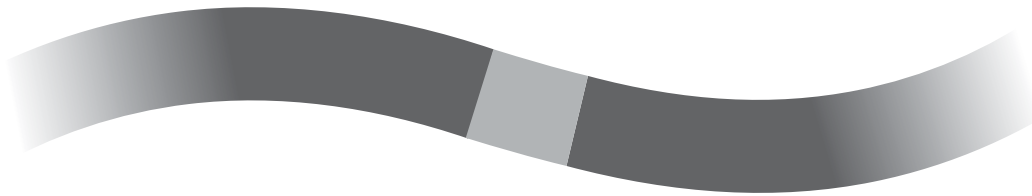




First Certificate in English



Information for candidates
for examinations from December 2008

Information for Candidates – FCE

Why take First Certificate in English (FCE)?

If your knowledge of English is already good enough for many everyday situations, then FCE is the right exam for you. It is ideal if you want to work or study abroad or to develop a career which requires English.

FCE is an upper-intermediate-level Cambridge ESOL exam, at Level B2 of the Council of Europe's **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (CEFR). This means that if you pass FCE, your level of English is good enough to be of practical use in many types of job. Successful FCE candidates can deal with everyday letters and telephone conversations, and can understand some non-academic training courses and simple textbooks and articles.

Why take a Cambridge ESOL exam?

Develop good communication skills

- Cambridge ESOL exams cover all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – as well as testing your use of grammar and vocabulary. They include a range of different types of question which test how well you can use English, so that you develop the full range of skills you need to communicate well in a variety of situations.

A world of opportunity

- Thousands of employers, universities and government departments around the world recognise Cambridge ESOL examinations, so a Cambridge ESOL exam is a valuable qualification to have when you need to provide evidence of your level of English for a job or when you apply for a place to study.

Quality you can trust

- We test all our questions on candidates before we put them into a 'live' examination. This makes sure that they are fair, at the right level, that the content is suitable for all candidates and that you have enough time to answer them. You can therefore be sure that your result is a true measure of your level of English.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) offers the world's leading range of qualifications for learners and teachers of English. More than 2 million people in over 130 countries take Cambridge ESOL exams each year.

What does FCE involve?

This booklet is a brief introduction to FCE. We show examples from each part of the exam, but in some cases we do not show the full text or all the questions. You can find more detailed information about FCE, as well as a full FCE sample paper, on our Candidate Support website at:

www.candidates.CambridgeESOL.org

	<i>Content</i>	<i>Time allowed</i>	<i>Marks (% of total)</i>
Paper 1: Reading	3 parts/30 questions	1 hour	20%
Paper 2: Writing	2 parts: Part 1 – one compulsory question Part 2 – one from a choice of four questions	1 hour 20 minutes	20%
Paper 3: Use of English	4 parts/42 questions	45 minutes	20%
Paper 4: Listening	4 parts/30 questions	40 mins (approx.)	20%
Paper 5: Speaking	4 parts	14 minutes per pair of candidates	20%

Paper 1: Reading

Time: 1 hour

Part 1

In this part of the Reading paper you have to read a text carefully and answer some questions. The questions are multiple choice, each with four options (A, B, C or D) and they follow the same order as the information in the text.

In the example below we show you an extract from a novel and some of the questions from a typical exam paper. Read the text and try to answer the questions (1–3). In the exam, the text is longer and in this example there are five more questions like the ones below.

I shifted uncomfortably inside my best suit and eased a finger inside the tight white collar. It was hot in the little bus and I had taken a seat on the wrong side where the summer sun beat on the windows. It was a strange outfit for the weather, but a few miles ahead my future employer might be waiting for me and I had to make a good impression.

There was a lot depending on this interview. Many friends who had qualified with me were unemployed or working in shops or as labourers in the shipyards. So many that I had almost given up hope of any future for myself as a veterinary surgeon.

There were usually two or three jobs advertised in the *Veterinary Record* each week and an average of eighty applicants for each one. It hadn't seemed possible when the letter came from Darrowby in Yorkshire. Mr S. Farnon would like to see me on the Friday afternoon; I was to come to tea and, if we were suited to each other, I could stay on as his assistant. Most young people emerging from the colleges after five years of hard work were faced by a world unimpressed by their enthusiasm and bursting knowledge. So I had grabbed the lifeline unbelievably.

line 16

...

- 1 As he travelled, the writer regretted his choice of
 - A seat.
 - B clothes.
 - C career.
 - D means of transport.

- 2 What had surprised the writer about the job?
 - A There had been no advertisement.
 - B He had been contacted by letter.
 - C There was an invitation to tea.
 - D He had been selected for interview.

- 3 The writer uses the phrase 'I had grabbed the lifeline' (line 16) to show that he felt
 - A confident of his ability.
 - B ready to consider any offer.
 - C cautious about accepting the invitation.
 - D forced to make a decision unwillingly.

Part 2

In Part 2, you have to read a text from which seven sentences or paragraphs have been removed. After the text you will find some sentences or paragraphs and you have to choose one of them to fit each space. There is one option which does not fit any of the spaces.

In the example below, there is part of an article about a woman who is a downhill mountain-bike racer. Four sentences are missing. Read the sentences after the text (A–E) and try to decide which sentence best fits each gap (9–12). There is one extra sentence which you don't need to use. In the exam, the text is longer and there are three more gaps and three more sentences.

Downhill racer

Anna Jones tells of her move from skiing to downhill mountain biking and her rapid rise up the ranks to her current position as one of the top five downhill racers in the country.

At the age of seven I had learnt to ski and by fourteen I was competing internationally. When I was eighteen a close friend was injured in a ski race, and as a result, I gave up competitive skiing. To fill the gap that skiing had left I decided to swap two planks of wood for two wheels with big tyres.

My first race was a cross-country race in 1995. It wasn't an amazing success. **9** After entering a few more cross-country races, a local bike shop gave me a downhill bike to try. I entered a downhill race, fell off, but did reasonably well in the end, so I switched to downhill racing.

I think my skiing helped a lot as I was able to transfer several skills such as cornering and weight-balance to mountain biking. This year I'm riding for a famous British team and there are races almost every weekend from March through to September. **10** In fact, there's quite a lot of putting up tents in muddy fields.

Last season I was selected to represent Great Britain at both the European and World Championships. Both events were completely different from the UK race scene. **11** I was totally in awe, racing with the riders I had been following in magazines. The atmosphere was electric and I finished about mid-pack.

Mountain biking is a great sport to be in. People ask me if downhill racing is really scary. I say, 'Yes it is, and I love it.' Every time I race I scare myself silly and then say, 'Yeah let's do it again.'

When you're riding well, you are right on the edge, as close as you can be to being out of control. **12** However, you quickly learn how to do it so as not to injure yourself. And it's part of the learning process as you have to push yourself and try new skills to improve.

...

- A** I've fallen off more times than I care to remember.
- B** I usually have to stop during practice sessions.
- C** The courses were twice as long and the crowds were twice as big.
- D** The attitude was: how much skill do you need to sit on a saddle and point a bike in the same direction for a few minutes?
- E** I finished last, but it didn't matter as I really enjoyed it.

Part 3

In Part 3, you have to read a series of prompts followed either by a long text divided into paragraphs or by a series of short texts. You have to scan the text(s) and decide which of the prompts matches which paragraph/text. There may be two or more 'matches' for each prompt, unlike Part 2.

In the example below, you have to read part of a magazine article about people who collect things. For each of the questions (16–20), you have to decide in which section of the article (A–C) you can find the information. In the exam, the text will be longer and there will be 10 more questions like the ones below to match.

Which person

had to re-start their collection?

16

has provided useful advice on their subject?

17

was misled by an early success?

18

admits to making little practical use of their collection?

19

regrets the rapid disappearance of certain items?

20

The World of Collecting

A **Ron Barton** shares his home with about 200 sewing machines. His passion began when he was searching for bits of second-hand furniture and kept seeing 'beautiful old sewing machines that were next to nothing to buy'. He couldn't resist them. Then a friend had a machine that wouldn't work, so she asked Barton to look at it for her. At that stage he was not an authority on the subject, but he worked on it for three days and eventually got it going.

Later he opened up a small stand in a London market. 'Most people seemed uninterested. Then a dealer came and bought everything I'd taken along. I thought, "Great! This is my future life." But after that I never sold another one there and ended up with a stall in another market which was only moderately successful.'

Nowadays, he concentrates on domestic machines in their original box containers with their handbooks. He is often asked if he does any sewing with them. The answer is that, apart from making sure that they work, he rarely touches them.

B As a boy, **Chris Peters** collected hundreds of vintage cameras, mostly from jumble sales and dustbins. Later, when the time came to buy his first house, he had to sell his valuable collection in order to put down a deposit. A few years after, he took up the interest again and now has over a thousand cameras, the earliest dating from 1860.

Now Peters 'just cannot stop collecting' and hopes to open his own photographic museum where members of the public will be able to touch and fiddle around with the cameras. Whilst acknowledging that the Royal Camera Collection in Bath is probably more extensive than his own, he points out that 'so few of the items are on show there at the same time that I think my own personal collection will easily rival it.'

C **Sylvia King** is one of the foremost authorities on plastics in Britain. She has, in every corner of her house, a striking collection of plastic objects of every kind, dating from the middle of the last century and illustrating the complex uses of plastic over the years.

King's interest started when she was commissioned to write her first book. In order to do this, she had to start from scratch; so she attended a course on work machinery, maintaining that if she didn't understand plastics manufacture then nobody else would.

As she gathered information for her book, she also began to collect pieces of plastic from every imaginable source: junk shops, arcades, and the cupboards of friends. She also collects 'because it is vital to keep examples. We live in an age of throw-away items: tape-recorders, cassettes, hair dryers – they are all replaced so quickly.'

King's second book, *Classic Plastics: from Bakelite to High Tech*, is the first published guide to plastics collecting. It describes collections that can be visited and gives simple and safe home tests for identification.

King admits that 'plastic is a mysterious substance and many people are frightened of it. Even so, the band of collectors is constantly expanding.'

Paper 2: Writing

Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Part 1 – Compulsory Task

For this part of the Writing paper, you have to write either a letter or an email based on some input material of up to 250 words. The input material will be a letter or an email with notes. You have to write 120–150 words.

In the example below, you have received an email from your English-speaking friend, Sara, who is planning to open a restaurant. You have to read Sara's email and the notes you have made and write an email to reply to Sara. Remember when you write that you should use all your notes.

email

From: Sara Martins
Sent: 15th March
Subject: Restaurant

You remember how Alex and I have always wanted to open a restaurant – well, we're going to do it!

We want to serve food from different countries in our restaurant so we're planning to travel around to collect some ideas. We want to come to your country. When is the best time to come?

Say when _____
and why _____

We want to find out what people cook at home every day. What's the best way for us to do that?

Suggest . . . _____

We'd also like to go to some local restaurants which serve traditional food. Can you recommend one? _____

When we open the restaurant in July, we'd like you to come. Will you be free? _____

Reply soon.

Sara

Yes, give details
No, because . . .

Results Online

Don't forget that you can now get your FCE results online from Cambridge ESOL, as soon as they become available! You can find out more about Results Online and register at:

CambridgeESOL-results.org/Members/Login.aspx

To register for Results Online, you need an ID number and a secret number. These are in a letter which your centre will give you. It's a good idea to register as soon as possible because the website is very busy on the day when we release the results.

Part 2

In Part 2, you can choose one of the five options. These may be an essay, an article, a report, a review, a letter of application, an informal letter or a short story. The last question in Part 2 is a choice of two options based on the list of set books. You should write 120–180 words.

In the example below, you can choose to write an article, a review or a story (Questions 2–4). If you prefer to write about one of the set books you have read, you should look at Question 5 which gives you a choice (a or b) between writing a letter or an essay.

- 2 You have seen this announcement in an international magazine.

MY FAVOURITE TEACHER

Tell us about a favourite teacher of yours and say what you remember about him or her.

We will publish the most interesting articles next month.

Write your **article**.

- 3 You recently saw this notice in an English-language magazine called Theatre World.

Reviews needed!

Have you been to the theatre recently? If so, could you write us a review of the play you saw? Include information on the characters, costumes and story and say whether you would recommend the play to other people.

The best reviews will be published next month.

Write your **review**.

- 4 Your teacher has asked you to write a story for an international magazine. The story must **begin** with the following words:

Anna had a very special reason for getting up early the next day, so she set the alarm for 5 am.

Write your **story**.

- 5 Answer **one** of the following two questions based on **one** of the titles below. Write the letter **(a)** or **(b)** as well as the number 5 in the question box on the opposite page.

- (a) *The Citadel* by A.J.Cronin
This is part of a letter from your English-speaking penfriend.

We are reading The Citadel in class. Didn't you say you've seen the film? What do you think of the main character, Andrew Manson?

Write a **letter** to your penfriend, giving your opinion. Do not write any postal addresses.

Write your **letter**.

- (b) *Round the world in 80 days* by Jules Verne
Phileas Fogg and Passepartout are very different characters. Which one do you think enjoys the journey most? Write an **essay** saying who you think enjoys the journey most and why.

Write your **essay**.

Paper 3: Use of English

Time: 45 minutes

Part 1

In Part 1 you have a text to read in which there are 12 numbered gaps (plus one gap as an example). Each gap represents a missing word or phrase. For each gap, there are four possible answers (A, B, C or D) and you have to choose which word or phrase fills the gap correctly. Sometimes you have to choose between words with a similar meaning. You can sometimes identify the word you need because it is always followed by a particular preposition.

Below you have the first part of a text about travelling. The correct answer for the example (0) is 'called'. For each of the numbered gaps (1–8) you have four choices (A, B, C or D). In the exam, the text is longer and there are four more questions like the ones in the example below.

A love of travelling

For Nigel Portman, a love of travelling began with what's (0) a 'gap year'. In common with many other British teenagers, he chose to take a year out before (1) to study for his degree. After doing various jobs to (2) some money, he left home to gain some experience of life in different cultures, visiting America and Asia. The more adventurous the young person, the (3) the challenge they are likely to (4) themselves for the gap year, and for some, like Nigel, it can (5) in a thirst for adventure.

Now that his university course has (6) to an end, Nigel is just about to leave on a three-year trip that will take him (7) around the world. What's more, he plans to make the whole journey using only means of transport which are (8) by natural energy. . . .

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | A settling down | B getting up | C taking over | D holding back |
| 2 | A achieve | B raise | C advance | D win |
| 3 | A stronger | B wider | C greater | D deeper |
| 4 | A put | B set | C aim | D place |
| 5 | A result | B lead | C cause | D create |
| 6 | A come | B turned | C reached | D brought |
| 7 | A just | B complete | C whole | D right |
| 8 | A pulled | B charged | C forced | D powered |

Part 2

Part 2 also consists of a text with 12 numbered gaps and you have to think of a single word which will fill each gap correctly.

The example below shows the first part of a text called 'The temple in the lake'. The first gap (0) is an example and the answer was 'as'. Read the rest of the text and try to find the right answers for questions 13–18. In the exam, the text is longer and there are six more gaps like the ones in the example below.

The temple in the lake

Lake Titicaca, often known (0) the 'holy lake', is situated in South America on the border between Bolivia and Peru. The lives of the people (13) tools and pottery have (14) found on its shores have long remained a mystery. However, scientists taking (15) in an exploration project at the lake have found what they believe to (16) a 1000-year-old temple under the water.

Divers from the expedition have discovered a 200-metre-long, 50-metre-wide building surrounded by a terrace for crops, a road and a wall. It is thought that the remains (17) those of a temple built by the Tihuanacu people who lived beside Lake Titicaca before it became a part (18) the much later Incan empire.

...

Part 3

Part 3 consists of a text in which there are 10 gaps. There is also one line at the beginning with a gap we have filled in for you to show you what you have to do. At the end of the line, separated from the text, is a word in capital letters. Use this word to make a new word which fills the gap to complete the sentence correctly.

The example below is part of a text about walking holidays. For the first gap, we give you the answer: SELECT becomes 'selection'. Read the text and try to find the correct words for the other gaps (25–28). In the exam, the text is longer and there are six more gaps like the ones in the example below.

Walking holidays

The *Real Walkers Company* offers a (0) of small group walking holidays which explore some delightful hidden corners of Europe, the Americas and Australasia. There is something for everyone to enjoy on these holidays, (25) of age or level of (26) The brochure includes various destinations and a range of itineraries. These range from sightseeing tours of (27) cities to undemanding walking trips in unspoilt coastal and country regions and, for the more (28) traveller, challenging mountain or hill-walking expeditions.

...

SELECT

REGARD

FIT

HISTORY

ADVENTURE

Part 4

In Part 4, you have to rewrite a sentence so that the meaning is the same, but it is written in different words. There are eight sentences for you to rewrite in this way. Each sentence is followed by a 'key word' and a second sentence with a gap in the middle. You have to use the 'key word' to complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first one. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

Below we give you five questions from Part 4. In the exam there are three more questions like these.

35 The two boys were sitting by themselves in the classroom.

OWN

The two boys were sitting in the classroom.

36 'I have an interview tomorrow, so I ought to leave soon,' Yannis said.

BETTER

'I have an interview tomorrow, so I soon,'
Yannis said.

37 The film will have started, so it's not worth going to the cinema now.

POINT

The film will have started, so in going to the
cinema now.

38 Roberto arrived late this morning because his train was delayed.

TIME

If the train Roberto would not have arrived
late this morning.

39 I had never met Pia's husband before.

FIRST

It I had ever met Pia's husband.

Paper 4: Listening

Time: 40 minutes (approx). You hear all the recordings twice in the exam.

If you have access to the internet, you can find the recordings for the tasks below on the Cambridge ESOL Candidate Support website at:

www.candidates.CambridgeESOL.org

Part 1

In Part 1, you hear eight short recordings of people talking in different situations. For each recording, you have a question with three possible answers. You have to choose the right answer (A, B or C).

Below we show you three typical questions from this part of the paper. In the exam, there are five more questions and recordings like these.

- 1** You hear a young man talking.
Why did he go back to college?

 - A** He needed a better job.
 - B** He needed an evening activity.
 - C** He needed new skills.

- 2** You hear a man talking on the radio.
What is he?

 - A** an inventor
 - B** a company employee
 - C** a writer

- 3** You hear someone talking on the radio about an artist.
How does the artist feel about his work?

 - A** He would like to exhibit it in an art gallery.
 - B** He wants to make his creations last longer.
 - C** He is happy to see his work destroyed.

Part 2

In this part of the paper, you have to listen for specific words or phrases in one longer recording. You have to complete sentences which have gaps in them.

In the example below you listen to an interview with a woman called Helen Hunter who runs a summer camp for teenagers. You have to listen for the missing words and write them in the gaps (9–12). In the exam, there will be six more sentences like this with gaps to fill. You need one to three words (or a number) for each gap.

SUMMER CAMPS

Helen says that people taking part in the summer camp usually sleep in a **9**

The summer camp is a chance for teenagers to meet people and learn **10**

As an example of a practical activity, Helen tells us about a team which built a **11**

In the next camp, teams will work out problem-solving activities such as a **12** with clues.

Part 3

In Part 3, you hear five short recordings of five different speakers. The recordings are all connected in some way – for example by the topic the speakers are talking about (e.g. travel), or the function of their speech (e.g. apologising). You then have to match a statement or opinion to each speaker.

In the example below, you listen to five different people talking about a mistake they recently made. You have to listen to the recordings and decide which person (Speakers 1–5) made which type of mistake (A–F).

A	ignoring someone's advice	Speaker 1	<input type="text"/>	19
B	failing to inform someone about something	Speaker 2	<input type="text"/>	20
C	mistaking someone's identity	Speaker 3	<input type="text"/>	21
D	arriving somewhere too early	Speaker 4	<input type="text"/>	22
E	getting a particular date wrong	Speaker 5	<input type="text"/>	23
F	losing something important			

Part 4

In Part 4 of the test, you have to listen for opinions, attitudes and main ideas from a longer text. You have to listen to the recording and then answer seven questions. Each question has three possible answers (A, B or C) and you have to choose the right one.

In the example below, you listen to a recording of an interview with a conservationist who has built a cable car in the rainforest. For each question (24–26) you have to choose the correct answer (A, B or C). In the real exam, there are four more questions like the ones below.

24 What feature of the cable car makes it particularly good for seeing wildlife in the rainforest?

- A** the speed at which it moves
- B** the height at which it travels
- C** the distance that it covers

25 What is the main aim of the cable car project?

- A** to educate local people
- B** to persuade people to save the rainforest
- C** to raise money for other conservation projects

26 What is the advantage of the project for the local people?

- A** They can use the land if they want.
- B** They can sell forest products to the visitors.
- C** More work is available to them.

Paper 5: Speaking

Time: 14 minutes per pair of candidates

Part 1 – Interview

In this first part of the Speaking test, the examiner will ask you questions about topics such as family life, daily routines, free-time activities, etc. and you will be expected to provide information about yourselves and give your opinions.

Part 2 – Long turn

In this part of the test you have to speak for 1 minute without interruption. The examiner will give you two colour photographs and you have to compare and contrast them as well as talking about your reaction to them. Your partner will get a different set of photographs and has to do the same thing. When each of you has finished speaking, the other will be invited to comment on the topic of the photographs (for about 20 seconds).

Have a look at the two photographs below which show people making music in different ways. Try to think of things you could say to compare them. In this example, the examiner asked the following question: 'Why do you think the music is important to the different groups of people?'

Why is the music important to the different groups of people?

1



Part 3 – Collaborative Task

This part tests your ability to take part in a discussion. You have to work with the other candidate to carry out a task based on some pictures which the examiner will give you. You have to talk for about 3 minutes.

In the example below, you have to imagine that a local café wants to attract more people. The pictures below show some of the suggestions they are considering. You have to discuss with the other candidate how successful each of the suggestions might be. Then you should decide which two ideas would attract most people.

- How successful might these suggestions be?
- Which two would attract most people?

21



Part 4 – Discussion

In this part of the test you have to take part in a discussion with the other candidate related to the topic of the task you did in Part 3. The examiner will ask you both some questions.

After the café task in Part 3, candidates had to answer questions like:

- What sort of restaurants are popular with visitors in your country? (Why?)
- Would you like to spend time in a café like this? (Why?/Why not?)

This part of the test lasts 4 minutes so you will need to practise giving full answers and initiating and keeping a discussion going with another student to perform well.

Preparing for FCE

If you would like more practice material to help you prepare for the FCE exam, there are past paper packs available to buy which include an audio CD of the Listening test. You can find more information, prices and details of how to order on our website at:

www.CambridgeESOL.org/resources/past-papers.html

Next steps

We wish you every success in taking FCE and we hope that you will take other Cambridge ESOL exams in future. The Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) is the next level of the Cambridge exams. You can find more information about CAE on our website at:

www.CambridgeESOL.org/exams/general-english/cae.html

What people have said about FCE

I've taken the PET in secondary school and the FCE exam when I started high school, and I think that each level has given me more tools to improve my skills. ... Cambridge has really given me a head start in my future career.

Paola Marisela González, Mexico

This exam is really useful for me. My English improved a lot. Since that time daily life is much easier for me as I am living in a foreign country where the daily language is English, not my mother tongue.

Gisela Raab, Germany

I am working in an international environment which requires me to continuously improve my English. ... After the exam I got the motivation to study more English and then decided to enroll in an MBA conducted in English.

Phan Hoang Hoa, Vietnam

Companies who have used Cambridge ESOL exams

3M	Disney	PricewaterhouseCoopers
Adidas	DuPont	Procter & Gamble
Agfa-Gevaert	Ericsson	Rank Xerox
AstraZeneca	Estée Lauder	Roche
AT&T	General Motors	Rolls-Royce
Barclays Bank	Gillette	Shell
BASF	GlaxoSmithKline	Siemens
Bayer	Goodyear	Sony
BP	Hertz	Sun Microsystems
British Airways	Hewlett-Packard	Texaco
Cable & Wireless	HSBC	Toyota
Carrefour	IBM	Unilever
Citibank	Johnson & Johnson	Vodafone
Coca-Cola	KPMG	World Bank
Colgate-Palmolive	Microsoft	World Health Organization (WHO)
Credit Suisse	Mobil Oil	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
DaimlerChrysler	Nestlé	
Dell	Nokia	
Deutsche Bank	PepsiCo	
DHL	Philips	

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