

GESE – Sample exam marks and rationales

Grade 4

Alessia

Result: Pass

Topic phase

Grade: C **Area for improvement:** Communicative skills

Rationale

The Topic phase should be a two-way discussion and it must not rely on a memorised recital. It is clear that Alessia has memorised information about her topic and tries to recite it with no opportunity for discussion. Because Alessia is reciting, the examiner responds by politely interrupting with questions.

In addition, abstract concepts such as 'Friendship' (chosen as one of the points for discussion) are unsuitable linguistically at the Elementary level.

Alessia is mostly able to provide some response to the questions on her topic, but she is quite hesitant and does not appear to be prepared to use spontaneous spoken English. There are a few examples of the grammatical and lexical items of Grade 4, which she uses with some accuracy. Pronunciation is heavily accented but mainly intelligible, apart from some errors such as 'now' for 'know'.

Conversation phase

Grade: D **Area for improvement:** Communicative skills, Grammar

Rationale

In the Conversation phase there are frequent breakdowns in communication as Alessia is unable to understand the examiner's questions. She often gives only one-word responses such as 'Yes' and 'No' or says nothing at all.

Even with support from the examiner, there is very little evidence of coverage of the communicative skills, language functions and language items of the grade. A lack of understanding and hesitation prevent the interaction from proceeding as required. In conclusion, Alessia is unable to sustain a conversation in this phase.

Penka

Result: Distinction

Topic phase

Grade: A **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

In general, Penka is a clear example of a candidate who has been under-graded. She consistently uses language above the grade, including quite complex sentence structures and intermediate vocabulary. She could have been entered for a higher grade.

During the Topic phase, Penka talks about the opportunities that foreign languages give people, and in addition to demonstrating the language requirements of Grade 4, she uses connecting clauses with because (Grade 5) and correctly produces more complex structures such as: '*Knowing English helps you to find...*' and: '*When I know better English, I...*'.

Pronunciation is always satisfactory for this level, with only occasional difficulties with words such as '*adult*'.

Conversation phase

Grade: A **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

In the Conversation phase Penka demonstrates a wide range of lexis and grammatical structures with sentences like: '*It sometimes irritates me because...*', '*My job is very responsible*' and, most notable of all: '*The most difficult part is that you have to take decisions every day that change people's lives*'.

To be able to express one's thoughts in such depth and detail in another language demonstrates communication skills above those expected of a Grade 4 candidate.

Grade 4 continued

Salvatore

Result: Merit

Topic phase

Grade: B

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

Salvatore's contributions are generally effective, comprehensible and adequately fulfil the task. There is good coverage of the communicative skills and functions of the grade (likes, future plans, comparisons, and describing manner and frequency) and Salvatore gives information about his chosen topic with confidence and relative fluency, despite some occasional hesitation as he searches for the language to express himself. There are grammatical and phonological inaccuracies but these do not impede the flow of natural conversation. Also, when prompted, he asks well-formed, relevant questions.

Conversation phase

Grade: B

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

Salvatore covers the functions of the grade well, despite some initial first language interference which means that he is not always clearly understood. However, his intonation becomes more natural as the phase progresses. Although he also makes errors with basic grammatical tense structures (eg '*My father don't cook... he hate...*'), these, many of which he self-corrects, rarely impact on the communication of meaning. The overall impression is of an adequate fulfilment of the task.

Rosario

Result: Pass

Topic phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Communicative skills

Rationale

Rosario incorporates some of the language functions of the grade but not comprehensively, and therefore the task is only partially fulfilled. He often requires support and there are several breakdowns in communication when the candidate misunderstands (eg '*How do you listen to music?*') but then fails to ask for clarification or repetition. Rosario uses the past tense, but it is limited to '*played*' and '*went*'. He often uses the present when referring to the future plans. In terms of lexis, he uses a relatively good range in his topic area. Phonologically, his speech is heavily accented and careful listening is often required.

Conversation phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Grammar

Rationale

For the most part, Rosario shows understanding of the examiner and generally responds appropriately to questions. He does, however, make some inappropriate contributions. There are isolated examples of accurate grammar of the grade (eg past tense, adverbs of frequency, comparatives) but he is mostly in control when using language below the grade. The flow of the communication is halted by some hesitancy and, again, support is sometimes required.

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Grade 5

Serafim

Result: Merit

Topic phase

Grade: B **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

Serafim chooses to talk about computers for his topic and puts himself in danger of producing too many lists of technical vocabulary, for example, the different versions of Microsoft Windows. However, his contributions are generally effective, comprehensible and appropriate. He responds well to the examiner's questions and asks some good questions when he is prompted by the examiner.

Serafim uses a good range of the language functions and language items for this grade, mainly accurately and appropriately, although repeated attempts by the examiner to elicit the present perfect tense from him are unsuccessful. Pronunciation is clear throughout.

Conversation phase

Grade: B **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

The conversation on the subject area of music tends to produce only short contributions from Serafim and he fails to exploit opportunities to use the present perfect with *for* or *since*. In discussing transport, however, Serafim's contributions improve and he produces one of his longest and best-formed sentences, '*I don't drive because I'm too young to drive a car*'.

If Serafim had paid more attention to the language of the grade, he might have achieved a better result. It is important to note how short answers and a failure to exploit the language of the grade can impact on a candidate's assessment.

Srija

Result: Distinction

Topic phase

Grade: A **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

Srija's performance is notable not only for the high level of accuracy and appropriacy demonstrated in all her contributions, but for her willingness to maintain the interaction by volunteering information and asking questions.

The Topic is well-prepared and Srija is ready to discuss a range of ideas. She exploits the topic with linguistic ease. Srija appears to have no difficulty with comprehension and responds to the examiner's questions in a series of well-connected sentences, demonstrating her ability to use almost all of the grammatical and lexical items listed in the specifications for Grade 5.

Conversation phase

Grade: A **Area for improvement:** n/a

Rationale

In the Conversation phase Srija talks with ease about 'Means of transport' and 'Special occasions', providing highly-appropriate responses to the examiners questions. She demonstrates a comprehensive range of the language functions, grammar and lexis of Grade 5 and exploits opportunities given by the examiner to provide language of the grade eg: '*I have travelled by train six times*'.

Although Srija has to be prompted to ask the examiner a question, this in no way detracts from her otherwise impressive performance. Her pronunciation is clear and comprehensible throughout the conversation.

Grade 5 continued

Immacolata

Result: Pass

Topic phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Communicative skills

Rationale

Immacolata partially fulfils the task. Although she talks with confidence, the answers early in the stage seem to be mainly recited. When the interaction becomes more spontaneous, the complex nature of some areas of her topic stretches her abilities and means she is not always easy to follow. There are lexical L1 influenced errors: *'It's a theme very actual'*, *'I am according with John Lennon'*. There were multiple examples of giving reasons and one isolated example of quantity.

There is partial coverage of grade functions; quantity and, in particular, giving reasons are expressed, and she shows understanding of a question about preferences and duration. She has also clearly learnt useful lexical items relevant to the topic.

Her contributions are always comprehensible, despite the elements of recitation that occur.

The linguistic limitations that sometimes limit comprehensibility mean that this performance is classified as a basic pass.

Conversation phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Grammar

Rationale

This interaction is more natural than the Topic phase, and Immacolata makes better use of the target functions by including recent events in the indefinite/recent past. However, despite her relative fluency, Immacolata continues to make basic grammatical errors (eg *'There is many traffic'*, *'My father have...'*, *'No-one is come to my home'*) which detract from her overall performance. Her pronunciation is clear throughout and her question to the examiner (*'What transport do you use for work?'*) is both appropriate and spontaneous. Overall this performance is a pass.

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Grade 6

Daniel

Result: Distinction

Topic phase

Grade: A

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

Daniel's topic choice enables him to exhibit a wide range of the language functions and language items of the grade accurately and appropriately. His contributions are clearly comprehensible and highly appropriate.

Daniel understands the examiner with ease and responds naturally, eg when he says *'Not a step – a huge leap forward'* and *'You know about that, don't you?'*. Daniel does omit to ask the examiner a question about his topic as required, but his performance is capable and engaging.

Conversation phase

Grade: A

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

The conversation on 'Learning a foreign language' and 'Health and fitness' proceeds smoothly, with Daniel contributing promptly and fluently. For example, he gives some appropriate suggestions on how to improve your English. Daniel accurately uses examples of a wide range of the language items listed for this grade, as well as some from above the grade.

Daniel asks an unprompted question about 'Health and fitness', although he does forget to ask the examiner a question about 'Learning a foreign language' as required. Despite this omission, however, this is a clear 'A' performance.

Danail

Result: Merit

Topic phase

Grade: B

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

Danail appears to have prepared his topic well and discusses a range of points related to cars with enthusiasm and good, but not comprehensive, coverage of the language of the grade. On the whole Danail maintains a reliable level of accuracy, with only occasional errors affecting the communication of meaning, eg *'women'* for *'woman'*. He also asks the examiner a spontaneous question about his topic (although it contains a minor grammatical error), ie *'And what about you – do you a driver?'*

The discussion generally flows well, but there is some hesitancy when the examiner asks Danail about penalties for not wearing seatbelts in Bulgaria. There is some slight first language interference with pronunciation, but not sufficient to impede understanding.

Conversation phase

Grade: B

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

In the Conversation phase the candidate's performance is slightly less assured and fluent than it was in the first part of the exam, and gives a B performance.

Danail uses examples of the language of the grade and responds readily to all the examiner's questions, with no need for support. He fulfils all of the listed communicative skills in this phase, including asking the examiner two appropriate questions.

Grade 6 continued

Antonella

Result: Pass

Topic phase

Grade: D

Area for improvement: Communicative skills, Grammar

Rationale

Antonella relies heavily on a memorised script and, when the examiner tries to interact with requests for clarification or more detail, she is clearly distracted and responds with one-word answers. As a result, the conversation lacks flow and becomes disjointed. There is little evidence of coverage of communicative skills, functions and other language items of the grade. Also, there are grammatical inaccuracies below the grade (eg 'my mum take it away...') which further suggest that her contributions fall short of a Grade 6 performance. Her phonemes and intonation can cause strain on the listener.

Conversation phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Grammar

Rationale

Antonella's contributions improve during this phase and include expressing opinions and impressions, intention and purpose, and obligation. She also makes a successful attempt at using the first conditional ('If I go to London, I will ...'). Generally, however, the structures she uses are low-level. Misunderstandings also occur ('Where are you travelling next?', 'I went to London'). Despite this, she does maintain the conversation and her performance is sufficient to partially fulfil the task.

Marco

Result: Merit

Topic phase

Grade: B

Area for improvement: n/a

Rationale

Marco's contributions are generally effective although he does not take the opportunity to fully use the language of the grade. He responds appropriately and effectively to the examiner's questions but these are limited to expressing opinions, and certainty and uncertainty. Marco has chosen a challenging topic and he is equipped with a good range of specific vocabulary to support his contribution. He communicates confidently and with relative fluency, and uses correct pronunciation and intonation. There is evidence of a reasonable level of accuracy although there are several errors (eg 'that we can found') and some confusion towards the end when he talks about 'magazines' and 'creating countries'. Nevertheless, Marco adequately fulfils the task.

Conversation phase

Grade: C

Area for improvement: Grammar

Rationale

Marco's performance is less fluent during the Conversation phase and he plays little part in initiating and maintaining the interaction. Rather, he often needs to be prompted by the examiner. Although his contributions are largely accurate, he lacks the necessary vocabulary to speak more confidently about 'fashion'. Also, with the exception of 'expressing opinions', Marco fails to accept the opportunity when prompted by the examiner to cover more of the functional and grammatical items of the grade.

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