

Marlins Spoken English Assessment for Cruiseship Staff (SPEACS)

The Marlins Spoken English Assessment for Cruiseship Staff (SPEACS) has been developed to help carry out effective assessment of the oral and aural skills of cruiseship staff in a one-to-one interview situation. The SPEACS can be used to identify the need for training and to assess progress during and / or after training.

Marlins recommends that the SPEACS is used in conjunction with the ISF Marlins Test to give a balanced profile of a seafarer's language level and ability. This will ensure a secure and objective assessment of language level (from the computer test) complemented by a personal assessment of communication skills (from the SPEACS).

The SPEACS is distinctively cruise industry orientated and provides an opportunity to evaluate the ability to communicate effectively in English. It is not designed to test knowledge of seamanship or job skills.

The test material includes a range of visuals, discussion topics and situational prompts at distinct language levels. When carrying out a Marlins SPEACS, the interviewer proceeds through a series of structured prompts to elicit natural spoken English. There are 3 Options to choose from which represent levels Elementary, Lower-Intermediate and Intermediate+. A set of preliminary questions is posed to ascertain the Option most appropriate for each seafarer. The Interviewer subsequently chooses questions from that level.

Extensive Interviewer's Guidelines are provided with details of how to carry out the test and prompts for questioning at each stage of the test.

Using a detailed set of descriptors of Spoken Fluency, Spoken Accuracy and Listening Comprehension, the interviewer is able to evaluate each seafarer's English proficiency. The SPEACS results can be used to support the ISF Marlins Test results and also to underline specific skill areas that would benefit from improvement during training.

Example of Option 1 – Visuals (describing Activities on Board)

Option 1 Main Menu [^](#) [< Back](#) [Exit >](#)

Visuals: Activities On Board

Click on an image to enlarge



Situations [>](#) Discussions [>](#)

Option 2 Option 3



Communicative Aim

To describe onboard activities

Example of the accompanying Test Materials for the Interviewer for the above question

- What is happening in the pictures?
- Which of these activities do you like doing? Why / Why not?
- What other activities do passengers do on board?
- What do you do when you're not working?

Example of Option 3 – Situations (Describing types of cruises)

The screenshot shows a digital interface for 'Option 3 Visuals: Cruises'. At the top right, there are navigation links: 'Main Menu', '< Back', and 'Exit >'. The main area contains six square images of cruise ships: 1) A ship in a blue fjord with a large glacier in the background. 2) A ship navigating a narrow river with a waterfall on the right bank. 3) A ship in a harbor with historic buildings and a cathedral. 4) A ship on a river with water fountains in the foreground. 5) A ship at a tropical beach with lounge chairs and people. 6) A ship docked at a modern pier with greenery. Below the images, there are two buttons: 'Situations >' and 'Discussions >'. At the bottom left, there are three colored buttons: a red one labeled 'Option 1', an orange one labeled 'Option 2', and a green one. At the bottom right is the 'Marlins' logo featuring a blue marlin fish.

Communicative Aims

To speculate about places in the pictures
To compare and contrast places

Example of the accompanying Test Materials for the Interviewer for the above question

- Where might these places be?
- Have you visited anywhere like the places in the picture? Tell me about the place
- If you had the chance, which one would you most like to visit? Why?
- Compare the type of holiday you could have in each place.
- What would be the best cruise in your opinion? Why?

Example of Option 2 – Situations (Taking a room service order)

Option 2
SituationsMain Menu < Back Exit >

ROOM SERVICE

Starters


Shrimp Cocktail
Green Salad

Sandwiches

Pastrami, Chicken or Cheese
on
Wholewheat White
(All served with fries)


Desserts

Jello
Apple Pie



< VisualsDiscussion >

Option
1Option
2Option
3



Language Function

Responding to questions in a polite manner

Example of the accompanying Test Materials for the Interviewer for the above question

Interviewer Prompts (Interviewer plays the part of a guest)

- Hello, I'd like some room service please.
- Do you have any fish dishes?
- My daughter is a vegetarian. What do you recommend?
- What comes with the sandwiches?
- What's in a Green Salad?
- What about desserts?