

Summary of the Cambridge English: First (FCE) exam

■ Reading and Use of English

This is the most obvious change to the exam: the former Reading paper and Use of English paper are now combined into one paper. The task types are in the same format as in the old exam, but word counts and the number of questions for each part have been reduced.

Time: 75 minutes (reduced from a total of 105 minutes for the two old papers)

The first four parts are Use of English-style tasks:

Part 1, Multiple-choice cloze: this consists of a text with 8 gaps.

Students choose from 4 options to complete each gap.

Part 2, Open cloze: this consists of a text with 8 gaps.

Students complete each gap with one word.

Part 3, Word formation: this consists of a text with 8 gaps.

Each gap has a corresponding word, which students modify in order to fit that gap correctly.

Part 4, Key word transformations: this consists of six lead-in sentences that correspond to six gapped sentences, each with a key word.

Students complete each gapped sentence using between two and five words, including the key word. The completed sentence must have the same meaning as its corresponding sentence.

The remaining three parts are Reading tasks:

Part 5, Multiple choice: this consists of one long text (550–650 words), with 6 questions.

Students choose from 4 options to answer each question.

Part 6, Gapped text: this consists of one long text (500–600 words), from which 6 sentences have been removed.

Students are given 7 sentences and choose 6 of them to complete the text.

Part 7, Multiple matching: this consists of one long text, or several short texts (totalling 500–600 words).

Students are given 10 statements which they match to the correct text/part of a text.

■ Writing

The Writing paper has also undergone changes – there are fewer task types in Part 2 to choose from, and the required output has increased to 140–190 words for each task. Each task carries equal weight.

Time: 80 minutes

Part 1, Essay: this is the compulsory question, which is now an Essay. Students are given a topic and some notes. They write their Essay using the notes and an idea of their own.

Part 2: this now consists of three questions, one of which must be answered. Possible task types are an **Article**, a **Letter/Email**, a **Report** or a **Review**. Students are given a context for each task type with a clear purpose and target reader.

■ Listening

The Listening paper is largely the same as it was in the old exam. There have been slight adjustments to Parts 2 and 3, but it is otherwise the same.

Time: approximately 40 minutes

Part 1, Multiple choice: this consists of 8 short recordings, with one 3-option multiple-choice question for each. Students hear each recording twice, and choose the correct answer.

Part 2, Sentence completion: this consists of 1 long monologue, with 10 incomplete sentences. Students hear the recording twice, and complete the sentences with words from the recording.

Part 3, Multiple matching: this consists of 5 short recordings, all on a related theme. Students hear the recordings twice, and match each recording to one of 8 possible options.

Part 4, Multiple choice: this consists of 1 long recording, with one or more speakers. There are 7 questions. Students hear the recording twice and answer each question by choosing from 3 possible options.

■ Speaking

In the Speaking test, two candidates (occasionally three) take the test together. There are two examiners: an Interlocutor (who does the speaking) and the Assessor (who observes). The structure of the Speaking test is largely the same as in the old exam, with a few minor but important changes.

Time: approximately 14 minutes

Part 1, Interview (2 minutes): This part of the test has been shortened to two minutes. In this part, candidates give personal information in response to questions from the Interlocutor.

Part 2, Individual long turn (4 minutes): In this part of the test, each candidate talks about two pictures for approximately 1 minute. Each candidate also responds briefly (30 seconds) to a question based on the other candidate's pictures.

Part 3, Collaborative task (4 minutes): There are two tasks in this part of the test. First, candidates have 2 minutes to discuss various options based on written prompts supplied by the Interlocutor. Then they have 1 minute to arrive at a decision together based on the same prompts.

Part 4, Further discussion (4 minutes): In this part of the test, the Interlocutor asks candidates questions related to the theme of the written prompts in Part 3.