

Exam Information: Integrated Skills in English (ISE)

Specifications | Guide for Teachers | Regulations



ISE III

C1 CEFR

Candidate profile

A candidate who passes ISE III can:

- ▮ express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly
- ▮ express themselves using a wide range of complex language structures, vocabulary and functions
- ▮ use a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- ▮ use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes
- ▮ recognise and appreciate different registers and degrees of formality
- ▮ read and respond to a wide range of demanding, longer texts
- ▮ produce clear, well-structured, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

This profile is based on the first stage of the level Proficient User, C1, in the Common European Framework of Reference.

The Portfolio

Trinity publishes a full list of the portfolio task options on its **website**. Candidates **must** select their portfolio tasks from the ISE III task list for the current exam year (January to December). This is determined by the year in which the final Interview component takes place. No other tasks are acceptable.

Here are some examples of the three portfolio task types at ISE III:

Portfolio section	Example text output types	Example task
Correspondence	Letter/email	One of your relatives wants to leave school at 16 and get a job instead of going to college or university. Write an email to him explaining that while you understand his need for independence, you are worried that he will regret his decision in the future. Try to gently encourage him to reconsider. (180-210 words)
Factual writing	Report/article/review	A national survey has predicted that water will become increasingly precious in the coming years. Despite this, water usage continues to soar. Write a report for an environmental committee discussing the reasons behind the current situation and advising on ways that citizens can reduce their water consumption. (220-250 words)
Creative/descriptive writing	Description/play/diary/story	Choose an important historical figure and write a series of diary entries, written over a period of many years, documenting some of the key events in his or her life. (220-250 words)

A full list of the current ISE III portfolio tasks and sample portfolio answers written by ISE III candidates can be found on the Trinity website.

The Controlled Written exam

The ISE III Controlled Written exam consists of three tasks that have equal weighting. Candidates must complete all tasks. There is no choice given. The time allowed is **2 hours 30 minutes**.

Exam format

- ▮ **Task 1** – Reading into writing task: approximately **300 words**
- ▮ **Task 2** – Correspondence task: approximately **250 words**
- ▮ **Task 3** – Creative writing task: approximately **250 words**

For further information about the ISE III Controlled Written exam tasks please see pages 10-12.

Sample of the Controlled Written paper for ISE III

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

This exam paper contains three tasks. You must complete all tasks.

Task 1 – Reading into writing task

Read the texts and look at the graph. Then, **in your own words**, write a report (approximately 300 words) for an equal opportunities committee:

- i) summarising the information given about the division of household chores, discussing the most relevant information **and**
- ii) giving your opinion on the survey and stating what you think the reasons behind the survey's findings might be.

Men still leave the housework to women

Men pay lip service to equal rights in the home while letting women do three quarters of the household chores, new research suggests.

However, women who are earning more do substantially less housework than women in lower paid work. Mee-yee Kan at Oxford University found that women did on average more than 18 hours a week, compared to 6 hours for men. The survey looked at unpaid household work such as cooking, cleaning and shopping, but did not include childcare. Ms Kan found that men were not much more prepared to help if their partners worked long hours.

Being able to buy household goods did not make a difference. 'Most studies show that more technology does not reduce the workload. If you have a washing machine you tend to wash more than once a week. Higher efficiency means higher expectations.'

The factors that did make a difference included women's earning power, education and age. Ms Kan suggested better educated couples and younger couples had a more equal attitude to housework. The survey revealed that educated women worked two hours less than women who left school at 16. Ms Kan concludes to say that as attitudes are changing men are more prepared to help around the house, but women are still left with the greater share.

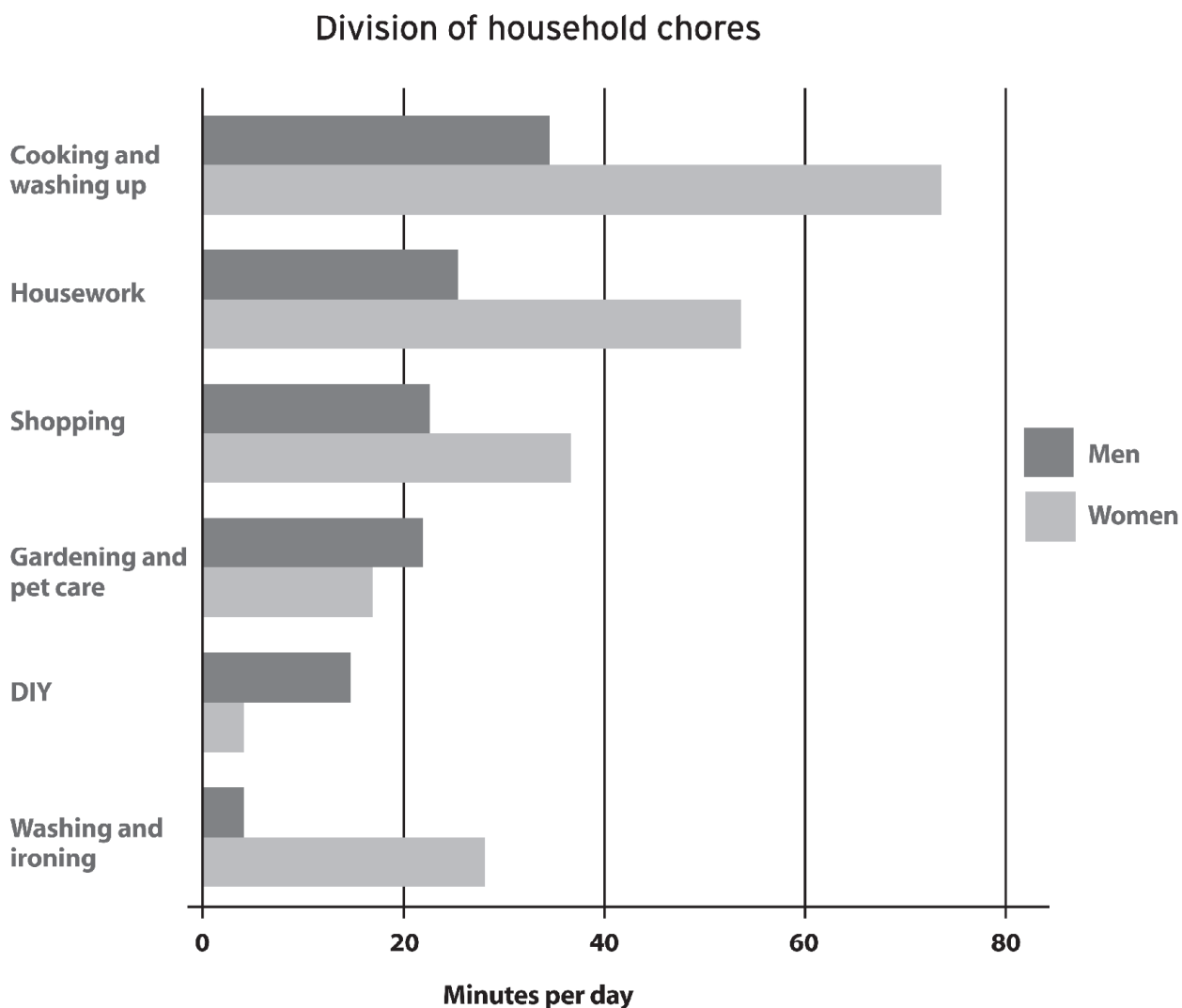
The writer Fay Weldon said that such studies missed the fact that housework could be fun. 'Women like doing housework more than men. Men don't care what the house looks like. Women who are better off simply employ other women to do the housework, they need more time to make money. The idea is that housework is a terrible chore, but it is just something you do to make your house look nice.'

(Source: Adapted from the *Guardian*)

Fact file

- Women in the UK spend more than twice as long as men dealing with household tasks, even though 12.9 million British women still have day jobs.
- The amount of time women spend on housework is equivalent to a yearly salary of up to £7,500.
- The number of women employing au pairs, window cleaners and gardeners has increased by 7.9% in the past five years.

(Source: Adapted from www.bbc.co.uk)



(Source: Adapted from www.national.statistics.co.uk)

*Use your own words as far as possible. No marks for answers copied from the reading texts.
You must make reference to both the text and the graphic information in your answer.*

Task 2 – Correspondence task

You have just heard that your local library may have to close due to lack of support. Although you know that people spend a lot of time on the internet and watching television nowadays, you think it is essential that the public library is maintained.

Write a formal letter (approximately 250 words) to your local council expressing your views on the proposed closure and asking for the plans to be reconsidered.

Task 3 – Creative writing task

Write a story (true or imaginary) for a writing competition of approximately 250 words about a group of people who meet for the first time in unusual circumstances and share an experience which changes their lives forever.

The Interview

Interview format

Total Interview time: 20 minutes

The Interview at ISE III consists of five assessed phases:

- Formal presentation of a topic prepared by the candidate (up to 4 minutes)
- Discussion of the topic presentation (up to 4 minutes)
- Interactive task (up to 4 minutes)
- Listening task (up to 3 minutes)
- Conversation with the examiner including a discussion of the portfolio and one subject area selected by the examiner (up to 5 minutes).

Communicative skills for the Interview

The candidate is expected to demonstrate the following communicative skills during the Interview.

Communicative skills for the Interview

In the Formal topic presentation phase

- Give a formal presentation, discursive in nature, on a chosen subject, with an identifiable structure, using discourse connectors and cohesive devices and showing controlled use of organisational patterns
- Introduce the presentation, develop particular points, expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, and integrate sub-themes fluently
- Bring the presentation to an appropriate conclusion by inviting questions and comments from the examiner

In the Topic discussion phase

- Initiate the discussion and encourage the examiner to comment and give his or her opinion on the ideas etc. provided in the presentation
- Take responsibility for the maintenance of the discussion
- Be prepared to justify the ideas and opinions given in the presentation
- Respond to challenges made by the examiner spontaneously and appropriately

In the Interactive phase

- Take full responsibility for maintaining the flow of conversation by changing the direction of the conversation when a particular line of questioning dries up
- Negotiate towards a successful conclusion to the interaction
- Where appropriate to the individual task, make use of the language functions listed for ISE III

In the Listening phase

- Understand inferences and pick up on phonological clues
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise a range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms

In the Conversation phase

- Take responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation
- Anticipate the direction of the conversation and cope with topic shifts
- Demonstrate the ability to infer and extract meaning from vague or imprecise language
- Evaluate and challenge statements and arguments made by the examiner
- Discuss fully not only the content of the portfolio but also the process of writing it

Interview procedure

- ▶ The examiner begins by greeting the candidate, trying to set him or her at ease and asking to see the candidate's identification.
- ▶ The examiner invites the candidate to deliver his or her formal topic presentation. The candidate provides the examiner with a written outline of the topic in note form.
- ▶ The candidate then gives a **formal oral presentation** of the prepared topic. This is in the form of a well-structured presentation with an effective logical structure which helps the examiner to notice and remember significant points. The examiner makes notes during the presentation to facilitate the following discussion. The examiner does not interact with the candidate in this phase of the Interview. This phase lasts up to four minutes.
- ▶ After bringing the formal topic presentation to a logical conclusion, the candidate initiates the **discussion of the topic presentation** by inviting questions and comments from the examiner. During this phase, the candidate and examiner participate in an authentic discussion of the ideas and opinions raised in the presentation. This phase lasts up to four minutes.
- ▶ The **Interactive phase** is then introduced by the examiner who informs the candidate of what he or she is required to do. The examiner provides an oral prompt to which the candidate has to respond by questioning the examiner in order to find out more information and by making comments. Once the examiner has set up the situation, the candidate takes full responsibility for maintaining the interaction. This phase lasts up to four minutes. If the candidate fails to initiate or to maintain the interaction, the phase will not extend to the full four minutes and the candidate's performance will not be rated highly.
- ▶ The examiner then introduces the **Listening phase** and informs the candidate of the requirements for the two different task types. The examiner orally presents three short pieces of discourse. The candidate is required to suggest possible endings for the first two texts, and to identify participants, contexts or settings related to the third text. Only short verbal responses from the candidate are required. This phase lasts up to three minutes.
- ▶ The examiner then introduces the **Conversation phase**. Firstly, the candidate's portfolio is discussed and the candidate should take responsibility for maintaining the interaction and engaging the examiner. Following this the examiner initiates a conversation on one of the ISE III subject areas from the lists provided for discussion. This phase lasts up to five minutes.
- ▶ The examiner indicates the end of the conversation and Interview.

Sample ISE III Interviews can be found on the Trinity website. A DVD showing examples of ISE Interviews at all levels is also available to Registered Exam Centres.

Guidance for the Interview

Interviews at this level demand a high level of language proficiency and conversational ability. Candidates will be well motivated and have particular reasons for wanting to be fluent in English. Candidates will be mature and experienced enough to handle abstract concepts and to contribute to discussions on matters of major importance in today's world. Please note, at this level examiners will make challenging statements to elicit the language of the level.

Formal topic presentation

The purpose of this phase is to give candidates the opportunity to display their command of the language of the level while delivering a formal oral presentation on a self-selected and personally relevant topic.

- ▶ At this level candidates are required to deliver a formal presentation on a topic of their own choice. Candidates are advised to select their topic carefully. The topic should be **discursive** in nature and allow the candidate to demonstrate the communicative skills, language functions and language items of the level. Actual knowledge is not assessed in this phase of the Interview.
- ▶ Please note the topic should **not** be chosen **directly** from the lists of subject areas for the Conversation phase or linked to any of the tasks in the portfolio. Instead, candidates should prepare a **personalised** topic. This is to enable candidates to show a wide range of language throughout the Interview.
- ▶ As this is a **formal** presentation, it should have an effective and identifiable structure which engages and maintains the examiner's interest. Therefore, candidates are required to introduce the topic, highlight and develop particular points and bring the presentation to an appropriate conclusion.

- ▶ Adherence to the timing of this phase is very important. Candidates are strongly advised to ensure the presentation lasts up to but no longer than four minutes. Candidates are responsible for concluding the presentation within the stated timing. Presentations which extend beyond the time allocated will be stopped and the candidate's performance will not be rated highly.
- ▶ The candidate is required to produce brief notes in the form of a **handout** for the examiner to facilitate the presentation. These should be given to the examiner before the start of the presentation. These notes will not be taken into account in the assessment. The candidate will have produced their own brief notes for personal use and these do not have to be shown to the examiner. As the presentation is oral, the use of complete written scripts in the presentation is not allowed. Recitation of a memorised script will have a negative effect on the assessment of this phase.
- ▶ During the presentation, the examiner will make notes for the following discussion on points which he or she wishes to raise in order to gain clarification or further information about the views and ideas expressed. Please note the examiner is not collecting examples of the candidate's language for assessment purposes.
- ▶ The presentation may be supported by technological aids (e.g. OHP/Powerpoint). Examiners must be notified at the beginning of the exam session if such aids are to be used. All such aids must be set up prior to the Interview and be ready for immediate use at the beginning of the Interview. There is no time allowed for the setting up or removal of such aids in the actual Interview. Candidates who choose to use such aids are advised to have back-up material in case of power or equipment failure. Skill in the technical preparation and use of such aids will not form part of the assessment.
- ▶ At the end of the formal topic presentation, candidates are required to initiate the Topic discussion phase by asking if the examiner has any questions and inviting comment.

Discussion of topic presentation

The purpose of the Topic discussion phase is for the candidate and examiner to have an authentic discussion on the ideas and opinions given in the formal topic presentation.

- ▶ When preparing for the topic discussion, candidates should try to anticipate the contributions of the examiner and think of ways of expanding and developing the topic beyond the limitations of the formal presentation.
- ▶ The topic discussion is intended to be a genuine discussion, with the candidate taking responsibility for maintaining the flow. There should be a real exchange of ideas and opinions with the candidate being able to challenge the examiner and respond to his or her contributions. Candidates must also be ready to justify, exemplify and elaborate on the ideas and opinions given in the presentation.
- ▶ The topic discussion is intended to be about the actual presentation rather than on the general theme of the topic.
- ▶ The candidate is expected to be proactive in the discussion and not simply respond to the contributions of the examiner. Therefore, candidates are required to invite questions and comments from the examiner at the end of the formal topic presentation and throughout the Topic discussion phase.
- ▶ A candidate who fails to prepare a Formal topic presentation cannot be assessed for this phase or for the Topic discussion. These two phases will be voided and this will result in a fail being awarded for the Interview component and the exam as a whole.

The Interactive phase

The purpose of the Interactive phase is for candidates to demonstrate their ability to take control of and maintain the interaction while demonstrating their ability to use the language functions and **grammatical items** of the level.

- ▶ The guidance for this phase is the same as that given for ISE II on pages 37 and 38.
- ▶ At ISE III, in addition to expressing the language functions of the level, candidates are also required to demonstrate their control of the grammatical items listed for the level and the previous levels.

Sample interactive prompts for ISE III can be found on the Trinity website.

The Listening phase

The purpose of the Listening phase is for candidates to demonstrate high level listening skills such as prediction, deduction and inference. The candidate needs to show recognition of the context, participants and register.

There are two types of listening tasks which require different responses from the candidate:

- **Type 1** – require the candidate to provide a suitable ending
- **Type 2** – require the candidate to identify participants, contexts or settings.

- Candidates are presented with three listening tasks – two of Type 1 and one of Type 2.
- Candidates are expected to respond with very short, precise responses and should not give lengthy replies.
- The listening tasks are not related to any of the given subject areas for the Conversation phase. This is to provide an unknown element which candidates at this level are expected to be able to handle.
- Candidates are not required to read or write anything in this phase, and the taking of notes is unnecessary given the nature of the task.
- Please note **the examiner will not repeat the listening texts** even if they are requested to do so.

Sample listening tasks for ISE III can be found on the Trinity website.

The Conversation phase

The purpose of the Conversation phase is to give candidates the opportunity to discuss their portfolio and to participate in a genuine and interesting exchange of information, ideas and opinions while demonstrating their ability to use the language of the level.

- In the **discussion of the portfolio** candidates must be ready to discuss points of detail arising out of their portfolio and to explain why they chose to do particular tasks and how they completed them. Candidates may, if they wish, bring to the Interview other material that has contributed to the portfolio, particularly if this helps to illustrate how the portfolio tasks were completed. The portfolio itself will be in the possession of the examiner, who will have already studied it for assessment purposes, and thus it will be available for reference by both examiner and candidate. The candidate must ask the examiner at least one question about their portfolio. This must relate to the content of the portfolio and must not include questions designed to find out the examiner's opinion of the work.
- The next section of this phase consists of a detailed **discussion of one subject area** as selected by the examiner from the lists provided for ISE III. The subject areas at ISE III are provided in two different lists and are designed to take into account different levels of maturity. Centres should decide which list is most appropriate for their candidates and provide practice in discussing the subject areas **EITHER** from List A (for teenagers/less mature candidates) **OR** from List B (for adults/more mature candidates). The centre should inform the examiner prior to the start of the exam session which list has been prepared. If the centre does not do this, the examiner will use his or her discretion.

In the Conversation phase, ISE III candidates will be expected to:

- engage the examiner in a meaningful discussion on complex and abstract topics
- influence the direction of the exchange
- maintain the flow of the exchange
- demonstrate their ability to use a range of complex language flexibly and effectively.

Language requirements for ISE III

In addition to the items listed for ISE 0 to ISE II, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to use the language functions and language items listed below.

Language requirements

Language functions

- Expressing abstract ideas
- Expressing regrets, wishes and hopes
- Expressing assumptions
- Paraphrasing
- Evaluating options
- Hypothesising
- Evaluating past actions or course of events
- Developing an argument
- Defending a point of view
- Expressing beliefs
- Expressing opinions tentatively
- Summarising information, ideas and arguments
- Deducing
- Justifying an argument
- Inferring
- Expressing caution
- Expressing empathy and sympathy
- Challenging arguments and opinions
- Evaluating different standpoints
- Expressing reservations

Grammar

- A high degree of grammatical accuracy, errors are rare and difficult to identify
- A broad range of complex structures, used flexibly and effectively in combination and contrast, including:
 - Mixed conditionals
 - *Should/must/might/could* + perfect infinitive
 - Correct verb patterns after *wish* and *hope*
 - Verbs followed by gerund and/or infinitive, e.g. *forget, stop, go on, remember*
 - More complex forms of the passive with modals

Lexis

- Vocabulary specific to the topic and subject areas
- A good range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- Cohesive devices to recap and recover, e.g. *as I was saying, anyway...*
- Hesitation fillers, e.g. *I mean, you know*
- Stock phrases to gain time for thought and keep the turn, e.g. *well, let me think...*
- Modifying words, e.g. *basically, quite, certainly*
- Intensifiers, e.g. *absolutely, completely, totally*
- Tentative expressions, e.g. *I may be wrong but..., Don't you think it might be...*
- Signposting words and expressions, e.g. *firstly, conversely, to conclude*
- Vague and imprecise language, e.g. *a bit more, a hundred people or so*
- Phrases and expressions relating to the language functions listed above

Phonology (Interview only)

- The correct pronunciation of topic and subject area specific vocabulary
- A wide range of stress, rhythm, intonation patterns, pitch and volume in order to engage and maintain the examiner's interest, signal the provision of new information, indicate discourse structure, emphasise main points/ideas and convey subtle shifts in meaning and attitude
- Various features of pronunciation which only occasionally deviate from an internationally intelligible model
- Rising and falling intonation for keeping, giving up and offering turns

Subject areas for the Conversation phase of the Interview

One subject area will be selected by the examiner from the lists below. The centre should inform the examiner which list has been prepared by the candidate (see page 47).

LIST A

- Independence
- Ambitions
- Stereotypes
- Role models
- Competitiveness
- Young people's rights

OR

LIST B

- The media
- Advertising
- Lifestyles
- The arts
- The rights of the individual
- Economic issues

Please note ISE III candidates should not select their topic from the list of subject areas above (see guidance notes on page 45).

Subject areas for the Portfolio and Controlled Written exam

In addition to the subject areas listed for the Conversation phase of the Interview:

- Roles in the family
- Communication
- The school curriculum
- Youth behaviour
- Use of the internet
- Designer goods
- International events
- Equal opportunities
- Social issues
- The future of the planet
- Scientific developments
- Stress management

General skills for ISE III (C1 CEFR)

Speaking

Overall spoken production

Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and providing an appropriate conclusion.

Overall spoken interaction

Can express himself or herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject may hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.

Listening

Overall listening comprehension

Can understand extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his or her own field, although he or she may need to confirm occasional details.

Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts.

Can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.

Understanding spoken English

Can understand in detail speech on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond their own field, although they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent of the interlocutor is unfamiliar.

Reading

Overall reading comprehension

Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, appreciating distinctions of style, whether or not they relate to his or her own area of speciality.

Processing written text

Can summarise long, demanding texts.

Writing

Overall written production

Can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

Can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.

Correspondence

Can express himself or herself with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.

Factual writing

Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed texts underlining the relevant salient issues.

Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

Creative/descriptive writing

Can write clear, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.

ISE III communicative skills, language requirements and general skills have been mapped to C1 in the CEFR.