

# GESE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Graded Examinations in Spoken English  
Initial stage

Grades 1-3 | CEFR levels A1-A2

suitable for young learners

## About this booklet

This booklet provides teachers with a comprehensive breakdown of the requirements and some preparation techniques for Trinity Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 1-3.

## 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 Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE)

The Graded Examinations in Spoken English are designed for all learners of English. There are 12 grades in total, so whatever your students' level of English there is an exam that they can take.

Trinity's GESE exams assess a range of speaking and listening skills and test what a candidate can actually do, rather than just what they know. Preparation for GESE exams focuses on the development of authentic communicative skills and on building the confidence to use English in real life.

Each GESE exam is conducted in person 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 12 grades of GESE are divided into four stages:

Initial	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Grades 1-3 5-7 minutes	Grades 4-6 10 minutes	Grades 7-9 15 minutes	Grades 10-12 25 minutes
			Topic presentation
			Topic discussion
		Candidate-led discussion of topic	Interactive task
	Topic discussion	Interactive task	Listening task
Conversation	Conversation	Conversation	Conversation

This booklet has been prepared to help teachers prepare their students for the Initial stage, Grades 1-3 exams. The activities in this booklet are designed with young learners in mind.

Full details of Trinity's GESE exams can be found in the latest edition of our Exam Information booklet at [trinitycollege.com/GESEexaminformation](http://trinitycollege.com/GESEexaminformation)

## Assessment

At the Initial stage, the examiner assesses the candidate's performance by awarding a letter grade A, B, C or D for Task fulfilment for the Conversation. 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 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 four weeks of the completion of the GESE exam session.

# GESE Initial stage (Grades 1-3, CEFR pre-A1-A2.1)

## Introduction to the Initial stage

### Candidate profile

**By the end of the Initial stage, the candidate can:**

- ▶ understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly in simple everyday conversation with support
- ▶ communicate in basic and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters
- ▶ use basic sentence patterns and communicate through simple phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places and possessions
- ▶ ask and answer simple questions about personal information and everyday life.

This profile is based on the level A2, Basic User, on the Common European Framework of Reference.

### Initial stage exam format

		Assessed	Not assessed
1	Greetings and setting at ease		✓
2	Conversation	✓	
3	End of conversation and leave-taking		✓

### Overview of the Initial stage

The Initial stage exams have one task which is a conversation with the examiner. The conversation lasts five, six or seven minutes, depending on the level.

- ▶ The examiner begins by greeting the candidate and trying to set him or her at ease.
- ▶ The **Conversation** is then started by the examiner who gives the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate the range of language required at this stage.
- ▶ At Grade 1, the candidate is required to show understanding by giving short responses using the language of the grade or through simple actions, such as moving around the room or pointing to specific objects.
- ▶ At Grades 2 and 3, the candidate asks the examiner at least one simple question during the exam.
- ▶ Examiners select exam materials that are appropriate to the age and maturity of the candidate. These materials can include everyday objects and pictures. The examiner will use the materials to engage the candidate's interest, to help the candidate demonstrate the language of the grade and to encourage the conversation to develop. The examiner may also talk about the immediate surroundings of the exam room, school or centre.
- ▶ The examiner brings the conversation to an end by thanking the candidate and saying goodbye.
- ▶ The candidate is expected to say goodbye.

## GESE Grade 1 (CEFR Pre-A1) – Introduction

Grade 1 is a conversation with a Trinity examiner, which lasts up to 5 minutes. During this time the examiner exchanges greetings with the candidate, asks simple questions and gives simple instructions.

Like all the Graded Examinations in Spoken English, it will be a friendly and enjoyable experience. The examiner uses pictures or objects to help the candidate produce the language they need to demonstrate. At Grade 1, candidates do not have to use full sentences when they talk to their examiner. They show that they understand the examiner by responding appropriately to their questions or instructions. Page 5 lists what candidates need to be able to understand and use in order to pass their exams.

Teachers can easily introduce exam practice into students' general English classes. Students can practise for their exam in class, for example, by talking to each other and playing educational games focusing on the language items required for Grade 1. At the end of the exam, candidates feel more confident because they have been able to understand someone they have never met before who does not speak their language. They see that the English they have learnt is real and useful. Trinity's aim is that candidates leave the exam room smiling and looking forward to their next English lesson.



# GESE Grade 1 – Language

## Exam format

Total exam time: 5 minutes

### The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ▶ Conversation with the examiner (up to 5 minutes).

## Candidate performance

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

### Communicative skills

- ▶ Exchange greetings with the examiner
- ▶ Show understanding of simple instructions through appropriate actions
- ▶ Give very short answers to simple questions and requests for information

### Language requirements

#### Language functions

- ▶ Exchanging greetings
- ▶ Giving personal information, eg name, age
- ▶ Identifying and naming items given in the lexical list below
- ▶ Leave-taking

#### Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand**:

- ▶ Imperatives for common actions, eg *go, come, show, point, give, touch, stand up*
- ▶ Question words *what? how many? how old?*
- ▶ Demonstratives *this, that, these, those*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- ▶ The present simple tense of the verb *to be*
- ▶ Common nouns in singular and plural (regular and irregular), eg *shoe/shoes, foot/feet*
- ▶ Simple adjectives, eg *small, tall, green*
- ▶ Determiners *a, the, my, your, his, her*
- ▶ Pronouns *I, you, he, she, it, they*

#### Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- ▶ Personal information
- ▶ Immediate surroundings including classroom objects
- ▶ Basic parts of the face and body
- ▶ Common animals (domestic, farm and wild)
- ▶ Cardinal numbers up to 20
- ▶ Colours
- ▶ Everyday items of clothing
- ▶ Words relating to the language functions listed above

#### Phonology

- ▶ The clear pronunciation of common words relevant to the lexical areas

## GESE Grade 1 – Example activities

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare students for a Trinity GESE Grade 1 exam. These activities will show teachers how they can develop their own classroom materials to practise the communicative skills and language needed for Grade 1. There are videos of GESE Grade 1 exams at [trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial](http://trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial)

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 Grade 1.

### Introductions

#### Examiner materials/gestures

[No materials needed in this section]

#### Examiner questions

- ▶ *Hello!*
- ▶ *What's your name?*
- ▶ *How are you?*
- ▶ *How old are you?*



**Vocabulary**

Look at the vocabulary wheel below. You will see pictures of some of the Grade 1 vocabulary. Show this to your students and ask them what each section represents. Do they know the English name of all of the pictures? Ask your students to name the items.



**Answer:**

Colours, immediate surroundings including classroom objects, exchanging greetings, common animals (domestic, farm and wild), cardinal numbers up to 20, basic parts of the face and body, everyday items of clothing

### Vocabulary

Practising: clothes, colours, parts of the body, determiners, imperatives, question words

- ▶ Draw this picture on your board, using different colours for clothes and the body.  
Or, you can make a copy. You do not need to write/copy the words.
- ▶ Use the picture as a student quiz, or play games using the instructions on the picture. You can also ask students to draw their own picture of a man and woman to use as a quiz. What language are we testing?

Point to ...  
Show me ...  
What colour is/are ...?  
Touch ...  
your ... my ... his ... her... their ...



How many ... are there?  
What are these/those ...?  
What's this/that?

## Numbers

### Examiner materials/gestures

- Examiner shows the number chart

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20

- Examiner points to a correct number
- Examiner points to an incorrect number
- Examiner points to another number

### Examiner questions

- How old are you?
- Point to (student's age)

- Is this 13?*
- Is this 15? Point to 15.*
- What's this?*

## Colour and Size

### Examiner materials/gestures

- Examiner shows some coloured pens



- Examiner points to the pens
- Examiner point to an incorrect pen
- Examiner points to another pen
- Examiner points to the other pens

### Examiner questions

- Look.
- What are these?
- How many pens are there?
- Point to the green pen.
- Is this the blue pen? What is it?
- Give me the blue pen.
- Is this your pen?
- Touch the big pen.
- Give me the small pen.
- Show me the red pen.
- What colour are these pens?

## GESE Grade 2 (CEFR A1) – Introduction

Grade 2 is a conversation with a Trinity examiner, which lasts up to six minutes. During this time, the candidate has the opportunity to show how much they have progressed since their Grade 1 exam. They are now able to use English at level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

The Grade 2 exam is a friendly and communicative experience and the candidate will use short phrases and statements and ask their examiner a question. The list of what learners should be able to do is longer (see below and page 12-13).

The language in Grade 2 reflects the way students learn English in the classroom. Because the candidate asks at least one question during the conversation, they start to understand that language is a two-way communication and can begin to see the advantages of learning English.



## GESE Grade 2 – Language

### Exam format

Total exam time: 6 minutes

#### The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ▶ Conversation with the examiner (up to 6 minutes).

### Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

#### Communicative skills

- ▶ Understand short, simple questions, requests and statements
- ▶ Respond with appropriate actions and positive and negative short form answers
- ▶ Contribute to the conversation using memorised phrases and short statements
- ▶ Use a basic range of words and simple phrases related to personal details and situations
- ▶ Ask for very basic personal information, eg about possessions

#### Language requirements

##### Language functions

- ▶ Indicating the position of people and objects
- ▶ Describing people, animals, objects and places very simply
- ▶ Stating simple facts
- ▶ Informing about possessions
- ▶ Asking very simple questions about personal details

##### Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand**:

- ▶ Present simple tense questions
- ▶ Question words *who? when?*
- ▶ Present continuous tense questions
- ▶ Determiners *some, any*

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- ▶ Present simple tense
- ▶ *There is/are* and *has/have got/have you got? Do you have?*
- ▶ Question words *where? how?*
- ▶ Prepositions of place *in, on, under, between, next to*
- ▶ Determiners *their, its*
- ▶ Possessive pronouns *mine, yours, his, hers*
- ▶ Yes/no answers to present continuous tense questions

## Language requirements continued

### Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- ▶ Rooms in the home
- ▶ Household objects
- ▶ Family and friends
- ▶ Pets
- ▶ Possessions
- ▶ Days of the week and months of the year
- ▶ Cardinal numbers up to 50
- ▶ Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed on page 12

### Phonology

- ▶ The clear pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas
- ▶ Basic intonation patterns for simple questions
- ▶ Contractions, eg *I've, I'm, he's*

Grade 2 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level A1.

## GESE Grade 2 – Example activities

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare for a Trinity GESE Grade 2 exam with your students. Students can prepare for their Grade 2 exam in their English classes, for example, by asking each other questions in the classroom and making sure that they understand the answers.

It can be useful for teachers and students to work together to create wall charts of samples of the language required for Grade 2. In order to make the exam practice as authentic as possible, you can use these materials to play the role of the examiner, asking the suggested questions and adding your own to elicit the required language from your students. The practice exam materials and questions have been divided into three different groups. Please use the examples on pages 15-18 to help you develop your own materials for exam practice, and remember there are many possible ways of preparing for the exam. There are videos of GESE Grade 2 exams at [trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial](http://trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial)

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 Grade 2.



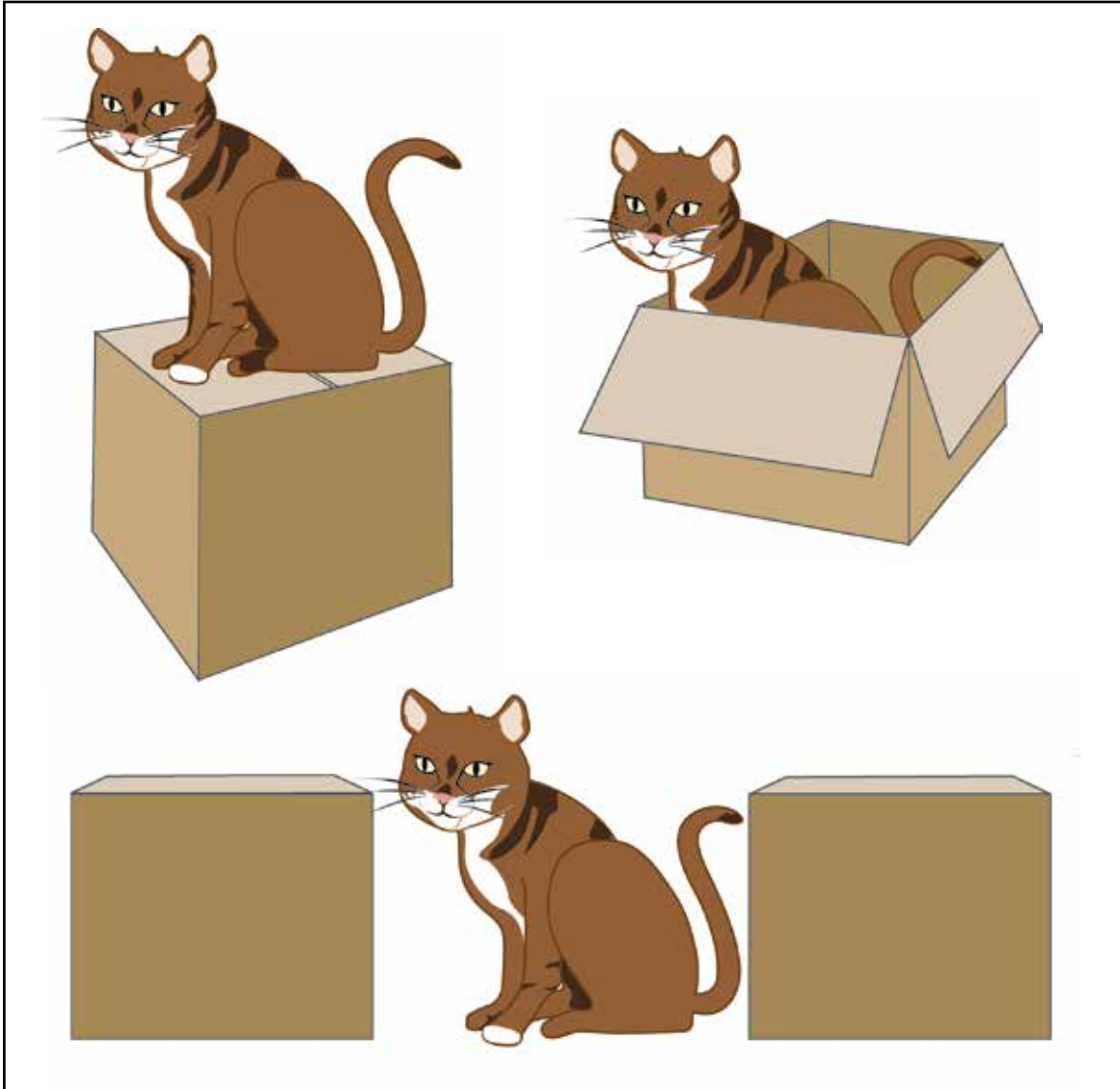
## Prepositions

### Examiner materials/gestures

- ▶ Using flashcards

### Examiner questions

- ▶ *Look at this cat. Where is it?*



- ▶ Examiner points to incorrect picture

- ▶ *Is it on the box?*

- ▶ *Where is it?*

## Rooms, household objects, prepositions, present continuous

Before the activity, ask your students:

- ▶ *Do you live in a house or a flat?*
- ▶ *How many rooms are there?*
- ▶ *What rooms are there in your house/flat?*

Put your students into A/B pairs and give them either the A or B half of this picture (or a similar picture).

Tell the students not to show each other their pictures.

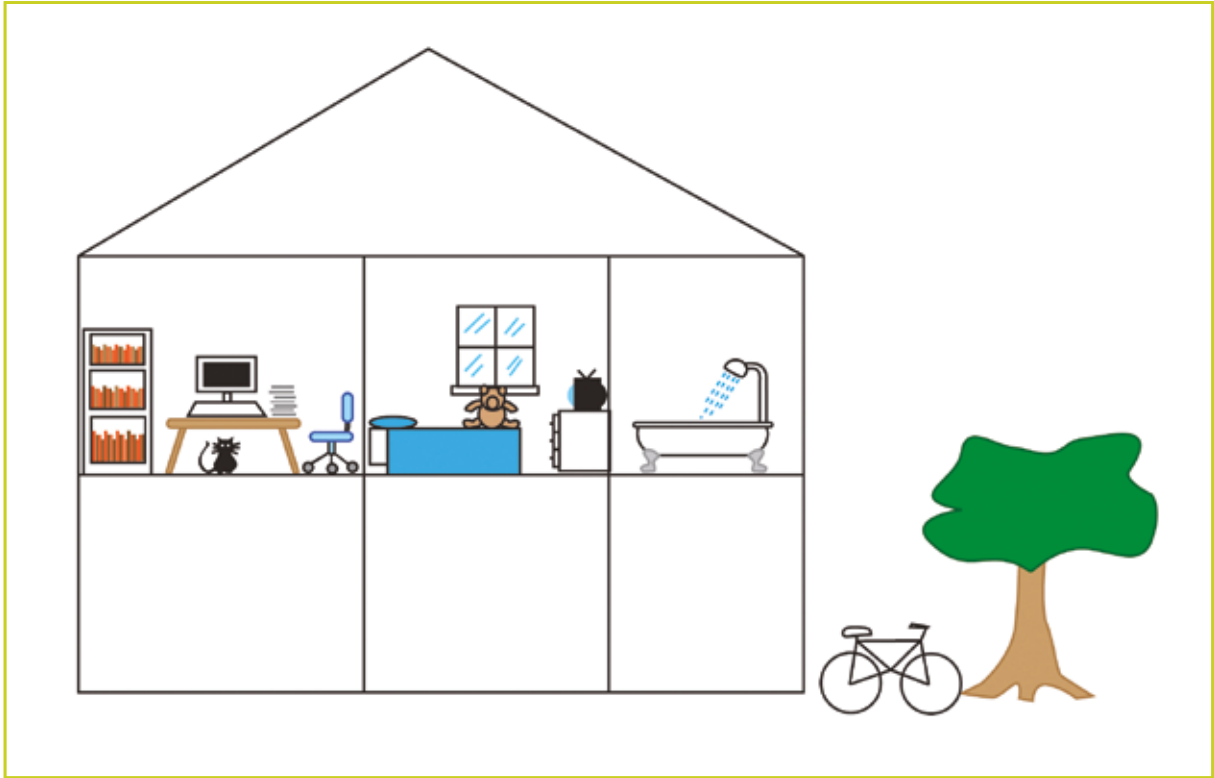
They must describe their rooms and furniture to their partner.

Their partner must draw and then describe what they hear.

Remember, they need to use the correct prepositions! At the end, ask the class:

- ▶ *Where are the cats?*
- ▶ *Where is the teddy bear?*
- ▶ *Where is the tree?*
- ▶ *Where is the woman?*
- ▶ *Is the woman sleeping?*
- ▶ *Is she eating?*
- ▶ *Is she drinking?*
- ▶ *Is she watching TV?*
- ▶ *Have you got a computer? Where is yours?*

A. Describe your house!



B. Describe your house!



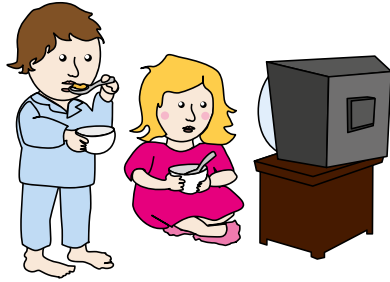
### Present continuous

#### Examiner materials/gestures

- ▶ Using flashcards
- ▶ Examiner points to a mixture of correct and incorrect pictures, asking...

#### Examiner questions

- ▶ *Look at these pictures*
- ▶ *Is he ...ing?*
- ▶ *Is she ...ing?*
- ▶ *Are they ...ing?*



## GESE Grade 3 (CEFR A2.1) – Introduction

Grade 3 is the final exam in the Initial stage of the GESE exams. This means that the learner has reached A2.1 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This exam lasts up to seven minutes and now candidates are able to have a more complex conversation with their examiner.

A Grade 3 speaker of English can describe their daily routines and other events to the examiner, give simple directions and describe what people are doing. They can also say the names of different common jobs and talk about what they do in their free time, using the grammar of the grade (see pages 20-21).

The Grade 3 exam is a stimulating communicative experience with the candidate talking more with the examiner. Like all the GESE grades, the examiner does not read a script and the examiner and the candidate have a real conversation. This means that the examiner enjoys meeting their candidates and the candidates enjoy talking – in English. And when the learner has completed the GESE Initial stage, it is time to start thinking about the next stage – Elementary stage. Next step: Grade 4.



## GESE Grade 3 – Language

### Exam format

Total exam time: 7 minutes

#### The exam consists of one assessed phase:

- ▶ Conversation with the examiner (up to 7 minutes).

### Candidate performance

In addition to the items listed for the previous grade, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills and meet the language requirements listed below during the exam.

#### Communicative skills

- ▶ Show understanding by responding appropriately to simple questions and requests
- ▶ Use basic sentence patterns and phrases to communicate limited information related to simple everyday situations
- ▶ Exchange basic information about everyday life and activities by asking and answering simple questions
- ▶ Link groups of words in a very simple way using *and*, *and then*

#### Language requirements

##### Language functions

- ▶ Describing daily routines and times
- ▶ Giving dates
- ▶ Expressing ability and inability
- ▶ Giving very simple directions and locations
- ▶ Describing current activities of real people or those in pictures
- ▶ Describing states in the past
- ▶ Asking simple questions about everyday life

##### Grammar

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use**:

- ▶ Present continuous tense
- ▶ *Can* and *can't*
- ▶ Prepositions of movement *from, to, up, down, along, across*
- ▶ Prepositions of time *on, in, at*
- ▶ Prepositions of place *near, in front of, behind, opposite*
- ▶ Past tense of the verb *to be*
- ▶ Link words *and* and *then*

## Language requirements continued

### Lexis

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to **understand and use** vocabulary related to:

- ▶ Jobs
- ▶ Places in the local area
- ▶ Place of study
- ▶ Home life
- ▶ Weather
- ▶ Free time
- ▶ Times and dates
- ▶ Ordinal numbers up to 31st for dates
- ▶ Words and phrases relating to the language functions listed on page 20

### Phonology

- ▶ The clear pronunciation of words relevant to the lexical areas
- ▶ The use of contractions where appropriate
- ▶ Basic stress and intonation patterns for words, short sentences and simple questions

Grade 3 communicative skills and language requirements have been mapped to CEFR level A2.1.

## GESE Grade 3 – Example activities

In the following pages there are some examples of how you can prepare for and practise a Trinity GESE Grade 3 exam with your students. Students can prepare for their Grade 3 exam in their English classes, for example, by asking each other questions in the classroom and making sure that they understand the answers. It can be useful for teachers to give the class lots of activities for asking questions and finding out information from other students in the class.

In order to make the exam practice as authentic as possible, you can use these materials to play the role of the examiner, asking the suggested questions and adding your own questions to elicit the required language from your students. The practice exam materials and questions have been divided into four different groups – these four examples are only suggestions. Please use the examples to help you develop your own materials for exam practice, and remember there are many possible ways of preparing for the exam. There are videos of GESE Grade 3 exams at [trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial](http://trinitycollege.com/GESE-initial)

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 Grade 3.



### Places in the local area

<p><b>Examiner materials/gestures</b></p> <p>▶ If a window with a view is available</p>	<p><b>Examiner questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Tell me about your house. Is it near this school?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Walking from this school to your house, what can you see? A park? Some shops?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Look out of the window. What can you see?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>Do you have a question for me?</i></li> </ul>
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### Time, Daily routines, Free time

<p><b>Examiner materials/gestures</b></p>	<p><b>Examiner questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Tell me about your daily routine. What time do you go to school?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>What subjects do you study at school?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>What time does school finish?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>What do you do in your free time?</i></li> <li>▶ <i>What do you do with your brother/sister/parents/friends?</i></li> </ul>
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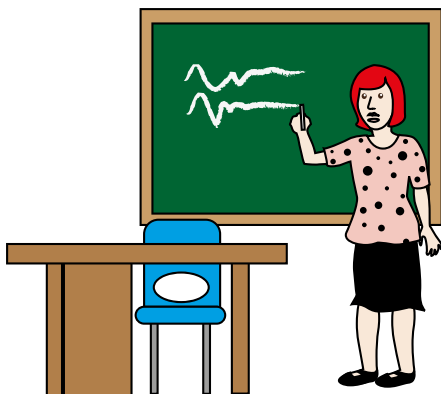
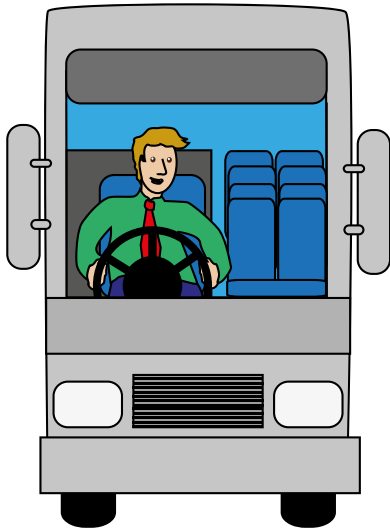
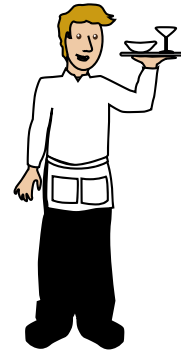
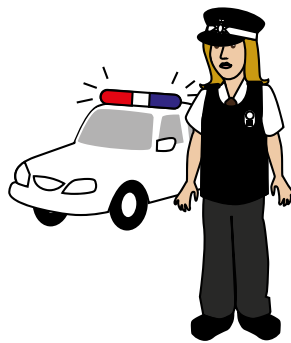
**Jobs**

**Examiner materials/gestures**

- ▶ Examiner shows the student pictures of different jobs

**Examiner questions**

- ▶ Tell me about your family. What are their jobs?
- ▶ Look at these pictures. What jobs can you see?
- ▶ What's her job?
- ▶ And his?
- ▶ Do you have a question for me?



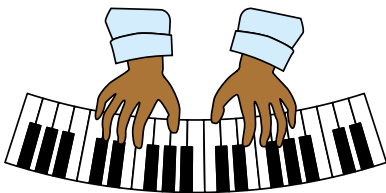
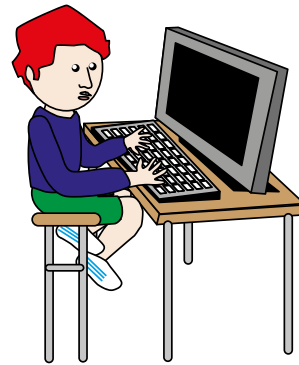
Free time, Present continuous, Can/can't

Examiner materials/gestures

- ▶ Examiner points to different activities

Examiner questions

- ▶ Look at these pictures of free time activities. What are they doing?
- ▶ What's she doing?
- ▶ What's he doing?
- ▶ Can you ...?
- ▶ Have you got a question for me?



# The next steps – GESE Elementary stage

## Introduction to the Elementary stage

### Candidate profile

By the end of the Elementary stage, the candidate can:

- ▶ understand the main points of clear speech on familiar matters
- ▶ enter into conversation, express personal opinions and exchange information on familiar subjects of personal interest or related to everyday life
- ▶ demonstrate a sufficient range of language to describe experiences and events and give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

### Exam format

		Assessed	Not assessed
1	Greetings and setting at ease		✓
2	Topic discussion	✓	
3	Conversation task	✓	
4	End of conversation and leave-taking		✓

### Overview of the Elementary stage

The Elementary stage exams have two phases. Each phase lasts up to five minutes. In the first phase, the **Topic discussion**, the candidate has a conversation with the examiner on a topic of personal interest which they have prepared before the exam. The candidate gives a completed topic form to the examiner. The candidate can make their own form or use the Trinity form. The examiner will use the topic form to ask questions about the topic the candidate has chosen to talk about.

In the second phase, the **Conversation**, the examiner and candidate have two short discussions about two of the subject areas listed for the conversation. The examiner will start the conversation.

Please see [trinitycollege.com/GESE-elementary](http://trinitycollege.com/GESE-elementary) for more information.

This booklet provides teachers with a comprehensive breakdown of the requirements and some preparation techniques for Trinity Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) Grades 1-3.

[trinitycollege.com/English](http://trinitycollege.com/English)