

MODEL EXAM

Version A and B are results of different national cultures and institutional constraints. Some institutions require discrete point testing of receptive skills (listening/reading) and also might choose to provide all the material and limit the students autonomy (version A) while other institutions/nations might allow for full access to the internet, and as a consequence more time to conclude the task. These versions of a possible model exam are not meant to exclude many other ways of organizing a task-based test. We have followed the “Steps in developing a task-based language test” developed by the GULT Team.

VERSION A

Candidates: Students of Environmental Sciences

Language: English

Level: B2

Test structure: receptive skills (120 minutes), independent study (individual and in pairs; 60 minutes), oral part (pair-work; 20-30 minutes), written part (individual; 90 minutes)

SPEAKING

Task:

A student radio station invited you (students of environmental studies) to talk about the BP oil spill. Work with your classmate and prepare to do the following:

- Present the problem from different viewpoints (taking into account the different authors of the articles in your case file).
- Present your opinions about the main arguments that the authors of the texts use to support their positions.
- Decide on the best short-/long-term solution to the problem.

The examiner:

- plays the role of the radio presenter;
- is given 'examiner's notes';
- asks clarification questions, maintains the focus on the topic.

Material:

- three articles from different sources: a broadsheet newspaper, the company responsible for the disaster (BP); an environmental NGO;
- a more 'technical' article would be welcome since they are students of environmental sciences.

Assessment:

- task completion (content: presentation, evaluation of arguments from the articles, solution);
- language (style, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation).

Problems:

- time constraints (too many texts?);
- KOW;
- the role of assessor (the extent of involvement, elicitation of desired content);
- discrete item testing?

WRITING

Task:

After the radio show, you write a blog entry on the potential solutions that you presented during the radio show because you feel that you did not have enough time to express all your opinions and ideas. In at least 250 words:

- Evaluate at least two of the arguments presented in the radio show.
- Mention any new ideas / arguments that were not presented in the programme.

Assessment:

- task completion (content: presentation, evaluation of arguments from the articles, solution)
- language (style, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)
- perhaps more emphasis should be place on grammar

Problems:

- world-limit
- similar content (assessing the same content twice)
- mistakes from the oral part could be repeated in the written part and consequently 'punished' twice.

Reading material

BP accepts full responsibility

<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7061712>

Moving our Nation beyond Petroleum

http://www.ips-dc.org/articles/moving_our_nation_beyond_petroleum

BP Ecocide oil rig explosion

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/09/ecocide-crime-genocide-un-environmental-damage>

Audios/videos

Obama BP oil spill

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8HT05yV-P8>

National Public Radio –

Gulf Spill May Far Exceed Official Estimates OK appropriate

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126809525>

VERSION B

Situation: This is an exam at an institution for a class of different L1 speakers.

(Needed competences: Basic public speaking, register: colloquial)

Context:

- 1) B2 - English for Bachelor students (General Language for all careers)
(Norwegian/Rumanian)
- 2) An exam situation is never an authentic situation however we intend to move towards an ideal of a more authentic situation.

Make a presentation of this topic to international students (on a student radio) in English

Topic: *The oil leakage from the BP platform*

- 3) For assessment purposes we need to clarify “needs”

Students need to understand, take a stand, argue, summarize, interact.

- 4) Presentation + discussion/ article

Radio presentation on your topic of interest for an English speaking

Prepare a written article for the webpage of the studio radio station based on the readings.

(could also be an international student conference/panel debate)

Reading material

BP accepts full responsibility

<http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7061712>

Moving our Nation beyond Petroleum

http://www.ips-dc.org/articles/moving_our_nation_beyond_petroleum

BP Ecocide oil rig explosion

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6. Describe the situation

You are taking part in a radio program on a student English language radiostation for a general audience/ international student conference. You will present, from your own point of view, on the BP oil spills in the Gulf.

The examiner will frame the situation, welcoming the “experts” (students) and then you present in pairs or groups your work. (20-25 minutes) (will be followed by a 20 minutes discussion by the examiners).

During the written exam on XXX you prepared an article/text concerning the oil spills in the Gulf. This project will eventually be published on the webpage

(Would you limit the access to some audios or give full autonomy.)

(How do you evaluate the oral production, would full reproduction be good or bad?)

(Would it be necessary or useful to have a student radio example)

Make a project

- Briefly summarize the problem of the oil spills
- Decide whether BP and other oil companies need to make changes in the way they extract oil/gas
- Comment on the proposal of making “ecocide” one of the topics of international crime (in addition to crimes against humanity
- suggest future action by politicians to protect the environment

After the interview,

7. see above nr. 6

8. It will be tested within the framework of the overall task mainly the presentation on the radio (oral) and the elaboration of an article for the webpage (written)

9. There will be no answer key to the receptive skills, because we are doing an integrative test. We will not separately assess receptive skills.

(In the case that your institution require discrete point testing of receptive skills (here: listening), you could ask for a summary of the audio or a multiple choice section for example)

10. We are doing a productive part testing it leads from this that they need to use their receptive skills to produce the product.

The listening and reading stimuli are there to active vocabulary and provide ways of organizing arguments (content and form).

11. Ideally the pairs should have different L1s, or the audience is presented as being international. For practical reasons we decided to keep it limited to pairs and not organize groups (much harder)

12. Build-up task

Practice with your partner. Examiners are not involved.

13. Full autonomy