

Introduction

In making this book, we wanted it to serve several purposes. Rather than simply creating a test preparation book for the Examination for the Certificate of Competence in English (ECCE), we wanted to create a textbook that classroom teachers could use with students that would have engaging readings and topics for discussion and writing. We have organized each unit around general themes that tie together the reading, writing, and speaking activities, and many of the listening activities. Moreover, many of the exercises are designed for small group activities for a more interactive class. While some exercises are closed, many are open-ended and should make for interesting comparisons among students' answers. At the same time, we wanted this book to be useful for students who may use it for self-study. Teachers may also assign exercises for homework as we have provided an ample range of activities in every unit. The mini-tests and the full test follow the ECCE format fairly closely, and the exercises were designed to help you practice features of English that are commonly tested on the ECCE. The book provides practice with all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as vocabulary and grammar.

Overview of the ECCE

ECCE is a standardized examination of English as a Foreign Language. It is developed and scored by the Testing Division, English Language Institute of the University of Michigan. It is administered by authorized test centers in a variety of countries. The ECCE tests all four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and evaluates the ability to effectively use standard colloquial English in realistic contexts.

Level of the ECCE

The ECCE emphasizes communicative use of English rather than formal knowledge of the language. It is aimed at examinees who can perform functional and communicative transactions in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The content and difficulty of the ECCE aim at the B2 level of the Common European Framework. The level of the ECCE is similar to the First Certificate in English (FCE), to TOEFL® scores with approximate ranges from 450–525 (paper-based), 150–200 (computer-based), and 50–75 (Internet-based), or to TOEIC® scores with approximate ranges of 500–700. This is usually achieved at high-intermediate or low-advanced courses, depending on the language center.

Main Uses of the ECCE

Students use the ECCE for personal, social, and occupational uses. Schools may integrate the ECCE into their curriculum as external validation of the quality and level of their academic program. Employers may request the ECCE certificate to determine that the candidate has the sufficient proficiency level to perform the job tasks in English.

Format and Content of the ECCE

Test items and tasks are developed to evaluate the four skills. The total time for test administration is approximately 2½ to 3 hours. The four sections of the ECCE are shown in the chart.

Section	Number of Items	Description	Time
Listening	30	Part I (multiple-choice) Each short conversation is followed by a question. Three picture options are shown as answer choices.	30 mins.
	20	Part II (multiple-choice) A radio interview is broken into several segments. Several questions follow each segment. Brief written options are presented as answer choices.	
Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading	35	Grammar (multiple-choice) An incomplete sentence is presented with several options. One answer choice is grammatically correct.	80 mins.
	35	Vocabulary (multiple choice) An incomplete sentence is shown with several answer choices. One option has the correct meaning to complete the sentence.	
	30	Reading (multiple choice) Part I: A short reading passage is followed by comprehension questions. Part II: Short texts are presented as advertisements followed by questions. Part III: Longer related texts are presented like an information brochure and followed by comprehension questions.	
Writing	1 task	A short passage in the form of a news brief, memo, or letter is presented as a writing prompt. Examinees may choose to respond in the form of a letter or essay.	30 mins.
Speaking	4 tasks	A structured oral interaction occurs between the examinee and the oral examiner. The interaction includes a brief interview and the use of a picture prompt.	15 mins.

The speaking section is scored by a trained oral examiner in the local test administration area; the other sections are all scored by the UM-ELI. The listening, reading, and writing sections are administered in this sequence at one time. The speaking test may be given either before or after the three other sections of the test.

Why We Wrote *The Michigan Guide to the ECCE*

This textbook was written in response to the demand for preparation materials for the ECCE. The book serves two primary purposes. First, EFL students will develop and improve all four language skills. Second, they will become more familiar with the content, level, and format of the ECCE test by completing the practice activities, mini-tests, and full test provided in this book.

How to Use This Book

This textbook is designed to be used in an EFL class or for individual study. It may also be used as a single course book or to complement other materials. Classroom teachers using this book will want to plan how to use it based on the number of contact hours they have with students: The book has been designed so that it takes about six to ten hours to complete the exercises in each unit, depending on how much work is done in class or is assigned for homework. We provide classroom activities for 30 to 50 hours and review/practice tests for an additional 10 to 15 hours. The mini-tests take 40 minutes to administer, and full tests take up to 2½ hours.

The Organization of the Units

There are six units in this book. The content and activities are organized in the following sections: (1) Topic Discussion Activities, (2) Reading, (3) Language, (4) Writing, (5) Listening, and (6) Speaking. While this order does not reflect the order of the activities on the ECCE test itself, organizing the sections in this way makes the units more appropriate for pedagogical purposes in terms of making meaningful associations to learn a language; relating new content and language to what is already known about the topic; and gradually building on previously learned aspects of the language to improve linguistic competence. The sequence proposed in this text helps to make those meaningful connections, and each section will prove a useful aid to subsequent sections.

- The **Topic Discussion Activities** introduce the central theme of the unit. Other activities expand on related themes. These activities also help learners to activate their previous knowledge of the theme and introduce language in context. The vocabulary

presented in this section may be useful when elaborating on the topic, even when not all expressions or terms may be tested in exams like the ECCE.

- The **Reading** section presents different genres of reading passages followed by comprehension and language-related activities. Reading passages vary from unit to unit, providing practice with the three main kinds of texts used in the ECCE: short passages, ads (skim/scan), and extended reading passages.
- The **Language Practice** section continues with a variety of ECCE-level grammar and vocabulary activities. The structures and vocabulary included in this section reflect those that will present some difficulty for learners at this level. The practice in this section does not cover all the possible structures or vocabulary that can appear on the ECCE, as no single textbook would ensure that an EFL learner reaches this high level of competence in the language.
- The **Writing** section provides a prompt in the format of the ECCE. We are confident that the work on the previous sections will have provided students with enough information to be able to write on the topic. We recommend that this writing practice is done under the same conditions as with the ECCE—allow only 30 minutes to respond to the prompt writing a 150- to 175-word letter or essay. Afterward, we recommended students become familiar with the writing rubrics used to rate this section of the test. The rubrics are published and updated on the ELI's website: www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/.
- The **Listening** section provides practice with the two formats of the ECCE listening tasks. In Part I, examinees listen to short conversations and then are asked about what they heard. Three picture options are presented for response to each question. In Part II, they hear segments of a radio interview and are asked questions about it.
- The **Speaking** section of the test reflects the speaking portion of the ECCE. Since the ECCE speaking tests are conducted by trained examiners, it is not possible to propose the same type of activities in a textbook intended for classroom use. Instead, we have included similar activities that require students to make the same kind of decisions that they would make as part of the Speaking Test. The activities in this text are proposed for pairs of students, and not for an examiner and an exam candidate. The activities provide practice with Tasks 2 and 3 of the ECCE Speaking Test. However, at the end of the Full Test, a speaking prompt is given to students with the Examiner part on the next page. The Examiner reads the prompt in the actual test setting. Teachers who wish to know more about the Examiner's prompts can visit www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/testing/.
- The **Mini-Tests** appear after Units 2 and 4. These are abridged versions of ECCE practice tests that allow practice during normal classroom hours. The mini-tests include

10 listening items, 10 grammar items, 10 vocabulary items, and 10 reading items (combining two different types of reading passages). We recommend that, as students become familiar with the multiple-choice format, these tests be timed, allowing no more than 40 minutes to reflect the expectations of the ECCE.

- The **Practice Test** is a full-length test that provides more actual practice with the content, format, and timing of the test. Again, when possible, it should be administered following the same time constraints of the real ECCE. Note that to keep the audio limited to one CD, we have shortened the pauses between items in the listening section by a few seconds. Teachers can add additional time for students by pressing the pause button on the CD player.

We hope to have made preparing for the ECCE a stimulating and engaging endeavor.

—Fernando Fleurquin, John W. McLaughlin, and Amy D. Yamashiro
Ann Arbor, MI, 2006

Language Features Reviewed in Volume 1			
Unit	Topic	Language Forms	Text Types
1	Health and happiness	synonyms/antonyms; active/passive verb forms; subjunctive; contrast markers	scientific health reports
2	Stress and exercise	verb tenses	vacation brochures; radio interview
3	Eating healthy	synonyms/antonyms; noun/adjective forms; adjectival clauses; passive form	news report; short conversations
4	Cooking or eating out	word classifications; comparative sentences	advertisements; brochures; scientific health study; radio interview
5	Children and money	conditional sentences; adverbial phrases	radio interview
6	Friends and family	word categories; transitions; prepositions; phrasal verbs	story; news report; radio interview