



Guide for Teachers: ISE IV (C2) Interview

Integrated Skills in English

CEFR level C2

About this booklet

This booklet provides teachers with a comprehensive breakdown of the requirements of the Interview component of Trinity's Integrated Skills in English IV exam, as well as some techniques for preparing for it.



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About Trinity College London

Trinity College London is a leading international exam board and independent education charity that has been providing assessments around the world since 1877. We specialise in the assessment of communicative and performance skills covering music, drama, combined arts and English language. With over 850,000 candidates a year in more than 60 countries worldwide, Trinity qualifications are specifically designed to help students progress. Our aim is to inspire teachers and learners through the creation of assessments that are enjoyable to prepare for, rewarding to teach and that develop the skills needed in real life.

At the heart of Trinity's work is the belief that effective communicative and performance skills are life enhancing, know no boundaries and should be within reach of us all. We exist to promote and foster the best possible communicative and performance skills through assessment, content and training that is innovative, personal and authentic.



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The ISE IV (C2) Interview – Overview

Integrated Skills in English (ISE) exams are designed for all learners of English. The ISE IV Interview assesses a range of speaking and listening skills and it tests what candidates can actually do, rather than just what they know.

Preparation for an ISE IV exam focuses on the development of authentic communicative skills and on building the confidence to use English in real life. ISE IV candidates assert, deny, soften and downplay propositions, contradict, imply and affirm. They can demonstrate a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language, reformulate ideas and convey finer shades of meaning with consistency. There is no set list of conversation subject areas, so candidates are expected to be able to discuss any subject of general or topical interest, as well as their Portfolio. They are expected to display their ability to use the functional, grammatical, lexical and phonological items specified for ISE IV and the preceding levels.

Each ISE IV Interview is conducted by a Trinity examiner. All Trinity examiners are highly trained and experienced. The exam consists of a one-to-one conversation with the examiner.

The ISE IV Interview lasts up to 25 minutes and is divided into five tasks:

Formal topic presentation	Up to 5 minutes
Topic discussion	Up to 5 minutes
Interactive task	Up to 5 minutes
Listening task	Up to 3 minutes
Conversation	Up to 6 minutes

This booklet has been prepared to help teachers prepare their students for the ISE IV Interview. Full details of Trinity's ISE IV exam can be found in the ISE IV Exam Information booklet at trinitycollege.com/ISE-IV-exam-information

Assessment

In the ISE IV Interview, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D for task fulfilment for the Topic presentation, Topic discussion, Interactive, Listening and Conversation tasks. In simple terms, these levels can be classified as follows:

- ▶ 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 combination of the five letter grades provides the overall level of achievement.

The examiner notes their assessments on a tablet. The centre receives an email within a couple of days of the end of the exam session with provisional results and key areas where the students can improve.

Certificates for successful candidates are usually sent to exam centres for distribution within six to eight weeks of the completion of the ISE IV exam.

Introduction to the ISE IV (C2) Interview

Candidate profile

A candidate who is successful in the ISE IV (C2) Interview can:

- ▶ understand arguments, inferences, changes in register and emphasis in extended, complex and sometimes unstructured speech, even when delivered at fast native speed
- ▶ express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning
- ▶ control the direction of a spoken interaction and maintain its flow with ease, relating skilfully to the contributions of the listener
- ▶ exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of complex language structures, vocabulary and language functions
- ▶ produce speech at word, sentence and discourse level which rarely deviates from an internationally intelligible model.

This profile is based on the level C2, Proficient User, on the Common European Framework of Reference.

ISE IV Interview format

		Assessed	Not assessed
1	Greetings and setting at ease		✓
2	Formal topic presentation task	✓	
3	Topic discussion task	✓	
4	Interactive task	✓	
5	Listening task	✓	
6	Conversation task (including Portfolio discussion)	✓	
7	End of conversation and leave-taking		✓

The ISE IV Interview lasts up to 25 minutes and has five tasks. In the first task, the **Formal topic presentation**, the candidate delivers a formal presentation on a discursive topic of his/her choice which they have prepared before the exam. The examiner does not interact with the candidate during the presentation. This task lasts up to five minutes.

In the second task, the **Topic discussion task**, the candidate and examiner participate in an authentic discussion of the ideas and opinions given in the Formal topic presentation. This task lasts up to five minutes.

In the third task, the **Interactive task**, the examiner reads out an oral prompt. The candidate needs to ask questions to find out more information and make comments. The candidate is responsible for maintaining the interaction. This task lasts no more than five minutes.

In the fourth task, the **Listening task**, the examiner reads three short pieces of discourse to the candidate. The candidate needs to suggest a suitable ending or answer a question. This task lasts up to three minutes.

In the final task, the **Conversation task**, the candidate and examiner have two short discussions. The first discussion is about the candidate's Portfolio. The examiner will ask questions about the process of researching and writing the Portfolio.

The second discussion will be on any subject the examiner deems appropriate for the individual candidate. This task lasts no more than six minutes.

Formal topic presentation

Introduction

Candidates begin the exam by giving a formal presentation to the examiner about a topic that they have chosen and prepared.

The purpose of the Formal topic presentation task is to give candidates the opportunity to display their command of the language of the level while delivering a formal oral presentation on a self-selected and personally relevant topic.

Choosing the topic

A good choice of topic is very important. Candidates should make sure that:

1. it is of personal interest and discursive
2. it will allow them to use the communicative skills of the level, eg giving supporting reasons and examples
3. it will allow them to use the functions and language of the level.

1. Personal interest and discursive

Candidates can choose any topic they like, but it is best to choose a topic that they are interested in and that is discursive in nature, eg veganism or alternatives to fossil fuels. This makes it easier to talk about. If the candidate doesn't know very much about the topic and they are trying to remember certain facts, they may not feel so relaxed in their exam.

2. The communicative skills of the level

Communication skills are very important when giving a presentation and it is the same in our ISE IV exam. Candidates are expected to give a formal presentation of their topic with an identifiable structure and which is engaging and interesting. The topic should be introduced, developed and properly concluded by inviting questions and comments from the examiner.

3. The language of the level

When choosing a topic look at the language of the level that the candidate needs to use for ISE IV.

It is important to choose topics that relate to social and abstract issues and are discursive, ie an issue with different sides or viewpoints. This is because the language required at this level (eg developing an argument, expressing beliefs, evaluating different standpoints) may not be easily exploited within a more simple or concrete topic.

Preparing the topic

It is very important to prepare the topic before the exam. Candidates are advised to:

- ▶ plan and prepare the areas of the topic they would like to inform the examiner about
- ▶ prepare enough material to sustain a presentation of the topic for up to five minutes (but no more)
- ▶ make sure the topic allows them to use the communicative skills of the level (eg giving a formal presentation that is discursive in nature with an identifiable structure and sequence)
- ▶ make sure the topic allows them to use the language of the level
- ▶ consider the structure and sequence of the presentation giving thought to how they will develop their ideas.

Recitation

Candidates must not prepare their Formal topic presentation as a written script to memorise and recite. Candidates may bring some notes to support them in the presentation, but this should not be a script.

Other points about recitation:

- ▶ It is clear to the examiner that it is not natural spoken English.
- ▶ Reciting can make a candidate nervous.
- ▶ The intonation and speed of speaking are different when someone recites.
- ▶ The examiner will gently interrupt if the candidate recites.
- ▶ Recitation of a memorised script will have a negative effect on the assessment of this task.

The handout

Candidates are required to produce brief notes in the form of a handout for the examiner to facilitate the presentation. These should be made available to the examiner before the start of the presentation. These notes will not be taken into account in the assessment.

Exam procedure

- ▶ In the Formal topic presentation task the examiner will ask the candidate for their handout, and will tell them that they are going to make some notes. The examiner will reassure them that these notes are for the topic discussion, and not about language or mistakes.
- ▶ The candidate has approximately five minutes to give their presentation. The candidate may stand or sit to deliver the presentation.
- ▶ At the end of the Formal topic presentation the candidate should invite comments and questions from the examiner to begin the topic discussion.
- ▶ If the candidate's presentation exceeds five minutes, the examiner will say:

Thank you. Now I'd like to discuss some of the points you've made.

Topic discussion

Introduction

After the presentation, the candidate and the examiner have a discussion about the presentation.

The purpose of the topic discussion is for the candidate and the examiner to have an authentic discussion about the ideas and opinions given in the formal topic presentation.

The topic discussion is intended to be a genuine discussion with a real exchange of ideas and opinions. The candidate should be ready to challenge the examiner and respond to his or her contributions. They should also be ready to justify, exemplify and elaborate on the ideas and opinions given in the presentation.

Preparing for the topic discussion

It is very important to prepare for the discussion. Candidates are advised to:

- ▶ anticipate what the examiner might say – think of comments they might make and questions they might ask
- ▶ think about how to talk more about the topic outside of the limitations of the formal presentation
- ▶ consider any alternative viewpoints or objections the examiner might have and how you can respond, for example by defending/justifying your position, evaluating the different views or contradicting them.

Exam procedure

- ▶ The candidate needs to initiate this task by inviting the examiner to comment on any points made in the presentation.
- ▶ The examiner will ask questions and make comments about the presentation.
- ▶ After five minutes the examiner will end the topic discussion by saying:

Thank you. That was interesting. Now we'll move on to the Interactive task.



Interactive task

Introduction

The purpose of the Interactive task is for the candidate to demonstrate their ability to control and maintain an interaction while using the language functions of the level.

The examiner provides an oral prompt to the candidate. The candidate responds by asking questions to find out more information and making comments. Once the examiner has set up the situation, it is the candidate's responsibility to maintain the interaction.

The interaction takes the form of multiple turns, with the examiner's turns being shorter than those of the candidate. The discussion may involve some role play, but the candidate is free to be themselves.

In this task, the candidate's ability to use the functional language of the level is more important than grammatical accuracy.

- The Interactive task provides candidates with the opportunity to:
- ▶ demonstrate their independence as users of English
 - ▶ understand and use the language functions of the level
 - ▶ take control over and maintain an interaction
 - ▶ participate in an authentic exchange of information and opinions.

The Interactive task lasts up to five minutes.

Preparing for the Interactive task

It is very important to prepare for the Interactive task. Candidates are advised to:

- ▶ practise different question forms and techniques
- ▶ learn how to express the language functions of the level in a variety of ways
- ▶ develop strategies to maintain a conversation
- ▶ practise taking the initiative and controlling the direction of a conversation
- ▶ hold conversations which allow them to use the language functions of the level.

Strategies for the Interactive task

Do	Don't
Ask the examiner to repeat the prompt if necessary	Interrupt the examiner when he/she is reading the prompt
Ask questions to find out more about the situation	Immediately make comments before asking questions
Ask questions and make comments about the whole situation	Ask questions and make comments about one small part of the prompt
Use multiple, longer turns	Use short questions and comments
Focus on the language functions of the level	Focus on the grammar of the level
Engage the examiner by inviting opinions and comments	Provide a five-minute monologue response to the prompt

Exam procedure

- ▶ The examiner introduces the Interactive task by saying:

In this task, I'll start by telling you something. You'll have to ask me questions to find out more information and make comments. It's your responsibility to maintain the conversation. Are you ready?

- ▶ The examiner provides the candidate with an oral prompt.
- ▶ The candidate may ask the examiner to repeat the oral prompt if necessary.
- ▶ The candidate responds to the prompt by asking questions to find out more information and making comments.
- ▶ The candidate controls and maintains the interaction. If he/she does not, the task will not last the full five minutes.
- ▶ Before five minutes, the examiner will end the Interactive task by saying:

Thank you. Now we'll move on to the Listening task.



Listening task

Introduction

The purpose of the Listening task is for the candidate to demonstrate high level listening skills such as prediction, deduction and inference. The candidate needs to show recognition of the context, participants and register.

There are two types of listening tasks which require different responses from the candidate.

- ▶ Type 1 – require the candidate to provide a suitable ending
- ▶ Type 2 – require the candidate to identify participants, contexts or settings.

The examiner will read three listening texts: two of type 1 and one of type 2.

The Listening task lasts up to three minutes.

Preparing for the Listening task

It is very important to prepare for the Listening task. Candidates are advised to:

- ▶ practise listening to recordings of natural, authentic spoken English, eg news, films, podcasts
- ▶ develop strategies to identify context, participants, attitude, mood and intentions from spoken text.

Strategies for the Listening task

Do	Don't
Give short, precise answers	Give lengthy replies
Listen carefully	Ask the examiner to repeat the text – they can only read it once

Exam procedure

- ▶ The examiner introduces the Listening task by saying:

I'm going to read you three short passages and after I've finished each one, I'd like you to either suggest a suitable ending or answer a question. I'll then move on to the next passage. Are you ready?

- ▶ The examiner will introduce the type 1 listening task by saying:

These two passages are incomplete. When I stop, I'd like you to tell me in just a few words how you think the passage finishes.

- ▶ The examiner will read two type 1 listening tasks before moving onto a type 2 listening task.
- ▶ The examiner will introduce the type 1 listening task by saying:

After I've read this passage, I'll ask you a question about what you've heard.

- ▶ After three minutes, the examiner will end the Listening task by saying:

Thank you. Now we'll move on to the Conversation task.

Conversation task

Introduction

The purpose of the Conversation task is for the candidate to participate in a genuine exchange of information, ideas and opinions while using the language of the level. It is not a formal question and answer interview.

The Conversation task consists of a discussion of the candidate's Portfolio and a subject the examiner considers appropriate for the individual candidate. There are no specific subject areas and candidates should be prepared to discuss any two subjects that the examiner deems appropriate.

- The Conversation task provides candidates with the opportunity to:
- ▶ engage the examiner in a meaningful discussion on complex and abstract topics
 - ▶ influence the direction of the exchange
 - ▶ maintain the flow of the exchange
 - ▶ demonstrate their ability to use a range of complex language flexibly and effectively.

The Conversation task lasts up to six minutes.

Preparing for the Conversation task

It is very important to prepare for the Conversation task. Candidates are advised to:

- ▶ prepare to talk about the process of researching and writing the Portfolio and the reason they selected the tasks
- ▶ follow current debates and issues in the media and be prepared to discuss them
- ▶ develop strategies to maintain a conversation
- ▶ practise using the communicative skills of the level
- ▶ practise using the language functions and items of the level
- ▶ think of questions and comments relevant to topical issues as well as questions and comments the examiner may make.

Please note candidates should not recite information they have learnt about the subject areas (see page 8).

Exam procedure

- ▶ The first conversation topic is the candidate's Portfolio. The examiner says:

Let's talk about your Portfolio.

- ▶ The candidate and examiner exchange ideas, opinions and information about the Portfolio. After approximately three minutes the examiner changes the subject for discussion by saying:

Thank you. Now let's talk about...

- ▶ The candidate and examiner exchange ideas, opinions and information about the second subject area. After about three minutes the examiner brings the Conversation task and the exam to an end.

Language requirements

Language functions

- ▶ Asserting
- ▶ Denying
- ▶ Softening and downplaying propositions
- ▶ Contradicting
- ▶ Implying
- ▶ Affirming

Grammar

- ▶ A comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis and eliminate ambiguity
- ▶ Differing linguistic forms to reformulate ideas and convey finer shades of meaning
- ▶ Complete and consistent grammatical control of highly complex language at all times

Lexis

- ▶ A good command of a very broad lexical repertoire
- ▶ A wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- ▶ Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology

- ▶ Produce individual sounds so as to be fully understood by the examiner, with only a rare sound that deviates from an internationally intelligible model
- ▶ Stress and intonation patterns which are recognisably specific to English without any lapses in intelligibility

Subject areas for the Conversation task

There are no specific subject areas for ISE IV.

Candidates should be able to make use of a wide range of vocabulary items relating to all other previous subject areas as well as other subjects of general or topical interest.

At this level, candidates are expected to be able to enter into discussion on any subject that the examiner deems appropriate for the individual candidate. The age of the candidate will be taken into account when the examiner makes his or her choice.

ISE IV – Example activities

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare students for the Trinity ISE IV Interview. These activities will show teachers how they can develop their own classroom materials to practise the communicative skills needed for ISE IV. There is a video of an ISE IV exam at: trinitycollege.com/ISE-IV-interview

Please note the suggestions given in this booklet 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 ISE IV.

Activity 1 – Developing a topic

This activity will help students to plan and develop their presentations.

Give the students the presentation breakdown and list of discourse markers below. Ask them to make notes under each heading about their own topics. Students can then add discourse markers from the list that they could use in each part of their presentation.

Presentation sections

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Provide a clear indication of your position
- ▶ Present your first argument
- ▶ Present your second argument
- ▶ Present your third argument
- ▶ Indicate that there is another side to this argument, with some idea of the points likely to be made for the view(s) which are opposite to your own
- ▶ Reiterate your position and conclude

Discourse markers

- ▶ In addition...
- ▶ Firstly...
- ▶ Furthermore...
- ▶ I'll begin by talking about...
- ▶ Secondly...
- ▶ On the other hand...
- ▶ To sum up...
- ▶ I've chosen to talk about...
- ▶ In my opinion...
- ▶ In conclusion...
- ▶ Nonetheless...
- ▶ Thirdly...
- ▶ In this presentation I'm going to talk about...
- ▶ Personally, I believe that...

Activity 2 – The Interactive task

This activity will help students to prepare for the Interactive task and give them some ideas for keeping the conversation going.

Below are some statements that the examiner might make. Students should select a comment and a follow-up question to go with each one. There is more than one possible answer. Students can practise role-playing as examiner and candidate to experiment with making different comments and seeing what effect this has on the conversation.

Examiner's statement

- ▶ I've decided not to vote in any political elections ever.
- ▶ I've heard that a huge amount of oil has just been found in my country.
- ▶ My perfect house would be high in the mountains.
- ▶ Many celebrities like to get involved in charity work.
- ▶ I heard that constant texting can affect our brains.
- ▶ The government in my country has extended the school day by one hour each day.
- ▶ About 85% of the world's population now own a mobile phone.
- ▶ The benefits of doing unpaid work experience outweigh the drawbacks.

Comments

- ▶ Mmmm. That's unlikely.
- ▶ I'm not surprised
- ▶ That's always good to hear.
- ▶ Really?
- ▶ How awful.
- ▶ That's good news.
- ▶ Sorry I didn't catch that.
- ▶ That's incredible.

Follow-up questions

- ▶ Don't you think you'd feel isolated?
- ▶ But what could be the reason behind that?
- ▶ Could this have an impact on the price of petrol for car drivers?
- ▶ What proof is there to support that?
- ▶ How long have you had yours?
- ▶ Can you ever really trust politicians?
- ▶ Do you mean it's worth working for nothing?
- ▶ How have the students reacted?

Activity 3 – Implying

Brainstorm and elicit with students some possible topics for conversation at ISE IV level, or use the following ISE IV interactive prompt:

'It is often said that there should be no limits to the activities of the press, even when it comes to people's private lives. I couldn't agree more.'

Ask students to work in small groups to list three or four arguments or opinions about the prompt or one of the topic areas elicited. Write some of these ideas on the board.

Now, clarify with students what we mean by 'implying', ie communicate an idea without saying it directly or without the idea coming directly from the speaker.

With that in mind, ask the students to transform one of the examples on the board into an implied opinion or argument, using functional language.

Example direct opinion: I think everyone has the right to a private life.

Example implied opinion: It's been suggested that everyone has the right to a private life.

I've heard it said that everyone has the right to a private life.

It's thought that everyone has the right to a private life.

People suppose that everyone has the right to a private life.

Experts suggest that everyone has the right to a private life.

You only have to look at (the media/politics) to know that everyone has the right to a private life.

I wonder if it would be better to ask if everyone has the right to a private life?

Ask students to transform their direct opinions into implied opinions, using functional language. Take feedback as a class, focusing on the use of different functional language for implying.

Students work in teams. One student says a direct opinion while the others in the group have to transform this into an implied opinion as quickly and accurately as possible, using functional language. The first team to come up with a sentence wins a point.

Activity 4 – Softening and downplaying propositions

In the Conversation task at ISE IV, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to soften and downplay their opinions and propositions.

Elicit from students what they understand by the term 'softening and downplaying propositions', ie you make people think it is less serious or important than it is. Elicit an example from the students to support their ideas.

Students work in pairs to complete the gaps in the sentences on the left with words on the right to make softening and downplaying expressions

I'm not sure I know all the _____, but...	just answers only suppose question just maybe feel considered problem might
That's not the only _____ .	
_____ it's too strong, but...	
I'm not _____ saying that...	
I _____ it's possible that...	
It _____ be true that...	
(Society) should also be _____ as one of the (arguments).	
It's not only a _____ of...	
I _____ there's more to it than _____ (economic issues).	

Ask students if they know any other words that can replace the words in the sentences, but keep the function of softening and downplaying the same. For example: 'just' could also be 'simply', 'suppose' could be 'guess' and 'maybe' could be 'perhaps'. How does the formality change?

You can also take current news headlines or topics from English news websites on the internet which will stimulate discussion. Students can work in pairs to brainstorm some propositions.

Students can then work in pairs (examiner and candidate) to role-play a discussion on the topic and practise the softening expressions.

Function in action

Students can search for examples of political discussions or news reports on the headlines they found, watching them to find examples of the softening and downplaying function in context.

Activity 5 – Asserting and denying

In small groups, give students the following phrases on cards. Ask them to discuss and categorise them into either 'asserting' or 'denying'. Ask them to justify their choice.

Asserting	Denying
I can see the advantages of...	I never said that...
I strongly believe that...	I wasn't trying to say that...
It seems logical that...	That's not what I'm saying...
I have to say that...	That's not what I meant
I'm afraid that's not right...	I didn't mean that...
I must argue/disagree with that...	I think you've misunderstood my point.
I'm totally in favour of...	There's no truth in that idea. Where is the evidence?
I really do think that...	No, it's not the case that...

Students prepare three or four opinions or arguments on a particular topic or Interactive task. Here is an example Interactive task they could discuss:

'One effect of increased globalisation is that minority languages are gradually becoming extinct. Many people regret this but I'm not sure it's such a bad thing.'

Next, in pairs or small groups, students take on the role of candidate or examiner to practise discussions in which they should assert or deny their point of view on the topic.

Function in action

Students can watch discussions between a politician and interviewer, noting the language they use to assert or deny their points of view.



Appendix – Communicative skills for the Interview

Communicative skills for the Interview

In the Formal topic presentation

- ▶ Present a complex topic with a high degree of linguistic formality to the examiner, who will probably be unfamiliar with it
- ▶ Present a clear argument with an effective logical structure which helps the examiner to notice and remember significant points
- ▶ Bring the presentation to a logical conclusion by inviting questions and comments from the examiner

In the Topic discussion

- ▶ Initiate the discussion and actively seek ways in which to engage the examiner in a meaningful exchange of ideas and opinions
- ▶ Take full responsibility for the maintenance of the discussion
- ▶ Be able to deal effectively with the examiner's input by responding to a variety of conversational gambits and handling in-depth questioning

In the Interactive task

- ▶ Control and sustain the discussion at all times
- ▶ Actively encourage the examiner's collaboration in the task
- ▶ Direct the interaction towards a successful conclusion

In the Listening task

- ▶ Understand texts on abstract and complex topics which may be of a specialist nature beyond his or her own field
- ▶ Understand virtually everything heard when delivered at natural native speaker speed
- ▶ Identify implicit meaning

In the Conversation task

- ▶ Take full responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation
- ▶ Hold a discussion unconstrained by linguistic limitations, without showing signs of having to restrict what he or she wants to say
- ▶ Introduce his or her contribution into the joint discourse with natural turn-taking and referencing
- ▶ Demonstrate the ability to make an unobtrusive substitution for a word or expression he or she is unable to recall
- ▶ Discuss fully and precisely not only the content of the Portfolio but also the process of writing it

This booklet provides teachers with a comprehensive breakdown of the requirements and some preparation techniques for the Interview component of Trinity's Integrated Skills in English IV, CEFR level C2.

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