



SERIES 4 EXAMINATION 2003
ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS

LEVEL 3

(Code No: 3041)

FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER

Instructions to Candidates

- (a) *The time allowed for this examination is 3 hours.*
 - (b) *Answer **all 4** questions.*
 - (c) *All questions carry equal marks.*
 - (d) *All answers must be clearly and correctly numbered but need not be in numerical order.*
 - (e) *While formal accuracy is expected, adequate and appropriate communication is essential and candidates must judge the length of their answers in this light.*
 - (f) *When you finish, check your work carefully.*
 - (g) *The use of standard English dictionaries and cordless non-programmable calculators is permitted. Candidates whose first language is not English may use a bilingual dictionary.*
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QUESTION 1

Situation

You are employed in the management department of a large hospital, the Cedars Hospital. The hospital has undergone a major redevelopment in recent years and the latest addition to its facilities is a large new department providing for the after-care of elderly patients who have undergone serious operations. Although this department has been providing care to patients for several weeks there is now to be an official opening to be held next week. The Minister of Health from the national government is going to perform the opening ceremony which will also be attended by many important guests from the local community and further afield.

The official opening is being paid for by local voluntary supporters of the hospital so it will not cost the tax payer anything. A local business executive, Mr Silvio Gredic, has made a large donation to the hospital and is paying the expenses of the Minister of Health. Mr Gredic's mother was treated in the hospital and he is very grateful for the care she received. However, he does not want his donations to be made public.

This morning the following article appears in the local newspaper, "The Gazette".

WHAT A WASTE OF MONEY

We all know what a fine job the Cedars Hospital does and we welcome all its new features. But "The Gazette" has learned that there is to be an expensive opening of the new department providing after-care for elderly patients. The Minister of Health is travelling over 500 kilometres to be here and many other so-called "important" guests will be there, eating and drinking at our expense.

It is obvious that this money could be much better spent as there are still lots of improvements that could be made to the hospital – the x-ray department is hardly state-of-the-art! It's not too late – call off the opening!

You feel that this is very inaccurate and unfair so you decide to write to the editor of "The Gazette". You know that the editor is happy to publish letters in response to any article. You decide to refute these allegations and take the opportunity to promote the hospital. The editor's name is Ms Maria Valentine and the newspaper's address is 19 Western Avenue, Boden City BD5 9JT.

Task

Write the letter to the editor of "The Gazette". You can assume that the hospital's headed notepaper will be used.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 2

Situation

You work as an assistant to the manager of a restaurant, *The Golden Plate*. The restaurant is well-known in your area as a value-for-money establishment providing fairly basic meals at a modest cost.

The restaurant's trade has declined in recent years as it has faced competition from other, cheaper restaurants and branches of fast food establishments.

The owner of the restaurant, Mr Didier Fontaine, is giving thought to changing the focus of the establishment. He believes business would be better if *The Golden Plate* became a better-quality restaurant providing a greater range of high quality food for the more affluent end of the market.

Mr Fontaine has asked you to carry out some research as to whether this is worth further investigation.

You have carried out some research in your town and will **produce a report** with recommendations for Mr Fontaine. He has asked you not to produce statistics only, but to try and offer an explanation of your points.

The results of your research are as follows:

Interviews with existing customers

Over a period of 2 weeks I spoke to all customers about repositioning the restaurant in the market. The responses were as follows:

63% said they would continue to use the restaurant if it went "up-market"

31% said they would not

6% were not sure.

Typical comments were:

"I think cooking tastes have moved on since *The Golden Plate* opened. It could do with improving the variety and quality of the food."

"Yes – go up-market please. There's plenty of cheap restaurants around here but we are short of good quality restaurants."

"I might come more if it went up-market. It's not really the place for special occasions now, is it?"

"Oh no! *The Golden Plate* is cheap and cheerful. I don't want to pay more for better food. I can eat elsewhere if I want this."

From an interview with business advisor of the local council

"The profile of restaurants in the area is quite interesting. There has been a massive growth in restaurants at the cheaper end of the market, particularly "fast-food" restaurants, but no such growth in the better quality market. There are some better quality restaurants out of town but only 2 with a central location like *The Golden Plate*. *Restaurant 42* is probably the best restaurant in the area but it is very expensive and exclusive and *Digby's* is fairly small. Both restaurants are always very well booked."

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

From street interviews with people in the town

Questions were asked of a random section of the population of the town. The response of those who said they ate in restaurants was as follows:

93% had heard of *The Golden Plate*. Of these, 89% associated it with a down-market image. Of those who used more expensive restaurants, 93% said it would be a good idea for another top quality restaurant to open and 85% said they would be likely to visit *The Golden Plate*.

Typical comments were:

"We're badly served for good restaurants in town. We have to travel some distance to find most of them."

"It's hard to think of *The Golden Plate* as a top quality restaurant."

"Most people would take a lot of convincing that it has improved before they visited it!"

From interview with the Head Chef

"Actually, many of our staff are very well trained and would love to serve a wider range of better quality foods. We would have to take on some new staff (or retrain existing staff) because some areas are not covered. For example, we generally use frozen or tinned vegetables so we have little experience of cooking better-quality fresh vegetables. But in general, the staff would welcome this."

Task

Write a report for Mr Fontaine as requested, making appropriate recommendations.

(25 marks)

QUESTION 3

Situation

You work in the offices of a large organisation. The office manager, Mrs Martha McCartney, is concerned that there has been an increase in the days lost by staff who are reporting that they are suffering from various bodily aches and pains. The office workers now spend virtually all of their time sitting in front of computers and Mrs McCartney is concerned that the staff could be suffering from a condition known as Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). She knows very little about this but has asked you to research the topic and report back to herself and senior colleagues with ideas and suggestions.

You decide to speak to Professor Ivan Barr, who is an expert in industrial injuries. This is the record of your discussion.

You: Good morning, Professor Barr. Thanks for agreeing to see me. Perhaps you can start by telling me exactly what is RSI.

Prof Barr: Oh dear! You've started with the most difficult question! You see, RSI is an umbrella term because it covers a wide range of work related injuries to various parts of the body, like muscles, joints, tendons and nerves.

You: Well, do we know what causes it?

Prof Barr: Again, it's difficult to be specific. But think of the typical office worker who often sits in the same position for hours on end doing the same activities with the same equipment such as a keyboard and a mouse, with eyes permanently focussed on a flickering screen. This is not a healthy environment; it places a strain on various parts of the body and can take a physical toll.

You: You mean, it's dangerous?

QUESTION 3 CONTINUED

- Prof Barr: Not exactly. There are fewer accidents than there will be in, say, a factory with lots of machinery or in a coal mine but workers can still suffer. And one problem we face is that this type of office work is still relatively new. We don't know what the long term effects might be as no-one has yet worked in this way for 30, 40 or 50 years.
- You: How can you tell if you are suffering from RSI?
- Prof Barr: Well, without being too technical, what is happening when you work in this way is that muscles can be overworked, nerves become tense and blood flow can be restricted. This might manifest itself as stiffness in the arms, legs, neck or shoulders or pain in one of these areas. The problem is that the pain might be "referred". This means that a problem in one part of the body might result in pain elsewhere. A strain in the neck could lead to a headache, for example.
- You: But minor strains and pains don't sound very serious.
- Prof Barr: Well, perhaps not, but if you do have a pain in the fingers, for example, the last thing you want to do is to start using them again the next day. And if injuries are not dealt with they can lead to more serious problems. I've seen office workers who have had to give up their jobs because they were in so much pain.
- You: Can we do anything to prevent it?
- Prof Barr: Fortunately yes. You might have heard of the science of ergonomics. This is the study of the working environment and how it can be made safer and more comfortable. I'm sure you'll find that things like well designed chairs, better lighting and the position of the VDU can all help. There's a lot of companies in the area that will advise you on this.
- You: Is there anything else we can do?
- Prof Barr: Well, sufferers can receive treatment – massage or physiotherapy can help. And to prevent RSI, workers should have regular breaks to have walks and "stretches". There's something else which doesn't help. People who work in an office and who might suffer from RSI come home and sit in front of a home computer sending emails or playing games. This is what we call "double-use".
- You: Many thanks for your advice. You have given me a lot of ideas.

Task

Using the information in the conversation above, answer the following questions, **in your own words as far as possible**, to show your understanding of Repetitive Strain Injury. This will enable you to talk to Miss McCartney later.

- (a) What does Professor Barr mean by "an umbrella" when he describes RSI? (2 marks)
- (b) What causes RSI in an office environment? (4 marks)
- (c) Why can we not assess the long term effects of RSI? (3 marks)
- (d) If someone is suffering from RSI, how might he or she feel? (3 marks)
- (e) What happens when a medical condition is "referred"? (3 marks)
- (f) What can a worker do to reduce the chance of suffering from RSI even if the office environment does not change? (3 marks)
- (g) How can a specialist in *ergonomics* assist in reducing the effects of RSI in an office? (3 marks)
- (h) Why "doesn't (it) help" that RSI sufferers "come home and sit in front of a computer sending emails or playing games"? (4 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

QUESTION 4

Situation

You work as an administrative assistant to Mr Bernard Krupinski, the Head of Civil Engineering for a large construction company. The company is based in London, United Kingdom, but works on projects all over the world. Mr Krupinski has been in Poland for a few days but he is expected to return to the London office this morning.

When you arrive in your office this morning you find the following message on your answer phone:

“Good morning, this is Bernard. I’m still here in Poland, I’m afraid, and I’m going to be here for three more days at least. We’ve hit a major problem in Gdansk with the Motlawa Bridge Scheme and I’m trying to sort it out now. By the time you hear this I’ll be on-site so I thought I had better leave a message.

“I’d like to ask you to do me a couple of favours. First of all, could you please water the houseplants in my office. You know that I don’t let anyone touch these (particularly Mrs Townsend) but if they aren’t given a gentle watering today (not too much!) they won’t survive.

“More importantly, please pass on my apologies to Oliver Larsen. I was due to attend the Project Meeting for the Borranquilla Development in Colombia today. Oliver chairs this meeting and I know he will be out of town until this morning. Could you please let him know that I’ll present my report on the exploratory excavations at the next meeting? Tell him there doesn’t seem to be any major problem. To be honest, I haven’t quite completed the report anyway, but don’t let Oliver know this! Oh yes, I would like to correct a small point from the minutes of the last Project meeting please. I don’t think the local company employed to do the land clearance is the La Plaz company. I forget the name but it’s in the file on my desk.

“Could you also gently remind Oliver that the details of the Colombian government’s subsidy should remain secret for the time being? It could be dangerous to announce this here before the press statement is issued in Colombia next week.

“I think that’s all – oh, yes, please don’t water the Paraguayan Cactus on top of the filing cabinet. It has to be kept as dry as possible. By the way, please send a memo to Oliver. He likes these things in writing rather than a telephone message.”

You look at the file on Mr Krupinski’s desk and find that the land clearance company referred to is Martinez Brothers.

Task

Write the memo about the Project Meeting to Mr Oliver Larsen.

(25 marks)

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