

COURSE DESCRIPTOR

CAMBRIDGE PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH 2010

Paper 1: READING

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Part 1 - Three unrelated texts in each of which there are six gaps. For each gap candidates have to choose the right word or phrase from a list of four to fill the gap. For some gaps they must decide between words which have a similar meaning (for example 'leaking', 'pouring', 'spilling' or 'flowing'), but for others their knowledge of fixed phrases, idioms or collocations (e.g. 'pay attention + to'), phrasal verbs or linkers like 'as soon as' will help them find the right answer.

Part 2 - Four short texts to read. All the texts share a common theme, but come from different sources and may vary in style. Each text is followed by two multiple-choice questions and candidates have to identify the correct option in each case from a choice of four.

Part 3 - A text in which there are seven gaps. After the text there are eight extracts and candidates must decide which extract fits each gap best. One of the extracts does not fit any of the gaps.

Part 4 - A long text and seven multiple-choice questions about it. To answer the questions correctly candidates are expected to understand the main idea and detail of the text and any opinions or attitudes which are expressed in it.

Paper 2: WRITING

Time: 2 hours

Part 1 – Candidates may have to do one of the following things:

- present and defend an argument
- express and then justify an opinion
- explain a problem and suggest a solution
- evaluate ideas and make recommendations.

The input material will always present at least three points, all of which must be discussed in the answer, but candidates should also add their own views and opinions. A total of 300–350 words must be written.

Part 2 – A choice of four options. For each one there is a context, a topic, a purpose for writing and a target reader. Candidates may be asked to write an article, a letter, a proposal, a report or a review for Questions 2–4; for Question 5 the task may be to write an article, an essay, a letter, a report or a review.

Paper 3: USE OF ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Part 1 - A text to read in which there are fifteen numbered gaps (plus one gap as an example). The right word must be found to fill the gap. The right answer is always a single word, but there may be more than one acceptable answer for each gap.

Part 2 - A word-building task - a text which has ten gaps in it. There is also one gap as an example. At the end of each line in which there is a gap there will be a 'prompt' word. Candidates must change the prompt word into a different form so that it fits the gap correctly.

Part 3 - Knowledge of vocabulary (e.g. collocation, phrasal verbs and word combinations). There are six questions. Each question contains three sentences, each of which has a missing word. For all three sentences, the missing word is the same and it must be the same part of speech.

Part 4 - A word transformation exercise. There are eight questions and, for each one, there is a 'lead-in' sentence which is followed by a key word and a response sentence which has a beginning and an end but a missing section in the middle. Using the key word, candidates have to rewrite the lead-in sentence in the format of the response sentence so that it has the same meaning. Between three and eight words can be used for your answer, but the key word must be included as it appears on the exam paper.

Paper 4: LISTENING

Time: 40 minutes (approximately)

In the exam you will hear each recording twice.

Part 1 - Four separate recordings. For each recording there are two multiple-choice questions, each with three options. The four recordings will each be different and may be monologues, prompted monologues (introduced by, for example, an interviewer) or conversations. Each question focuses on a different aspect of the text, for example:

- What is the speaker's attitude to people who complain?
- In the speaker's opinion, what explains the team's recent lack of success?
- What is the programme going to be about?
- What should you do if you want to enter the competition?

Part 2 – A monologue or prompted monologue. The content is designed for a non-specialist audience and the subject matter will be of an informative nature. Candidates have to listen very carefully for specific words or phrases and write the information down to complete the sentences on the question paper. One to three words are needed for each gap and all the words must be spelt correctly.

Part 3 - A conversation between two or three speakers. The conversation lasts approximately 4 minutes. There are five questions, each with four possible answers.

Paper 5: SPEAKING

Time: 19 minutes per pair of candidates

Speaking tests are taken with another candidate. There are two examiners: one of them (the assessor) does not take part in the interaction but assesses performance according to five analytical scales; the other examiner (the interlocutor) conducts the test and tells candidates what to do. The interlocutor also gives a global mark for performance in the test as a whole.

Part 1 – Interview. The interlocutor will ask each candidate a minimum of three questions about everyday life, work experience, interests or travel. Candidates will have an opportunity to give general information about themselves but will also be asked to express an opinion.

For example:

- How important is it to speak a foreign language in your country?
- What do you look forward to most when you go home at the end of the day?
- With more shopping being done over the internet, what future is there for ordinary shops?
- If you could live in any country, apart from your own, which would it be?

Part 2 – Collaborative task. The interlocutor will give spoken instructions and one or more pictures to look at. There are two phases to the Part 2 task. First, the interlocutor will ask candidates to focus on some aspects of one or more pictures and allow one minute to discuss these together. The interlocutor will then give instructions for a decision-making task which must be carried out between candidates. The second part of the task lasts for 3 minutes.

Part 3 – Long turn + discussion. Each candidate has to speak for two minutes without interruption. The interlocutor will provide a card with a question on it and some ideas in the form of bullet points. After one candidate finishes speaking, the interlocutor will ask their partner a question relating to the topic of the card and they have up to 1 minute to answer. The interlocutor will then address a further question to both candidates and together they have a minute to respond. The examiner then repeats the same procedure with the other candidate.