

# Language Competence Test Specifications English for Construction Workers Level B1/B2 Voc

## Listening

### Listening 1

Candidates listen to 5 single sentences distributed between: statements / questions (see example) / descriptions / instructions.

M.C.Q.s: Candidates underline the correct response from three distractors.

For example: Candidates hear: 'How long is it?'

Candidate chooses from:

- a. It's twenty three kilos
- b. Only twenty three centimetres
- c. I'm twenty three

The sentences should provide opportunities to test appropriacy of response (see example), to distinguish between things that sound similar (e.g. *nineteen – ninety*) and to understand meaning (e.g. different meanings of the word *wood*). Two of the items should be delivered on the audio by two-way radio (as if on site) and the items should reflect this.

### Listening 2

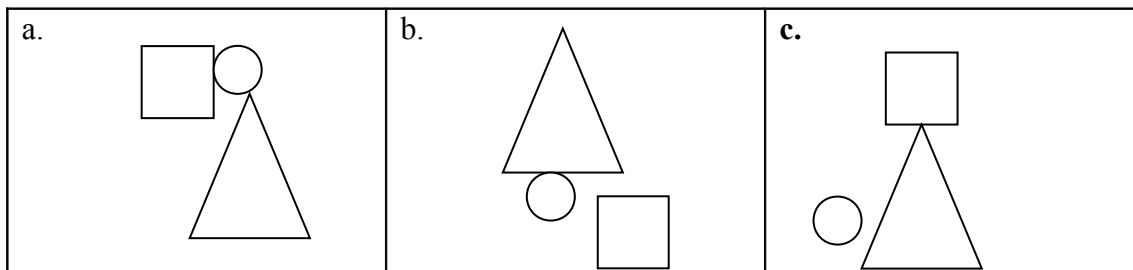
Candidates listen to 5 descriptions of geometrical shapes and choose the one that is being described from three diagrams.

For example:

Candidates hear:

'Number 1: A triangle on top of a circle which is next to a square.'

Candidates see: (The correct answer is b.)



Though the diagrams do not need to become more complex, the 5 texts should be of increasing complexity (though not length). Texts should employ vocabulary and structures pertaining to the geometry of technical drawing at a level of speciality represented by expressions and words such as:

dome, triangular, at right angles to, acute angle, curve, parallel, semi-circle, perpendicular, inverse, adjacent, area, perimeter, radius, centre, left/ right hand side, cylindrical, diagonal, equidistant, symmetrical, lateral surface, line perpendicular to a plane, midpoint, etc.

See glossary at: <http://library.thinkquest.org/2647/geometry/glossary.htm>

### **Listening 3**

Candidates listen to *instructions* and complete five parts of a record (no more than three words per answer).

The instructions in the audio script should be delivered as if at management level (for example; a project manager giving instructions to a site manager or foreman which are to be relayed to the workers).

The instructions can be either general (an entire construction process) or specific (a construction task or set of tasks). Technical vocabulary should be included but should be recognisable by an informed lay person.

This exercise should test candidates' ability to:

- understand spoken numbers including use of decimal (e.g. 'one hundred and fifteen point three')
- pick out specific items from a list
- understand spoken abbreviations (e.g. JCB / AC / ASAP )
- correctly hear and record contact information: email address / website / fax number etc

### **Listening 4**

Candidates listen to a discussion. The discussion should be a problem / solution type dialogue (two speakers). Audio script should contain conditional sentences and moderately difficult linguistic features such as corrections, a request for clarification, repetition, discourse markers etc.

The discussion could be delivered over a telephone (e.g. foreman phoning for technical help and advice).

Scenarios could be built up from situations arising from:

- Faulty, new, undelivered or operating instructions for equipment / machinery / tools
- New, previously unknown materials
- Clarification over a plan or an aspect of a plan
- Expenses – a mistake or an over-spending
- Misunderstood instructions and wrongly executed instructions

Candidates answer five questions. Each question should be a what / which / where / type. Candidates write very short answers (no more than 3 words). It must not be possible for a candidate to answer correctly from their own knowledge. Therefore, the questions must be about information given in the discussion and should be about both the problem and the solution.

## Reading

### Reading 1

Candidates study five pictures and read six sets of instructions. Candidates must match the instructions with the pictures (there is one set of instructions not needed).

[N.B. It is only necessary to provide specifications for pictures, not images themselves unless the images are totally suitable and totally free of copyright restrictions.]

For example:

[a/w: Series of 5 pictures (with titles) illustrating steps for laying paving stones. The series has a general title: 'Laying paving stones' and each picture is also titled.

Picture 1, Title: 'Prepare the ground'. Picture shows excavation and markers.

Picture 2, Title: 'Bedding' Picture shows sand laid, man using screed board and guides.

Picture 3, Title: 'Laying' Picture shows grid of strings and man using the strings as guides for laying paving stones.

Picture 4, Title: 'Filling' Picture shows sweeping of newly laid paving stones.

Picture 5, Title: 'Finishing' Picture shows man operating compactor.]

- a. Excavate the area where you'll be laying paving stones to 100-150mm.
- b. Compact the surface of your pavers and add more jointing sand. Sweep off excess and repeat.
- c. Drag a screeding board from side to side to create a firm, flat laying surface.
- d. Use a grid of string lines to help keep the paving joints straight.
- e. Cut and position part-pavers and use edge restraints to prevent movement.
- f. Sweep jointing sand over the finished paving stones to ensure all joints are full.

[Answers: 1a, 2c, 3d, 4f, 5b (Sentence e is not needed.)]

## Reading 2

Candidates read extracts from different styles of documentation. Candidates then read three sentences and must identify which sentence means the same as the extract.

For example:

Candidates read:

*The building shall be constructed so that ground movement caused by land slip or subsidence will not impair the stability of the building*

Candidates choose from:

- a. Ground movement causes subsidence and impairs building stability.
- b. Construct the building so that it does not cause landslip and subsidence.
- c. Don't build where the land may shift.

Extracts should be taken from the following document types:

- Technical specifications of machinery / equipment / material
- A trade article
- A legal document such as a contract
- A prospective employee's CV
- Quality requirements and standards
- Manufacturers or company's instructions and company procedures
- Environmental instructions
- Standard work practices
- A work schedule
- Specifications
- A site safety plan
- Organisational policies and procedures
- Project traffic management plan

## Reading 3

Candidates read a text (100–200 words). Five parts of the text have been removed (1–3 words each) and the candidates select the correct item for the gaps from 3 distractors.

The text should be relevant to technical / supervisory / managerial construction staff and should be taken from the list in Reading 1.

The textual parts that are taken out should be of equal length. The distractors should be all grammatically possible but there must be only one correct choice.

It should be possible to derive clues about which sentence goes where from cohesive textual ties that connect the parts with the full text.

## Reading 4

Candidates read a summary of a formal report (probably an abstract), a press release or similar document and answer 5 questions.

The report should be of one of the following:

- an accident on site
- an overrun of time on a project
- a construction failure
- costing of a project
- error / fault / efficiency analysis of a project / purchased equipment etc.
- work force relations
- labour force analysis
- price and costs survey
- for and against summary of proposed site

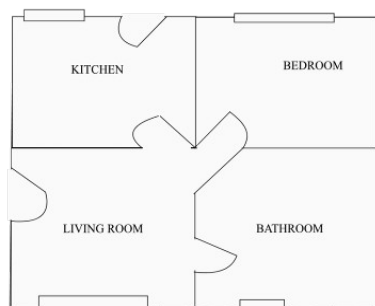
The report should be approx 250 words and pitched slightly below B2 level.  
The questions must be answerable by candidates using no more than three words.

## Writing

### Writing 1

Candidates study a plan / drawing and describe it in a composition of 100–150 words.

*Example: Describe the layout of this house (100 – 150 words).*



The drawing / plan should not be complex. Candidates are being tested on their ability to control the target language well enough to describe locations and spatial relationships in simple, straightforward and clear writing.

The first sentence(s) should be provided which illustrate the kind of description that is required.

## Writing 2

Candidates produce a medium length piece of continuous writing as a response to an email / letter.

Candidates read an email / letter from customer / supplier / subcontractor / lawyer / architect / town planner etc.

Email / letter should detail a problem or be a request for information.

Candidates have to write a response. The first sentence of the response is provided.

Further information can be added, if necessary, for candidates to use for their composition. This information should be in a tabular form, such as: a work schedule, time table, list of prices / charges / fees, names and addresses, calendar.

## Speaking

### Speaking 1

Interlocutor has a bank of questions. Candidate responds to questions about him/herself.

Provide a list of ten questions which anyone would be able to answer and develop from which the interlocutor can choose. Questions which put personal experiences into a construction context work best, e.g. *Why / How did you become a X?*

### Speaking 2

Candidates are given titles to choose from and must prepare a short presentation and extend it into a discussion with the interlocutor.

There should be ten titles, though candidates choose from only five.

Topic areas should be of general interest so that people of any specialism within the construction industry would have something to say on it.

Topics can be framed in the form of questions, quotes, talk titles or statements.

Examples:

*Are there too many building regulations or not enough?*

*'Why can't we have those curves and arches that express feeling in design? What is wrong with them? Why has everything got to be vertical, straight, unbending, only at right angles - and functional?' Charles, Prince of Wales*

*Globalisation means that everywhere will soon look the same.*