

**Test Information Guide  
for**

**BILINGUAL TEST FOR**

**COUNTER CASHIER,  
CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE,  
CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST,  
SENIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST**

**TEST 4301 (SPANISH)  
TEST 4302 (CAMBODIAN)  
TEST 4303 (CANTONESE)  
TEST 4304 (KOREAN)  
TEST 4305 (MANDARIN)  
TEST 4306 (VIETNAMESE)**

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**HR Performance Assessment Services  
Southern California Edison Company**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Test Information Guide is to familiarize you with the Bilingual Test. This Guide contains background information about the test, test description, sample of the type of dialogue used in the test, an example of the instructions given to people who take the test, and strategies to use while taking the test.

## **Background Information**

The Customer Service Department at Southern California Edison (SCE) has created a new bilingual job progression for Customer Service Representative positions: Customer Service Representative (CSR), Customer Service Specialist (CSS), and Senior Customer Service Specialist (Sr. CSS) at the phone centers and local offices to serve customers who do not speak English. The bilingual positions are for individuals who speak English and one of the following languages: Cambodian; Cantonese; Korean; Mandarin; Spanish; and Vietnamese.

The Bilingual Test is intended to ensure that people in these bilingual positions are proficient in the non-English language they will use. The best method to confirm one's proficiency in a language is to develop a performance/skill test that is job-related. The Bilingual Test is set up to simulate situations the applicant might encounter on the job (i.e., a phone call or face-to-face discussion of a typical customer problem or request).

## **Policy for Scheduling the Test**

The Bilingual CSR Test will be given four times a year at regularly scheduled 90-day intervals (early December, March, June, and September). In addition, it will be given when there is a JOIS posting for a Bilingual CSR position (and the regularly scheduled test sessions won't allow the JOIS position to be filled in time). If the test is given because of a JOIS position being open, people wanting to test for reasons other than to fill that JOIS position also may take the test the day that raters are available. Because this test is expensive, both in terms of manhours and raters' fees, the test will not be given at any other times.

People who wish to take the test need to be scheduled in advance and also need their supervisor's approval. Test Administration will notify Customer Service about regularly scheduled test dates, and also will give as much advance notice as possible of any testing dates required by JOIS.

## **Retest Policy**

Someone who does not pass the test on his/her first attempt may retest, after an interval of 90 days, at the next regularly scheduled session (late November, February, May, and August) or on the day the test is given due to the need to fill a JOIS position.

## **Description of the Test**

The test is set up as a role-playing exercise in one of the six non-English languages being evaluated. The applicant (you) plays the role of a Customer Service Representative (CSR),

while one rater assumes the role of a customer. And a second rater acts as an observer. The rater who acts as a customer has a script, in the non-English language, to follow exactly. The applicant is given a booklet with short paragraphs of his/her part of the conversation. The applicant's part of the conversation is given in *English*, as *general instructions/directions* as to where the conversation should lead. Each paragraph is written on a separate page to identify the different parts of the conversation, and you need to turn a page when you are done discussing the information it contains with the customer (rater). The customer (rater) will nod his/her head when it is time to turn the page.

The applicant (you) should read the relevant paragraph, think of its meaning, and then answer the customer (rater) in the **non-English language and in his/her own words**. The instructions are given in such a way that verbatim translation of the written paragraph would not sound like a conversation.

The conversation between the rater and the applicant concentrates on a typical problem customers might have, such as a request for turn on/off of electricity or a billing inquiry. The script is designed to simulate a work-related situation. However, the script exists only to help the applicant concentrate on presenting the correct language. This is a test of language proficiency not a test of SCE procedures.

The conversation between the rater and the applicant is tape-recorded to allow later reviews of the conversation, if necessary.

## **Test Procedure**

When you arrive at the location where the test is conducted, a Test Administrator will escort you to a quiet room where he/she will explain the procedures that you are going to follow. He/she will read aloud from the Instructions for Applicants Sheet (see Appendix A of this Guide) while you read along. You are encouraged to ask questions if you do not understand how the procedures will work.

When procedures are clear and all of your questions are answered, the Test Administrator will give you ten minutes to read your part of the conversation from the booklet described above. Then he/she will escort you to the test room and introduce you to the raters. The raters will go over the instructions in English, then will demonstrate an example (shown in English in Appendix B of this Guide), in the non-English language, of how the test procedures work. After that, you and one of the raters will practice with a second example (shown in English in Appendix C) in the non-English language, so you can get more of a feel for what the test will be like. After you are through with the second example and the raters have answered any questions you have, the actual test will begin. During the test you will be expected to speak only in the non-English language.

When you are done, you will be escorted back to the Test Administrator and asked to fill out a Test Comment Sheet, in which you can give your feedback regarding the test. These comments are important since they can help us improve the test.

The test (excluding the instructional period) typically takes 20 minutes to complete.

### **How the Test is Scored**

Scoring of the test is done by both raters. They have a scoring sheet that includes a description of several aspects of speaking a language such as: "flexible use of the language," "presentation of the language," use of culturally appropriate terms" and "professional composition of the language."

Each rater grades the conversation separately and then the two raters need to reach a consensus on the above factors. During the evaluation process the raters may listen to the tape, when necessary.

## **Test Taking Strategies.**

The following list provides common sense techniques you can use before the test begins.

Before the test:

1. Think of the test as a way of demonstrating the level of your understanding of the tested language and your ability to communicate clearly with another person.
2. Remember! This is a test of language proficiency, not of SCE knowledge. Your score will not be lowered if you describe an incorrect procedure (these are being given to you). The important thing is that you need to be able to communicate clearly in the non-English language that you chose to be tested for.
3. If you have any questions regarding the test, discuss them with your supervisor or call Staffing and Assessment Services at PAX 25558.

During the test:

1. Be confident- if you feel confident about passing the test, you may lose some of your anxiety.
2. Be sure to listen carefully to the raters and respond accordingly. The rater will nod when you are done discussing a section of the conversation and it is time to move on.
3. This is not a timed test. Take your time and think about your response.
4. Ask questions (in the non-English language) to clarify words or sentences that are not clear to you.
5. If you don't know a particular word, look for another way of expressing the same idea and keep on going. Use other parts of the dialogue to show your abilities.
6. If the test room becomes noisy or there are other distractions or irregularities, mention them to the Test Administrator or raters immediately.

## Appendix A

### Applicant Instruction Sheet

This test is a test of oral proficiency in non-English language. The test consists of a typical conversation between a customer who does not speak English and a Customer Service Representative. The conversation centers around either a request for turn on/off electricity in a new address or a billing inquiry. However, this conversation is fictitious. It does not follow exact on-the-job procedures used by the Customer Service Department.

The test is intended to evaluate your proficiency in the non-English language not your knowledge of customer service procedures. Do not be concerned that the procedures are not correct; just follow the script. The raters will not score your use of procedures; they will, however, score your use of language.

The test involves you (the examinee) and two raters. One of the raters will play the role of an SCE customer, you will play the role of the Customer Service Representative and the other rater will observe the interaction between you and the "customer". Both raters are proficient in the language being tested, and both will be rating your proficiency in the use of the language.

Before starting the test, the raters will demonstrate, in the non-English language, how the "role playing" should work, and then will let up "warm up" by playing the part of a Customer Service Representative during a second short example. (The example will not be scored. Its purpose is to help you feel more comfortable and familiar with the test procedures.) If you have questions about how the test works, please ask the raters for clarification before the actual test starts.

The level of language that is required from you is the best that you know in order to be understood and respected by your customer without using English words. For example, Spanish speakers should use Spanish, not "Spanglish," during the test.

If you cannot remember a particular word, just go ahead and use a phrase to explain what you mean. Also, if the rater uses a word you are not sure of, go ahead and ask him/her to repeat or explain the word. You will not be penalized for asking an occasional question. Knowing when to ask questions, after all, is an important part of real communication.

You will be given written instructions, in English, as to the content of what you should say to the customer. (Before the test, you will be allowed ten minutes in which to familiarize yourself with these written instructions.) Verbatim instructions, however, have not been included. Instead, you are expected to use your own words and your own expressions. If you (attempt to) translate the instructions verbatim, you may fail the test. It is important that you read what you are supposed to convey to the customer and then put that message into your own words. (For instance, if you speak Spanish and your instructions tell you to "Greet customer," you might respond "Buenos dias" or "Buenas tardes.")

**(If you are an Edison Customer Service Representative and the procedures mentioned in our script (scenario) are different from those you have learned on the job, please go by this script. Again, the important thing for this test is language use, not perfect Customer Service Representative procedures!)**

Test instructions are presented in a binder, with one instructional "unit" per page (a unit can consist of anything from a single sentence to an entire paragraph). There are approximately 12 instructional units in a script (scenario). The procedure you are to follow is:

- 1a. Read the first instructional unit.
- 1b. Convey that message, in your own words, and to the best of your ability, to the "customer."
- 1c. Listen to the response from the "customer." Wait until he/she is completely finished.
- 1d. After the customer has completed his/her response, then turn the page to the next instructional unit.

Repeat these steps for each of the instructional units within the script (scenario), until the script (scenario) is completed.

Do not read ahead during the test session. Do not move to the next page before you and the "customer" have finished discussing all the material on the current page. One of the raters will nod his/her head when it is all right for you to turn to the next page.

Do not be concerned if you feel the pace of the exchange between you and the customer is a bit slow because you have to read the instructions. That is expected and you will not be penalized for pauses while you read what you should be communicating next. This is not a timed test.

Note: All tests will be tape-recorded. The tape recorder will be in plain view. Before the test begins, one of the raters will state your name, the date, and the vignette (scenario) number so that your test can be identified, if needed. This tape-recording is the property of HR Measurement and Assessment Services (MA&S) and is confidential and never will be released to your supervisor. This tape-recording will: (1) allow the raters to replay parts of the test in case a rater is unclear as to what rating should be given; and (2) provide a permanent record of the testing session.

## Appendix B

### Applicant Instruction Sheet

#### First Example of How Role Playing Works

The first example is demonstrated by the raters.

**1. Greet customer. Ask how you may help him/her.**

*This is expressed in the non-English language by the first rater who, for this example, is playing the role of Customer Service Representative. During the actual test, the person taking the test would express this in words of his/her choice in the non-English language being tested.*

**2. Hello. My name is Chris Day. My address is 2325 Yorkshire Drive, Number 30, Ontario. I can't pay my bill right now, and I need an extension.**

*This is said in the non-English language by the second rater who, for this example, is playing the role of a customer. During the actual test, as well, one of the raters would play this role.*

**3. Tell the customer that you have confirmed the address information, and have found the account number. Ask how much of an extension is needed.**

*This is done in the non-English language by the rater playing the role of the Customer Service Representative. During the actual test, this would be expressed by the person taking the test, in words of his/her own choosing.*

**4. I need an extension until Friday of next week. I can pay next Friday.**

*This is said in the non-English language by the rater playing the role of a customer in this example. During the actual test, as well, one of the raters would play this role*

## Appendix C

### Second Example of How Role Playing Works

The second example is demonstrated by the applicant (role of Customer Service Representative) and one rater (role of a customer).

**1. Greet customer. Ask how you may help him/her.**

*This is expressed in the non-English language by the applicant who, for this example and in the test to follow, will play the role of Customer Service Representative.*

**2. Hello my name is Chris Duran. My address is 1050 Bonita Ave, Number 10, Pomona. Just a few minutes ago, all the lights in my house went out, and I couldn't get them on again.**

*This is said in the non-English language by a rater who, for this example and in the test to follow, is playing the role of a customer.*

**3. Ask if the customer has checked the fuse box.**

*This is said in the non-English language by the applicant playing the role of the Customer Service Representative.*

**4. Yes, but I didn't find any problem.**

*This is said in the non-English language by the rater acting as a customer.*

**5. Tell the customer that you will send a service person to the house within the next four hours.**

*This is said in the non-English language by the applicant playing the role of a Customer Service Representative.*