



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 15 May 2019 – Morning

AS Level English Language

H070/02 Exploring contexts

Resource Booklet

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes



You must have:

- the Question Paper
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- The materials in this **Resource Booklet** are for use with the questions in **Section B** of the Question Paper.

INFORMATION

- This document consists of **8** pages.

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The material in this **Resource Booklet** relates to the questions in Section B of the Question Paper.

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SECTION B – Exploring language in context

Text A

Text A is an edited page from a website called “CV Library” which deals with a range of careers-related topics. This page provides advice for those attending interviews.

5 common mechanical design engineer interview questions

Interviews are challenging. Preparation, as we all know, is the differentiator between success and failure. While the usual tough interview questions will crop up, there will naturally be some more specific, job-related questions. We’ve identified a few common interview questions that apply across the board that will help increase your chances of landing a mechanical design engineer job.

1. Can you tell me about a time you were expected to back up decisions with supporting data?

Once all the introductory niceties and “tell me about yourself” type questions are done with, the competency-based ones begin. The interviewer expects you to prove that you have the skills and experience required by answering these questions effectively. You should use the *STAR technique to provide evidence and show you’re the right person for the job.

Think about a task you completed, how you used data and if there was anything you could have done better, to prove your knowledge and adaptability.

What is the *STAR technique?

The STAR technique breaks your answer down into a coherent structure to show the interviewer you’ve got the required skills and attributes. The four stages of a STAR technique answer are:

- **Situation** – Here, you set the scene and tell the interviewer about the situation you were initially in
- **Task** – Then, you reveal the task you were set
- **Action** – Next, you detail the action you took
- **Result** – Finally, you explain the result and outcome of the task

2. Tell me about a time you combined practical and technical ability in a project.

Due to the varied nature of a mechanical design engineer role, this question could as easily refer to gas turbine basics as it could to beam bending. The point is to demonstrate how well you can combine these two essential skills to deliver a positive result.

Once again, draw on the STAR method to keep you on track if you tend to ramble and deviate.

3. What problems did you identify in your last role that others had overlooked?

The good old attention-to-detail question, with some problem-solving thrown in. This is the type of question that can differentiate candidates.

Be careful not to criticise your current colleagues or employer. Remember, team fit and personality are big factors in the hiring decision.

4. Tell me about a time you had to change the mind of a senior manager or influential customer.

The amount of contact you have with senior management and influential customers will vary dependent on the job. This question simply examines your influencing, assertiveness and communication skills.

Your response will also be quite telling of your attitude towards authority.

5. Tell me about a time you've made a mistake at work.

This is a very common and tricky question to answer as it prompts you to admit your mistakes while trying to impress.

Honesty is the key here because everyone makes mistakes!

However, be careful about what you choose to share. You don't necessarily need to share that you swore loudly, panicked or broke down when you discovered the error. Instead, use the STAR method to explain the steps you took.

Final thoughts

Our top tips would be to study the job description, identify the essential and desirable competencies the employer is looking for and prepare lots of examples. After all, preparation and organisation are the key to acing that interview and landing your dream job!

SECTION B – Exploring language in context

Text B

Text B is an edited guest blog on a website called “Northern Lights”, a marketing strategy forum which deals with a range of business and marketing strategies. This page discusses gender differences in public speaking.

Public Speaking – Are Women and Men Really Different?

Guest blog by Rosalind Adler and Lea Sellers of The Confidence People, which offers communication and media skills courses designed to boost confidence for people when they speak in public or face the media.

How different are men and women when it comes to speaking in public? Of course, we train men and women, but when we started out – and were called Media Skills for Women – we did focus more on women. Why? There is a widespread lack of confidence amongst women spokespeople and public speakers in particular.

Women are judged more on their appearance

One key difference between men and women is that women are far more exercised about their appearance – possibly because that’s a criterion they’re still much more harshly judged on than their male counterparts. You have only to see the appalling comments made about historian Mary Beard, to understand why. Working in Dubai with women wearing the long black abaya and the hijab, we find they are still very conscious of their face, their hair and their hands when speaking in public.

Women need to find their voice – not a man’s voice

Another key difference is that a lot of women give themselves a hard time because they are trying to speak more like a man. Women tend to believe that being a good speaker involves being a more ‘male’ speaker. But don’t fall for the current advice to ‘lower your voice to sound more authoritative’. You need to be clear, of course, but to inspire trust you need, above all, to be yourself. Finding your own voice and style sometimes needs in-depth work: one client worked hard to drop her carapace of jargon – but what a joy to see emerging from that chrysalis a confident and engaging speaker, able to use and enjoy her own words and her own voice!

Even high-powered women like those we work with on the Steering Committee of the 30% Club express problems of anxiety when facing a room full of people.

Both sexes have self-doubt – women express it

Of course, both sexes experience similar levels of anxiety and self-doubt. Women are perhaps fortunate in that they often feel more able to express their fears. It is a brave man who admits to feeling unsure. Stereotypically, men tend to put themselves forward as spokespeople when they feel reasonably competent; women usually like to feel 100% certain they can deliver before they offer themselves as speakers.

This often means that the pool of female experts available (and willing) to represent their company is small – the BBC is trying to address the problem with their BBC expert woman initiative. One of our objectives is to widen that pool of spokeswomen. No-one wants to see the same few faces all the time, however brilliant the speakers. We all like a surprise.

Women give mixed messages

And here's one: studies of children show that girls are more adept than boys at sending two conflicting messages at once, a mismatch between verbal and non-verbal communication. The danger of giving mixed messages – sometimes out of a desire not to cause hurt or not to be unpopular – is one women need to be particularly aware of in their communications.

So, whether you're a woman or a man, when you're facing an audience: grab their attention, take them by the hand and lead them to where you want them to go.

And we'd love to hear your experiences of public speaking – what have been your biggest fears and greatest successes?

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