



Anglia Ascentis Language Examinations

Speaking Tests

Paper A 2010

**Topics which may be prepared by the
candidate before the examination**

First Step

No preparation necessary.

Junior, Primary and Preliminary

At these levels, no preparation is necessary. However, if they want to, teachers may prepare their students for the optional extension in which any or all of the children may perform a chant, rhyme, song or poem.

Elementary

Task two: Candidate to choose 3 photographs or pictures to talk about. The teacher should vet these for suitability.

Pre-Intermediate

Task two: Candidate to prepare a topic that starts with: My favourite... e.g. my favourite holiday, person, movie, subject at school.

Intermediate

Task two: list of topics

A Where would you most like to go for a day out with your friends?

1. the beach
2. the mountains
3. sailing on a lake or the sea
4. at home with your computer
5. shopping in town
6. on your bikes in the countryside

B Who would you most like to meet?

1. a famous singer / pop star
2. an important person from history
3. your favourite football team
4. your favourite Hollywood actor
5. the president / prime minister of your country
6. someone in your family that you have never met before

Advanced

1. The Internet brings people closer together. Do you agree?
2. In your opinion what makes a good movie?
3. If children behave badly, their parents should also be punished. Do you agree?
4. Sport should not be taught in schools as children should concentrate on academic subjects. Do you agree?
5. Smoking should be banned completely, both in public and private places. Do you agree?

Proficiency

Task two – two articles to read and think about. You should be prepared to talk briefly on one of them before discussing it.

PROFICIENCY READING ONE: LET THE PANDA DIE OUT!

The BBC wildlife expert Chris Packham has questioned the millions of pounds spent trying to save the giant panda from extinction and has suggested that the bamboo-eating bear should be allowed to die out "with a degree of dignity". The zoologist risked criticism from wildlife conservationists in an interview in which he describes the giant panda as a "T-shirt animal" on which too much conservation money is wasted. "Here is a species that, of its own accord, has gone down an evolutionary cul-de-sac. It's not a strong species", he said. "Unfortunately, it's big and cute and a symbol of the World Wide Fund for Nature. We pour millions of pounds into panda conservation. The species is restricted to 20 or so patches of forest in China in a region densely populated by its only major enemy – humans. It also needs to eat huge amounts of bamboo to survive. We should let them go, with a degree of dignity."

Packham's comments peoples very angry, at the WWF, which has used the giant panda as its symbol since its foundation in 1961 and is active in panda conservation in the Chinese forest reserves, where the animal still survives. Dr Mark Wright, chief scientific adviser at WWF UK, dismissed Packham's assertion that the giant panda was at an evolutionary

dead-end because it relied on bamboo. "It's like saying the blue whale is in an evolutionary cul-de-sac because it lives in the ocean," he said. He added: "Chris has taken an irresponsible position. Pandas face extinction because of poaching and human pressures on their habitat. They have adapted to the area in which they live and if left alone, they function perfectly well."

"However, he is right in his assertion that we must secure habitat in order to protect endangered species. This is exactly what we work to achieve in the case of the giant panda. Importantly, in protecting those mountain areas where pandas live, we are also retaining vital habitat and resources for thousands of other species (many also endangered) and helping the human communities that depend on this landscape."

It's not only pandas that need worry, however. When asked which animal he would not mind becoming extinct, Chris Packham replied, "Human beings. No question. That's the only one."

SEPTEMBER 22 2009 Adapted from article - www.timesonline.co.uk

Points to consider:

- Do you think we should keep endangered species only in zoos?
- Should we spend money trying to save a species?
- What can be done to raise awareness of the environment?
- Do you agree that damage to the environment is a natural result of human progress?
- Is it wrong to interfere with nature?

PROFICIENCY READING TWO: HELICOPTER PARENTS – HOVERING, NOT HELPING

Several decades ago, parental complaints in school were rare. Teachers taught and disciplined their students as they saw necessary, with little interference from the parents. Teachers saw the parents occasionally to report on academic progress. Twenty years on, our world could not be more different. In schools, teachers hide from the 'helicopter parents'.

So what are helicopter parents? They are the ones who pay such close attention to their children that they rush forward to try to prevent anything bad ever happening to them. Of course, it is natural for a parent to be concerned, and to contact the school when necessary, but the helicopter parent is simply not ready to allow their children to learn from mistakes.

A girl in year 9 is seen smoking by two members of staff. It is a clear case that she has broken school rules. However, the helicopter parent phones the principal to say that his "little girl" was only "holding the cigarette" for a friend. The principal is sceptical, but goes back to the two members of staff. They are certain that the girl was actually smoking the cigarette. The school returns to the helicopter

Points to consider:

- Is it possible for parents to be *too* involved in their child's education?
- Do children depend on their parents too much?
- Do parents believe their children too much?
- At what age should a child leave home to be independent?

parent with the update and – surprise, surprise – they tell you that the two members of staff are "mistaken" because "my daughter has never told me a lie in her life". From there, of course, the results are predictable. The school insists the child must be punished; the helicopter parent will not "support" it; there is a formal complaint; and the helicopter parent's grudge against the school grows, meaning that it will be even harder to discipline the girl in the future.

Unfortunately, helicopter parenting doesn't stop when the child leaves school. Helicopter parents oversee their child's first graduate job application, prep them for tests and interviews – and have even tried to renegotiate starting salaries. Paul Redmond, head of careers at Liverpool University, said that many parents were present at careers fairs last year, and that some students had been pushed aside. "In future we will have to be more open and say it doesn't look particularly impressive to have your parents with you at a fair."

JULY 12 2009 Adapted from article -
www.timesonline.co.uk

Proficiency

Task three – the candidate chooses one of the following groups and should be prepared to talk on any of the particular topics within it:

GROUP ONE: TECHNOLOGY

1. Life was better when technology was simpler.
2. Computers can translate into many different languages so there is no need to learn a foreign language.
3. Students shouldn't use the internet when they do their homework.
4. Technology cannot continue to develop at the same rate for long.
5. There is no need for a child to have a mobile phone.

GROUP TWO: THE MEDIA

1. Famous people are treated unfairly by the media.
2. People want to read bad news in the newspapers.
3. Printed newspapers will soon cease to exist.
4. TV advertising is more effective than any other medium.
5. Newspapers should not be allowed to make a profit.

Masters

Task two: two articles to read and think about. You should be prepared to talk briefly on one of them before discussing it.

READING ONE – CITIES OF THE FUTURE

As temperatures rise and ice melts, it has become clear that Man's attempt to impose his will on Nature has gone awry. A new breed of scientists is beginning to approach our myriad problems from a new, humbler perspective; how, they ask, can we learn from Nature and borrow some of its extraordinary inventiveness in the fight against climate change?

The deep ocean is an unlikely source of inspiration for one project, which aims to make our cities alive and glowing. The plan sounds almost biblical; the lighting of the world from a multitude of fish. Dr Rachel Armstrong, an architectural researcher from University College London, wants to transform buildings from being sterile, inert objects into entities that interact and evolve with the natural environment. She sees this as the fulfilment of what architects have always seen as the purpose of their work. "We've likened the city to an organism, but so far it has been a symbolic description. In the future, architecture will be literally alive," she said.

Imagine the cityscape of the future. Forget skyscrapers studded with undimmed lights. Instead, think of crystal whites and luminous blues forging the city's silhouette. Picture a city that sucks in carbon and uses bacteria harvested from dead fish to light the darkness. The city as a living character will no longer be a literary conceit, but a reality. From metaphor to concrete in one generation. One of her projects starts with a simple premise. Leave a fish rotting in a bowl of water for long enough and it will begin to glow. The light comes from bacteria in the fish. In certain species, such as the flashlight fish and the anglerfish, a symbiotic relationship with this bacteria, *Vibrio phosphoreum*, allows the fish to glow and flicker in the deep ocean. But how have scientists leapt from flashes of light in the sea to a new vision for our cities? Welcome to the world of nanoarchitecture.

With her colleagues at the Bartlett School of Architecture, Armstrong is focusing on cheap and relatively simple solutions to global warming. One intriguing possibility is the use of bioluminescent bacteria, organisms that give off a blue-green glow, as low-energy urban lighting. In the US, urban lighting accounts for more than 8 per cent of the country's total electricity consumption. The sides of buildings and billboards could be covered in sparkling bacteria, such as *Vibrio phosphoreum* – the fish bacteria. This produces light automatically when a pigment contained in the bacteria called *luciferin*, from the Latin meaning light bringer, reacts with oxygen in air or water. At present, the light emitted is not strong enough to illuminate a street, but scientists believe that it could be engineered to do so. Another possibility is using bacteria to metabolise carbon dioxide through photosynthesis so that the bacterial coating would effectively eat up carbon dioxide by turning sunlight into energy.

"When dealing with climate change we don't always have to invent something new, we have to think very cleverly about what we already have," Armstrong said. "It doesn't take a massive leap of imagination to envisage how much more useful the surfaces of our buildings could become if covered in bacteria that glow in the dark or remove pollutants from the atmosphere."

READING TWO – A ONE-WAY TICKET INTO OUTER SPACE

Outer space is often described as "the final frontier," and not just by those who follow the adventures of Captain Kirk in Star Trek. The phrase, though, may take an even more literal meaning for those exploring space in the future. A senior NASA official has revealed that the world's space agencies, or the commercial firms that may eventually succeed them, could issue one-way tickets to space, with the travellers accepting that they would not come back. Dr John Olson, NASA's director of exploration systems integration, talks about NASA's plans for the moon, Mars and one-way tickets into space. "The prospect of spending years cooped in a spacecraft would not deter people from applying," he said. "It's really no different than the pioneering spirit of many in past history, who took the one-way trip across the ocean, or the trip out west across the United States with no intention of ever returning."

In May 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged the US to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade and return him safely to Earth. In an effort costing \$1.4 trillion in 2009, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to set foot on the moon. Now, NASA hopes to reignite the public's interest and win support for a massive investment in new trips to space.

Since Kennedy's speech, the US has lost 17 astronauts. "NASA is currently bound by Kennedy's directive to bring its astronauts home", Olson said. But the other nations rapidly developing space programmes may shed the constraint, as could the commercial companies that may supplant national efforts. "Space is no longer for power; it's truly for economic benefit," the Apollo 11 flight director Eugene Kranz said. "The technology that emerges from high-risk, high-profile, extremely difficult missions is the technology that will keep the economic engine of our nation continuing to go through the years."

If, as Olson predicts, humans reach Mars by the middle of this century, engineers and astronauts may then set their sights on the frozen planets, fiery moons and stars beyond. "We're going back to the moon for a sustained presence," Olson said. "We're going to use the moon as a stepping stone to Mars and we're going to look at other exciting places to go in this solar system." With currently foreseeable technology, a round trip to Mars launched from a lunar outpost would take two to three years – a journey of six to nine months each way and a year-long mission on the surface. The star nearest Earth's solar system, Alpha Centauri, is 4.37 light years away, or more than 2.5 trillion miles, and a round-trip spacecraft would have to carry enough fuel to brake and propel itself back to Earth. Robert Park, a physicist and prominent critic of manned space flight, said that even a one-way trip to Alpha Centauri was beyond the laws of physics. The energy required to push a spacecraft up to the speed needed to get to the star within 50 years was so great as to be barely conceivable. He described the measurement as a fantastic multiple of the energy consumed by the entire world in a year. "We don't have a warp drive," he said, referring to the interstellar engines of Star Trek fantasy. "A multigenerational space ark would doom the children raised to continue the mission never to see Earth and would decide their destiny before their birth, raising profound ethical questions." Rather than devote immeasurable resources to sending humans into space, Park said science should instead build stronger telescopes to better study distant stars and planets.

Masters

TASK THREE
Group One (card A)

STATEMENT 1

Wealthy countries should pay more for environmental damage.

STATEMENT 2

Foreign aid helps donor countries more than the recipients.

STATEMENT 3

Governments of ALL countries should make education compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 15.

STATEMENT 4

It is better for students to study at university in their own country rather than abroad.

TASK THREE
Group Two (card B)

STATEMENT 1

You can tell a lot about a country from the way its animals are treated.

STATEMENT 2

Wild animals should never be kept in captivity.

STATEMENT 3

Health care is a basic human right and should be free for everyone.

STATEMENT 4

Some people receive a lot more medical care than others. Individuals should pay for the health care they receive.