



Business Level I

Business Communication I

(Pilot Paper)

Instructions to candidates

- (1) Time allowed: 2 hours
- (2) Total: 100 marks
- (3) Section I - Reading: 6 questions – **All questions are compulsory.**
Section II - Writing: 4 questions – **All questions are compulsory.**
- (4) Answers to all questions, should be in the answer booklet given to you.
- (5) Begin each answer for each question on a separate page in the answer booklet.

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Section I : Reading

All questions are compulsory.
Total marks for Section I is 50 marks.
Recommended time for this section is 1 hour.

Question 1

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the word given within brackets. Look at the example.

(10 marks)

Example (0)..... player

Accounting has been around since the beginning of trade. Through the years, it has become a major (0)(play) in the professional spectrum.

Today, it continues to accommodate a great number of professionals around the world. Careers in accounting are (i)(flourish) due to the steady demand for its services.

It is indeed one of the most (ii)(promise) professions and it is an excellent choice.

Accounting offers a stable rate of (iii)(employ) amidst economic fluctuations. Some professions take a beating when the economy dives, but not (iv)(account).

Businesses need to keep track of their (v)(operate) to be able to find ways to survive (vi).....(economy) plunges. They need to report their (vii)(earn) to the state and pay taxes, (viii).....(regard) of the prevailing situation. Managers need to regularly furnish monthly or (ix).....(quarter) reports to the board.

Accounting is a necessity in business and with the massive business activity we have and will continue to have, there is just plenty of work for both new and (x).....(experience) accountants.

Question 2

Read the topic sentences and the short paragraphs. Select the topic sentence relevant to each paragraph. Write the letter A, B, C, or D on the dotted line provided .

(05 marks)

Paragraphs

(i) Entrepreneurs are goal-oriented and know exactly what they want. They set their goals and everything they do is aimed at achieving those goals. Having a strong vision helps propel you toward accomplishment. Consider setting a goal for yourself.

(ii) Without passion, there is no reason for your work and no drive to do it. Successful business men are passionate and they love what they do and are extremely dedicated to the businesses they create.

(iii) Happy people, who always look on the bright side, are constant dreamers. They look at how they can do things better and make the world a better place. They never dwell on the past or regret mistakes. Instead, they focus on moving forward and moving up. When they're confronted with challenges, they don't see them as problems; they see them as opportunities.

(iv)..... The first reason is that employers want workers to be reliable. The second reason is they want workers to be responsible. In addition, employers look for workers who can work well with others. The ability to work in harmony with co-workers is another quality looked for.

(v). Perhaps no other instrument of the late twentieth century has had such a pervasive impact on our lives. The coming of the information age is forcing schools to rethink of curricula. Students run experiments, analyze data and write papers in ways that could not have happened 30 years ago.

Topic sentences

- A) Importance of setting a goal
- B) Sometimes a vision can help
- C) Achieving a goal is hard.
- D) Entrepreneurs always set goals.

- A) Dedication to a business is a must
- B) Passion is a mighty driving force
- C) One thing you need to be good in life
- D) It is that you should love what you do

- A) Some people like to live in the past
- B) Challenges and opportunities make us
- C) Dreamers are making a better world today
- D) There are many benefits of positive thinking

- A) There are difficulties in finding employees
- B) The ways to achieve success in a business
- C) Harmony is an essential commodity for us
- D) Reliability of workers is hard to find now

- A) Modern day computer users
- B) Curriculum in schools will change
- C) Computers have changed our world
- D) Facilities are upgraded by computers

Question 3

Choose the most suitable word given within brackets to fill in the blanks in the following text.

(10 marks)

Time Management.

Time is something that you can lose and never get back.

People are always **(i)**.....(asking, wishing, making, telling) they had more hours available in the day. The solution to this common problem is **(ii)**.....(easily, easier, easiest, easy) than one might realize. With a few minor adjustments, you can learn **(iii)**..... (why, how, when, where) to manage your time. Proper time management is something that can change your life on a fundamental basis for the better.

Every daily cycle **(iv)**.....(consists, contains, compiles, compels) of a twenty-four hour period. This is **(v)**.....(many, some, one, more) of those things that is what it is and cannot be changed. **(vi)**, (Therefore, Also, Even though, Whether) you cannot control time, you can control how the time you have is used. This realization is the first step to being **(vii)**.....(inventive, effective, negative, restive) in your own time management. It is important to take stock of what is vital in your daily life and **(viii)**.....(focus, lean, jump, hold) on allocating time for these things. Anything that is not important should be **(ix)**..... (considered, eliminated, adjusted, refused) .

Developing skills to successfully manage your time will bring **(x)**.....(forward, forth, towards, into) improvements to your life on a dramatic scale. So, let us say it will be beneficial to keep on trying!

Question 4

There are five gaps in the following paragraph; an extract from a memo. Select the most suitable group of words to complete the paragraph. Write the letters A, B, C, D or E in the space provided.

(05 marks)

- A) are in a position to compile necessary data
- B) are needed for this project
- C) willing to invest their money however is small
- D) the enthusiastic youngsters
- E) commitment the project should succeed handsomely.

Our financial analyst and several laboratory technicians are interested in our new project. The number of people (i)..... . Most of the employees willing to join the project are (ii)..... . Neither our department nor the other three departments (iii)..... . I was told that all the computers and printers in this office (iv)..... . Several loyal clients have been asked to participate . If Mr . Kamal Perera is willing to make a (v)..... .

Question 5

Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words. Use each word only once.
(10 marks)

but while despite with after when furthermore if because as

Business Resilience : a point of view

Many different definitions simply categorize resilience as the “ability to bounce back”.

(i)..... we agree that the ability to “ bounce back” is important, resilience in our view means much more than that. Living and conducting your business (ii) purpose, perseverance, and self reliance make for resilience. This concept is important not just for survival, (iii) also to achieve a competitive advantage.

Resilient businesses regain their balance and keep going, (iv)..... misfortune. They find meaning even (v) there is confusion and turmoil. They are self-confident and understand their own strengths and abilities . (vi).....they do not feel pressure to conform , but take pleasure in being unique and willing to “go through it alone” (vii).....necessary.

Resilient businesses have confidence in their ability to persevere (viii).....they have done so before and anticipate rather than fear change and challenges.

Being resilient does not mean that a business will “bounce back” and return to the same position (ix)..... experiencing difficulties, but it does mean that equilibrium will be re-established.

Resilient businesses experience the same difficulties (x)..... everyone else; they are not immune or hardened to stress, but they have learned how to deal with life’s inevitable difficulties and this ability sets them apart. This in itself can be seen as a competitive advantage!

Source: ThinkGRC

Question 6

Read the following text and select the correct answer to the questions given below.

10 marks

Although there are notable improvements in national payments system, cash is still the most popular means of retail payment in Sri Lanka . The habit of carrying cash is encouraged as only a limited number of stores accept card payments or e-money due to the costs involved, such as annual fees and commissions, lack of required infrastructure as well as to avoid the tax net. However, the cost of handling cash is becoming increasingly challenging, for the users of cash as well as the financial institutions and the Central Bank. Therefore, **this practice** needs to be gradually replaced with a more secure cashless payment medium, thereby encouraging and inculcating a tradition of cashless transactions as in many other emerging markets as well as advanced economies. The increased use of cashless modes of transactions will not only improve the transparency of financial flows, but would also reduce illegal and informal economic activity. Meanwhile, the increased use of mobile electronic devices such as smartphones by the public has created an enabling platform, thereby **widening the avenues** available for cashless transactions, including e-banking and e-wallets. Although mobile phone penetration in Sri Lanka was around 150 per cent in 2018, mobile based payments as a percentage of total retail payments was minute relative to other countries. Nevertheless, digital payments are expected to replace traditional cash transactions in the near future and in such a transforming phase, block -chain technology will be a key payment platform going forward. In this context, timely acquisition of the required technological expertise would be **imperative** for all stakeholders, particularly banks, merchants and end users, so as to keep up with the advances in payment technologies. While such developments are expected to reshape the financial landscape of the country, it would also enhance the efficiency and overall stability of the financial system of Sri Lanka. The Central Bank and other financial institutions are expected to strengthen precautionary measures to enhance cyber security by providing the required infrastructure and increasing consumer awareness about such technologies.

Source : Central Bank Report

(i) Why is payment by cash a more popular mode of transaction in Sri Lanka?

Because

- (a) it is a convenient means to pay at retail stores
- (b) all retail stores look for commissions and e-money
- (c) a limited number of stores are concerned about costs
- (d) card payments are not accepted at stores all the time

(ii) What is the main reason for establishing a cashless medium of payment?

- (a) It is the popular medium in advanced economies
- (b) Handling cash is costly and a challenge for the Central Bank
- (c) Financial institutions find cash transactions easier
- (d) Global markets need a cashless payment system

(iii) How could smartphones assist in solving the problem of cash transactions?

- (a) The public usage makes them an enabling platform

- (b) By discouraging the tradition of paying with cash
- (c) The 150 percent of population use cash for transactions
- (d) Widening the possibility of making payments

(iv) What effect does cashless modes of transactions have on the economy?

- (a) Make financial flows transparent
- (b) Compete with emerging economies
- (c) Reduce illegal economic activity
- (d) Raise awareness of formal transactions

(v) How is it expected to move from cash to cashless payments in the future?

- (a) Through block-chain technology
- (b) By 150 percent users of smartphones
- (c) By new banking technologies
- (d) Using expert technologies

(vi) Which is the most suitable title for this text?

- (a) Global Evolution of Payment Modes
- (b) Growing to be a cashless economy
- (c) Different modes of paying money
- (d) Imagining a cashless world for us

(vii) Complete the following sentences.

Reshaping the financial landscape of the country depends on

- (a) acquiring timely technological expertise
- (b) stakeholders , banks and end users
- (c) banking sector using cashless payments
- (d) the habit of carrying cash for payments

(viii) What does the phrase ‘Imperative for stakeholders’ mean ?

- (a) compulsory for the financial arena in Sri Lanka
- (b) very important for people who will be affected
- (c) crucial for payment with cash in transactions
- (d) could concern the persons who are involved

(ix) What do the two highlighted words ‘**this practice**’ refer to ?

- (a) handling cash transactions
- (b) carrying cash as a habit
- (c) using cash for payments
- (d) cashless transactions

(x) What is the meaning of the phrase ‘**widening the avenues**’?

- (a) improving further the methods
- (b) creating better moves with cash
- (c) making a wide pathway
- (d) opening out more possibilities

Section II - Writing

All questions are compulsory.
Total marks for Section II is 50 marks.
Recommended time for this section is 1 hour

Question 1

The annual get-together scheduled to be held in April has to be postponed. As the secretary of the welfare association it is your duty to inform all participants. Write a notice to inform everyone .
(10 marks)

Include the following in your notice .

- reason for the postponement
- the new date, time duration and venue
- expression of regret
- a cordial invitation to attend

Question 2

Assume that you are the Human Resource Manager of Sahan Pvt Ltd. You are aware that there are employees who deserve recognition for their services and you plan to hold a 'Customer Service Excellence Awards' ceremony for the year 2019, as a tribute to them . The approval of the management has been obtained. Write a memo to all Department Managers requesting to submit nominations for the awards.
(15 marks)

Include the following in your memo

- purpose of the award
- two qualifications needed for the nominations
- closing date for submission of names of nominees

Question 3

Imagine that you missed several lectures due to an important event in your office. Write an email to your lecturer.

(10 marks)

Include the following in your email:

- say why you could not attend lectures
- ask about sections of the syllabus you missed
- make a polite request for help

Question 4

Write a paragraph on **one** of the following topics . (Use 140- 150 words)

(15 marks)

- (a) Advantages and disadvantages of advertisements
- (b) Importance of learning English for business communication
- (c) Five ways to prevent accidents on roads in Sri Lanka

Suggested Answers

SECTION 1 - READING

Question 1

- i. flourishing ii. promising iii. employment iv. accounting v. operations
vi. economic vii. earnings viii. regardless ix. quarterly x. experienced

Question 2

- i. A ii. B iii. D iv. A v. C

Question 3

- i. wishing ii. easier iii. how iv. consists v. one vi. Even though
vii. effective viii. focus ix. eliminated x. forth

Question 4

- i. C ii. D iii. A iv. B v. E

Question 5

- i. while ii. with iii. but iv. despite v. when vi. furthermore
vii. if viii. because ix. after x. as

Question 6

- i. d ii. b iii. a iv. c v. a
vi. b vii. a viii. b ix. c x. d

SECTION II - WRITING

Question 1

Content : 4 marks Language : 4 marks Organization : 2 marks

Example

NOTICE

The annual get-together scheduled for April has to be postponed due to the arrival of the foreign investors and the management's involvement in discussions.

The new schedule is as follows :

Date : 2nd May Time: 6 .00 p.m - 10 .00 p.m Venue : Hotel Water Front

I regret any inconvenience caused .

All are cordially invited

Sumudu Gamage
Secretary
Welfare Association

Question 2

Format: 2 marks

Content: 6 marks

Language : 7marks

Example

Date : Any date

½ mark

From: Human Resource Manager

½ mark

To: All Department Managers

½ mark

Subject : Customer Service Excellence Awards

½ mark

The management has given the approval to hold a ceremony to present awards to the employees with excellent customer service records .

This aims at recognizing the loyalty and dedication of employees towards the company.

Please send me the nominations for these awards before the 21st of May.

Consider the following criteria for nominations.

Number of years of service

Feedback from customers

Ability to resolve customer problems etc.

You may consider other relevant factors to select deserving employees.

HR Manager

Question 3

Content : 5 Language : 5

Example

From : Rasika@yahoo.com
To: Sujeeva@gmail.com
Subject: Missed lectures

Dear Mr Sujeeva

I missed three lectures on accounting last Thursday as I was quite busy working for the Annual Report Awards Ceremony which is a flagship event in our company.

Please may I know what sections of the syllabus I have missed. Have I missed a lot? I don't like to bother you, but could you please help me with what I missed?

Thank you
Best regards
Rasika

Question 4 (Writing a paragraph) Total marks= 15

Content : 6 Language: 6 Organization: 3

Content

5-6 All points included
4-3 Most of the points included
2-1 Only a few points included
0 Totally irrelevant

Language

5-6 Almost no errors, well connected sentences, good range of vocabulary
4-3 Some errors, well connected sentences, good range of vocabulary
2-1 Only a few correct sentences
0 All sentences incorrect

Organization

3 Well organized ideas , meaningful sentences
2 Ideas not well connected
1 Ideas jumbled
0 No organization at all