

International Phonetic Association

Individual Oral: Non-English Sounds, Tone and Intonation

Individual orals are scheduled to last 10 minutes. There will be two examiners present. After you leave the room, the examiners have 5 minutes to discuss your performance and agree marks before calling the next candidate. You will need to respond promptly when performing the different tasks; a very slow response is suggestive of an inability to make or identify a particular sound and will affect the mark that the examiners are able to award. Examiners are however always sensitive to a candidate's exam nerves and every effort is made to assist you and put you at your ease.

Apart from the English transcription reading exercise, there are four other exercises in the oral exam:

- Reading transcription of non-English sounds
- Substitutions: identifying non-English sounds
- Reading tonal patterns from transcription
- Intonation: performing, identifying and describing English intonation patterns

- **Reading from transcription**

There are two further reading-type exercises.

- Sample of materials for reading non-English items from transcription

On the following page, you will find a typical set of candidate's materials which includes the non-English reading items, Exercise 1 – three Cardinal Vowels and three 'exotic' consonants. This is one of the sets of oral materials presented to candidates in the August examination in 2014. This sheet will be given to you in the examination room after you have completed the English reading exercise. You will be asked to look at the six items, and when you are ready, to read them aloud to the Examiners. You will be asked to say each item twice. If you do not like the way you said something, then simply tell the Examiners that you are not satisfied with your performance and you are going to say it again. Examiners will permit you several attempts until you are more satisfied with what you have said – we fully understand the way nerves can sometimes interfere with what you want to say.

Scrap paper and a pencil will be available should you wish to write anything down during your oral.

Each item can be awarded a maximum of 2 marks. Examiners will mark you independently during the oral, but will discuss and agree their final marks when you have left the room.

**International Phonetic Association
Certificate Examination in English Phonetics**

[1]

Examination: Tuesday 26th August, 2014

Oral Materials: Candidate's copy

1 Please read aloud the following vowel and consonant sounds – pronounce each item twice:

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. [ɨ̃] | 2. [y] | 3. [ao] |
| 4. [a]a] | 5. [aᵐa] | 6. [aḡa] |

2 Please read aloud the following tonal patterns. Say each one twice:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. please don't <u>˘</u> tell | 2. please don't <u>˘</u> tell |
| 3. please <u>˘</u> don't tell | 4. <u>˘</u> please don't tell |

3 Produce the following using a suitable intonation tune and then describe the tune you have used. Please say it twice, in the same way:

we hoped to arrive a lot earlier ||

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS COPY.

○ Sample of materials for reading tonal patterns

Exercise 2 on the sheet requires you to read four tonal patterns, almost always in the form of English nuclear tones applied to a short utterance as in the sample on the previous page, Exercise 2.

You are again asked to read these patterns aloud to the Examiners, saying each one twice.

There is 1 mark for each pattern, making a total maximum of four marks for this exercise. Examiners will mark you independently during the examination and will discuss and agree their final mark after you have left the room.

- **Substitutions**

As well as being able to read and produce non-English sounds, you are also expected to be able to identify and describe individual sounds. This skill is tested by means of what are called substitutions.

The substitution exercise takes place between Exercises 1 and 2 on the sheet above. You will have two sets of substitutions, one produced by each Examiner. The Examiner will take a word, for example *sardine* or *pillow*, and they will normally replace the medial consonant with a different consonant. You are asked to provide a full phonetic label (a Voice-Place-Manner label) for the substituted sound. *Sardine* and *pillow* were one of pairs used in the August exam in 2014 and the substitutions given are shown below, together with the expected answers:

For [d] in *sardine*

[g^w r ʒ t]

Answers: labialized voiced velar plosive
voiced alveolar tap
voiced alveolar lateral fricative
voiceless retroflex plosive

For [l] in *pillow*

[ɰ̃ ɡ̃ ç d̟̟]

Answers: nasalized voiced labialvelar approximant
voiced alveolar lateral click
voiceless palatal fricative
voiced postalveolar/palatoalveolar affricate

The Examiner will initially produce each substitution twice. You may request additional repetitions. The Examiners mark your answers independently during the oral and will discuss and agree their final marks after you have left the room. Each substitution can be awarded a maximum of 2 points giving an overall maximum of 16 marks for this exercise.

- **English intonation**

The final exercise in the oral examination is the production, identification and description of English intonation patterns.

The sheet reproduced on page 5 above includes a short intonational phrase – in this case *we hoped to arrive a lot earlier*. You will be asked to produce this IP

twice using a suitable intonation tune and afterwards to describe the tune you have used. You might, for example, decide to say:

we ^hhoped to ar^orive a lot earlier ||

Using an established descriptive framework (and here I will follow WELLS, J.C., 2006, *English Intonation: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) you must then describe the tune that you used. For example:

The utterance was produced as one IP with the nucleus on the first syllable of *earlier* which was stressed. It was a high fall nuclear tone, followed by a low level tail with no further stresses. There is an onset, with a high head beginning on the stressed syllable *hoped* and with another stress on the second syllable of *arrive*. There is a low, unmarked prehead.

One of the Examiners will then take the same IP and produce it using a different tune. You will then describe the Examiner's version. The Examiner will produce his/her version twice but you can ask for additional repetitions if you need to hear it again. For example, the Examiner might say:

\we ^ohoped to ar^vrive a lot _oearlier ||

This time, your description would be:

The utterance was produced as one IP with the nucleus on the second syllable of *arrive* which was stressed. It was a fall-rise nuclear tone, followed by a rising level tail with the rise delayed and starting on the first syllable of *earlier* which was stressed. There is an onset, with a falling head beginning on the stressed syllable *we* and with another stress on *hoped*. There is no prehead.

Examiners will mark your answers independently during the oral but will afterwards discuss and agree their final mark when you have left the room. Each description can be awarded a maximum of 4 marks making a total maximum of 8 marks for intonation.

Excluding the English reading passage, the oral is marked out of 40.