

B2 First – an overview

CEFR LEVEL B2

B2 First is focused on a level of English suitable for everyday study and work environments. It proves that a student has the language ability to:

- study at an upper-intermediate level, such as foundation, pathway, or pre-sessional programmes
- start working in an English-speaking environment
- live independently in an English-speaking country.

You can expect a student with B2 First to be able to:

- understand the main ideas of complex pieces of writing
- keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics, expressing opinions and presenting arguments
- produce clear, detailed writing, expressing opinions and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of different points of view.

KEY FACTS

Global availability	The exam can be taken at exam centres around the world. To find an exam centre, visit cambridgeenglish.org/centresearch .
Exam dates	Exams can be taken throughout the year, with exam sessions for digital tests available up to 365 days a year.
Format of exam	B2 First can be taken as either a digital or paper-based exam.
Results format	Results are given on the Cambridge English Scale. The exam reports on the scale between 122 and 190. For more information about the scale, visit cambridgeenglish.org/cambridgeenglishscale .
Results issued	5-10 working days for the digital version. 4-6 weeks from exam date for paper-based version.
Expiry of results	B2 First is an in-depth exam, rather than a 'snapshot' test, so results do not expire. Universities and colleges can choose how long to accept results.
Recognition	The exam is accepted by thousands of universities, government bodies and employers around the world. A full list can be seen at cambridgeenglish.org/recognition .

What's in the exam?

B2 First is made up of four papers to test different aspects of candidates' English skills.

Paper		Content	Shows students can ...
	Reading and use of English (1 hour 15 minutes)	7 parts/ 52 questions	understand the main ideas in different types of text, such as fiction, newspapers and magazines. Candidates must also demonstrate how well they can control grammar and vocabulary.
	Writing (1 hour 20 minutes)	2 parts	produce two different pieces of writing, including a compulsory essay.
	Listening (about 40 minutes)	4 parts/ 30 questions	follow and understand a range of spoken materials, such as news programmes, presentations and everyday conversations.
	Speaking (14 minutes per pair of candidates)	4 parts	communicate effectively in face-to-face situations.

The overall score is calculated by averaging the scores achieved in Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Use of English. The weighting of each of the four skills and Use of English is equal.



Format

Candidates can choose to take the paper-based or a digital version of the exam.

The Speaking test is face to face and taken with two examiners and at least one other candidate. The paired format means candidates experience a more authentic exercise in communication, which gives a more reliable measure of their ability to use English.



Availability

With Cambridge English Qualifications Digital, exam sessions are available up to 365 days a year, offering flexibility and fast results for candidates.

B2 First: Paper 1

READING AND USE OF ENGLISH – EXAM STRUCTURE AND TASKS

The Reading and Use of English paper uses a variety of different tasks, requiring candidates to demonstrate practical reading skills. The paper also tests the students' vocabulary and ability to use grammar to manipulate language.

Students successful in this part of the exam can be expected to have reading skills appropriate for studying on foundation or pathway courses, such as understanding the main idea and gist, while also being able to pick out specific detail and information.

How is the paper marked?

The Reading and Use of English paper contains a series of items which are marked as either correct or incorrect.

Cambridge English uses Rasch (1960/1980) analysis to ensure that a consistent standard is applied in the grading of objectively marked components, accounting for differences in difficulty between them. This is achieved by calibrating the difficulty of all the items in a given test onto the same scale. This calibration allows us to determine the raw marks for each test paper that represent a predetermined level of ability – the standard needed to achieve a particular grade or level.

Although one paper, marks for Reading and marks for Use of English are aggregated separately in order to produce two separate scores on the Cambridge English Scale. Parts 1, 5, 6 and 7 are Reading tasks and Parts 2, 3 and 4 are Use of English tasks.

Reading and Use of English at a glance

FORMAT	The paper contains seven parts. For Parts 1 to 3 , the test contains texts with accompanying grammar and/or vocabulary tasks. Part 4 consists of separate items with a grammar and vocabulary focus. For Parts 5 to 7 , the test contains a range of texts and accompanying reading comprehension tasks.
TIMING	1 hour 15 minutes
NO. OF PARTS	7
NO. OF QUESTIONS	52
MARKS	For Parts 1 to 3 , each correct answer receives 1 mark. For Part 4 , each correct answer receives up to 2 marks. For Parts 5 to 6 , each correct answer receives 2 marks. For Part 7 , each correct answer receives 1 mark.

Reading and Use of English tasks

1 hour 15 mins

The paper contains seven parts. The Reading section consists of Parts 5, 6, and 7 of the paper. The Use of English section consists of Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Part	Number of questions	Number of marks	Task types	Focus	Format
1	8	8	Multiple choice cloze	The main focus is on vocabulary, e.g. idioms, collocations, fixed phrases, complementation, phrasal verbs, semantic precision.	A modified cloze test containing eight gaps. There are 4-option multiple-choice items for each gap.
2	8	8	Open cloze	The main focus is on awareness and control of grammar with some focus on vocabulary.	A modified cloze test containing eight gaps.
3	8	8	Word formation	The main focus is on vocabulary, in particular the use of affixation, internal changes and compounding in word formation.	A text containing eight gaps. Each gap corresponds to a word. The stem of the missing word is given beside the text and must be changed to form the missing word.
4	6	12	Key word transformation	Grammar, vocabulary, collocation.	Six separate items, each with a lead-in sentence and a gapped second sentence to be completed in two to five words, one of which is a given 'key' word.
5	6	12	Multiple choice	Detail, opinion, attitude, tone, purpose, main idea, gist, meaning from context, implication, text organisation features (exemplification, reference).	A text followed by six 4-option multiple-choice questions.
6	6	12	Gapped text	Cohesion, coherence, text structure.	A text from which sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. Candidates must decide from which part of the text the sentences have been removed.
7	10	10	Multiple matching	Detail, opinion, specific information, implication.	A text or several short texts, preceded by multiple-matching questions. Candidates must match a prompt to elements in the text.
TOTAL	52	70			

B2 First: Paper 1 sample tasks

READING AND USE OF ENGLISH PART 3

Questions 17–24

For each question, use the word in CAPITALS on the right to form a word that fits in the gap.

An incredible vegetable

Garlic, a member of the Liliaceae family which also includes onions, is commonly used in cooking all around the world. China is currently the largest of garlic, which is particularly associated with the dishes of northern Africa and southern Europe. It is native to central Asia and has long had a history as a health-giving food, used both to prevent and cure . In Ancient Egypt, workers building the pyramids were given garlic to keep them strong, while Olympic athletes in Greece ate it to increase their resistance to infection.

The forefather of antibiotic medicine, Louis Pasteur, claimed garlic was as as penicillin in treating infections. Modern-day have proved that garlic can indeed kill bacteria and even some viruses, so it can be very useful for people who have coughs and colds. In , some doctors believe that garlic can reduce blood

Keyword List

17. PRODUCT

18. ILL

19. EFFECT

20. SCIENCE

21. ADD

22. PRESS

23. ADVANTAGE

24. SPICE

Part 1
0 of 8

Part 2
0 of 8

Part 3

17

18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Part 4
0 of 6

Part 5
0 of 6

Part 6
0 of 6

Part 7
0 of 10

✓

Answer Key

Q	Part 3
17	producer
18	illness(es)
19	effective
20	scientists
21	addition
22	pressure
23	disadvantage
24	spicy



Sample test

The above image shows an example screenshot from the B2 First Digital exam. To access the complete digital sample test, please scan the QR code



READING AND USE OF ENGLISH PART 6

Questions 27–42

Read the newspaper article below about a former ballet dancer talking about the physical demands of the job. Six sentences have been removed from the text below. For each question, choose the correct answer. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Good preparation leads to success in ballet dancing

A former classical ballet dancer explains what ballet training actually involves.

What we ballet dancers do is instinctive, but instinct learnt through a decade of training. A dancer's life is hard to understand, and easy to misinterpret. Many a poet and novelist has tried to do so, but even they have chosen to interpret all the hard work and physical discipline as obsessive. And so the idea persists that dancers spend every waking hour in pain, bodies at breaking point, their smiles a pretence.

As a former dancer in the Royal Ballet Company here in Britain, I could beg to question this.

37 _____ With expert teaching and daily practice, its various demands are easily within the capacity of the healthy human body. Contrary to popular belief, there is no need to break bones or tear muscles to achieve ballet positions. It is simply a question of sufficient conditioning of the muscular system.

Over the course of my dancing life I worked my way through at least 10,000 ballet classes. I took my first at a school of dance at the age of seven and my last 36 years later at the Royal Opera House in London. In the years between, ballet class was the first thing I did every day. It starts at an early age, this daily ritual, because it has to. 38 _____ But for a ballet dancer in particular, this lengthy period has to come before the effects of adolescence set in, while maximum flexibility can still be achieved.

Those first classes I took were remarkably similar to the last, in fact, taking into account the occasional new idea. Ballet classes have changed little since 1920, when the details of ballet technique were first written down, and are easily recognised in any country. Starting with the left hand on the barre, the routine unfolds over some 75 minutes. 39 _____ Even the leading dancers have to do it.

These classes serve two distinct purposes: they are the way we warm our bodies and the mechanism by which we improve basic technique. In class after class, we prove the old saying that practice makes perfect. 40 _____ And it is also this daily repetition which enables us to strengthen the muscles required in jumping, spinning or lifting our legs to angles impossible to the average person.

The human body is designed to adapt to the demands we make of it, provided we make them carefully and over time. 41 _____ In the same way, all those years of classes add up to a fit-for-purpose dancing machine. This level of physical fluency doesn't hurt, it feels good.

42 _____ But they should not be mistak: there is a difference between hard work and hardship. Dancers have an everyday familiarity with the text. Hardship is not.

Through endless trials at the classical exercises and frequent failures, ballet dancers develop the neural pathways in the brain necessary to control accurate, fluid and smooth movement.

The ballet shoe offers some support, but the real strength is in the muscles, built up through training.

As technology takes away activity from the lives of many, perhaps the ballet dancer's physicality is ever more difficult for most people to imagine.

Ballet technique is certainly extreme but it is not, in itself, dangerous.

The principle is identical in the gym – pushing yourself to the limit, but not beyond, will eventually bring the desired result.

No one avoids this. It is ballet's great demerit, the well-established members of the company working alongside the newest recruits. It takes at least a decade of high-quality, regular practice to become an expert in any physical discipline.

Reset

Part 1 0 of 9 Part 2 0 of 8 Part 3 0 of 9 Part 4 0 of 5 Part 5 0 of 6 Part 6 27 38 39 40 41 42 Part 7 0 of 15

Answer Key

Q	Part 6
37	D
38	G
39	F
40	A
41	E
42	C



Sample test

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B2 First: Paper 2

WRITING – EXAM STRUCTURE AND TASKS

The Writing paper requires the candidate to produce two different pieces of writing, including a compulsory essay.

Students successful in this part of the exam can be expected to have writing skills appropriate for studying programmes at foundation or pathway level, such as writing in a genre-appropriate way, expressing ideas and opinions, making comparisons and drawing conclusions.

Writing at a glance

FORMAT	The paper contains two parts.
TIMING	1 hour 20 minutes
NO. OF PARTS	2
NO. OF QUESTIONS	Candidates are required to complete two tasks: a compulsory one in Part 1 and one from a choice of three in Part 2.
ANSWER FORMAT	The questions are in a booklet. The answers are written in a separate booklet with lined pages.
MARKS	Each question on this paper carries equal marks.

Writing tasks

1 hour 20 mins

The test contains two parts. Candidates are required to complete two tasks: a compulsory one in Part 1 and one from a choice of three in Part 2.

Part	Number of questions	Number of marks	Task types	Focus	Format
1	1	20	Writing an essay (one compulsory task) 140–190 words	Focus on agreeing or disagreeing with a statement, giving information, giving opinion, giving reasons, comparing and contrasting ideas and opinions, drawing a conclusion.	Candidates are required to deal with input of up to 120 words. There is an opening rubric to set the scene, and then an essay question with two given prompts, plus a prompt requiring candidates to write about their own additional idea.
2	1	20	Writing (choose one task from a choice of three) 140–190 words	Writing one of the following: an article, email, letter, review or report.	A situationally based writing task specified in no more than 70 words.
Total	2	40			

B2 First: How Writing is assessed

ASSESSMENT SCALES

Tasks are marked using assessment scales that were developed with explicit reference to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The scales consist of four subscales: Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation, and Language:

- **Content** focuses on how well the candidate has fulfilled the task, in other words if they have done what they were asked to do.
- **Communicative Achievement** focuses on how appropriate the writing is for the task and whether the candidate has used the appropriate register.
- **Organisation** focuses on the way the candidate puts together the piece of writing, in other words if it is logical and ordered.
- **Language** focuses on vocabulary and grammar. This includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.

Responses are marked on each subscale from 0 to 5.

When being marked, the length of responses and varieties of English are taken into account:

- Guidelines on length are provided for each task; responses which are too short may not have an adequate range of language and may not provide all the information that is required, while responses which are too long may contain irrelevant content and have a negative effect on the reader. These may affect candidates' marks on the relevant subscales.
- Candidates are expected to use a particular variety of English with some degree of consistency in areas such as spelling, and not, for example, switch from using a British spelling of a word to an American spelling of the same word.

- Candidates should also aim to use a range of tenses, expressions and vocabulary, even if these contain some minor mistakes. It's important for candidates to show the full range of their language ability and to be ambitious in their use of language.
- Non-impeding errors, which do not affect communication, will not necessarily be penalised. These include spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. However, errors which interfere with or cause a breakdown in communication will be treated more severely.

The subscale **Content** is common to all levels:

	Content
5	• All content is relevant to the task. • Target reader is fully informed.
3	• Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. • Target reader is on the whole informed.
1	• Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. • Target reader is minimally informed.
0	• Content is totally irrelevant. • Target reader is not informed.

The remaining three subscales (Communicative Achievement, Organisation, and Language) have descriptors specific to each CEFR level. The following assessment scale is used for marking candidate responses.

B2	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

B2 First: Paper 2 sample task

WRITING PART 1 - COMPULSORY ESSAY

2

Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **140 – 190** words in an appropriate style on the separate answer sheet.

- 1 In your English class you have been talking about the fashion industry. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.



Some people say the fashion industry has a bad effect on people's lives.
Do you agree?

Notes

Write about:

1. whether people's appearance is important
2. the price of clothes
3. (your own idea)



Sample test

This is an example from the B2 First paper-based exam. To access the sample tests, including a complete digital test, please scan the QR code, or go to camengli.sh/3YMtIM6



B2 First Writing: Sample answers and comments

QUESTION 1 – CANDIDATE A

In today's world, the fashion industry has a strong importance in people's lives. The fashion industry say to the society what to wear and creates new types of clothes all the time.

Some people claim that the fashion industry has a bad effect on people's lives, they say that the fashion industry creates clothes that the society has to wear. Furthermore, the clothes' price is extremely high and people, who can't afford it, should not be in the society.

In the other hand, the fashion industry guide the people to be in a good appearance, because, nowadays, the appearance of the person is more important than the person itself.

In my opinion, the fashion industry doesn't has a bad influence on people's lives. It's something which was created to help people what to wear.

Comments

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant and the target reader is fully informed. The essay discusses the role of the fashion industry and expresses some negative aspects (<i>nowadays, the appearance of the person is more important than the person itself</i>) and also cost (<i>the clothes' price is extremely high</i>). The candidate also expresses their own idea, suggesting that the fashion industry has a lot of influence on people (<i>say to the society what to wear</i>). The candidate concludes the essay with an opinion, which sums up the main points made.
Communicative Achievement	2	Some of the conventions of essay writing are used appropriately. The register and tone are consistently formal and there are some expressions which are appropriate for an essay (<i>In today's world; Some people claim; Furthermore; In my opinion</i>). There is also an introduction and a conclusion. Although straightforward ideas are communicated, the target reader's attention is not always held. For example, the final paragraph attempts to sum up the main points, but the ideas are not clearly expressed.
Organisation	2	The text is generally well organised and coherent. There is a clear structure to the text with an introduction, main body and conclusion. Paragraphs are used for the development of ideas. The text is connected using linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices, some of which are misused. More use of pronouns would limit the repetition of key phrases.
Language	2	There is a range of everyday, topic-specific vocabulary, which is used appropriately (<i>creates new types of clothes; Some people claim; extremely high; is more important than</i>). Simple grammatical forms are used with a good degree of control, although the use of verbs in the third person is not consistent. There are attempts to express ideas using a range of grammatical forms, passives and modals for example, but these are less successful (<i>people, who can't afford it, should not be in the society; the fashion industry guide the people to be in a good appearance; It's something which was created to help people what to wear</i>). Errors are noticeable but meaning can still be determined.

QUESTION 1 – CANDIDATE B

Fashion industry is very a discussed subject nowadays: they create and design new clothes everyday in order to satisfy some people needs.

There are many people who claim that the fashion industry is important and good for society. According to them, this industry design beautiful clothes and thanks to that every person can wear shirts, trousers or any accessory which is on today's fashion.

On the other hand, the fashion industry in some people opinion, controls the market of clothes and because of that they can't wear what they want to. In addition, the industry can increase the price of clothes, forcing people who don't want to be "old-fashioned" to buy and pay a large amount of money to keep "beautiful"

In my opinion, we can't let the fashion industry decide what we must or musn't wear. We shouldn't judge people for its appearance, because that is not important. We must wear whatever we like, want and feel comfortable with.

Comments

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task and the target reader is fully informed. The candidate discusses the importance of appearance in terms of fashion (<i>this industry design beautiful clothes and thanks to that ...</i>) and concludes that <i>We shouldn't judge people for its appearance</i>. The negative aspect of the price of clothes is mentioned and an opinion given on how this affects people's choice (forcing people ... to buy and pay a large amount of money to keep "beautiful"). A third aspect states how choice for consumers is limited due to the fashion industry's control over design and the market (<i>the fashion industry in some people opinion, controls the market of clothes</i>).
Communicative Achievement	3	The conventions of essay writing are used appropriately. There is an introduction, topic paragraph and a conclusion. The register is appropriate for the task, using generally neutral language to discuss both positive and negative aspects of the question. Straightforward ideas are communicated, using some appropriate language (<i>in order to; According to them; the industry can increase</i>) to introduce the ideas, and to hold the target reader's attention.
Organisation	4	The essay is well organised and coherent. There is a clear overall structure and the ideas are linked across sentences and paragraphs using referencing, substitution and paraphrasing to avoid repetition. There are a variety of appropriate linking words and cohesive devices (<i>many people who; According to them; this industry; thanks to that; On the other hand; In addition; In my opinion</i>).
Language	3	A range of everyday, topic-specific vocabulary is used appropriately (<i>to satisfy some people needs; good for society; controls the market; forcing people</i>) but some errors do occur with less common lexis and expressions (<i>on today's fashion</i>). A range of simple and some complex grammatical forms is used with a good degree of control (<i>can increase the price of clothes, forcing people who don't want to be</i>). There are some repeated errors with prepositions and third person verbs, but these do not impede communication.

QUESTION 1 – CANDIDATE C

The society we live today is characterised by technology in constant development, fast speed processes, information travelling and getting to people at a blink of an eye and a complex web of social networking. In this context, the fashion industry is becoming increasingly important and having a more and more paramount role in our lives.

On one hand, the fashion industry is undeniably a source of profit and income. It hires millions of people all over the world and generates millions of dollars every year. Furthermore, such profitable business is also believed to be able to spread and make known the culture of a people, encouraging and enhancing a better understanding of each other.

Nevertheless, for those who are neither impressed nor motivated by numbers and figures, the fashion industry is seen as one which segregates people, isolating those who not fit their laws and commands. It is stated that people place too much importance on appearance and the material, world, sadly true, and the fashion industry just spurs on such situation. Moreover, not only are the costs of fashion item unrealistically high, it is thought to be a money better spent on more pressing issues, such as poverty and hunger.

I do believe that the fashion industry, as it is today, has a harmful effect, because it values a minority of people in detriment to the majority. However, it has such a wide reach that, if put into a good use, it can save lives.

Comments

Subscale	Mark	Commentary
Content	5	All content is relevant to the task and the target reader is fully informed. The candidate presents a balanced argument, discussing their own idea first that the fashion industry is important as it provides jobs and income for a huge number of people. The essay then discusses the negative aspect of the fashion industry in relation to appearance (<i>the fashion industry is seen as one which segregates people; people place too much importance on appearance</i>). Finally, the high cost of fashion is mentioned in relation to the price of clothes and it is suggested that money could be better spent on social issues rather than on fashion.
Communicative Achievement	5	The conventions of essay writing are used effectively to hold the target reader's attention. The register and tone are consistently appropriate and there is a range of suitable expressions which introduce both positive and negative aspects of the question, which are balanced throughout the essay. Straightforward and more complex ideas are communicated, making links between the importance of fashion in consumers' lives and how the fashion industry affects people, communities and wider society (<i>the fashion industry is undeniably a source of profit and income. It hires millions of people all over the world; it values a minority of people in detriment to the majority</i>).
Organisation	5	The essay is well organised and coherent. There is a clear overall structure and the ideas are linked effectively across paragraphs and sentences through the use of paraphrasing, substitution, ellipsis and referencing (<i>In this context; It hires; such profitable business is also believed; Nevertheless, for those who; sadly true; such situation; not only are</i>). Organisational patterns are used to generally good effect, for example links are made between fashion and industry, fashion and finance and fashion and society throughout the text, making clear connections between the separate aspects.
Language	5	There is a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis which is used appropriately in most cases (<i>is characterised by; at a blink of an eye; paramount role; undeniably; the culture of a people; enhancing; neither impressed nor motivated; segregates; isolating; in detriment to</i>). A range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with control and flexibility to express more complex ideas. Although there are some errors, these mainly occur when more ambitious language is attempted and do not impede communication.

B2 First: Paper 3

LISTENING – EXAM STRUCTURE AND TASKS

Candidates listen to recordings of monologues or interacting speakers and answer questions that test their comprehension of what they have heard.

Students successful in this section demonstrate that they have listening skills appropriate for studying on foundation or pathway courses. They can be expected to be able to identify specific information from what is said and understand speakers' tone and opinions.

A variety of voices, styles of delivery and accents will be heard in each Listening paper to reflect the various international contexts presented in the recordings.

How is the paper marked?

The Listening paper contains a series of items which are marked as either correct or incorrect.

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Listening at a glance

FORMAT	The paper contains four parts. Each part contains a recorded text or texts and corresponding comprehension tasks. Each part is heard twice.
TIMING	Approximately 40 minutes
NO. OF PARTS	4
NO. OF QUESTIONS	30
ANSWER FORMAT	Candidates are advised to write their answers in the spaces provided on the question paper while listening. Five minutes will be allowed at the end of the test to copy the answers onto a separate answer sheet.
MARKS	Each correct answer receives 1 mark.

Listening tasks

approximately 40 mins (including 2 minutes to check answers in the digital test, and 5 minutes to transfer your answers in the paper-based test)

Part	Number of questions	Number of marks	Task types	Focus	Format
1	8	8	Multiple choice	The focus is on genre, identifying speaker feeling, attitude, topic, opinion, purpose, agreement between speakers, gist and detail.	A series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. There is one multiple-choice question per text, each with three options.
2	10	10	Sentence completion	The focus is on detail, identifying specific information and stated opinion.	A monologue lasting 3–4 minutes. Candidates are required to complete the sentences with information heard on the recording.
3	5	5	Multiple matching	The focus is on identifying speaker feeling, attitude, detail, gist and opinion.	Five short related monologues of approximately 30 seconds each. There are five questions which require the selection of the correct option from a list of eight.
4	7	7	Multiple choice	The focus is on identifying opinion, attitude, detail, gist, main idea and specific information.	An interview or exchange between two speakers and lasting 3–4 minutes. There are seven 3-option multiple-choice questions.
TOTAL	30	30			

B2 First: Paper 3 sample task

LISTENING PART 2

Questions 9–18

You will hear a woman called Angela Thomas, who works for a wildlife organisation, talking about the spectacled bear. For each question, write the correct answer in the gap. Write a word or short phrase.

Spectacled Bears

Angela says that it was the of the spectacled bear that first interested her.

Angela mentions that the bear's markings can be found on its as well as its eyes and cheeks.

Angela is pleased by evidence that spectacled bears have been seen in areas of Argentina.

Angela says the bears usually live in though they can also be found in other places.

Spectacled bears behave differently from other types of bear during , which Angela finds surprising.

Angela is upset that are the biggest danger to spectacled bears.

Angela says that spectacled bears usually eat and tree bark.

Bears climb trees and make a , which fascinated Angela.

When bears eat meat, they much prefer although they do eat other creatures.

One man has produced an amusing about the time he spent studying the bears.

Part 1 0 of 8 Part 2 **9** 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 Part 3 0 of 5

Answer Key

Q	Part 2
9	(great) name
10	chest
11	northern
12	forests
13	(the) winter
14	(the/some) human(s)
15	berries
16	(a) platform
17	(small/little) mice
18	(funny) diary



Sample test

This is an example from the B2 First paper-based exam. To access the sample tests, including a complete digital test, please scan the QR code, or go to camengli.sh/3YMtIM6



B2 First: Paper 4

SPEAKING – EXAM STRUCTURE AND TASKS

The Speaking test contains four parts. There are always two examiners. Candidates are usually assessed in pairs, however if there is an uneven number of candidates, candidates can be assessed in groups of three. One examiner acts as both interlocutor and assessor and manages the interaction either by asking questions or providing cues for the candidates. The other acts as assessor and does not join in the conversation.

Speaking at a glance

FORMAT	The paper contains four parts. Each part of the test focuses on a different type of interaction: between the interlocutor and each candidate, between the two candidates, and among all three.
TIMING	14 minutes
TASK TYPES	Short exchanges with the interlocutor; a 1-minute individual 'long turn'; a collaborative task involving the two candidates; a discussion.
MARKS	Candidates are assessed on their performance throughout. During the test, one examiner, the interlocutor, conducts the test and gives a global assessment of each candidate's performance. The other, the assessor, focuses solely on assessing each candidate's ability.

Speaking tasks

14 minutes (for pairs) **20 minutes** (for groups of three)

Part	Timing	Task type and interaction	Focus
1	2 minutes	A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (spoken questions).	The focus is on general interactional and social language.
2	A 1-minute 'long turn' for each candidate, plus a 30-second response from the second candidate. The total time for Part 2 is 4 minutes.	An individual 'long turn' for each candidate with a response from the second candidate. In turn, the candidates are given a pair of photographs to talk about.	The focus is on organising a larger unit of discourse; comparing, describing and expressing opinions.
3	A 2-minute discussion followed by a 1-minute decision-making task. The total time for Part 3 is 4 minutes.	A two-way conversation between the candidates. The candidates are given spoken instructions with written stimuli, which are used in discussion and decision-making tasks.	The focus is on sustaining an interaction; exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.
4	4 minutes	A discussion on topics related to the collaborative task (spoken questions).	The focus is on expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing and speculating.

B2 First: How Speaking is assessed

EXAMINERS AND MARKING

The quality assurance of Speaking Examiners (SEs) is managed by Team Leaders (TLs). TLs ensure all examiners successfully complete examiner training and regular certification of procedure and assessment before they examine. TLs are in turn responsible to a Professional Support Leader (PSL) who is the professional representative of Cambridge Assessment English for the Speaking tests in a given country or region.

Annual examiner certification involves attendance at a face-to-face meeting to focus on and discuss assessment and procedure, followed by the marking of sample Speaking tests in an online environment. Examiners must complete standardisation of assessment for all relevant levels each year and are regularly monitored during live testing sessions.

ASSESSMENT SCALES

Throughout the test candidates are assessed on their own individual performance and not in relation to each other. They are awarded marks by two examiners: the assessor and the interlocutor. The assessor awards marks by applying performance descriptors from the analytical assessment scales for the following criteria:

- Grammar and Vocabulary
- Discourse Management
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication

The interlocutor awards a mark for global achievement using the global achievement scale.

B2	Global achievement
5	Handles communication on a range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation. Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>
3	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence, and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>
1	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation. Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in well-rehearsed utterances.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>

Assessment for B2 First is based on performance across all parts of the test, and is achieved by applying the relevant descriptors in the assessment scales. The assessment scales for B2 First are extracted from the overall Speaking scales.

B2 First Speaking Examiners use a more detailed version of the following assessment scales:

B2	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas. Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.	Is intelligible. Intonation is appropriate. Sentence and word stress is accurately placed. Individual sounds are articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices.	Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, despite some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>			

B2 First: Paper 4 Sample task

SPEAKING PART 3 AND 4 - COLLABORATIVE TASK AND DISCUSSION

21 Holiday resort

Part 3 4 minutes (5 minutes for groups of three)
Part 4 4 minutes (5 minutes for groups of three)

Part 3

Interlocutor Now, I'd like you to talk about something together for about two minutes. (3 minutes for groups of three).

I'd like you to imagine that a town wants more tourists to visit. Here are some ideas they're thinking about and a question for you to discuss. First you have some time to look at the task.

Place Part 3 booklet, open at Task 21, in front of the candidates. Allow 15 seconds.

Now, talk to each other about why these ideas would attract more tourists to the town.

Candidates

⌚ 2 minutes
(3 minutes for groups of three)

Interlocutor Thank you. Now you have about a minute to decide which idea would be best for the town.

Candidates

⌚ 1 minute
(for pairs and groups of three)

Interlocutor Thank you. (Can I have the booklet, please?) *Retrieve Part 3 booklet.*

21

```

graph TD
    A[building a large nightclub] --- E(( ))
    B[building holiday flats] --- E
    C[putting up security cameras] --- E
    D[providing parks] --- E
    F[having more shops] --- E
    E --- G[Why would these ideas attract more tourists to the town?]
            
```

Part 4

Interlocutor Use the following questions, in order, as appropriate:

- Do you think you have to spend a lot of money to have a good holiday? (Why? / Why not?)
- Some people say we travel too much these days and shouldn't go on so many holidays. What do you think?
- Do you think people have enough time for holidays these days? (Why? / Why not?)
- Why do you think people like to go away on holiday?
- What do you think is the biggest advantage of living in a place where there are a lot of tourists?
- What can people do to have a good holiday in (candidate's country)? (Why?)

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate:

- What do you think?
- Do you agree?
- And you?



Sample test

This is an example from the B2 First paper-based exam. To access the sample tests, including a complete digital test, please scan the QR code, or go to camengli.sh/3YMtIM6



Sample performance – Speaking



Filmed Speaking tests

The examiner comments below accompany a filmed Speaking test. The candidates' names are Natalia and Enzo. You can find the video of the test in our Speaking playlist on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/cambridgeenglishtv](https://www.youtube.com/cambridgeenglishtv)

GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

Natalia

Natalia shows a good degree of control of simple forms:

- I went to a restaurant... I had a little birthday party with some people, with my friends and my family (part 1)
- I believe that these friends are in (on) a vacation trip (part 2).

She attempts some complex grammatical forms, sometimes with success, but errors do occur at times:

- They are having some [a] good talk (part 2)
- There has been a long time that I don't go to the beach (part 2)
- Some don't have can afford some sports classes (part 3)
- It would be expensive, but it would be very useful (part 3)
- Sports are really important for people's health (part 4).

She uses a range of appropriate vocabulary:

stepfather, incredible (part 1)

commenting, chilling, bonfire (part 2)

judging, insecurities (part 4)

Enzo

Enzo shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms:

- I don't really go out on field trips, so I would probably choose to... (part 2).

He also attempts some complex grammatical forms, sometimes correctly but at others with limited success:

- I really think I would enjoy to try to go on field trips with my friends... (part 2)
- It definitely would be an experience I've never had before (part 2)
- So, when they have it for free, they'll probably going to increase, er, I wouldn't say increase the number of times they play games, but it would probably make people more interested in playing it 'cos (because) it would be for free and they wouldn't have to put their money on it (part 3)
- It's going to be a lot expensive to build more of them (part 3).

Enzo uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar topics:

- some type of soccer, feeding ducks (part 2)
- closer relations, competitions, return of money (part 3).

DISCOURSE MANAGEMENT

Natalia

Natalia generally produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Her response to part 2 is rather short at only 36 seconds rather than a full minute. At a few points her contributions tend to rather fade away ('and stuff...')

Her contributions are relevant but sometimes limited. There is very little repetition:

- I went to a restaurant called, I forgot the name...but it's a very good restaurant, and I had a little birthday party... (part 1)

She uses a range of cohesive devices (well, as you said, before, but)

Enzo

Enzo produces extended stretches of language throughout, despite some hesitation. His contributions are relevant and there is little repetition:

- I can't really relate one picture to the other, (part 2)

There is evidence of a range of cohesive devices and occasional discourse markers: definitely, lately, for that reason, given the fact that.

PRONUNCIATION

Natalia

Natalia is intelligible throughout the test. Her intonation is generally appropriate:

- ...with a bonfire in the middle of them. (↗) (part 2)
- You said it would be expensive, and it really **would** be (part 3).

Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed:

- I'm **scared** of the **sea** (part 2)
- I think the **same** as **you** (part 4)

Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly, but there are some errors:

- contry [country] (part 3)
- cen-trez [centres], owerweigh [overweight], some weigh [weight], partipating [participating] (part 4)

Enzo

Enzo is intelligible throughout the test and intonation is often appropriate, occasionally using intonation to enhance meaning:

I **really** [↗]do (part 1).

Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed:

- They seem to be a **family** (part 2)
- Every **year**, every **month** (part 3).

Sounds are generally accurate:

- enter**tain**ment, insecurities (part 4).

But there are also some unclear sounds:

- feeding (part 2)
- encourage... attached... oblivious... expensive solution... government... (part 3).

INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Natalia

Natalia initiates and responds appropriately in all parts of the test.

Natalia maintains and develops all the interaction with the interlocutor. With her partner, in parts 3 and 4, her development of the conversation mostly consists of answering his questions, brief agreement, and simple questions. She links some of her contributions to those of her partner in part 3.

Enzo

Enzo initiates and responds appropriately. In part 3 he initiates the discussion by asking his partner a question, and does not develop his partner's point, but chooses to move on to another point instead.

He generally maintains and develops the interaction. He justifies reasons for his own opinions in part 3 but does little to negotiate towards an outcome with his partner.

GLOBAL ACHIEVEMENT

Natalia

Natalia is generally coherent and handles communication on familiar topics throughout the test, despite some hesitation. She organises extended discourse appropriately but some inaccuracies occur, particularly when attempting more complex language.

Enzo

Enzo handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. He organises extended discourse throughout with little repetition and he maintains and develops the interaction appropriately in parts 3 and 4.

SCORES

Natalia

Grammar and Vocabulary: 3.5

Discourse Management: 3.5

Pronunciation: 4

Interactive Communication: 4

Global Achievement: 4

Enzo

Grammar and Vocabulary: 4

Discourse Management: 4

Pronunciation: 4.5

Interactive Communication: 4

Global Achievement: 4



What can students with **B2 First** do?

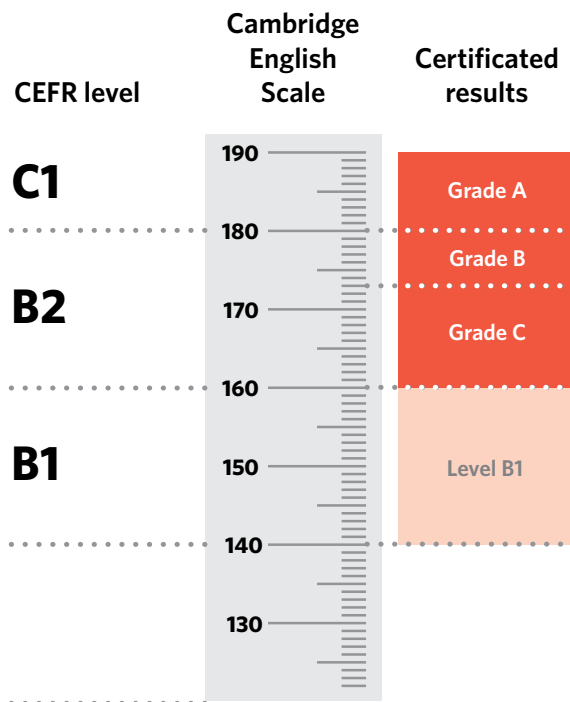
B2 First is primarily targeted at CEFR Level B2: 160–179 on the Cambridge English Scale.

It also assesses language ability above and below this level.

Candidates sometimes show ability beyond Level B2. If a candidate achieves a grade A (180–190 on the scale) in their exam, they will receive the First Certificate in English stating that they demonstrated ability at Level C1.

If a candidate's performance is below Level B2, but falls within Level B1 (140–159), they will receive a Cambridge English certificate stating that they demonstrated ability at Level B1.

Scores between 122 and 139 (CEFR Level A2) are also reported for B2 First, although candidates with scores in this range will not receive a certificate.



Can Do statements

On the following pages you can find out more about what language skills you can expect a student to have at the different levels covered by the exam.

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) has researched what language learners can typically do at each CEFR level. They have described each level of ability using Can Do statements, with examples taken from everyday life. Cambridge English, as one of the founding members of ALTE, uses this framework to ensure its exams reflect real-life language skills.

CEFR Level B1 (CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH SCALE 140–159)

CAN DO STATEMENTS FOR LEVEL B1 INCLUDE:



Reading

- CAN understand routine information and articles.
- CAN understand most information of a factual nature in their study area.



Writing

- CAN take basic notes in lectures.
- CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.



Listening

- CAN understand straightforward instructions or public announcements.
- CAN understand instructions on classes and assignments given by a lecturer or teacher.



Speaking

- CAN express simple opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way.
- CAN take part in a seminar or tutorial using simple language.

CEFR Level B2 (CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH SCALE 160–179)

CAN DO STATEMENTS FOR LEVEL B2 INCLUDE:



Reading

- CAN scan texts for relevant information and grasp main points of text.
- CAN follow central ideas in abstracts.
- CAN read all information related to practical arrangements for study which teachers or lecturers are likely to write.



Writing

- CAN make simple notes that are of reasonable use for essay or revision purposes, capturing the most important points.
- CAN present arguments, using a limited range of expression (vocabulary, grammatical structures).



Listening

- CAN follow a talk on a familiar topic.
- CAN check that all instructions are understood.



Speaking

- CAN ask for clarification and further information, and is likely to understand the answer.
- CAN give a clear presentation on a familiar topic.
- CAN answer predictable or factual questions.
- CAN present her/his own opinion, and justify opinions.
- CAN keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.

CEFR Level C1 (CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH SCALE 180–190 IN B2 FIRST)

CAN DO STATEMENTS FOR LEVEL C1 INCLUDE:



Reading

- CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course.
- CAN scan texts for relevant information, and grasp main topic of text.
- CAN assess the relevance of most textbooks and articles within own subject area of study.



Writing

- CAN write an essay which shows ability to communicate, giving few difficulties for the reader.
- CAN make useful notes from written sources, capturing abstract concepts and relationships between ideas.
- CAN select the most salient and relevant ideas and represent them clearly and briefly.



Listening

- CAN follow much of what is said in a lecture, presentation or demonstration.
- CAN make decisions about what to note down and what to omit as the lecture proceeds.
- CAN follow the development of a discussion during a seminar.



Speaking

- CAN ask detailed questions.
- CAN make critical remarks/express disagreement without causing offence.
- CAN follow the development of a discussion during a seminar.
- CAN reformulate questions if misunderstood.