

English for Business



Level 3

Series 3 2003

(Code 3041)

Model Answers

English for Business Level 3

Series 3 2003

How to use this booklet

Model Answers have been developed by LCCIEB to offer additional information and guidance to Centres, teachers and candidates as they prepare for LCCIEB examinations. The contents of this booklet are divided into 3 elements:

- (1) Questions – reproduced from the printed examination paper
- (2) Model Answers – summary of the main points that the Chief Examiner expected to see in the answers to each question in the examination paper, plus a fully worked example or sample answer (where applicable)
- (3) Helpful Hints – where appropriate, additional guidance relating to individual questions or to examination technique

Teachers and candidates should find this booklet an invaluable teaching tool and an aid to success.

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board provides Model Answers to help candidates gain a general understanding of the standard required. The Board accepts that candidates may offer other answers that could be equally valid.

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QUESTION 1

Situation

You work in the Customer Service Department of a small company, *Cookhouse Products*, which makes kitchen equipment. The company has recently set up a site on the Internet which gives details of its products and how they can be used. Other interesting features such as kitchen design ideas and recipes have been added and the site has been widely praised for being interesting and informative.

You recently received this letter:

518 Central Avenue
Smallville SM7 9DA

7 June 2003

Dear Sir or Madam

I am not an expert on computers or the Internet but my family persuaded me to “go on-line” so I could visit websites such as yours. Your website is fine but why do you charge so much for people to visit it?

Since my wife and I started to visit your site, our telephone bills have increased enormously. My latest bill was 75% higher than the previous one before we went on-line. My children do go on-line sometimes but they say they do not do this very often.

I would love to go on visiting your site, but I'm afraid I just cannot afford to do so.

Yours faithfully

Hugo Suarez

Hugo Suarez (Mr)

As far as you are aware, there is no charge to visit the website but you check this with the Head of Marketing, Miriam Makoni, who laughs loudly when she sees the letter. She says this to you:

“Oh dear! Poor Mr Suarez just doesn't seem to understand how the system works. Of course we don't charge anyone for visiting our website. How much anyone pays for visiting any site depends on how much the telephone company, or your provider charges. This man might be well advised to check how much they charge him per minute for connecting to the Internet.

“But doesn't this sound a bit suspicious to you? His children go on-line “but don't do it very often”, or so they say! I bet the children are on-line all the time – my kids certainly are – and this is why his bill has increased”.

You decide to write to Mr Suarez to explain how the system works. You should not make any direct accusations about this family but you should offer suggestions as to why the bill is so high.

Task

Write an appropriate letter to Mr Suarez. You can assume that the company's headed note-paper is used.

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 1

A suitable answer would be as follows:

<p>Headed paper</p>
<p>11 June 2003</p>
<p>Mr H Suarez 518 Central Avenue Smallville SM7 0DA</p>
<p>Dear Mr Suarez</p>
<p>Cookhouse Products Website</p>
<p>Thank you for your letter of the 7 June. I am glad you enjoy visiting our website. Many others have commented on how informative this is.</p>
<p>I am sorry that your telephone bill has increased but I must assure you that we do not charge for visiting our website. This is the policy of most companies like ours.</p>
<p>The cost of your visits to websites is entirely the result of charges made by your telephone company and by your "server". We know that charges vary enormously between companies and you would be well advised to investigate the charges of other companies. These are well advertised in the press. I should add that it is often the case that younger members of the family find difficulty in resisting using the Internet for various purposes and they lose track of the time they spend on it.</p>
<p>I hope you are able to continue to enjoy visiting our website, but in the meantime I have enclosed a copy of our latest magazine and price list.</p>
<p>Thank you for your interest in our company.</p>
<p>Yours sincerely</p>
<p>A Candidate</p>
<p>A Candidate Customer Service Assistant</p>
<p>encs</p>

NOTE:

A business letter should always contain:

- sender's address (or letterhead)
- date
- receiver's name, title, and address
- appropriate salutation
- subject line
- body of the letter (with appropriate paragraphs)
- matching close, signature, name and title

QUESTION 2

Situation

You work for a very successful company producing newspapers and magazines. The owner of the company, Mr Oliver Hochbaum, has a very high profile nationally and internationally. He started his career publishing a school magazine 20 years ago and he has seen his business grow into a massive publishing business.

Mr Hochbaum is often invited to participate in public events and you often assist him in this. Yesterday he gave you some documents and said this to you.

“Could you please help me? I’m off to America for a few days and I promised to do a job for the local college, Northern Business School, before I go. The students have to come up with an innovative business idea and I agreed to look at them and decide which was the best. I’ve got some notes about each idea but could you please summarise the information about the ideas into a report? The college has narrowed it down to five ideas and there are two prizes – one for the idea which is most environmentally friendly and one for the idea which makes best use of information and communication technology.

“I would be very grateful if you would put all the ideas into a sensible report to which I can refer and please suggest which of the ideas should receive the prizes. I know I should do this but I really haven’t time and your judgement is as good as mine”.

The notes on the five ideas are as follows:

The Quickbolt

This is a lock for inner doors in a house – can be fitted to inside doors in minutes – doesn’t damage the door – no holes drilled – fits most standard doors – makes them secure – any burglar who breaks in through outside door or window – can’t get any further into property – would give up.
Not very expensive to produce – great benefit to home owners.

The mini wind-turbine

Not cheap to produce – but can pay for itself in a few years. Turbine to produce electricity for places like schools, farms, small businesses etc from wind. No fossil fuels involved – no carbon dioxide emissions.
Can store electricity generated when wind is blowing, for times when it is not – any surplus power fed into national grid. Quite small in appearance – can be placed on roof.

The interactive website

Great help for small businesses – provides on-line communication between a company and its suppliers – fully active website – secure information on orders, purchases, deliveries and payments exchanged between companies.
Saves time in small companies – can be used 24 hours per day – not expensive software – but some training for use required.

The heated cushion

This is a cushion which can be used at outdoor events (eg by spectators at sporting events) – disposable cushion – like a normal cushion – two layers of soft material – but also an inner layer of chemicals which, when mixed, gently heat up for about 2 hours. Comfortable and warm seat on cold days.
Perfectly safe – well tested – can be thrown away after use.

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

Multi-layered fun soap

Often difficult to persuade children to wash – can now encourage them with “fun” soap – looks like ordinary bar of soap but comprises several layers – changes colour as each layer is used – contains no harmful chemicals – but is often used very quickly – therefore more sold – good business idea.

Task

Write a report giving a logical presentation of the five ideas. You should recommend which idea should receive each prize and support your recommendations.

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 2

A suitable answer would be as follows:

To: Mr Oliver Hochbaum
From: A Candidate
Date: 11 June 2003

Northern Business School – Innovative Business Idea Competition

Introduction

I have investigated the five business ideas submitted by students and I have summarised (a) what the idea is and (b) any important features of it. I have made suggestions as to which should be awarded a prize for being the most environmentally friendly and for making the best use of ICT.

The Quickbolt

- (a) This is a device that can be fitted to inner doors of property to lock or secure them.
- (b) It is inexpensive, easy to fit on most doors, no damage is done to the door, and it gives additional security should any property be broken into.

The mini wind-turbine

- (a) This is a small wind operated generator which can provide power for buildings such as farms, schools and small businesses.
- (b) Electricity generated in times of high wind can be stored for times when it is still. The environment is not harmed in any way as there is no use of fossil fuels or gas emissions. Although it is not cheap, the device can be cost-effective over a short period of time.

The interactive website

- (a) This software allows communication of orders, deliveries, payments, etc, to take place between the websites of companies and suppliers.
- (b) This is inexpensive but can lead to a great saving of time by small businesses if training is undertaken.

The heated cushion

- (a) This is a cushion with a layer of chemicals between two layers of ordinary cushion material that can be made to heat up to a comfortable temperature for up to two hours.
- (b) This can add comfort to spectators seated outside in cold-weather, such as at sporting events. The cushion is safe and can be disposed of after use.

Multi-layered soap

- (a) This is ordinary soap but of several colours. As each layer is used, another colour is revealed.
- (b) This is an interesting business idea as it could persuade children to use more soap. It contains no harmful ingredients.

Recommendations

The prize for the most environmentally friendly idea.

This should be awarded to the Mini Wind-Turbine. It provides "clean" power without contributing to any harmful effects on the environment (ie no use of fossil fuel, no pollution caused).

The prize for the best use of ICT.

This should be awarded to the Interactive Website. It allows ICT to reduce the administrative burden of small businesses.

QUESTION 3

Situation

You are employed in the Human Resources Department of a large company, Flo-tech International, which is located in a very competitive high technology market. There has been much publicity recently about employees, particularly managers in such companies, suffering from stress due to the pressures of work.

The Human Resources Manager, Ms Ursula Decker, has asked you to investigate the causes, symptoms and results of stress and possible means of overcoming the problem. Having researched the topic, you will then be asked to meet the senior managers to discuss the issue.

The results of your research are as follows:

From an interview with an industrial psychologist.

“Stress” is the result of working under great pressure and attempting to do too much. It’s often connected with trying to meet targets or achieve deadlines, especially when the survival or profitability of the company depends on this. It is ironic that people who are stressed often attempt to work harder in response to it and make things worse rather than easing off to make things better.

From an interview with a company doctor.

It’s well known that medical problems can result from stress. In the short term, stressed staff can suffer from irritability, insomnia and difficulty in concentrating. Stressed staff often take short spells of time off work – this can be a sign of stress levels rising and people feeling stressed can often turn to such harmful things as smoking, drinking or even eating too much as a comfort. If you suffer from stress for a longer period of time, this can have more serious consequences such as migraine attacks, ulcers, eczema or even heart disease.

From an interview with a government business advisor.

There is a big difference between managers who are given incentives to work hard in order to stimulate staff and increase productivity, compared with those who are stressed by being placed under pressure. Stressed staff tend to lose concentration easier, and work less effectively. They often take out their frustrations on colleagues which leads to arguments and disharmony between colleagues. Stress leads to a marked decrease in the quality of work. This often results in a degeneration in the organisation of the work place. Staff under pressure seem unable to clear things up as they work so the work place starts to look untidy, even chaotic.

From an interview with a representative of “Stress-Busters”, an organisation that advises companies on how to reduce stress levels.

There’s no secret or magical way to reduce stress levels, but there are many things senior management can do to help. Here are a few suggestions.

Encourage staff to work *smarter* not *harder*; find ways to help staff to be more organised and more productive to achieve more in the same time.

Keep an eye on everyone. Look out for the early tell-tale signs of stress and offer assistance.

Review regularly the staff’s workload and responsibilities to ensure that pressures are shared, not concentrated in one person or area.

Don’t ignore the social side of work. Take the staff out of the work environment from time to time; in other words, release the pressure valve.

QUESTION 3 CONTINUED

Task

Answer the following questions, **in your own words as far as possible**, to show your understanding of the information given.

- (a) What causes some workers to suffer from stress? (2 marks)
- (b) Why does the industrial psychologist say it is “ironic” that workers who are stressed often attempt to work harder? (3 marks)
- (c) Apart from working harder, how do people who suffer from stress often make their own physical condition worse? (3 marks)
- (d) How do medical conditions, resulting from short-term stress, differ from those which are the result of long-term stress? (4 marks)
- (e) At what stage does working to incentives, which is positive, become working under stress, which is harmful? (3 marks)
- (f) Why is it likely that teamwork will not be as successful if staff are stressed? (4 marks)
- (g) Why does working *smarter not harder* reduce stress levels? (3 marks)
- (h) Apart from encouraging staff to work smarter, what else could a company do to prevent staff from becoming stressed? (3 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 3

Suitable answers would be:

- (a) Stress is the result of people working under great pressure, particularly to achieve difficult targets or deadlines.
- (b) Workers who are stressed could make it better for themselves by working less hard, but most do the opposite and work harder, which makes things worse.
- (c) People under stress attempt to gain relief from activities which further damage their health, such as smoking, drinking or over-eating.
- (d) Short-term stress conditions are often connected with behaviour. For example, people may become very sensitive or irritable, they do not sleep well and lack concentration. In the long term, more serious medical problems can arise, such as heart problems, ulcers and eczema.
- (e) Working for incentives can stimulate staff but when an incentive becomes unreasonable pressure, workers can become stressed.
- (f) Staff suffering from stress cannot concentrate well and work less effectively. They then often blame others for the problems that arise, and therefore working with colleagues in a team can be difficult. There are disagreements and arguments.
- (g) By doing this, workers can achieve more and be more productive without working any harder, thus reducing the potential for stress.
- (h) A company could set up a system to review staff continually and also to make sure the workload is distributed fairly. Social events can be organised well in advance so workers know there will be the chance to “let off steam”.

QUESTION 4

Situation

You work for PDQ International, a major manufacturing company based in a large factory in the city of Rathlin. The company is currently modernising its premises and at the moment one of the oldest parts of the factory, Block J, is being re-built. The closure of Block J is causing some interruption to production but the rebuilding should be completed and re-opened in about three weeks.

Your work involves assisting the Managing Director of PDQ International, Mr Gregory Martin.

This morning, Mr Martin gave you these instructions.

"I've just had some bad news about Block J. The builders have found that the roof contains a huge amount of asbestos. Apparently it's the old type of asbestos which is a dangerous substance so work has had to come to an end until a specialist firm can come to remove the stuff. This could take months.

"Please call a meeting for all our Heads of Department. They need to clear their diaries for a full day meeting on Tuesday of next week. Mrs Doyle (the Facilities Manager) will let you know the details, you know, time and place.

"The next important thing is that this news is for Heads of Department only. We face all kinds of problems now, but that's what the meeting is about. We'd better not call them 'problems' – make sure you use a different term, 'issues', perhaps. But at the moment, the fewer people that know about this, the better.

"I'll need to know from everyone how the continued closure of Block J will affect them. We'll also have to discuss how we can organise health checks for all those who have worked in Block J. Any ideas on how we do this will be gratefully received!

"Please try not to alarm the Heads of Department. I'm sure there are ways we can get round the problems – sorry, issues! But it is important that the news does not get out just yet. I'll issue a statement after the meeting."

You have received this note from Mrs Doyle.

"I've been asked to arrange this meeting for Tuesday next week. I don't know what it's all about but it must be important if all Heads of Department are invited. I've organised Room 53 in Block F from 0930. I was told to arrange buffet meals for the day so you won't be interrupted – this gets more mysterious. I can't remember if any Heads are vegetarian or have any special food requirements but perhaps they can let me know about this."

Task

Draft the memo as instructed, to be sent to each Head of Department.

(25 marks)

Model Answer to Question 4

A suitable answer would be as follows:

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Heads of Department
From: A Candidate
Date: 11 June 2003

Developments in Block J

As you are aware, Block J is currently undergoing refurbishment, and it was hoped that it would re-open in about three weeks. Unfortunately all work has had to be suspended as a hazardous form of asbestos has been found in the roof. A special firm will now be called in to complete the work, but this could take some time as it is vital that all health and safety issues are addressed fully.

In due course we will issue a statement about this, but, until we have formulated a plan to deal with the issues, please ensure that no-one else hears about this. To prepare a plan to cover the issues, I propose to hold a Heads of Department meeting for Tuesday of next week. Clearly, this takes priority over any other commitments you might have for this day.

Please be prepared to discuss the implications for your department of the prolonged closure of Block J. We will also need to discuss the issues of the health screening of those who have worked in Block J. Your contributions on all issues will be valued.

The meeting will take place at 0930 for the full day of Tuesday 17 June in Room 53 in Block F. Please let Mrs Doyle know of your dietary requirements (tel 4116) as we will have buffet style meals to avoid interruptions.

Whilst this is an unfortunate occurrence, we have faced bigger issues at PDQ in the past, and I'm sure that with your assistance, we can quickly resolve these issues.



**EXAMINATIONS
BOARD**

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