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# ECPE

Examination for the  
Certificate of  
**Proficiency** in  
English

## Information Bulletin



TESTING AND CERTIFICATION DIVISION  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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## OVERVIEW OF THE ECPE

The Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) is a standardized advanced-level English as a foreign language (EFL) examination. It is developed and scored by the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan (ELI-UM) and is administered by test centers around the world, including Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

The ECPE assesses linguistic, discursal, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic elements of the English language. Receptive and productive skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing) are evaluated through a combination of integrated and discrete tasks. The ECPE is aimed at the C2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Certificate of Proficiency in English is recognized in several countries as official documentary evidence of advanced proficiency in the English language and can be used for academic and professional purposes. The ECPE does not assess specific curricular content, nor does it assess or certify teaching ability.

The ECPE certificate is valid for the lifetime of the recipient. It is accepted by some universities as evidence of proficiency in English if the certificate has been received within the past two years.

ELI-UM is committed to excellence in its tests, which are developed in accordance with the highest standards in educational measurement. All parts of the examination are written following specified guidelines, and items are pretested to ensure that they function properly. ELI-UM works closely with test centers to ensure that its tests are administered in a way that is fair and accessible to examinees and that the ECPE is open to all people who wish to take the exam, regardless of the school they attend.

The ECPE tests all four skill areas: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

## PREPARING FOR THE ECPE

ELI-UM does not recommend any specific course of study to be taken in preparation for the ECPE. The best preparation is through the general study and use of English.

Examinees may also find it useful to consult the sample test items at the end of this booklet in order to familiarize themselves with the format of the test items. In addition, many different publishers produce study guides for the ECPE. A list of preparation materials and additional sample test items can be found on the ELI-UM website, [www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli). The website also houses a full ECPE test for practice purposes, as well as ECPE writing prompts and sample answers demonstrating different levels of proficiency.

Some local language schools offer courses specifically for learners wishing to prepare for the ECPE, or may recommend a course of study for learners wishing to take the ECPE. Contact your local test center for information about language courses in your area.

## PRELIMINARY TEST FORMAT

An ECPE Preliminary Test is available from test centers. Examinees should contact their local test center for specific information regarding the ECPE Preliminary Test in their country.

Preliminary test scores are not used in determining final ECPE results. Only results from the final ECPE will be used in determining whether or not an individual will receive a certificate.

The preliminary test does not contain speaking, writing, or listening sections. The following chart describes the format and content of the ECPE Preliminary Test.

Format and Content of Preliminary Test			
Section	Total Time	Description	Number of Items
Grammar, Cloze, Vocabulary, Reading	30 minutes	<b>Grammar</b> (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of words or phrases to complete it. Only one choice is grammatically correct.	10
		<b>Cloze</b> (multiple choice) After reading a passage from which words have been removed, examinees must choose one of four words that best fills a missing word slot in terms of grammar and meaning.	10
		<b>Vocabulary</b> (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of words to complete it. Only one word has the correct meaning.	10
		<b>Reading</b> (multiple choice) A reading passage is followed by comprehension questions.	5

## ECPE FINAL TEST FORMAT

The following chart describes the format and content of the final ECPE. At the end of this booklet you will find sample items and/or additional information for each section of the final test.

SECTION	TIME	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF ITEMS
<b>Speaking</b>	30–35 minutes	Examinees participate in a semistructured, multistage task involving two examinees and two examiners.	1 task
<b>Writing</b>	30 minutes	Examinees write an essay based upon one of two topic choices.	1 task
<b>Listening</b>	35–40 minutes	<b>Part I</b> (multiple choice) A short recorded conversation is accompanied by three printed statements. Examinees choose the statement that means about the same thing as what was heard, or that is true based upon the conversation.	50
		<b>Part II</b> (multiple choice) A recorded question is accompanied by three printed responses. Examinees choose the appropriate response to the question.	
		<b>Part III</b> (multiple choice) Three recorded talks, such as those that might be heard on the radio, are each followed by recorded comprehension questions. Examinees choose the correct answer from the printed answer choices.	
<b>Grammar, Cloze, Vocabulary, Reading</b>	75 minutes	<b>Grammar</b> (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is followed by a choice of words or phrases to complete it. Only one choice is grammatically correct.	40
		<b>Cloze</b> (multiple choice) After reading a passage from which words have been removed, examinees must choose one of four words that best fills a missing word slot in terms of grammar and meaning.	20
		<b>Vocabulary</b> (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.	40
		<b>Reading</b> (multiple choice) Four reading passages are followed by comprehension questions.	20

## SCORING

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The speaking and writing sections are graded according to scales established by ELI-UM. The speaking rating is assigned by local oral examiners. The writing section ratings are assigned by specialized raters trained by ELI-UM. All written tests are scored by at least two raters. Scoring rubrics for the speaking and writing sections can be found on pages 8 and 9.

The listening and grammar, cloze, vocabulary, and reading (GCVR) sections of the ECPE are scored by computer at ELI-UM using Item Response Theory (IRT). In this method, more credit is given for answering a difficult question correctly than for answering an easy one correctly. Using IRT, ability estimates are calculated based on the examinee's responses to all test questions. The ability estimate required to pass a section, or to receive a high score, remains the same from year to year.

Examinees who obtain passing scores on all four sections of the ECPE are awarded a Certificate of Proficiency. Those with high scores on all four sections are awarded a Certificate of Proficiency with Honors.

## RECEIVING RESULTS

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ELI-UM does not report results directly to examinees. After all exams in an administration period have been administered and scored, ELI-UM reports examination results to the test centers. Final results are reported as Honors, Pass, or Fail. Section results are reported according to the corresponding level. Numerical scores are not reported. The local test center notifies examinees of their results.

After results have been reported, ELI-UM sends certificates to the test centers for distribution to successful candidates.

## EXAMINATION REPORTS

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All examinees will receive an Examination Report that shows their overall performance as well as the levels for each test section. Examinees are given these results so that they will know the areas in which they are doing well and in which they need to improve.

On the Examination Report, the following information is provided:

1. The result for the ECPE (Honors/Pass/Fail);
2. Section results with a brief description of the examinee's performance. Each section's results is reported on a five-point scale. (The scale and rubrics used for the Speaking and Writing sections are on pp. 8 and 9 of this bulletin.)

The five levels of performance, from highest to lowest, are:

- Honors (H)
- Pass (P)
- Low Pass (LP)
- Borderline Fail (BF)
- Fail (F)

## RESCORING

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Examinees may request to have the writing and/or listening/GCVR sections of the exam rescored. Those who wish to have their exam rescored can get a Rescore Request form from the test center where they took the test. They will return the form to their test center, along with the corresponding fee.

- Examinees have up to one month after test results have been issued by ELI-UM to request a rescore.
- Examinees receive rescore results after ELI-UM has processed the request and returned the information to the test center.
- The ECPE rescore fee is available from ELI-UM. Please contact us at [elicertif@umich.edu](mailto:elicertif@umich.edu) for information.

## DECLINING OR INVALIDATING SCORES

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The ECPE is a secure test. ELI-UM reserves the right to decline to score the ECPE or to invalidate ECPE scores under the circumstances listed below. No exam fees will be refunded and the examinee will not be allowed to take the exam again.

- An examinee misrepresents her/himself; for example, examinee appearance or signature does not match picture or signature on the ID.
- There is sufficient evidence that the handwriting on the ECPE composition does not match the examinee's signature.
- The examiner discovers evidence of examinee misconduct during the ECPE administration, including, but not limited to, copying answers from another examinee, talking with another examinee during the test administration, transferring ECPE test information to any external media, referring to previously prepared notes or aids (test preparation books, study guides, dictionaries, etc., are not allowed), creating a disturbance, or neglecting to follow the examiner's instructions.
- There is an unusual discrepancy in the examinee's performance and/or pattern of answers across test sections.

## TEST TAKERS WITH DISABILITIES

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ELI-UM is committed to ensuring that every examinee be able to demonstrate his or her language ability under circumstances that are fair and equitable. For this reason, ELI-UM allows exam applicants with disabilities to request special accommodations. These accommodations may include changes in the format or the administration of the test.

Types of disabilities usually granted accommodations:

- Visual impairment or blindness
- Hearing impairment or deafness
- Motor impairment
- Psychological and learning disabilities

Arrangements that can be requested:

- Wheelchair access
- Extended testing time
- Additional rest breaks
- Reader
- Scribe
- Recorder to mark answers
- Headphones
- Alternate test formats (e.g., Braille, large print)
- Alternate response formats (e.g., computer for writing section)

### How and when to apply

Examinees should apply directly to the local test center as far in advance as possible from the test date. For special materials, such as Braille or large-print exams, the examinee should apply at least three months before the test date. For administrative modifications, such as extended time, reader, or scribe, the examinee should apply at least one month before the test date. The test center representative will inform the examinee before the exam about what accommodations have been granted.

### Required documentation

Documentation from a licensed or certified professional who is qualified to evaluate the examinee's disability should be submitted to the examination center in advance of the actual test date, at the time when the examinee registers to take the exam. Individuals with disabilities are defined by the American Psychological Association as persons possessing a physical, mental, or developmental impairment that substantially limits one or more of their major life activities. Qualified professionals include physicians, school psychologists, psychometricians, and psychiatrists. Classroom teachers or parents are not considered to be qualified to make a disability determination.

## Score reporting and certificate modifications

When there is credible evidence that the scores from a modified examination are comparable to scores from a standard administration, no special indicator is placed on the certificate. When such evidence is lacking, information about the nature of the modification will be provided, if permitted by law, to help test users interpret test results accurately.

In cases where a section of the examination is not given (e.g., the listening section is not administered because the examinee is profoundly deaf), ELI-UM will issue a modified certificate. The modified certificate will indicate which sections of the exam were taken and passed.

### Further information

Please visit the ECPE section of ELI-UM's website for more information as well as a copy of the manual for test takers with disabilities.

## ADMINISTRATION AND TEST CENTERS

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The ECPE is administered twice a year, in June and in November. The cost of the ECPE varies from country to country, depending on the local economy. The fee is paid directly to the test center. For specific information about registration procedures, test dates, and fees contact your local test center.

Visit the ELI-UM website for a list of all ELI-UM ECPE test centers ([www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli)). Contact the testing center nearest you to find out if and when the ECPE is offered in your area. **You may take the ECPE only in the country in which you are a resident.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### How often can I take the ECPE?

Examinees may take the ECPE twice a year. Test centers offer the ECPE in June and November.

### Do I have to be a student at the test center in order to take the ECPE there?

No. Test centers are required to offer the ECPE to all interested persons, regardless of whether they are students at the test center.

### Can I use a pen or pencil on the writing section?

Examinees must use a pencil on the writing section.

### May I use a dictionary during the exam?

No. Examinees are not allowed to use any aids during the exam.

**May I make notes in my test booklet?**

In Part III of the listening section of the ECPE, examinees are encouraged to take notes in the test booklet as they listen. Otherwise, it is not necessary. Examinees should not mark answers in the test booklet; answers should be marked on the separate answer sheet.

**If I don't know the answer to a question, should I guess or leave the answer blank?**

If you don't know the answer to a question, you should make an educated guess. There is no penalty for wrong answers.

**What happens if I mark more than one answer to a question?**

The question will be marked wrong, even if one of the marked answer choices is correct.

**If I use alternate English accents or spellings in the speaking or writing sections, will I be penalized?**

No.

**Who scores the speaking section?**

The local oral examiner who administers your speaking test will score that section of the exam.

**Who scores the writing section?**

The writing section is scored by specialized evaluators trained by ELI-UM.

**How long does it take to receive test results?**

Examinees typically receive their results within two months after taking the exam.

**How do I receive my results?**

The test center where you took the exam will notify you of your results.

**Can I replace a missing or lost certificate?**

Once certificates have been sent to test centers, ELI-UM will not issue duplicate certificates or copies of Exam Reports. You may contact your center to request a letter specifying the test you took, when you took it, and the final result.

**How does the ECPE relate to the Common European Framework of Reference?**

The content and difficulty of the ECPE is aimed at the C2 (Proficient User, Mastery) level.

<b>Proficient</b>	C2	Mastery
	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency
<b>Independent</b>	B2	Vantage
	B1	Threshold
<b>Basic</b>	A2	Waystage
	A1	Breakthrough

*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.* (2001). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**How can I get more information about University of Michigan exams?**

Additional information about the ECPE and other University of Michigan exams is available on the English Language Institute website, [www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli).

For specific information about test dates, registration procedures, and test fees in your area, contact your local test center.



# ECPE SAMPLE SECTIONS

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In this portion of the *ECPE Information Bulletin* you will find additional information and/or samples of the speaking, writing, listening, grammar, cloze, vocabulary, and reading sections of the ECPE. You can use the samples to familiarize yourself with the format, content, and general difficulty of the ECPE. Please remember that these are samples only. The ability to successfully complete the sample sections does not necessarily indicate success on the ECPE.

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## SPEAKING

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In the speaking section of the ECPE, the examinee participates in a semistructured task with another examinee and two examiners. The test has five stages, which are designed so that each candidate is provided ample opportunity to speak individually as well as to engage in discussion with others.

- The goal of Stage 1 is for Examiner 1 and the candidates to introduce themselves and for candidates to become comfortable interacting with each other.
- In Stage 2, each candidate is given an information sheet with descriptions of two options. Candidates then take turns summarizing the descriptions of their two options to each other. The goal of Stage 2 is for candidates to learn what all the options are, to make a recommendation to their partner, and to choose silently one of their own options as the best.
- In Stage 3 the candidates then compare and contrast the options they have individually chosen and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option. The goal of Stage 3 is for the two candidates to come to an agreement on one single option.

- In Stage 4, candidates are given two to three minutes to collaborate and plan a short, formal presentation to Examiner 2. The goal of Stage 4 is for the candidates to present and to convince Examiner 2 that the option they have chosen is the best one.
- In Stage 5, Examiner 2 questions the candidates about the decision they have made and about the reasons for that decision. The goal of Stage 5 is for each candidate to address Examiner 2's challenges and to justify and defend the reasons for the decision.

The ECPE speaking test section may be scheduled before or after the written test administration (writing, listening, GCVR). The two oral examiners enter each examinee's oral rating on the registration form immediately after the interview. The following chart shows criteria used by raters to determine a score on the speaking section

## ECPE 2009 SPEAKING SCORING RUBRIC (CONDENSED VERSION)

		Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)		Delivery And Intelligibility
		Vocabulary	Grammar	
<b>A</b> ↑ <b>LEVEL EXPERT</b>	<b>Discourse and Interaction (Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension)</b>			
	<b>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarizes concisely and accurately; little to no reliance on written material</li> <li>Provides coherent explanations without prompting on all topics</li> <li>Presents decisions persuasively and appropriately for varying contexts</li> </ul> <b>Contribution to Extended Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently contributes appropriately to development of interaction; very aware of listener</li> <li>Recommendations are appropriate and supported with explanations</li> <li>Justifies position, regularly paraphrasing and elaborating to explain and/or clarify</li> <li>Communication breakdowns are rare</li> </ul> <b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses broad range of vocabulary</li> <li>Collocations, colloquial language, idiomatic expressions used accurately and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a wide variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and effectively</li> <li>Uses a range of grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent and articulate delivery</li> <li>Often uses rate of speech and/or prosodic features to add meaning, aid listener, and/or to shift style/register appropriately</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Slips of the tongue" may occur, often self-corrected; (fossilized) errors may be present throughout discourse but do not impede interaction</li> </ul>		
<b>B</b> ↑ <b>LEVEL CONSISTENT</b>	<b>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarizes concisely and accurately; some reliance on written material</li> <li>Provides coherent explanations, usually without prompting, on all concrete and most abstract topics</li> <li>Usually presents decisions persuasively, and usually appropriately for context</li> </ul> <b>Contribution to Extended Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually contributes appropriately to the development of the interaction; very aware of listener</li> <li>Provides recommendations that are almost always supported with explanations and are appropriate to the context</li> <li>Justifies position, frequently paraphrasing and elaborating to explain and/or clarify statements</li> <li>Communication breakdowns usually do not occur</li> </ul> <b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almost always understands linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually uses a broad range of vocabulary</li> <li>Collocations, colloquial language, and idiomatic expressions are often used and are usually accurate and appropriate</li> <li>Occasionally uses secondary meaning of words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and usually effectively</li> <li>Usually uses grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently fluent and articulate; may require minimal listener effort</li> <li>Usually uses rate of speech and/or prosodic features to add meaning, to aid listener, and/or to shift style/register appropriately</li> <li>Fluency may slightly decline with challenging speech events but this rarely affects the flow of discourse</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Errors in vocabulary and/or grammar do not cause miscommunication or interrupt the flow of discourse</li> <li>Accuracy in vocabulary and/or grammar may decline with more challenging speech events</li> </ul>		
<b>C</b> ↑ <b>LEVEL EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequately summarizes; may rely on written material periodically</li> <li>Elaborates, often without prompting, and provides coherent explanations on almost all concrete and many abstract topics</li> <li>Often presents decisions clearly, appropriately; may occasionally show some limitations in ability to extend discourse and to provide convincing explanations</li> </ul> <b>Contribution to Extended Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often contributes appropriately to the development of interaction; aware of listener; may occasionally rely on interlocutors for continuation of discussion</li> <li>Recommendations may require minor prompting for supporting explanations; may occasionally be awkwardness to appropriateness of word choices/phrasing</li> <li>Justifies position adequately; usually able to paraphrase; clarity of meaning may occasionally be lacking when providing supporting details</li> <li>Communication breakdowns may occur during challenging speech events; usually repaired</li> </ul> <b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually understands linguistic and sociolinguistic information and often understands the pragmatic information in order to engage in extended, spontaneous interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often uses moderate range of vocabulary accurately and appropriately</li> <li>Occasionally uses idiomatic expressions and colloquial language</li> <li>Occasionally uses incorrect collocations that may lead to vagueness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often uses a variety of basic and complex grammatical structures accurately and effectively</li> <li>Often uses a variety of grammatical structures that are pragmatically appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often fluent, usually articulate; may require some listener effort</li> <li>Pace usually consistent; may occasionally be relatively slow</li> <li>Occasionally uses rate of speech, and/or prosodic features to add meaning, aid listener, and/or to shift style/register appropriately</li> <li>An increase in rate of delivery may occasionally lead to a decrease in clarity of speech or comprehensibility</li> <li>Fluency may decline with more challenging speech events but this does not stop the flow of discourse</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range of vocabulary and grammatical structures extends beyond what has been provided orally and/or in writing</li> <li>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</li> <li>Accuracy in vocabulary and/or grammar often declines with an increase in rate of speech and/or with more challenging speech events</li> </ul>		

	<b>Discourse and Interaction (Development, Functional Range, and Listening Comprehension)</b>	<b>Linguistic Resources (Range and Accuracy)</b>		<b>Delivery And Intelligibility</b>
		<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Grammar</b>	
<b>D</b> ↑ <b>LEVEL DEPENDENT</b>	<b>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually summarizes by repeating language already provided</li> <li>Occasionally able, when prompted, to elaborate and provide explanations on most concrete topics; explanations frequently lack coherence and organization</li> <li>Usually presents decisions by repeating language already produced</li> </ul> <b>Contribution to Extended Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently relies on other participants to initiate, develop, maintain discourse; rarely offers feedback or commentary</li> <li>Usually able to recommend; occasionally able, when prompted, to provide supporting explanations</li> <li>Attempts to justify a position are usually unclear and repetitive</li> <li>Communication breakdowns may occur during any speech event and often are not repaired</li> </ul> <b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limitations in comprehension may often result in interruptions in exchange and in communication breakdowns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited range of vocabulary</li> <li>Frequently uses vague and/or inaccurate vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent use of basic structures (i.e., lack of complex sentences) that often contain errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listener effort frequently required</li> <li>Delivery is often slow and halting</li> <li>Pausing and phrasing are often incorrect, negatively affecting intelligibility</li> <li>Production may be word by word, resulting in a lack of sentence rhythm and flat intonation</li> <li>L1 influence may disrupt intelligibility</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary and grammar structures used are typically repetitions of what has been provided orally or in writing</li> <li>Gaps and/or errors in vocabulary and grammar may disrupt effective communication</li> </ul>		
<b>E</b> ↑ <b>LEVEL LIMITED</b>	<b>Production of Independent, Spontaneous Speech</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to summarize; merely reads information provided</li> <li>Occasionally able, when prompted, to elaborate on concrete and familiar topics; explanations usually lack organization</li> <li>Usually able to present basic position on concrete topic; very little elaboration; usually repeats language already produced</li> </ul> <b>Contribution to Extended Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently unable to contribute to the development of discourse on topics that have been provided; considerable reliance on interlocutors</li> <li>Usually able to state a recommendation or opinion but unable to provide supporting explanation</li> <li>Rarely able to justify and defend; attempts are almost always unclear and repetitive</li> <li>Almost always unable to repair communication breakdowns</li> </ul> <b>Listening Comprehension</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extreme limitations in comprehension result in an inability to engage in extended discourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very limited vocabulary</li> <li>Regularly searches for words</li> <li>Frequently uses vague expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses only basic structures that regularly contain errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow and halting delivery</li> <li>Production is often word by word, resulting in a lack of sentence rhythm and flat intonation</li> <li>Errors in rhythm, stress, and intonation disrupt intelligibility, often causing considerable listener effort</li> <li>L1 influence may disrupt intelligibility</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular gaps and/or errors in vocabulary, grammar, and/or delivery</li> <li>Gaps and/or errors frequently prevent communication</li> </ul>		

## WRITING

The writing section consists of a form with a choice of two topics. The examinee must choose one topic on which to write a 250- to 300-word essay. The response may be in the form of an argument or exposition, depending on the topic. The response should develop the topic in an organized way, with some

acknowledgment of the topic's complexity. The ideas should be communicated clearly and with accuracy of form. Examinees should use varied syntactic structures and appropriate vocabulary. Following is a sample writing topic:

Some psychologists believe that there is more to intelligence than what traditional intelligence tests measure (mathematical and verbal ability). They say there are many kinds of intelligence and many ways to be smart. Besides mathematical and linguistic intelligence, in what other ways do you think people are smart? Be specific in your discussion and provide concrete examples.

The writing section is scored by specialized evaluators trained by ELI-UM. The following chart shows the criteria used by raters to determine a score on the writing section.

RATING	RHETORIC	GRAMMAR/SYNTAX	VOCABULARY	MECHANICS
<b>A Honors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic richly, fully, complexly developed</li> <li>• Organization well-controlled, appropriate to the material</li> <li>• Connection is smooth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible use of a wide range of syntactic (sentence level) structures; morphological (word forms) control nearly always accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad range, appropriately used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation errors are rare and insignificant</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic clearly and completely developed, with acknowledgment of its complexity</li> <li>• Organization is controlled and shows appropriateness to the material</li> <li>• Few problems with connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both simple and complex syntax adequately used; good morphological control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary use shows flexibility, is usually appropriate</li> <li>• Any inappropriate vocabulary does not confuse meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation errors are infrequent and not distracting</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic clearly developed, but not always completely or with acknowledgment of its complexity</li> <li>• Organization generally controlled; connection sometimes absent or unsuccessful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both simple and complex syntax present</li> <li>• For some, syntax is cautious but accurate, while others are more fluent but less accurate</li> <li>• Inconsistent morphological control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate vocabulary, but may sometimes be inappropriately used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation errors sometimes distracting</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic development usually clear but simple and may be repetitive</li> <li>• Attempts to address different perspectives on the topic are often unsuccessful</li> <li>• Overreliance on prefabricated language and/or language from the prompt</li> <li>• Organization partially controlled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morphological errors are frequent</li> <li>• Simple sentences tend to be accurate; more complex ones tend to be inaccurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary may be limited in range, and is sometimes inappropriately used to the point that it causes confusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation errors are frequently distracting</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic development may be unclear and/or limited by incompleteness or lack of focus</li> <li>• Might not be relevant to topic</li> <li>• Connection of ideas often absent or unsuccessful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pervasive and basic errors in sentence structure and word order cause confusion</li> <li>• Problems with subject-verb agreement, tense formation or word formation</li> <li>• Even basic sentences are filled with errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect use of vocabulary causes confusion</li> <li>• Even basic words may be misused</li> <li>• May show interference from other languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic vocabulary words regularly misspelled</li> <li>• Little or no control over sentence boundaries</li> <li>• Spelling and punctuation errors regularly cause confusion</li> </ul>

## LISTENING

The listening section of the ECPE is delivered via audio recording. It has three parts for a total of 50 questions. Examinees hear segments and questions only once. On the actual test, the segments and questions are not printed in the test booklet; only the answers are printed.

### Part I

In Part I of the listening section, examinees hear short conversations. From the three printed answer choices, they choose the answer that means about the same thing as what was heard or that is true based upon what was heard.

Male Voice: Have you been to this restaurant before?  
Female Voice: No, but I've heard the food is very good.

1. a. She has been there before.  
b. She likes the food.  
c. This is her first visit.

Female Voice: Oh, that's such a cute dress! I'm going to buy it right away!

Male Voice: Hadn't you better try it on first? Dress sizes do vary.

2. a. He thinks she should buy it.  
b. It might not fit.  
c. He likes it, too.

Male Voice: I can't believe it's only 2 o'clock. I wish I could go home now.

Female Voice: I know how you feel, but we've still got 3 more hours to go.

3. a. They'll leave at 3.  
b. They'll both go home at 2.  
c. They're both tired of work.

Female Voice: Where have you been? I've been waiting here for half an hour.

Male Voice: You didn't get my message? I told John to tell you I had an appointment.

4. a. She met John 30 minutes ago.  
b. John didn't give her the message.  
c. John gave her the message.

Male Voice: Are you an English teacher at this school?

Female Voice: Well, I used to be.

5. a. She works there.  
b. She never taught.  
c. She doesn't work there anymore.

### Part II

In Part II of the listening section, examinees hear a question. From the three answer choices given, examinees choose the best answer to the question.

Male Voice: There you are. What took you so long?

1. a. I took some books.  
b. As long as you want.  
c. I missed the bus.

Male Voice: Does that shop on State Street repair anything besides TVs?

2. a. They fix everything.  
b. They fix TVs too.  
c. It's next door.

Female Voice: What would happen if she cancelled her trip?

3. a. She'd lose her deposit.  
b. She didn't have enough money.  
c. She can still go.

Male Voice: Does this medicine have any side effects?

4. a. No, it helps your sight.  
b. No, it's quite safe.  
c. Yes, it's very effective.

Female Voice: Do you know who might have left all these papers lying around?

5. a. We have only unlined paper.  
b. Well, Tom and Mary were working in here.  
c. He might have left already.

### Part III

In Part III of the listening section, examinees hear three short segments from a radio program. The program is called “Learning from the Experts.” Examinees hear what three different radio guests have to say about three different topics. Each talk lasts about three minutes. Examinees are encouraged to take notes in their test booklets while listening to the segments. After each segment, examinees are asked questions about what was heard. They must select, from the printed answer choices, the best answers to the questions. Following is an example of one segment.

**Voice 1:** Magnets are an important component in many technological inventions today. They have many uses in computers and medical devices, and you probably even have some on your refrigerator. Recently, several groups of scientists have been working on developing a new special kind of magnet. Jim Hawkins reports:

**Voice 2:** In the past, magnets have always been made out of metal. But a few years ago, a group of American chemists was able to develop one made of plastic, instead. Unfortunately, it had one very serious drawback: it only functioned at extremely low temperatures—ones that can only be created inside of a special lab—so it wasn’t much use for everyday products. But now a Canadian team has developed a plastic magnet that actually works at room temperature. Elizabeth Spenser, one of the scientists on the Canadian team, speaks about the development process.

**Voice 3:** Well, magnetism in metals is caused by a special alignment of electrons. In a plastic magnet, though, it is not the alignment of electrons that creates the magnetism. In plastic magnets, there are what are known as free radicals that create the magnetism. Free radicals are atoms that are usually strongly bonded to other atoms to form larger molecules, but we’ve engineered these free radicals so that they are only attracted to specific kinds of metal, in the same way that a metal magnet would be. We had been trying for several months to get the right ingredients in the right proportions. We were just about to give up when we decided to double-check some of the earlier models that we’d made. To our great surprise, they actually worked the second time around, and we were able to pick up pieces of iron with our plastic magnet.

**Voice 2:** It turns out that the team had been on the right track from the start, it was just that it took some time for the free radicals in the original samples to become magnetically aligned in a way that produced a magnetic effect.

**Voice 3:** That’s right. However, we still have a long way to go before plastic magnets will have any important commercial uses. The main problem is that their power is still fairly weak, compared to conventional metal magnets. We now know which chemicals we need to make the plastics out of, but we’re still trying to figure out what the most ideal proportions should be. Once we have all the ratios right, the plastic magnets should become much stronger. This also means that eventually we may be able to create customized magnets, ones that are made to have a specific, precise level of strength, depending on how the magnet is going to be used.

**Voice 2:** The scientists are excited, because plastic magnets have several important advantages over metal ones. First, they weigh less, which is important for things like portable computers. Also, many medical devices use magnets, including those implanted into the human body. Previous research has revealed that plastic components are much less likely than metal ones to be rejected by the body’s immune system.

What was the problem with the magnets created by the American scientists?

1. a. They worked only at low temperatures.  
b. They didn’t work at low temperatures.  
c. They had to be created inside a special lab.

What do the Canadians still need to find out in order to improve their magnets?

4. a. at which temperatures they work the best  
b. which chemicals to use  
c. the best chemical ratios

How did the Canadian team modify their earlier models?

2. a. They added more free radicals.  
b. They did not modify them.  
c. They changed the proportions of the ingredients.

According to the speakers, what is one reason that scientists want to develop plastic magnets?

5. a. They want to improve medical devices.  
b. There is a shortage of metal magnets.  
c. Plastics are inexpensive to make.

What is the main disadvantage of plastic magnets so far?

3. a. They don’t work at room temperature.  
b. They are not powerful enough.  
c. They lose their strength over time.

## GRAMMAR

In the grammar portion of the ECPE, examinees choose the word or phrase that produces a grammatically correct sentence. Some grammar questions appear in the form of a short dialogue (see number 2 below), and some appear as a sentence. There are 40 grammar questions in the ECPE.

1. I'd like \_\_\_\_\_ this with you before the meeting.
  - a. to discuss about
  - b. discussing about
  - c. the discussing of
  - d. to discuss
2. "Did you enjoy the movie?"  
"Yes, though it was \_\_\_\_\_ I'd expected."
  - a. so different from
  - b. different as that
  - c. different as what
  - d. different from what
3. Nancy couldn't find a phone, so she asked \_\_\_\_\_ at the front desk.
  - a. for an assist
  - b. for assistance
  - c. to assist
  - d. for assisting
4. Although John tried to stop the car, \_\_\_\_\_ able to.
  - a. but wasn't
  - b. but he didn't
  - c. he couldn't
  - d. he wasn't
5. The world today \_\_\_\_\_ many challenges.
  - a. is facing with
  - b. is facing
  - c. has been faced
  - d. is faced
6. How bad \_\_\_\_\_ he forgot to pay the rent?
  - a. was it that
  - b. that it was
  - c. was that
  - d. was
7. I like this painting because \_\_\_\_\_ where I grew up.
  - a. reminds me
  - b. it reminds
  - c. it reminds me of
  - d. reminds me that
8. A bicycle \_\_\_\_\_ unlocked might be stolen.
  - a. leaving
  - b. that left
  - c. left
  - d. was left
9. The boss didn't know what to do, \_\_\_\_\_ the rest of us.
  - a. nor did
  - b. either
  - c. neither
  - d. so did
10. John has \_\_\_\_\_ that job he applied for.
  - a. a little chance for getting
  - b. little chances to get
  - c. a little chance in getting
  - d. little chance of getting

## CLOZE

The cloze section of the ECPE is a passage from which words have been deleted. Examinees must choose, from four printed answer choices, the best word to fill in the blank in both grammar and meaning. There is one cloze passage with 20 questions in the ECPE.

A recent study on possible health risks of cell phone use found that when cell phones operate at radiation levels within current safety limits, they can have a physiological effect on the brain. As a result, the report recommends that children avoid (1) cellular phones for all (2) essential calls. Because of the (3) for harm, the report recommends that the mobile phone industry refrain from promoting phone use (4) children, and (5) labeling phones with information on the amount of radiation (6) emit. Since we (7) fully understand the effects of radiation from cell phones on humans, the government should adopt a precautionary approach, particularly in (8) to children. Children's nervous systems are still developing, which means they are more vulnerable to the effects of radiation than adults are. Children have less tissue and bone to (9) their brains, thus making them more vulnerable to increased levels of radiation as (10) to adults. Therefore, if phones do prove to be hazardous—which they haven't yet—it makes sense to take precautions.

1. a. from  
b. using  
c. applying  
d. to
2. a. very  
b. of  
c. the  
d. but
3. a. threat  
b. fear  
c. potential  
d. effect
4. a. by  
b. from  
c. in  
d. with
5. a. supply  
b. by  
c. to  
d. start
6. a. that  
b. they  
c. being  
d. levels
7. a. don't  
b. can  
c. might  
d. won't
8. a. relating  
b. aiming  
c. regard  
d. order
9. a. support  
b. affect  
c. prevent  
d. protect
10. a. same  
b. compared  
c. much  
d. done

## VOCABULARY

In the vocabulary portion of the ECPE, examinees choose the word or phrase that most appropriately completes the sentence. There are 40 vocabulary questions in the ECPE.

1. The new president promises to end government \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. deformation
  - b. ventilation
  - c. compilation
  - d. corruption
2. The company's sales increased after its shoes were \_\_\_\_\_ by a famous athlete.
  - a. negotiated
  - b. endorsed
  - c. activated
  - d. accelerated
3. Most packaged food today is full of \_\_\_\_\_ to keep it fresh.
  - a. preservatives
  - b. conservatives
  - c. infiltrations
  - d. adaptations
4. The president has recently \_\_\_\_\_ an increase in funding for AIDS research.
  - a. entitled
  - b. accredited
  - c. authorized
  - d. empowered
5. When the government reduced spending, the whole educational system went \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. downhill
  - b. downstairs
  - c. downtown
  - d. downstream
6. Although I like Adam, I'd be \_\_\_\_\_ to let him take care of my children.
  - a. redundant
  - b. reluctant
  - c. rebellious
  - d. responsible
7. The idea just \_\_\_\_\_ into my head.
  - a. gathered
  - b. grasped
  - c. popped
  - d. located
8. Mary always tells her children to be \_\_\_\_\_ of strangers.
  - a. shrewd
  - b. distinctive
  - c. wary
  - d. sensational
9. The politician made his \_\_\_\_\_ on the issue clear.
  - a. notch
  - b. state
  - c. stance
  - d. location
10. The train went by so fast that it was just \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a blur
  - b. a fuse
  - c. a muffle
  - d. an outburst

## READING

The reading portion of the ECPE is a reading passage followed by comprehension questions. The reading passage is typically between 250 and 300 words long. There are four reading passages in the ECPE, each followed by five comprehension questions.

***This passage about salmon comes from a newspaper article.***

Lately, annual runs of wild coho on the Rogue River have been about 80 percent below average. In fact, most strains of Pacific salmon are in deep trouble as a result of overfishing at sea and destruction of freshwater streams where the big fish spawn and their offspring grow large enough to return to the ocean. The deteriorating condition of streams has seriously limited the ability of wild salmon, namely coho and chinook, to recover from record low numbers. To reproduce, salmon require clean beds of stones in which to lay eggs. And the hatchlings need deep pools of clean water with many nooks where they can hide from predators while waiting to seize aquatic insects, their main food.

Trees are important in creating a good environment and an ample food supply for the coho. But over the years, people have removed fallen trees from streams, transforming the deep pools into shallow channels. In addition, the cutting of trees along stream banks has deprived some aquatic insects of the leaf material on which they feed. Furthermore, tree removal, by eliminating shade, has allowed stream water to warm, reducing the number of microorganisms that other aquatic insects eat. Salmon numbers plummet under these conditions and require decades to recover after shoreline trees reappear.

Nevertheless, measures can be taken to improve the situation. Tree trunks can be reintroduced into the freshwater habitats. Within a very short period of time, the movement of water under and around the logs transforms the shallow spots into deep pools. Tests of this strategy have resulted in a thousand-fold increase in the number of young salmon that survive.

1. According to the author, what is causing the decrease in the number of wild salmon?
  - a. pollution in freshwater streams
  - b. too much fishing in freshwater streams
  - c. a worsening of the young salmon's environment
  - d. an increase in competition between chinook and coho salmon
2. What does the author say about microorganisms?
  - a. They cause disease in salmon.
  - b. They are a food source for insects.
  - c. They are an important food source for salmon.
  - d. They help keep the water clean.
3. Relatively cool stream water...
  - a. benefits the microorganisms.
  - b. harms the young salmon.
  - c. causes the number of aquatic insects to decrease.
  - d. discourages the salmon from laying eggs.
4. A tree that has fallen into a salmon stream...
  - a. can change deep pools into shallow channels.
  - b. becomes a valuable food source for the salmon.
  - c. can create a good spawning bed.
  - d. can create a suitable place for young salmon to live.
5. The author says that the salmon population could be quickly increased by...
  - a. planting trees on the shoreline.
  - b. putting dead trees in the streams.
  - c. eliminating predators.
  - d. reducing the number of microorganisms in the water.

## ANSWER KEY FOR SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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### Listening, Part I

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. C

### Listening, Part II

1. C
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. B

### Listening, Part III

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. A

### Grammar

1. D
2. D
3. B
4. D
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. C
9. A
10. D

### Cloze

1. B
2. D
3. C
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. A
8. C
9. D
10. B

### Vocabulary

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. C
9. C
10. A

### Reading

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. D
5. B



