

International Phonetic Association

Individual Oral: Reading English Transcription

Individual orals are scheduled to last 10 minutes. There will be two examiners present. After you leave the room at the end of your oral, 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.

- **Reading from English transcription**

- Sample of text for reading English reading from transcription

On the following page, you will find a copy of a typical reading sheet. This one was presented to candidates in the August 2014 examination.

At the beginning of your oral examination, you will be called to a preparation room where you will be given a copy of the reading passage. You have 15 minutes to prepare this. After 15 minutes, the examiners will call you into the examination room. You will begin your oral by reading the English text aloud to the examiners.

Examiners will expect you to be fluent and read without undue hesitation. Note that this does not mean you have to be fast! Examiners are looking for fluency and accuracy, but not necessarily for great speed! You need to aim to avoid undue hesitation, repetition, etc., and to make as few mistakes as possible.

The text will be transcribed using the symbols of WELLS, J. C., 2008, *Pronunciation Dictionary*, London: Longman (3rd edn). All candidates will read from this text. The text will be transcribed as if spoken with a Modern Received Pronunciation accent. This is a broad transcription, however, and it does not invalidate its use by speakers of other accents.

After you have finished reading, an Examiner will ask you a brief question relating to your reading. Non-native speakers of English or those with non-MRP accents are sometimes asked about particular difficulties for speakers from their language or differences for speakers of their accent. Or you may be asked about particular features of the text – assimilations, elisions, liaison, strong and weak forms, t-glottaling, etc. You should be prepared to give a brief answer and identify an appropriate example where relevant. The lines of the text are numbered to facilitate locating examples.

International Phonetic Association Certificate Examination in English Phonetics

Examination: Tuesday 26th August, 2014

Reading passage

You have approximately 15 minutes to prepare this passage for reading aloud to the examiners.

Line

- 1 /'ri:ʃn̩tli | aɪv baɪn 'lɜ:nɪŋ 'pəʊlɪʃ || ən ði 'lðə 'deɪ |
- 2 'sʌmwʌŋ geɪv mi ə 'kɒpi | ən ðə 'zenəfəʊbz 'gaɪd tə ðə
- 3 'pəʊlɪz || ə 'lɒt ən its 'rɪəli kwaɪt 'flni ||
- 4 ɪ? pɔɪnts 'aʊt ðət ðə 'pəʊlɪz ə 'veri 'tæktɔɪl || ðeɪ 'kɪs ən
- 5 'hʌŋ ət 'evri ɒpə'tju:nəti || ðə 'stændəŋ 'grɪ:tɪŋ | fə ðəʊz
- 6 ən 'aɪðə 'seks | hu ə 'mɔ: ðəŋ 'kæz wəl ə'kweɪntənsɪz |
- 7 ɪz ə 'beə hʌŋ | 'fɒləʊb baɪ ə 'tʌtʃɪŋ ən 'tʃɪ:ks | ən ðen
- 8 'θrɪ: 'eə 'kɪsɪz | pə 'pɜ:sən 'grɪ:tɪd ||
- 9 fər ə'kweɪntənsɪz ən ə 'lesər 'ɔ:ðə | ən ə'blɪgətɪ 'hænfɛɪk
- 10 sə'faɪsɪz || bə? 'ðɪs kən 'teɪk ʌp ə 'lɒt ən 'taɪm || ɪf 'ten
- 11 'ŋju:kɒm əz mɪxt 'ten 'ləʊkɪz | ðɪs baɪdz 'ʌp tu ə 'lɒt ən
- 12 'hændʃeɪkɪŋ || əm bi'fɔ: ju 'nəʊ ɪt | its ɔ:'redi 'taɪm tə
- 13 gəʊ 'həʊm || /

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS COPY.

In the case of this particular text, an Examiner might ask what the text tells us about the weak forms of the definite article *the*. You could refer to lines 1 and 2 and identify the pre-vocalic form in **ði** 'ʌðə and the pre-consonantal form in **ðə** 'zenəfəʊbz.... The Examiner might then ask whether any other words display this type of contextual variation. Here, you could identify the indefinite article *a* in pre-consonantal position in lines 3, 10 or 11 in the expression **ə** 'lɒt but explain that pre-vocalically, this becomes **ən** as in line 9 **ən** ə'blɪgətɪ, or pre-consonantal **tə** in lines 12-13 pronounced **tə** in **tə** 'gəʊ whereas in MRP this would probably be **tʊ** if occurring pre-vocalically, for example *to act* **tʊ** 'ækt. Words spelled with a final letter *r* also change their pronunciation, the *r* being silent in pre-consonantal positions in MRP and other non-rhotic accents, but pronounced when the word occurs prevocalically, for example *for* in line 9 **fər** ə... whereas in *for me* it would be silent **fə** 'mi:

This exercise is marked independently of the rest of the oral and will be awarded a mark out of 20. A maximum of 10 marks are available for fluency, 5 for accuracy and 5 for theory. Examiners will mark you independently during the examination itself and will discuss and agree their final mark after you have left the room.

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