

BGE NYVK	C1	Listening Comprehension	
English for Business Communication		40 minutes*	40 marks
Sample Test 2			

* including 3 minutes' transfer time

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the instructions for each part of the paper carefully. Answer all the questions. Write in blue ink.

There are two parts to the test. You will hear each piece **twice**. For each part of the test, there will be time for you to look through the questions and time for you to check your answers.

While you are listening, write your answers on the **question paper**. You will have 3 minutes at the end of the test to copy your answers onto the separate **answer sheet**.

At the end of the test, hand in both this question paper and your answer sheet.

When you hear a signal, the text begins.

Text 1

You will hear a text about the acquisition of US Foods by Systems Services Company (Sysco) and the American food distribution business.

I. | **Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F) according to the text.**
1-10

1. In 1946 food was distributed by small firms.
2. In 1970 Sysco was set up by merging several companies.
3. In December Sysco proposed a new deal.
4. Sysco doesn't deliver to Michelin-starred restaurants.
5. Restaurants expect lower prices after the acquisition.
6. Sysco caused a scandal by poor handling of perishable food.
7. US Foods employees are happy about the acquisition.
8. After integration the 2 firms will have over 70 outlets.
9. For some years small rivals will have chance to grow.
10. Sysco will apply its strategy abroad after the acquisition.

Text 2

You will hear a text about the past and present of tinned fish.

II. While listening, fill in each gap in the notes with a maximum of 4 words.
11–20

Tinned fish

What its common image shifted to: (11)

Its role in diets during wars: (12)

Change of the product

Typical packaging in Portugal: (13)

Emerging American shops aim to meet (14)

Type of enterprise started by Martinez: (15)

Martinez says during the pandemic people explored (16)

Growth rate of premium versus common tinned fish: (17)

Branding

Online audience Fishwife addresses: Gen Z and (18)

What makes eating fish more approachable: (19)

Younger consumers emphasize about preserved food: (20)

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KEY

Text 1	
1.	T
2.	T
3.	T
4.	F
5.	F
6.	T
7.	F
8.	F
9.	T
10.	F
Text 2	
11.	Viral treat
12.	(Essential) sources of sustenance / Staple part
13.	Vibrantly coloured (cans)
14.	Gourmands' demands
15.	online-delivery (business
16.	Unfamiliar flavours
17.	triple
18.	Millennial consumers
19.	(Watching) instructional videos
20.	convenience

Text 1

US Foods by Sysco

WHEN John Baugh and his wife Eula Mae launched Zero Foods in 1946, to deliver frozen food to businesses in Houston, America's distribution system consisted of countless small local firms. So Baugh set about consolidating it. In 1970 (nineteen seventy) he persuaded eight similar firms to merge with his to form the Systems Services Company (Sysco), which he then expanded through a series of acquisitions. Baugh died in 2007, but on December 9th his firm announced a deal which, if antitrust regulators approve it, may be the culmination of his visionary strategy.

In an acquisition valued at \$8.2 billion, Sysco will buy US Foods, its closest rival in America. There has been speculation for years that these two firms would get together.

Thanks to its strategy of acquisitions and an obsession with cost control and efficiency it got from Baugh, Sysco has long been the market leader in delivering food, frozen and otherwise, to schools, fast-food chains and even fancy Michelin-starred restaurants. With US Foods it will account for over a quarter of the American market. Food producers will not relish the extra clout of the combined firm. Likewise, restaurants, which will lose the chance to get lower prices by playing off Sysco and US Foods against each other.

After a hard year of slow growth and a scandal over poor storage of perishable food in some depots in California, Sysco hopes to return to what it knows best, stripping out costs. The outlook may be grim for employees of US Foods, who had hoped for an easier exit from six years of ownership by Clayton Dubilier & Rice. Workers would doubtless have preferred an initial public offering or even a sale to a big retailer like Walmart.

Successfully integrating two such sprawling, decentralised firms (Sysco alone has more than 70 operating businesses in America) is likely to take several years. That will create opportunities for smaller rivals such as Performance Food Group and the innovative Gordon Food Services to poach customers disgruntled by the merger process. It will also hold back Sysco's efforts to apply its strategy to markets outside America.

Text 2

Tinned fish

Ms Liao says tinned fish is often considered “akin to cat food or bunker food”. But, posting as @daywithmei, she has turned it into a viral treat: her videos have millions of views on TikTok.

The canning process was invented during the Napoleonic wars. Fresh food was in short supply, particularly for those on military and naval expeditions, and so foods preserved in jars became essential sources of sustenance. Later, during the second world war, tinned fish became a staple part of diets. For a long time this gave any food packed in aluminium or steel connotations of hardship. But now tinned fish is back: on social media, on restaurant menus and in Gen Z’s cupboards. What changed?

The product itself, for starters. Canned fish has been part of the Iberian food scene since the 19th century: shops across Portugal are dedicated to the vibrantly coloured cans. Becca Millstein encountered artisanal tinned fish, such as pulpo en aceite de oliva (octopus in olive oil), while studying in Europe. Realising that American equivalents were “frozen in the 1960s”, she co-founded Fishwife, a food company, in 2020. Stockists are popping up to meet gourmands’ demands. The Fantastic World of the Portuguese Sardine opened in Times Square in New York last summer. The shop offers more than 30 varieties of tinned fish, including eels and whelks.

Patrick Martinez founded The Tinned Fish Market, a British online-delivery business, in 2018. “I remember doing farmers’ markets and people getting upset because our sardines were £3 [\$3.90]”, over five times the cost of supermarket tins. Yet “The pandemic changed our appreciation of food,” he says, as people had more time to indulge and experiment with unfamiliar flavours. Now high-end products are his company’s main draw. In America, too, sales of premium tinned fish—anything exceeding \$5 a tin—are growing at triple the rate of the broader market.

Branding is an important part of the revival. Ms Millstein credits much of Fishwife’s success to social media; the company targets Gen Z and millennial consumers online. Videos of influencers unboxing retro-looking tins are both fun and helpful. Many people do not know what to do with something like tinned sardines, Ms Liao says, and some worry about choking on the bones. Watching instructional videos makes it “less scary” for the uninitiated.

Tinned fish may be paving the way for cans’ comeback: there are more than 335m posts on TikTok related to “Spam food”. A new generation of consumers has peeled away unflattering assumptions about preserved foodstuffs and highlighted their convenience. Time to stock up.