Lindsey Cook • Annabel Pope

FIRST POWER

Four practice tests for the Cambridge English Language Assessments: First for Schools (FCE)







Four practice tests and concise, precise advice for the Cambridge English First for Schools (FCE)



First Power

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FIRST POWER

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FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

WHAT IS FIRST FOR SCHOOLS?

First for Schools, also known as First Certificate in English (FCE), is the third level, B2, of the Cambridge English Language Assessment for teenagers.

• WHAT IS CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT?

Cambridge English Language Assessment is a range of exams, certificates and diplomas at various levels provided by the University of Cambridge. Each qualification is recognized all over the world and more than three million people in 135 different countries take them.

• WHAT IS LEVEL B2?

B2 is the fourth level in the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (C.E.F.R.). This standard shows that you are now confident in your use of English with a broad vocabulary and can communicate in a wide variety of situations, including working in an office or following a course in the language. That means that you can:

- understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in your field of specialization;
- interact with native speakers in a natural, easy and fluid manner with no effort on either party;
- produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and express a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

• WHAT IS THE C.E.F.R.?

This is a guideline which was put together in the 1990's by the Council of Europe to provide a fair method of assessing and teaching languages in Europe. It is now used worldwide.

If you are now more confident and feel comfortable with a wide variety of Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking situations, and would like a valid diploma for further studies, personal satisfaction or future employment ...

... FOLLOW THE PATH TO SUCCESS AND FUEL UP FOR FIRST FOR SCHOOLS!

CAN I TAKE FIRST FOR SCHOOLS?

First Certificate in English is the Cambridge English exam which introduces you to practical language skills in real life situations. It tests your ability to communicate confidently with native speakers for everyday work and study purposes. It can be taken on paper or on a computer.

First for Schools is exactly the same exam, but is more specifically aimed at the interests and experiences of younger people of school age.

CAN	YOU	YES	NO
•	follow a discussion on a familiar topic in English and maintain		
	a conversation on a wide range of subjects?		
•	ask for explanations or information and understand the answer,		
	as well as checking that instructions have been understood?		
•	give your opinion, start a conversation or discussion point		
	and answer factual or predictable questions?		
•	check texts for relevant information, take down notes,		
	or write both informal and formal letters?		
•	read the media and understand it well enough to give your opinion?		
•	write a report with some evaluation and advice?		
•	present arguments in writing and make notes for		
	writing essays or for revision?		

If you've ticked all the YES boxes...

... PROCEED TO THE PRACTICE PAPERS!

HOW TO GET READY FOR FIRST FOR SCHOOLS

TAKE A HINT FROM US

ASK	friends or relatives who go to English speaking countries to bring you back up-to-date material, such as newspapers and magazines, information leaflets for students, etc.
 BUY	a notebook and jot down new vocabulary, especially idioms and collocations which you learn. This is a simple thing to do but far more useful than you may think.
 CARRY ON	listening to songs in English and try and bring expressions from the lyrics into your own English vocabulary.
 CHANGE	the instructions on your phone, tablet or laptop into English.
 CHAT	online to English-speaking friends and relations and keep in practice by writing emails and letters to them.
 KEEP	up-to-date with what is happening in the English-speaking world and current affairs in general.
 TAKE	every opportunity to read everyday English in books, magazines and advertisements. Think how many ads have English slogans!
TRAIN	yourself to listen to a wide range of spoken English in different situations and with a variety of accents and speeds. Make sure you can listen not only for general understanding but also for specific detail.
 TRY	to have a stay in an English-speaking country, even if it is only for a short time.
 USE	the Internet sensibly to read news headlines and topical articles, as well as watching interviews with well-known personalities.
 WATCH	films in English with English subtitles regularly. This is one of the most effective ways of improving your fluency and widening your vocabulary, as well as accustoming yourself to a variety of accents.
 WORK	carefully through this book and always find out where and why you make mistakes.
BE	prepared for the exam and know exactly

...WHAT TO EXPECT FROM FIRST FOR SCHOOLS.

THE EXAM

WHAT IT CONTAINS

There are four papers: Reading and Use of English, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

PAPER 1

- • • • • • • •
- contains both the Reading and Use of English
- lasts 1 hour 15 minutes and is worth 40% of the total marks
- has four parts with 30 questions in the Use of English section; there are three parts with 22 questions in the Reading section.

PAPER 2

- is the Writing Test
- lasts 1 hour 20 minutes
- is worth 20% of the total marks
- has two parts to it: one compulsory question and one to be chosen from four alternatives.

PAPER 3

- is the Listening Test
- lasts about 40 minutes
- is worth 20% of the total marks
- has four parts to it.

PAPER 4

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- is the Speaking Test
- lasts 14 minutes and is worth 20% of the total marks
- has four parts to it and is taken together with another candidate; sometimes, if there are three remaining students at the end of an examining session, they will take it together.

HOW IT IS GRADED

The total marks of the exam are out of 190 and it is graded as follows:

GRADE A	180 - 190	(YOUR CERTIFICATE WILL STATE THAT YOU SHOWED ABILITY AT C1 OR ADVANCED LEVEL)
GRADE B	173 - 180	
GRADE C	160 - 173	
NARROW FAIL	140 - 160	(BUT YOUR CERTIFICATE WILL STATE THAT YOU SHOWED ABILITY AT B1 OR PRELIMINARY LEVEL)
FAIL	0 - 140	

This means that you must get at least **160 marks** to pass the exam.

HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR THE EXAM

Your teacher will certainly know how to help you in the best possible way, but you can help yourself too by remembering the following:

DO

- read the instructions carefully and look at each example given to you before you begin
- answer ALL the questions, even if you are not sure that your answer is correct
- check your answers at the end and transfer them accurately to the answer sheet you will have plenty of time to do this.
- time yourself while doing the practice tests.

DON'T

- worry if there are some words that you don't understand you will still be able to guess the meaning from the rest of the text.
- leave a blank, if you write something, you have a 50% chance of getting a mark.
- underestimate the amount of preparation required to pass the exam!

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE EXAM DAY

BEFORE

DO remember to

- go to bed early the night before
- have a good breakfast
- get there early too.

DON'T forget to

- check the date, time and address of your First for Schools exam
- find out how long it will take you to travel to the exam.

ON THE DAY

DO bring

- your I.D.
- pencils, sharpener and rubber
- a watch or small clock- it helps to keep a check on the time.

DON'T bring

- any food into the exam room
- your bag, phone or any other electronic device into the room.

AT YOUR DESK

DO

- · listen carefully to the instructions given by the invigilator
- make sure you read all the instructions carefully, too
- put up your hand if you need help or to ask any questions
- put up your hand immediately if you are doing the Listening Part and cannot hear properly.

DON'T

- talk to anybody else in the exam room, or try to see what other people are writing
- panic, just do your best!

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED

DO

- put up your hand if you have any serious queries about the exam
- check your answers again if there is still time.

DON'T

- leave your seat until you have permission to leave
- talk about what you did right or wrong, forget about it until the results come out.

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE

First for Schools is the third step up the ladder of the Cambridge English Language Assessment. The first practice test is a chance to try yourself out on each part with some advice to help you. When you have completed this, then you are ready to work on all the practice tests.

REMEMBER:

FOLLOW THIS SOUND ADVICE and YOU WILL COME UP TRUMPS!

Paper 1 - READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

PRACTICE TEST 1

Hot tips for the Reading and Use of English section

Preparing for the *First for Schools* can be fun these days. There are a lot of online exercises to help you in the **Reading and Use of English Test**. They usually give examiners' comments, too. These are useful in order to see exactly what an examiner expects.

Every time you come across a phrasal verb, underline it or copy it (have you noticed the one you just read?). Look it up in your monolingual dictionary – yes, by now you should be using monolingual dictionaries. Collocations are important to study and fixed expressions, too. You will find all of these in the exam.

Read advanced graded books, magazines about your interests or online articles and use the grammar check list at the back of the book to make sure you have studied the essential grammar structures for the First Certificate Level.

The Reading and Use of English section takes 1 hour 15 minutes. You should time yourself while doing these practice tests to see how long it takes you.

Part 1Multiple Choice

EXTRA ADVICE FOR READING AND USE OF ENGLISH 🔐

- Read the title to get an idea of the topic and skim the text noticing any graphics.
- This part tests vocabulary rather than grammar. Look out for collocations such as "feel free", "come prepared", commonly confused words such as make/do and fixed expressions such as "put your mind at rest", "to meet by chance", etc.
- Read the words before and after the gaps as they can help you choose the correct word. Look at the example below. The word after the gap is 'at', therefore you can immediately eliminate 'watch' and 'examine' as they are never followed by the preposition 'at'.
- There is only one possible correct word.

Questions 1-8

- For questions 1-8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C, D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).
- Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Example

(0)	A) look	B) examine	C) watch	D) peer	Answer:			
• •		,		<i>,</i> ,				



WHAT WOULD SPACE COLONIES LOOK LIKE?

When you **(0)** at the facets of the environment on the moon, you understand why astronauts have found no traces of life. First, the climate vacillates significantly from 132 degrees Celsius on the equator to between 30 to minus 50 at the poles. **(1)** to that the sharp moon dust that flies about and the lack of atmosphere to protect you from solar radiation, and it isn't exactly a trip to the beach.

The **(7)** problem for achieving space settlement is the money. Private flights into space orbit have cost \$20 million for one person.

We'll have a better idea in the next decade about the likelihood of these space dreams turning **(8)** reality. In the future, outer space neighbourhoods may no longer be the stuff of fantasy.

1.	A)	add	B)	attach	C)	include	D)	extend
2.	A)	initial	B)	first	C)	original	D)	beginning
3.	A)	in	B)	over	C)	up	D)	at
4.	A)	overlap	B)	remain	C)	last	D)	reach
5.	A)	instead	B)	sooner	C)	except	D)	rather
6.	A)	accessing	B)	letting	C)	making	D)	allowing
7.	A)	absolute	B)	main	C)	bigger	D)	important
8.	A)	in	B)	into	C)	out	D)	to

Practice Test 1 • Paper 1 - READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

Part 2 Multiple Choice Open

EXTRA ADVICE FOR READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

- Read the title to understand the topic and skim the text.
- Read the words before and after the gap. It will help you to think of the correct word.

- Often there is a missing article, auxiliary verb, relative pronoun, linking word or preposition as in the example below. Remember to study collocations such as 'thick fog', 'heavy rain' and phrasal verbs such as ' fall over', 'take after' and so on.
- You might think of more than one possible word for the gap but on the answer sheet you must only write one.
- Write in capital letters and spell correctly.

Questions 9-16

- For questions 9-16, read the text below and think of the word that best fits the gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).
- Write your answers in CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet.

Example	Α	Т														
---------	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

EXOTIC TASTES

No, she wasn't on drugs, but her perception was chemically **(9)**: after eating miracle fruit, nearly everything tastes (temporarily) sweet. The experience is so psychedelic that many have dubbed it "flavour tripping".

Miracle berries, native to West Africa, are a trendy example of the weird world of exotic fruits. A sure sign that you've landed somewhere new, such fruits intrigue and challenge us, whether by **(10)** unfamiliar size, shape, texture, or smell. The stinky durian fruit, for instance, has become infamous among travellers to China and Southeast Asia.

Practice Test 1 • Paper 2 - WRITING

Hot tips for the Writing section

The **Writing Test** contains two parts. Part One is compulsory while Part Two allows you to choose one question from four choices. You have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete both parts. Reading articles from newspapers and magazines will help you prepare for this part of the exam. You need to have a wide vocabulary – no dictionaries are allowed. Remember that informal language is less useful than semi-formal or formal.

You should use a variety of more complex structures perhaps including Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect, Conditionals, etc.

Make sure you count your words during your practice answers. By doing this, you will be able to estimate how many you are writing while doing the 'real' exam. You should always think about who you are writing for:

An article is usually for readers who have the same interest as you. The main purpose is to interest the reader and hold his attention so it should contain your personal opinion or comment.

An email is written in reply to a situation. Usually it is to a friend, a head teacher, a colleague, potential employer or a magazine editor.

An essay is always written to the teacher.

A review is usually for an English-language magazine, website or newspaper. The purpose is to give your opinion about something you have experienced (a film, a holiday, a website, a book, etc.); you must be able to describe, explain and normally you will say whether you recommend it or not.

A story should be interesting and should include descriptive language and complex grammatical structures. Often a past tense is used such as the Past Simple, Past Continuous and Past Perfect Continuous.

The Set Book gives you the opportunity to write about a novel. The title of the novel is published on the Cambridge website (*www.cambridgeenglish.org*) so you will have plenty of time to read and study it. However, in order to answer the Set Book question, you must have a thorough knowledge of it, as you may be required to discuss the characters, plots, setting and/or atmosphere.



SIL.

Practice Test 1 • Paper 2 - WRITING

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Part 1 Compulsory Question

EXTRA ADVICE FOR WRITING

- In Part 1 it is vital that you read the instructions, essay question and prompts very carefully so that you understand what you have to do.
- You must use the two essay prompts and think of a third one of your own. If you miss one out you will lose points. And don't forget: your opinions should be supported by examples and reasons.
- You should get plenty of practice in planning an essay and in using the correct linking words such as 'however', 'nonetheless', 'on the other hand', 'what's more', etc. Paragraphs are important, too. You will need one for the introduction, one or two for the body and one for the conclusion.
- You will also need to know suitable vocabulary to discuss current affairs because the essay question usually requires you to compare, agree, disagree, explain, inform and give opinions on present day issues.
- **1.** You must answer this question. Write your answer in **140-190** words in an appropriate style on the separate answer sheet.
 - Write an essay using all the notes and give reasons for your points of view.

Nowadays technology has taken over our lives. We no longer communicate with each other but sit for hours in front of our screens or mobile phones. Do you think technology is ruining our lives?

Notes

- 1. more information widely accessible
- 2. less time to chat
- **3**. _____ (your own idea).

Practice Test 1 • Paper 3 - LISTENING

Hot tips for the Listening Section

The **Listening Test** lasts about 40 minutes and has four parts to it. You will hear each part twice. You will have time at the end of the test to write your answers onto the answer sheet. There are practice answer sheets at the back of this book.

- Remember to read the instructions before each part very carefully.
- Don't expect to understand every single word. What is important is to understand the general meaning of what you hear.
- Try and decide on your answers the first time you listen if possible and check them the second time.
- Always use the time you are given before each recording to read through the questions and options given.
- Never leave an answer blank. Always write something, even if you are not sure. Ask yourself if the answer you have given makes sense.

Part 1Multiple Choice

EXTRA ADVICE FOR LISTENING

- Read each question carefully and underline the key words. Is it who, what, where, when? Think about the kind of answer you will need to listen for, and the vocabulary associated with the different options.
- You will usually listen to one person talking or a conversation between two people in this part.

Remember that the answer could be at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. Listen to the whole text once before choosing your answer.

• You may hear a word which is one of the options, but it is not necessarily the right answer to the question.

Questions 1-8

- You will hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions 1-8, choose the best answer (A, B or C).
- 1. You hear a student talking about a train journey. What was his final destination?
 - A) Edinburgh University.
 - B) York.
 - **C)** Meeting his friend's brother in Birmingham.
- 2. You will hear a message left by a friend on an answer phone. Ginny thinks:
 - A) Tim will miss the bus.
 - **B**) Jake is likely to forget to phone Tim.
 - C) Mrs Wheeler is waiting to hear from them.

Practice Test 1 • Paper 3 - LISTENING



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3.	You hear two students talking about their exams. What do they agree on?		
	A) B) C)	It feels wonderful to have finished their exams. They should go and have a drink. Their last exam was hard.	
4.	You hear a woman giving a talk to students at school. What is she talking about?		
	,	Lack of jobs for young people in agriculture. Ecological issues. Eating healthily.	
5.	You hear two friends talking about their holidays. Why did the girl go to the place she went to?		
	B)	She had always wanted to go camping. She was tired of beach and partying holidays. To do her friend a favour.	
6.	You will hear a conversation in a shop. What is the customer surprised about?		
	A) B) C)	That there are no earphones for his phone in the shop. That the shop will not give him his money back. That there will not be a delivery until the weekend.	
7. You hear a boy talking to someone on his phone. Who does he want to come and fetch him?			
	A) B) C)	His sister. His father. His mother.	
8.	You hear a father and son talking in the kitchen. What have they organised?		
	A) B) C)	A dinner party. A pizza party. A barbecue.	

Practice Test 1 • Paper 4 - SPEAKING

Hot tips for the Speaking Section

The **Speaking Test** lasts 14 minutes and you take it with another student. There are four parts to the test.

- Try not to be nervous, the examiners are not looking for things you DON'T know; on the other hand, they will encourage you to say what you DO know, so be as natural as possible. Smile and be friendly and stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what the examiner says. If, however, you don't hear or understand something, ALWAYS ask the examiner to repeat it, you are still showing you can communicate and feel at ease in English.
- The vocabulary you will need in the Speaking Test is basically the same that you have read, listened to and written previously in the other parts of the test. However, don't underestimate this part. It only lasts about 14 minutes, but it is worth the same amount of marks as the other parts.
- Always listen to what your partner says, too.

Part 1 A Few Questions About Yourself

EXTRA ADVICE FOR SPEAKING

- This Part lasts about 2 minutes (3 if there are 3 candidates).
- Try and answer the questions without hesitating too much.
- Make your answers interesting, not just 'yes' and 'no' replies.
- The questions will basically be about yourself, so be prepared for vocabulary about family, school, hobbies, sports, likes and dislikes.
- Don't try and search for 'difficult' words or words you don't know. Use the ones you DO know to describe or explain things.

Examiner: Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening. My name is..... and this is my colleague..... Can I have your mark sheets? Thank you.

First of all, we'd like to know something about you. Where are you from? And you?

Possible questions

Sample answers

 Tell us something 	There are five of us in my family: my father, my mother, my
about your family.	brother and my sister, and myself. Luckily we all get on well.

- Do you like living in your hometown?
 Yes, I love it even if there's not much to do. It's a small village in the country, so it's very quiet and peaceful. I still have my old friends from primary school there, so we all meet up every weekend.
- Did you do anything special last weekend?
- How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
- Do you prefer to go on holiday with your family or with friends?
- What do you like about your house/flat?
- Do you use public transport much?

Practice Test 1 • Paper 4 - SPEAKING

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Part 2 The two photographs

EXTRA ADVICE FOR SPEAKING

- Part 2 lasts about 4 minutes.
- Each candidate has about 1 minute for his/her task.
- You will be asked to talk alone and must be able to compare, describe and give your own opinion as fluently as possible.

.....

- You will need to talk for about one minute, so practice beforehand so that you are able to organise your thoughts quickly.
- To do this, talk about what is similar and different in the two photos, but without giving specific detail about them, and then answer the question (which is also written above the photos) and give the reason for your answer. That should take up just about one minute.
- Remember not to interrupt your partner while he/she is talking, but listen carefully and be ready to answer your question promptly when he/she has finished.

Examiner: In this part of the test I'm going to give each of you two photographs. I'd like you to talk about your photos on your own for about a minute and also to answer a question about your partner's photographs.

STUDENT A (go to p. 105)

It's your turn first. Here are your photographs. They show young people on different kinds of holidays. I'd like you to compare the two photographs and say why you think they have chosen this kind of holiday. All right?

Why have they chosen this kind of holiday?

Sample answer.

Well, both these photos show young people on holiday. They look as if they are having fun, but whereas in the first one it is obviously a family holiday, in the second they are all friends together, having a holiday on their own. In the first picture they could be hiking together in a national park or somewhere like that but in the second they are hanging out on the beach. I expect their parents in this first picture offered them the chance to have fun together, to remember the times they had when they were a young family; but in this one, maybe they have





just finished school, or their exams at uni and are enjoying the freedom of travelling alone together and are chilling out by the sea.

- *First Power* is the third of three books which cover the first three levels of the Cambridge English Language Assessments. These are linked to the levels of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). They represent the ideal travelling companion to prepare the Cambridge Exams and are also an invaluable resource for **self-study students** in order to achieve success.
- First Power is planned to help both students and teachers to efficiently and concisely prepare the First for Schools (FCE) examination, corresponding to the intermediate B2 level of the CEFR. The tests follow the sequence and the modalities of the real exam with pages for Reading and Writing, Listening, Speaking.
- First Power contains:
 - four complete exam practice tests: simulations of the original tests which use authentic material from sources such as magazines, instructions, guides, television and radio;
 - tips for tasks and useful suggestions to read before beginning tests;
 - explanations of marking and grading, illustrated by original sample answers.
- First Power also includes:
 - CD with the listening activities;
 - Teacher's Guide with keys to activities, notes, procedures and further tips;
 - Online Resources available on the website of the Publishing House.