



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

An introduction to the updated FCE exam

from December 2008

Margaret Fowler

Bergamo, 13th December 2008





Margaret Fowler

British Council

Via Manzoni 38

20121 Milan

www.britishcouncil.it

esami.milano@britishcouncil.it

02 77222213 02 77222201



Aims of the seminar

- to introduce the changes to FCE and their benefits
- to discuss the rationale and process behind the changes
- to ensure understanding of the changes to each paper



Cambridge ESOL

- World's leading range of ESOL examinations
- 2 million candidates
- Over 2000 centres in 135 countries



The Common European Framework of Levels

C2	CPE	Very Advanced	UK University level
C1	CAE	Advanced	UK University level
B2	FCE	Upper-intermediate	Italian University Scuola Superiore
B1	PET	Intermediate	Italian University Scuola Superiore
A2	KET/Flyers	Pre-intermediate	Scuola Media
A1	Movers Starters	Elementary	Scuola Elementare

The Common European Framework of Reference

CEFR	YLE	General English	BEC	BULATS	Skills for Life	IELTS
C2		CPE		5		9
C1		CAE	BEC Higher	4	Level 2	8
B2		FCE	BEC Vantage	3	Level 1	7
B1		PET	BEC Preliminary	2	Entry 3	6
A2	Flyers	KET		1	Entry 2	5
A1	Movers Starters			0	Entry 1	4
						3
						2
						1
						0



Aims of the review

- to ensure exams are up-to-date: ongoing evaluation process
- to reflect changes in methodology
- to ensure that customer requirements continue to be met successfully and exams continue to be relevant
- to incorporate future changes in technology



This slide has been hidden as the notes are continued from the previous slide



Trialling

- 30 countries
- almost 4,000 candidates
- candidate feedback collected



**What would you like to change
about FCE?**



Basic considerations behind decisions

- Focus on shortening written papers; Listening and Speaking cannot be reduced in length
- Impact of research studies on tasks/content
- Reduce examinations to approx 4 hours (excluding Speaking)
- Maintain the level and all testing focuses as relevant
- Moving more to fixed formats
- Support for candidates



New Timings

■ Paper 1: Reading	1 hour	3 tasks
■ Paper 2; Writing	1 hour 20 minutes	2 tasks
■ Paper 3: Use of English	45 minutes	4 tasks
■ Paper 4: Listening	40 minutes	4 tasks
■ Paper 5. Speaking	12 minutes	4 tasks



Outcomes: FCE

Same number of papers as currently

Reading

- three parts
- one matching, one gapped and one multiple matching task

Writing

- reduced input and output in Part 1

Use of English

- four parts
- no error correction task

Listening

- one task type only for Parts 2 and 4

Speaking

- additional written support



Outcomes: CAE

Reading

- Part 1 now has themed texts with multiple choice

Writing

- reduced input and maximum output in Part 1
- set texts introduced

Use of English

- now five parts, not six

Tasks removed:

- register transfer
- gapped text
- error correction

Tasks inserted:

- key word transformations
- gapped sentences

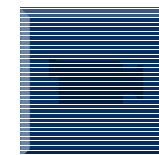
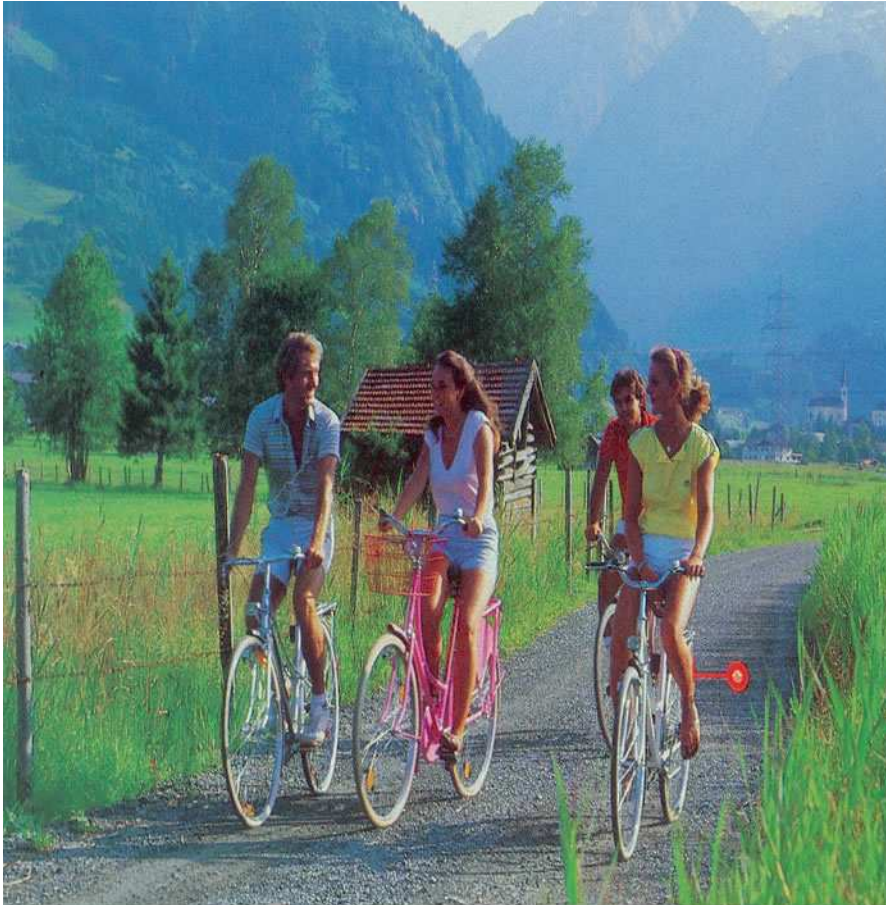
Listening

- fixed format throughout
- short extracts for Part 1
- all texts heard twice

Speaking

- Part 1 reduced from three sections to two

Why do people enjoy activities like these in their free time?






This slide has been hidden as the notes are continued from the previous slide



Benefits of the update

- wider range of testing focuses
- improved practicality and accessibility
- clear progression
- straightforward preparation
- new length
- incorporate future changes in technology



This slide is hidden as the notes are continued from the previous slide




UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment



FCE in detail





FCE Paper 1

Reading



Paper 1 Reading

Summary of changes

- broader and closely specified test focus
- three parts: one matching task removed
- 1 hour
- fixed number of questions per part



Paper 1 Reading

Part 1

- four-option multiple choice questions
- eight questions
- wider range of texts
- broader range of testing focuses



Focuses could include:

Understanding;

- **exemplification**

e.g. Mr Jones gives the students the example of an elephant because ...

- **purpose**

e.g. Why does the cyclist describe his last race?

- **tone**

e.g. In describing the journey, the writer sounds
A worried **B** amused etc.

- **comparison**

e.g. In the third paragraph the writer compares her experience of diving to

A rediscovering a forgotten place **B** making a journey into space etc



Paper 1 Reading


Part 2

- gapped text: sentences only
- seven questions
- tests text structure, cohesion and coherence
- links to real-life skills



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.

My first race was a cross-country race in 1995. It wasn't an amazing success.  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.


- C The courses were twice as long and the crowds were twice as big.
- F I finished last, but it didn't matter as I really enjoyed it.



Paper 1 Reading

Part 3

- testing focus broadened: opinion and attitude
- 15 questions
- links to real-life skills



FCE Paper 2

Writing



Page 23

- How has the writing paper changed?



Paper 2 Writing

Part 1

- input material will be maximum 160 words
- candidates to write between 120 and 150 words
- output text will be letter or email



What stays the same

- task still requires a direct response to a particular individual
- candidates are expected to show awareness of audience and situation
- both letter and email must be in standard English and grammatically correct sentences
- assessment criteria and methods are unchanged
- missing task points will still be reflected in the mark scheme



Part 1

You **must** answer this question. Write your answer in **120–150** words in an appropriate style on the opposite page.

1 You have received an email from your English-speaking friend, Sara, who is planning to open a restaurant. Read Sara's email and the notes you have made. Then write an email to Sara, using **all** your notes.

Write your **email**. You must use grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation in a style appropriate for the situation.



email

From: Sara Martins

Sent: 15th March 2006

Subject: Restaurant

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

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

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

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

Say when and why

Suggest...

Yes, give details

No, because...



Writing paper: Part 1

Sample script A

Dear Sara


Thanks a lot for your email. I was very happy for it.

You ask me about when is the best time to come to our country. I would say march and april because there are a lot of markets and events where you can collect some ideas. The best way to find out what people cook at home is, when you stay for one week in a typical Italian family.

The best restaurant here in Milan is 'Bella Italia'. They makes the food fresh and on a typical traditional way. The restaurant is very small but also lovely.

Thank you very much for your invitation but next July we booked a trip through Canada for one month. Please let me know how was your days in Milan.

*Love
Stephanie*

- 
- 1 What is your initial impression?
 - 2 Are all points covered?
 - 3 Is the word length appropriate?
 - 4 Is there expansion on some of the points?
 - 5 Is the email well organised and appropriately laid out?
 - 6 Is it in grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation in a style appropriate for the situation? (see rubric)
 - 7 Would the target reader (Sara) be clearly informed?



Paper 2 Writing

Part 2

- review task type added
- now two set texts
- one question specific to each set text
- length, input, assessment unchanged

- 
- 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**.



Writing paper: Part 2

Sample script B


OSCAR WILDE: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Last week I went to see 'Earnest' with my English class.

The story is very complicated and funny. There is a love story of Gwendolen and Jack, who has invented an imaginary brother called 'Earnest'. Jack says he visits Earnest whenever he wants to spend time in town. And there's also a story between Algernon and Cicely. Algernon has an imaginary friend called 'Bunbury' who he says he visits whenever he needs an excuse of not doing something. The other main character is Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen's mother, who is large and has a very loud voice. She has some of the best lines. There is a happy ending.

The acting was really good. Everyone spoke quiet slowly so I could understand them, also because we had studied some of the scenes in class. The scenery was nice, an old English house and garden. The costumes were really beautiful – especially the women's long dresses. Gwendolen's dress was dark blue and Lady Bracknell wore a huge hat with the feathers.


I would really recommend the play to everybody. It was a great experience for me. I know you will enjoy it if you see it.

- 
- 1 What is your initial impression?
 - 2 Does the candidate do the task successfully?
 - 3 How good is the language?
 - 4 Is the word length appropriate?
 - 5 Overall assessment?



Set texts for December 2008 to December 2009

- Great Expectations
(Charles Dickens)
- Phantom of the Opera
(Gaston Leroux)



FCE Paper 3

Use of English



Paper 3 Use of English

Summary of changes

- four parts
- 45 minutes
- now 42 questions in total
- order of tasks has changed
- maintains wide testing focus




Paper 3 Use of English

Parts 1 and 2

- 12 questions per part
- test focus unchanged

Part 4

- 8 questions
- test focus unchanged



This slide is hidden as notes continue from the previous slide



Paper 3 Use of English

Part 3

- 10 gaps
- not every line has a gap
- length of text increased
- benefits: real-world texts



Part 3

For questions **25–34**, read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap **in the same line**. There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

Write your answers **IN CAPITAL LETTERS** on the separate answer sheet.

Example:

0	S	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N										
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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.

SELECT

REGARD

FIT



FCE Paper 4

Listening



Paper 4 Listening

- same length and number of questions
- removal of range of task types for Parts 2 and 4
- Part 2: sentence completion task only
- Part 4: three-option multiple choice only
- standardised from session to session



This slide has been hidden as the notes continue from the previous slide



Part 2

You will hear an interview with a woman called Helen Hunter who runs a summer camp for teenagers. For questions **9–18**, complete the sentences.

SUMMER CAMPS

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

9

The summer camp is a chance for teenager to meet people and learn

10

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

11



FCE Paper 5


Speaking



Paper 5 Speaking

Strengths of current Speaking Test

- format
- assessment
- assessment criteria

- 
- Grammar and vocabulary 5
 - Discourse Management 5
 - Pronunciation 5
 - Interactive Communication 5
 - Global Achievement 5



Paper 5 Speaking

- same format, timing, interaction patterns
- same assessment criteria
- Parts 2 and 3 now have written questions on the visuals sheets



Some don'ts!

- chewing gum
- Inappropriate clothes
- “according to me”
- “instead”
- My house is situated in ...
- My family is composed of ..
- Italian



Results



Special Circumstances

- Special Needs
- Special Consideration
- Malpractice



www.britishcouncil.it

- www.cambridgeesol/teach
- www.britishcouncil.org/teaching
- www.learnenglish.org.uk