's he doing?

- Can you ...?

- Have you got a question for me?

Free time, Present continuous, Can/can't: What language are we testing?  
Please check the criteria listed on page 23.

## General information – Initial stage

### Format

The exam at each grade consists of the following:

- greetings and setting at ease
- conversation
- end of conversation and leave-taking.

### Exam procedure

- The examiner begins by greeting the candidate and trying to set him or her at ease.
- The conversation is then started by the examiner who gives the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate the range of language required at this stage.
- At Grade 1, the candidate is required to show understanding by giving short responses using the language of the grade or through simple actions, such as moving around the room or pointing to specific objects.
- At Grades 2 and 3, the candidate asks the examiner at least one simple question during the exam.
- Examiners select exam materials that are appropriate to the age and maturity of the candidate. These materials can include everyday objects and pictures. The examiner will use the materials to engage the candidate's interest, to help the candidate demonstrate the language of the grade and to encourage the conversation to develop. The examiner may also talk about the immediate surroundings of the exam room, school or centre.
- The examiner brings the conversation to an end by thanking the candidate and saying goodbye.
- The candidate is expected to say goodbye.

Sample exams at the Initial stage can be found on the Trinity website [www.trinitycollege.co.uk/GESEvideo](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/GESEvideo). A DVD showing examples of the exams at all grades is also available to Registered Exam Centres. Sample lesson activities for the Initial stage can be seen at [www.trinitycollege.co.uk/go/GESElessonplans](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/go/GESElessonplans)

## General information – Initial stage

### Guidance

- At the Initial stage, it is important for candidates to practise questions and answers. But in the conversation, the examiner also aims to help the candidate participate in a real two-way exchange using the language of their grade.
- The examiner will speak slowly and clearly in the exam and will allow the candidate time to understand what the examiner says and to form a response.
- The examiner will provide support in the form of repetition and rephrasing.
- Candidates should ask for repetition of anything they have not heard clearly or understood for example 'Can you repeat that, please?' or 'Sorry?'. However, if the candidate overuses such phrases, this will be an indication that the candidate is having difficulty understanding the examiner. Regular difficulty understanding the examiner will affect the examiner's assessment of the candidate.
- Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to use the communicative skills, language functions and language items listed for the grade (and for any previous grades). Therefore, anyone responsible for preparing candidates for the exam should make sure that the candidates are completely familiar with the language items, understand their meaning and can use them accurately and appropriately.
- At Grade 1, candidates are expected to answer the examiner's questions with very short, mostly one or two word responses, as well as with gestures and actions.
- At Grade 2, it is acceptable for candidates to answer the examiner's questions with a few words, very short responses or full sentences. Candidates are expected to provide simple descriptions of people and objects using basic phrases and sentences. In the exam, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one very simple question about personal details.
- At Grade 3, candidates are expected to link groups of words with simple connectors, e.g. 'My brother's tall and he's got black hair'. In the exam, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least one simple question about everyday life.



## General information – Initial stage

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### Assessment

At the Initial stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D. These levels are:

- A – Distinction (reflects an excellent performance)
- B – Merit (reflects a good performance)
- C – Pass (reflects a satisfactory performance)
- D – Fail (reflects an unsatisfactory performance).

The examiner completes an individual Exam report form for each candidate immediately after the exam. The Exam report form provides an indication of the result of the exam and identifies key areas for improvement if the candidate receives a C or D. The final result of the exam is confirmed by the issue of a certificate (or otherwise) six to eight weeks after the exam.

Full details on all of Trinity's ESOL exams can be found in the latest edition of our syllabuses or on our website [www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/esol)

## Notes

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