

BEC Preliminary Practice Test Audioscripts

PART ONE, Questions 1 to 8

- For questions 1 – 8, you will hear eight short recordings.
- For each question, mark **one** letter (**A**, **B** or **C**).
- You will hear the eight recordings twice.

EXAMPLE

What does Jane's boss want her to do?

M: Hi Jane, Siegfried here. I can't find the project data file. I thought it was in my briefcase with the sales statistics but it isn't. Could you find it and email me a copy by six this evening? Thanks.

The answer is B.

1 Which chart is correct?

Overtime hours worked per employee were high at the beginning of the year but began to fall in the second quarter as expected. Although they rose again in the third quarter, fewer overtime hours were worked in the last quarter.

2 Which room does the woman book for the conference?

M: Do you want to have the Star like last year?

F: Yes, but I think we've got too many people.

M: How many?

F: 130

M: Mmm. The Star would be a bit small, but possible. The Rose or the Moon might be more comfortable.

F: Are they free on that date?

M: Let's see. The Moon's booked, but the Rose isn't. Shall I book it?

F: Yes, please.

3 What will they spend the extra money on?

- F: So, we've got the extra budget for the new machines, then?
- M: Yes, but shouldn't we think about getting larger offices first? There's not enough room for everyone.
- F: It'll only be a problem if we employ more people. And there's no point doing that if the machines keep stopping.
- M: You're right. That's where we'll spend it. Bigger offices can come later.

4 When will Mr Abdi arrive?

- F: I'm calling on behalf of Mr Abdi. His four fifteen flight has changed to leave Dakar at a quarter past three instead. He expects to be with you at a quarter to four your time, providing there are no delays.

5 Why is the factory closing?

- F: As you know, demand for products like ours has generally fallen although, thank goodness, sales of our products are still increasing.
- M: It's a good thing we moved production overseas last month. It's made a big difference.
- F: Yes, I think we made a wise decision to postpone the plans for building a new factory here, don't you?
- M: I agree.

6 What do they agree is most important for the job?

- F: I think the most important quality is being able to work on your own.
- M: While I think that's important, the key thing is to be able to motivate the team, isn't it?
- F: Problem-solving seems the most important, but you can do that with a good team, so perhaps you're right.
- M: Yes, problems are easier to deal with in a group.

7 Which chart is correct?

Sales for the first quarter were reasonably good, especially after the disappointing start at the beginning of the year. February saw a steady improvement, which was encouraging. This continued through the following month, although in April sales levelled off.

8 Why did the company have to change its supplier?

M: Did we change supplier because our previous one put up its prices last month?

F: We'd already decided to change. As you know the quality of our products is a great selling point so we needed to make sure that we had a supplier who could match the greater quantities we now needed. This wasn't happening with our old supplier.

M: I see.

PART TWO, QUESTIONS 9 – 15

Look at the form below.

Some information is missing.

You will hear a man phoning a colleague to make arrangements for some company visitors.

For each question **9 – 15**, fill in the missing information in the numbered space using a **word, numbers** or **letters**.

You will hear the conversation twice.

- M: Hello, Diana, Geoffrey here. It's about next month's visitors.
- F: Okay. I'll get the booking form out. Is it for the 8th of February?
- M: It was originally but it's going to be three days later, the 11th. That's not a problem is it?
- F: No. Is the contact still Bradley Whalley? W – A – L.....
- M: Yes – But there's an aitch after the W . W – H – A – double L – E – Y.
- F: What's his email address?
- M: Let me see. Its ... er ... Brad @ R – A – Z – E – N – G dot com.
- F: What's the flight number so we can meet them at the airport?
- M: It's KG 4569 – oh sorry no that was the original one, now it's 4-5-7-zero.
- F: Right. I've got that. Now let's see, it gets in at ten forty-five, doesn't it?
- M: I thought it was eleven forty five...um. Oh, no, you're right, ten forty-five.
- F: How many people in the group? I've got 25. Weren't there 35 last year?
- M: Yes, but you've got the right figure.
- F: Good. Now, which hotel shall I book? Do they still want the Crown?
- M: Actually, the King Hotel is nearer the conference centre. Could we try that? I think they've got some special offers on and we can't spend more than €135 per person per night.
- F: The King works out at €147 per person and the Crown is only €115 at the moment.
- M: Right, we'd better go for that then as the budget is tight.
- F: Right, I'll sort that out today.

PART THREE, QUESTIONS 16 – 22

- Look at the notes below.
- Some information is missing.
- You will hear part of a radio business news programme.
- For each question **16 – 22**, fill in the missing information in the numbered space using **one** or **two** words.
- You will hear the programme twice.

And here is this evening's business news in brief. The telecoms company, Telcon, has made an offer to buy one of Europe's biggest mobile-network operators, valued at £17.7 billion (\$31.5 billion). Telcon's own domestic market has weakened recently and it is hoping to expand its operations around the world. It already has operations in South America and Australia.

ENTel, another European telecoms company, has announced it is building new offices to add to those already in Spain and Italy. These are in Germany and it is in discussions for expanding into France.

WinterGold, a mining company based in Canada, is hoping to become the world's largest gold-miner, producing 8.4 million ounces of gold this year. To achieve this it has begun a \$9.2 billion bid to buy its biggest rival, Goldig.

With profits boosted by clients in the Middle East and Asia, the NPG Financial Group is reporting record quarterly profits. It says that the third-quarter net income has risen by 71%. More on that in the programme following this news report.

Lanlink, the media group, has more than doubled the value of its shares over the last year. This is mainly as a result of innovations using the Internet and also the purchase of Filmpay, the American TV company.

Eagle Airlines has reported its biggest-ever quarterly net loss – \$1.8 billion – and blames it on reorganisation costs. The carrier is hoping the new ticketing and pricing system will help them win back customers in the next quarter.

And finally, oil prices fell to below \$60 a barrel for the first time since July as warmer weather in parts of America reduced demand for heating oil. And now we move on to..... 282

[Adapted from **Business this week** Nov 3rd 2005 From The Economist print edition]

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PART FOUR, QUESTIONS 23 – 30

- You will hear a short radio interview with Jim Niven, a banking expert, about Macquarie Bank, an Australian bank.
- For each question **23 – 30**, mark one letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) for the correct answer.
- You will hear the conversation twice.

F: This evening I'm talking to Jim Niven about Australia's Macquarie Bank. Good evening Jim.

M: Good evening Janet.

F: Now, this week, for the first time in its history, the Board of Macquarie Bank met outside Australia, in London.

M: That's right. Macquarie's been buying up large companies all over the world and owns lots of assets in Britain now. So it seemed like a good idea to have a meeting there. Even though its bid for the London Stock Exchange earlier in the year failed, Macquarie still has a lot of interests there.

F: Macquarie Bank operates a bit differently from traditional banks, doesn't it?

M: Yes. Although it offers conventional investment banking, fund-management and retail financial advice, Macquarie Bank also enjoys acquiring businesses. For example, in Britain alone it's bought several in the past 18 months, including a ferry operator and a gas distributor, to add to the M6 toll road and the two airports it already owned.

F: Now the bank has grown considerably since it started with two offices in Sydney and Melbourne, hasn't it?

M: It certainly has. Macquarie now manages a portfolio worth 89 billion Australian dollars and employs 7,000 people in 23 countries. It made a profit last year of 823 million Australian dollars, an increase of 67%, and the value of its portfolio went up by more than 40%. And more importantly, its income outside Australia rose by a massive 83%, and now accounts for almost 40% of the total.



Intelligent Business

F: Is Macquarie's success due to Alan Moss's role as CEO?

M: Well, the stock market seems pretty confident that he's doing the right thing. Macquarie's share price keeps rising and he's been in the driving seat longer than any other chief executive, 12 years in all. Most CEOs only last for about four years in the banking industry. Although he says he feels as if he's been there much longer than that.

F: Jim, can you tell me something about the history of the bank?

M: Well, Alan Moss started the bank with the executive chairman, David Clarke, in 1985. Before that it was part of the Australian branch of a British merchant bank. They decided to name it after a great Australian. Lachlan Macquarie was an early 19th-century governor of Sydney who bought Spanish silver dollars, punched out the middles and created two new coins. Today the punched-out bit and the one with a hole are the bank's symbol.

F: The bank's success has made a lot of money for its clients, and for its CEO. In fact, isn't Alan Moss Australia's highest-paid chief executive?

M: That's true, but the bonuses are mainly from "performance-related" fees which are added to his salary. If he doesn't bring in the business, he doesn't get the bonus. Macquarie's success is because it's not limited by traditional views of what investment banks should do.

F: I understand that the bank's key strategy developed from its involvement with the M2 toll road?

M: Yes. About ten years ago, Macquarie won a tender to build the M2 toll road in Sydney. It floated a company that would own the road. And the original investors have made a ten-fold return on their investment. It showed the bank that this was the way to go.

F: Is Macquarie Bank planning to continue this strategy in the future?



Intelligent Business

M: For sure. Although it may seem that Macquarie's assets are all very different, they have one common element: they must be in a market where there are few rivals. So it's looking at things like shopping centres, industrial properties, airports, toll roads and broadcast towers. The bank believes that as more people want to use them, their revenues will keep on growing.

[Adapted from **Macquarie Bank London calling** Oct 13th 2005 | SYDNEY From The Economist print edition]

