

English Skills (3850)

Frequently asked questions for teachers Preparing candidates for assessment

1	General
1.1	How many stages are there within the qualification?
1.2	How is the qualification structured?
1.3	How is the qualification graded?
1.4	How is the qualification certificated?
2	Reading & Writing
2.1	Where can I find the Reading & Writing syllabus?
2.2	How are Reading & Writing skills examined?
2.3	When will the examination take place?
2.4	How will the examinations be organised?
2.5	How can I prepare candidates for the Reading & Writing examination?
3	Speaking & Listening
3.1	Where can I find the Speaking & Listening syllabus?
3.2	How are Speaking & Listening skills examined?
3.3	When will the examination take place?
3.4	How will the examinations be organised?
3.5	How are the Speaking & Listening examinations marked and how are results submitted?
3.6	What records should I keep of Speaking & Listening activities?
3.7	How can I prepare candidates for the Speaking & Listening examination?
4	Support
4.1	What qualification documentation is available?
4.2	What other support is available?
5	Quality Assurance
5.1	Why does English Skills (3850) need quality assurance?
5.2	Who is responsible for quality assurance and what are they responsible for?
5.3	Quality assurance of Reading & Writing
5.4	Quality assurance of Speaking & Listening
5.5	How should we prepare for an External Verifier's visit?
5.6	Sharing good practice

1 General

1.1 How many stages are there within the qualification?

The English Skills (3850) qualification is available at 3 stages: **Stage 1**, **Stage 2** and **Stage 3**.

1.2 How is the qualification structured?

The qualification comprises three skill areas – Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening. The syllabus for each skill area is covered in the qualification handbook. There are three units that need to be taught for each skill area.

Reading unit	Reading unit	Reading unit	Writing unit	Writing unit	Writing unit	Speaking & Listening Unit	Speaking & Listening Unit	Speaking & Listening Unit
The content of all Reading & Writing units is assessed in one externally set and marked examination						The content of all 3 Speaking & Listening units is assessed internally through the Speaking & Listening examination. It is internally assessed and externally verified.		

1.3 How is the qualification graded?

Three grades are possible for Reading & Writing are pass, merit or distinction

Three grades are possible for Speaking & Listening are pass, merit or distinction

1.4 How is the qualification certificated?

Full certificate - If successful in all skill areas - Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening, candidates will receive an overall certificate in English Skills (3850). The certificate will list two grades; one for the Reading & Writing paper, one for the Speaking & Listening paper.

City & Guilds Certificate in English Skills (3850)	
Awarded if candidates are successful in both Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening examinations	
Grade for Reading & Writing listed on certificate	Grade for Speaking & Listening listed on certificate

Skill (unit) certificate - If a candidate does not achieve a full certificate, they will receive a certificate for the paper in which they were successful. The certificate will list the grade achieved.

City & Guilds Certificate in English Skills (3850)

Reading & Writing

Grade

City & Guilds Certificate

in English Skills (3850)

Speaking & Listening

Grade

2 Reading & Writing

2.1 Where can I find the Reading & Writing syllabus?

The syllabus for Reading & Writing can be found in the qualification handbook.

The Reading syllabus is contained within three units at each stage.

The Writing syllabus is contained within three units at each stage.

2.2 How are Reading & Writing skills examined?

Reading & Writing are assessed together in one externally set and marked examination.

2.3 When will the examination take place?

The examination will take place on **Thursday, 15 June 2017**.

2.4 How will the examinations be organised?

The examination process will be managed by the Overseas Examinations Commission (OEC) which will provide invigilators.

City & Guilds, London will provide examination question papers (QPs) and the candidates' scripts will be returned for marking.

2.5 How can I prepare candidates for the Reading & Writing examination?

The overall theme of the assessment for this academic year is '**Employability**'. A high level word list will be available to support the theme. The purpose of the word list is to familiarise candidates with key words and concepts. It is not intended as a spelling list.

Teachers should make sure that the full syllabus (unit content) has been taught.

Candidates should have engaged in at least two (2) mock assessments before the final examination in June 2017. These will help candidates to become familiar with the papers and be

prepared for the examination on the day. Prior evidence, eg from mock assessments, **cannot** be counted towards final assessment.

Five (5) sets of sample papers are available. Following the end of the first examination series in June 2015, an additional set of past papers will be added annually.

Teachers need to give candidates practice in using the boxes/spaces provided for planning activities

Teachers should note that the length of the Writing Activity varies at each Stage: **Stage 1: 75 – 150 words/ Stage 2: 200 – 300 words/ Stage 3: 300 – 400 words.**

Teachers should note that there is a difference between the types of questions asked at each Stage. The Question Answer (QA) Relationship slides in the PowerPoint presentation from the Briefing may be used to help both teachers and candidates to analyze the types of questions in the sample/specimen papers in preparation for the examination.

The City & Guilds Representative Office, with Ministry of Education support, has arranged for every student to receive a copy of a sample paper at the appropriate Stage for the purposes of practice and familiarisation. Teachers are expected to go through the sample papers with students to make sure they are well prepared.

3 Speaking & Listening

3.1 Where can I find the Speaking & Listening syllabus?

The syllabus for Speaking & Listening can be found in the qualification handbook.

The syllabus is contained within three units at each stage.

3.2 How are Speaking & Listening skills examined?

The Speaking & Listening syllabus is examined by teachers (examiners) through different activities at each level. The examinations must take place at school. Standard Jamaican English is expected throughout (see Marking guide for additional detail).

Stage 1	Activity 1 Listening comprehension	Activity 2 Discussion (minimum 5 minutes)	
Stage 2	Activity 1 Listening comprehension	Activity 2 Discussion (minimum 5 minutes)	
Stage 3	Activity 1 Presentation (3-4 minutes)	Activity 2 Listening	Activity 3 Discussion (minimum 5 minutes)

The Speaking & Listening assessment is a summative assessment taken when learners are deemed to be 'ready' for assessment. It is not a continuous assessment model. Therefore, 'mocks' cannot count towards the final assessment.

Teachers who are examining candidates should familiarise themselves with the sample papers and marking guides which provide a detailed marking scheme, template and space for examiner comments during the assessment.

Guidance for marking, at each stage, has been prepared with examples of the type of comments that are acceptable to meet the criteria. These have been completed with sample statements and offer a guide to amount and type of comments examiners will need to provide.

3.3 How will the examinations be organised?

The audio recording for the listening comprehension and discussion/presentation topics will be provided by the Overseas Examination Commission (OEC) along with all examination materials. Alternative topics can be used by arrangement (see below).

Discussion/Presentation

- Candidates can have one week's notice of the discussion or presentation brief, but this must not be rehearsed before final assessment.
- Candidates should have an opportunity to re-sit the discussion and/or presentation if unsuccessful at the first attempt.
- A fresh discussion brief must be provided to those who re-sit the discussion.
- If re-taking the presentation, the same presentation can be used.
- Candidates should not know how they will be grouped for discussion until the assessment day.
- Once students have been placed in their groups for the discussion, they should be given a maximum of 30 minutes as preparation time.
- It is possible for teachers to select alternative topics for the discussion at stage 1 and stage 2. The discussion that is a result of the presentation at stage 3 is externally set for this series, but these must be agreed with Internal/External Verifier (IV/EV) beforehand.
- External Verifiers (EVs) will visit your school to monitor progress and assessment sessions.
- Internal Verifiers (IVs) will observe your live assessment sessions.
- Candidates can take notes during the listening comprehension activity at Stages 1 and 2 and listening activity at Stage 3. Candidates may write answers at any point during the listening activities.

3.4 How are the Speaking & Listening examinations marked and how are results submitted?

- Teachers will examine candidates at school and will complete the marking guide with marks and comments.
- Teachers/examiners will hand the marks/grades to their Examination Secretary who will enter them into Walled Garden
- City and Guilds, London has established an operational process for recording the grades.
 - Each school will receive an electronic entry form populated with candidates' details [name, date of birth, etc.].

- The Exam Secretary will select the appropriate grade from a drop-down menu. The Grades are: Distinction, Merit, Pass, and Fail. [See last page of the Specimen Papers handbook]

3.5 What records should I keep of Speaking & Listening activities?

- Create a file for each Stage for which you have entered candidates/candidates.
- In each file, keep the original copy of the Marking guide (Assessment/Examiner Record Sheet) with the marks allocated and comments made for each candidate when he/she was assessed for a Speaking and Listening activity.
- Ensure that these records are confidential, accessible only to the teacher and the Head of Department (Internal Verifier).
- The External Verifier (EV) could ask to review these documents during a visit.

3.7 How can I prepare candidates for the Speaking & Listening examination?

There will be an overall theme for the assessment each academic year. A high level word list will be available to support the theme. The purpose of the word list is to familiarise candidates with key words and concepts. It is not intended as a spelling list.

Teachers should make sure that the full syllabus (unit content) has been taught.

Candidates should have had opportunities to practise listening, discussing (and preparing and making a presentation at Stage 3) in a range of contexts ahead of the final assessment.

Teachers and candidates should make use of the sample papers available. There will be five sets of sample papers available. Following the end of the first examination series in June 2015, an additional set of past papers will be added annually. To record outcomes of practice assessments/formative assessment and monitor progress additional **Assessment Sheets** have been made available to all teachers.

3.8 Additional marking guidance for Stage 3

Teachers should note the following amendments:

- 1.1 Summary Assessment Record on page 4 - Presentation (fourth assessment criterion)**

1 mark Gives (multi-step) instructions that can be followed (call to action) At least two actions must be given	1 mark
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- Amend 1.1 Summary Assessment Record on page 5 - Listening (second assessment criterion)**

2 marks Follows (multi-step) instructions and/or narrative 1 mark Some of the time	2 marks
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The content of candidate presentations may vary. These changes, in line with the outcomes and assessment criteria, allow additional flexibility.

Sample assessments will be amended to incorporate this change. Teachers should check version numbers on sample papers to ensure correct version is being used.

- Summary Assessment Record [p118] Activity 1 - Presentations**
 “Speaks confidently in a way that suits the situation throughout the presentation” May be interpreted to include audibility, correct pronunciation/enunciation, fluency and eye contact.
- Activity 3 - Discussion Stage 3**
 “Makes several significant contributions to a discussion. “Several” should be interpreted as **3 or more**.

4 Support

4.1 What qualification documentation is available?

The following documentation can be downloaded free of charge from the qualification webpage
<http://www.cityandguilds.com/about-us/international/mathss-english>

- Qualification handbook – provides detail on qualification structure and unit content (syllabus)
- Sample papers and marking guides
- Practice mark sheets
- Word list

Note that the FAQs will be updated from time to time, so teachers need to ensure they are referring to the most recent version.

4.2 What other support is available?

City & Guilds offers a range of support:

- A dedicated qualification web page - [Mathematics and English Skills qualifications and training courses | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/mathematics-and-english-skills)
- Representative Office for advice and support:

City & Guilds Jamaica Representative Office
Lee Gore Business Centre
Suite # 15
31 Upper Waterloo Road
Kingston 10.

Telephone: (876) 924-7808 or (876) 924-7804
Telefax (765-) 924-7950
Email address: Jamaica@cityandguilds.com

5 Quality assurance

5.1 Why does English Skills (3850) need quality assurance?

English Skills (3850) is different from the English for Office Skills (8960) examination offered in previous years which looked at a narrower range of skills and did not assess speaking and listening. It was a 100% externally assessed, summative assessment, so much of the quality assurance was carried out by City & Guilds directly.

English Skills (3850) is a new qualification that aims to measure a candidate's **competence** in English Skills. A candidate is deemed 'ready' for assessment when they have completed a programme of learning that allows them to develop competence in the outcomes listed within each of the units of the syllabus.

Having robust quality assurance processes and controls in place is essential for the validity of the qualification and its continued value and recognition. It is also critical to ensure avoidance of any malpractice or maladministration.

5.2 Who is responsible for quality assurance and what are they responsible for?

Everybody involved in delivering and/or assessing/examining the qualification has a responsibility for quality assurance.

What is an Assessor/Examiner?

We sometimes refer to Assessor/Examiner interchangeably. The Assessor/Examiner is usually the teacher and the person making assessment decisions.

What is an IV?

We sometimes refer to both Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and Internal Verifier (IV). Both perform the same role. For our international centres we usually use Internal Verifier. This is the person who oversees the quality assurance process within the school. This is likely to be a Head of Department or senior teacher.

In our support videos you will hear both terms used.

What is an EV?

We also sometimes refer to External Quality Assurer (EQA) and External Verifier (EV). Both perform the same role. For our international centres we usually use External Verifier. External Verifiers are appointed by City & Guilds and work independently to ensure quality assurance is upheld.

In Jamaica, there are four External Verifiers monitoring the English Skills (3850) qualification across the country.

Both the Internal Verifier and External Verifier are responsible for monitoring key aspects of the delivery and assessment process.

5.3 Quality assurance of Reading & Writing

The assessment of Reading & Writing is carried out through an externally set and marked examination. Quality assurance of markers and marking is the responsibility of City & Guilds in London.

However, City & Guilds also needs to be confident that learners taking the examination have had the opportunity to develop skills and competence in the learning outcomes listed within each of the units of the syllabus as part of their programme of learning. Therefore, City & Guilds will ask its Internal and External Verifiers to check that learning programmes contain the required coverage for the Stage being delivered and will ask to see evidence of this during visits, eg a programme scheme, programme syllabus or other suitable documentation.

External Verifiers will visit schools to monitor the work of the Internal Verifier and the progress of the programme carefully through regular school visits. They will look at practice materials, assessment records and monitor live or practice assessments taking place. They will also speak to teachers and students. They are also available to support and provide advice.

5.4 Quality assurance of Speaking & Listening

Final assessment of competence in speaking and listening skills is carried out by examining a candidate's performance in a number of set activities. These are internally examined and marked by the teacher (examiner). As this is an internal examination, it carries higher risk, so Internal and External Verifiers have an important role to play in ensuring all processes and procedures are followed carefully, examinations have been conducted appropriately and that standards have been met consistently.

Again, City & Guilds also needs to be confident that learners taking the examination have had the opportunity to develop skills and competence in the learning outcomes listed within each of the units in the syllabus as part of their programme of learning. Therefore, City & Guilds will ask its Internal and External Verifiers to check that learning programmes contain the required coverage for the Stage being delivered and will ask to see evidence of this during visits, eg a programme scheme, programme syllabus or other suitable documentation.

Teachers (examiners) are responsible for making sure that they read assessment documentation carefully, eg Marking guides. They must adhere to any specific instructions, timings etc and complete any documentation fully. Teachers should keep good candidate records, practice and final assessment dates and mark sheets/outcomes, and ensure all materials are stored securely. All records and documentation should be accessible to Internal and External Verifiers for monitoring.

Internal Verifiers should observe live assessment taking place. They should have documentation in place to show how they are supporting teachers (examiners) with standardization of marking/comments; how they are providing feedback on marking/comments and monitoring that

this is being acted upon; how they are sampling marks/comments to ensure consistency of assessment decisions; and any other requirements agreed with the External Verifier and in line with City & Guilds policy.

External Verifiers will monitor the work of the Internal Verifier and the progress of the programme carefully through regular school visits. They will look at documentation, records and monitor live or practice assessment taking place. They will also speak to teachers and students. They are also available to support and provide advice.

5.5 How should we prepare for an External Verifier's visit?

Internal Verifiers and External Verifiers will liaise to make arrangements for the visit.

The Internal Verifier should complete the relevant documentation in preparation for the visit and inform teachers.

All staff involved should make sure relevant documentation is ready for review:

- Registration information
- Programme scheme/scheme or work or other suitable documentation showing coverage of the syllabus
- Assessment plans – dates of mocks, mock grades, progress records or similar
- Details of assessment preparation (might include practice materials, eg mark sheets, mocks)
- Assessment records to show progress
- Marksheets with marks/comments – where learners have been unsuccessful at a first attempt
- Sampling plan (Internal Verifier)
- Meeting records/standardization activities (Internal Verifier)
- Other documents as agreed with the External Verifier.

You might also want to make a list of points to discuss with your External Verifier or bring to his/her attention.

5.6 Sharing good practice

External Verification visits also provide an excellent opportunity to share your progress and examples of best practice in delivery and assessment. External Verifiers will be able to share this with City & Guilds and other schools in the programme.

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