

Integrated Skills in English (ISE) Guide for Students – ISE III (C1)

Reading & Writing | Speaking & Listening

Foreword

Trinity's Integrated Skills in English (ISE) exams assess all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – in a way that reflects real-life communication in English.

This guide will:

- ▶ give a summary of both modules of the ISE III exam – Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening
- ▶ give you some ideas on how to prepare for the ISE III exam
- ▶ tell you what the examiner is looking for
- ▶ tell you about results and certificates.

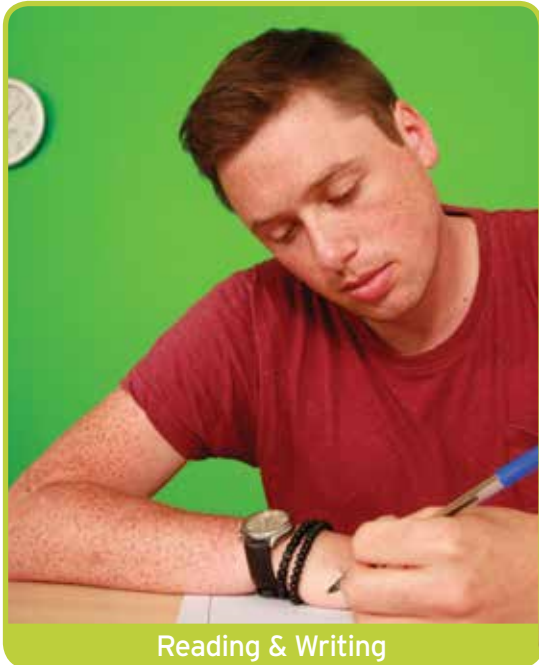
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What is ISE III?

What is ISE III?

ISE III is an English language exam for learners of English who are at level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference. You take ISE III in two parts – Reading & Writing and Speaking & Listening.



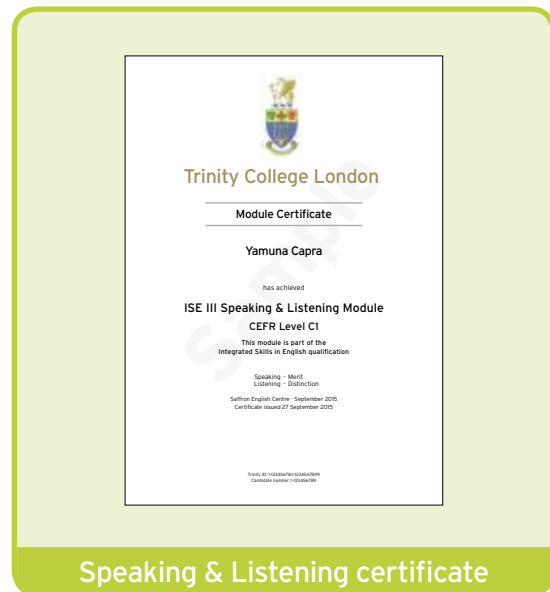
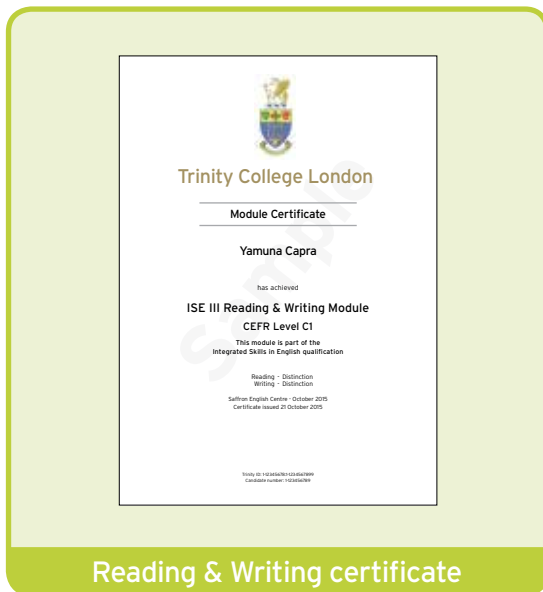
Who recognises ISE?

Many institutions recognise ISE as proof that you can read, write, speak and listen in English. To find out more visit:

www.trinitycollege.com/recognition

What do I get when I pass a module?

When you pass an ISE module, you get a module certificate:



When do I receive the ISE III qualification certificate?

After you have passed both ISE III Reading & Writing and ISE III Speaking & Listening, you will receive the ISE III qualification certificate, which shows your results in all four skills.



ISE III summary

Reading & Writing

How long is the Reading & Writing exam? Two hours.

Which skills do the reading tasks test? Reading for gist, reading for details, reading comprehension, understanding the main ideas of a text and inferring.

Which skills do the writing tasks test? How you organise a text, your range of grammar and vocabulary, how well you answer the question, how you transform reading texts into a writing text.

The Reading & Writing exam has four parts:

Task 1 – Long reading

How many texts? One text.

How long is the text? About 700 words.

How many questions? 15 questions. There are three types of question:

- ▶ questions 1-5 – choose the right heading for each paragraph of the reading text
- ▶ questions 6-10 – decide which five statements from a list of eight are true, according to the text
- ▶ questions 11-15 – complete sentences with words from the reading text.

Task 2 – Multi-text reading

How many texts? Four short texts.

How long are the texts? In total, the four texts are about 700 words. One of the texts is a graphic or diagram with some short text.

How many questions? There are 15 questions. There are three types of questions:

- ▶ questions 16-20 – choose which text matches a description – there are five questions which describe the main idea or purpose of the texts
- ▶ questions 21-25 – decide which five statements from a list of eight are true according to the texts
- ▶ questions 26-30 – complete summary notes with words from the texts – the notes are a summary of the four texts.

Task 3 – Reading into writing

How many texts do I read? You use the four texts from task 2.

What do I write? An essay or article.

How many words do I write? 200-230 words. You can **only** use information from the texts in task 2 in your answer.

Task 4 – Extended writing

What do I write? An essay, article or report in response to a question.

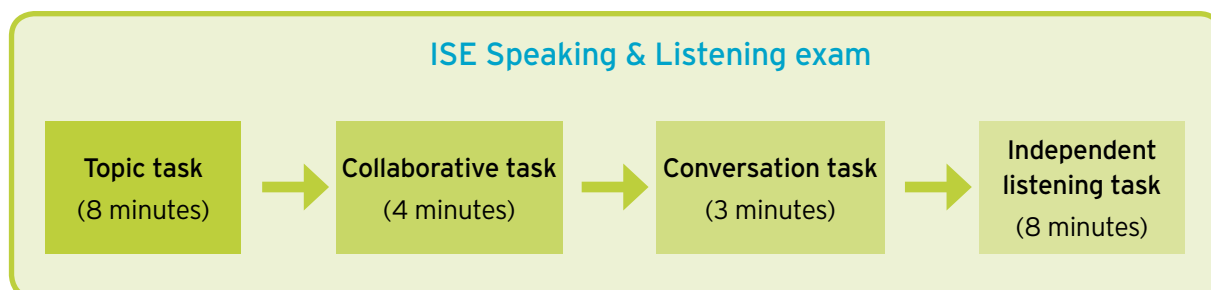
How many words do I write? 200-230 words.

To see sample Reading & Writing exams, please go to:

www.trinitycollege.com/ISEIII

Speaking & Listening

The Speaking & Listening exam is a one-to-one interview with a Trinity examiner. The exam is in four parts:



Topic task (8 minutes)

Topic presentation

Before the exam you will prepare to give a formal presentation on a topic. You can choose what you want to talk about. You should prepare a handout for the examiner. You can use visual aids if you want to. This part of the task lasts for four minutes.

Topic discussion

After your presentation, the examiner will discuss the topic with you. The examiner will have made notes during your presentation and may ask you to expand upon points you made, clarify information, defend your opinions or consider alternatives.

You can bring some notes with you to the exam. During the exam, you discuss your topic with the examiner. Remember to plan your topic both as a presentation and as a discussion, thinking of questions that you can ask the examiner and also questions that the examiner might ask you. The topic discussion lasts for up to four minutes.



Collaborative task (4 minutes)

1. The examiner will read a short prompt. The prompt will have some information about a situation or opinion. You need to listen carefully to what the examiner says.
2. When the examiner finishes reading the prompt to you, he/she will stop talking. It's then your responsibility to start the conversation. Try asking the examiner for more information or details and then respond to what they say.
3. For the rest of the task, it's your responsibility to keep the conversation going by responding to what the examiner says, adding to the conversation and encouraging the examiner to tell you more information.

Remember, it's a discussion and it's your role to collaborate with the examiner, working together to build the conversation. But if you say nothing, the examiner says nothing!

Conversation task (3 minutes)

In this part of the exam, you and the examiner have a conversation on one of these subjects.

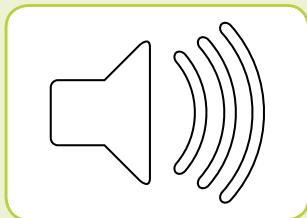
Independence	Ambitions	Stereotypes
Competitiveness	Young people's rights	The media
Advertising	Lifestyles	Lifestyles
The arts	The rights of the individual	Economic issues

Think about each subject. What can you say about each one? Try to talk about your personal experience.

Independent listening task (8 minutes)

In this part of the exam there is one task.

You listen to a recording twice and take some notes. You do not have to take notes if you don't want to. You need to listen for more than just basic information, for example, listen for what arguments are given for a particular opinion, or for the advantages and disadvantages of a situation or proposal.



Listen to a recording (twice)



The examiner asks you some questions



You tell the examiner your answers

If you would like to watch a video of an ISE III Speaking & Listening exam, please go to:

www.trinitycollege.com/ISEIII

How to prepare for ISE III

Below are some tips for preparing for each part of the ISE III exam:

Reading & Writing

Reading

Do

- ▶ Practise reading in English by, for example, reading English websites, newspapers or magazines – look for subjects in English that interest you and subjects that you are studying in school or college.
- ▶ Use graded readers, which are books specially written for C1 level learners of English.

Don't

- ▶ Don't look in the dictionary for every new word – instead look at the whole sentence, the paragraph and the context and try to imagine possible meanings of the word. After you finish reading the paragraph or the whole text, you can check the meanings of the words in the dictionary.

Writing

Do

- ▶ Look at the question carefully (How many different ideas are there in the question? How many ideas do you have to write in your answer?).
- ▶ Practise writing in a three-stage process:
 - plan what you want to write
 - write your answer
 - check what you have written.
- ▶ Check your work to see if it is:
 - organised (Have you used paragraphs? Does it have a conclusion?)
 - appropriate (Have you answered the question? Have you thought about who will read your writing?)
 - accurate (Is your spelling correct? Have you used capital letters and full stops?).
- ▶ Practise doing sample exams from the Trinity website www.trinitycollege.com/ISEIII
- ▶ Practise writing in English outside class – for example, write reviews of films or books you have enjoyed, take part in discussions on the internet in English or write emails or messages to friends in English.

Speaking & Listening

Topic task

Do

- ▶ Spend time choosing and preparing your topic. Choose a topic that interests you and that you can spend up to four minutes talking about.
- ▶ Try to think of a topic which includes lots of language of ISE III. For example, a topic in which you can develop and justify an argument, evaluate opinions, speculate and summarise.
- ▶ Use a range of different language from the level.
- ▶ Think of the language you will need and the questions the examiner might ask you.
- ▶ Give the examiner some notes to accompany your topic presentation.
- ▶ Make sure your topic is discursive – there should be more than one point of view and you should demonstrate the differences between them.
- ▶ Invite the examiner to ask questions at the end of your topic presentation.

Collaborative task

Do

- ▶ Practise with a friend or colleague.
- ▶ Practise asking another person about a problem, a situation that has happened, or a problem or situation that might happen in the future. Also, try asking them about their opinion on a problem or situation – ask them for more information and try to work with them to discuss the situation.

Don't

- ▶ Don't talk about yourself – the Collaborative task is about the other person's situation, not yours!

Conversation task

Do

- ▶ Be prepared to talk about all the conversation areas.
- ▶ Think about what questions the examiner might ask about the different conversation areas.
- ▶ Think about how you can use the language of ISE III to talk about the different subjects.

Don't

- ▶ Don't forget to think of a question to ask the examiner about each subject area.

Independent listening task

Do

- ▶ Practise listening to English as well as speaking it – you are tested on listening in the speaking exam and how well you respond to the examiner, so practise having conversations in English.
- ▶ Practise listening to recorded English – you are also tested on listening to recordings, so watch films and television in English, listen to English podcasts or news programmes, watch English videos on the internet and practise in class.
- ▶ Practise taking notes while you listen – try to only write the most important information like dates, names, places and facts.
- ▶ Listen to discussions and speeches where the content is more likely to be abstract and attitudes implied rather than purely informational.

Don't

- ▶ Don't try to write down everything you hear – you don't need that much information!

What happens on the day of the exam?

Reading & Writing

You will take the exam at your school or language centre. It is a written exam and it takes two hours. Here is the format of the exam and some tips on each part.

Task 1 – Long reading

- ▶ Read the questions carefully.
- ▶ Write your answers on the exam paper.
- ▶ Spend about 20 minutes on this task, and make sure you leave enough time to do all the other tasks in the exam.



Top tip!

If you make a mistake, just cross out your answer ~~like this~~ and write a new answer next to it.

Task 2 – Multi-text reading

- ▶ Read the questions carefully.
- ▶ Write your answers on the exam paper.
- ▶ Spend about 20 minutes on this task and make sure you leave enough time to do all the other tasks in the exam.

Task 3 – Reading into writing

- ▶ Read the task carefully.
- ▶ Plan your answer before you write – your plan will not be marked.
- ▶ Make sure you answer all the points in the question.
- ▶ Make sure you use information from the texts in task 2 to answer the question.
- ▶ Check your work when you have finished.
- ▶ Spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Top tip!

Don't just copy from the texts – always try to use your own words.

Task 4 – Extended writing

- ▶ Read the task carefully.
- ▶ Plan your answer before you write – your plan will not be marked.
- ▶ Make sure you answer all the points in the question.
- ▶ Check your work when you have finished.
- ▶ Spend about 40 minutes on this task.

What happens on the day of the exam?



Speaking & Listening

A Trinity examiner will come to your school or language centre for the Speaking & Listening module. This is how the exam runs:

Introductions

- ▶ The examiner says 'Hello' and asks your name. The examiner will probably use some simple greetings like 'How are you?'.
- ▶ If you're taking ISE I, II or III the examiner asks you for identification.
- ▶ You are not tested during the introductions part of the exam.

Top tip!

It is natural to be nervous when taking an exam – but try to think of the Speaking & Listening exam as an opportunity to talk about things that interest you. It's a chance to show the examiner what you can do in English!

If you don't understand something, it's fine to ask the examiner to repeat what he/she said.

Topic task

Topic presentation – The examiner will ask you to begin your presentation. You have four minutes to give your presentation including any time it takes you to set up. Make sure you are confident in setting up any visual aids you have prepared so that it doesn't take too much time.

Practise your presentation and time yourself to make sure that you can say all you plan to in this phase. At the end of your presentation, ask the examiner if he/she has any questions.

Topic discussion – The examiner will use the notes he/she made during your presentation to ask you questions about your topic.

Be prepared to defend your arguments, negotiate points, hypothesise about alternative ideas or possible outcomes, develop your arguments further or summarise your thoughts.

Collaborative task

The examiner will read out a short prompt. You have to ask questions and keep the conversation going. Listen carefully to what the examiner says and make sure you understand the prompt. Respond to the prompt and ask questions, offer opinions and ask the examiner what he/she thinks. Don't just talk about the subject but really try to interact with the examiner about what they have said and try to stay relevant. Build the conversation together!

Conversation task

The examiner tells you which subject you are going to talk about and then asks you a question to start the conversation. Listen to what the examiner says and think about what language you need to answer the question. Remember, it's a discussion!

Independent listening task

The examiner will play the recording and will tell you what you need to do. You will be speaking to the examiner about what you have heard and you should listen out for things like evidence of a speaker's attitude or opinion. In this task you may take notes but your notes are not assessed.

Top tip!

In the Independent listening task you can take notes if you want to. Your notes are not assessed.

End of the exam

The examiner tells you that the exam has finished and says goodbye. You are not marked on this part of the exam.



What is the examiner assessing at ISE III?

What is the examiner assessing in ISE III?

Language functions for ISE III

Study and practise the language functions before the exam!

- ▶ Developing and justifying an argument
- ▶ Summarising
- ▶ Evaluating options, past actions/course of events, different statements
- ▶ Deducing and inferring
- ▶ Staging
- ▶ Hypothesising
- ▶ Negotiating meaning
 - Indicating understanding of points made by partner
 - Establishing common ground/purpose or strategy

Reading

There are 30 questions in the reading section. Depending on the number of correct answers you give, your Reading result will be Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.

Writing

Here are the four skills that the examiner is assessing:

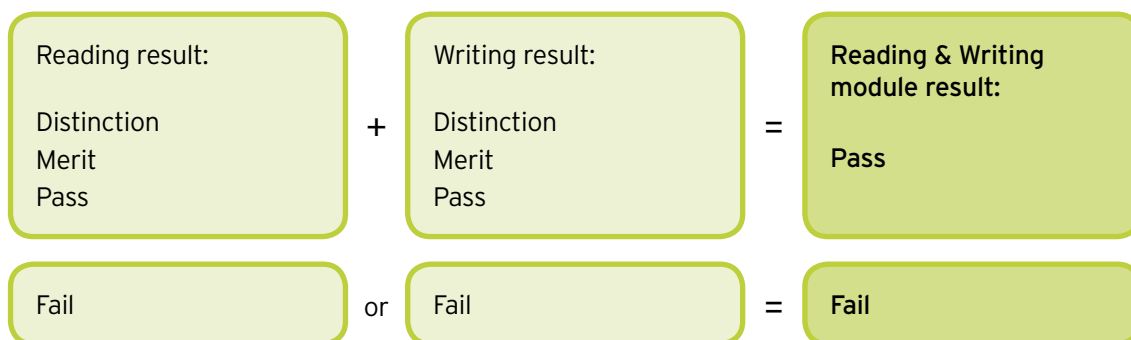
Task fulfilment: How well you answer the question.

Organisation and structure: How well you organise your writing, use paragraphs and sentences and link your ideas together.

Language control: Your range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammar. How well you use punctuation and your spelling.

Reading for writing (task 3 only): How well you are able to use the reading texts to write an answer to task 3, using your own words.

For the writing tasks, your scores in the four scales are combined. Your writing result will be Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.



If you pass the reading tasks and the writing tasks, you will pass the Reading & Writing module.
If you fail either reading or writing, or both, you will not pass the Reading & Writing module.

Speaking

The examiner will assess these four abilities:

Communicative effectiveness: How well you complete each task. For example, discussing a topic or having a conversation.

How well you respond to the examiner and how you cope with problems. For example, can you ask the examiner to repeat when you don't understand?

Interactive listening: How well you show that you understand the examiner.

Language control: How good is the range and accuracy of the vocabulary and grammar that you use? For example, how well you use the language functions of ISE III (see page 14).

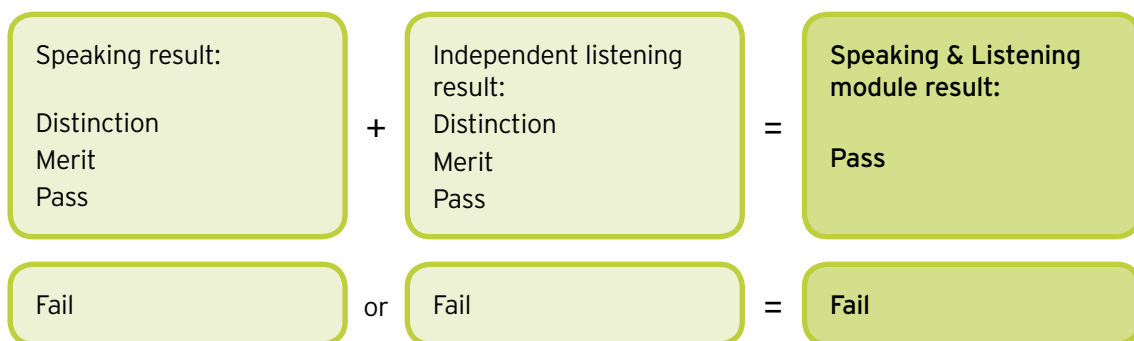
Delivery: Can the examiner understand you? How good is your pronunciation and fluency?

Your speaking result will be Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.

Independent listening

In the Independent listening task the examiner will choose a mark, depending on how well you have understood the recording. Your speaking and writing are not assessed in the listening tasks.

Your Independent listening result will be Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail.



If you pass the speaking tasks and the listening task, you will pass the Speaking & Listening module.

If you fail either speaking or listening, or both, you will not pass the Speaking & Listening module.



What happens after the exam?

What happens after the exam?

Reading & Writing

A few weeks after the exam, you will receive your results. If you have passed the exam, you will receive a module certificate.

The module certificate will show that you have passed the Reading & Writing module and will give your results for reading and for writing.

Speaking & Listening

Your results will be sent to your Trinity Registered Exam Centre who will tell you if you have passed or failed in two areas: speaking and listening.

A few weeks later, if you have passed the exam, you will receive your results on a module certificate. The module certificate will show that you have passed the Speaking & Listening module and will give your results for speaking and for listening.

Your ISE III qualification certificate

When you have passed both the Reading & Writing module and the Speaking & Listening module, you will receive your ISE III certificate. This certificate will show that you have passed ISE III and will give your results in: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

ISE III: Pass

Reading: Pass or Merit or Distinction

Writing: Pass or Merit or Distinction

Speaking: Pass or Merit or Distinction

Listening: Pass or Merit or Distinction

