



Cambridge English Qualifications

B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools

2020 exam update

At a glance – what’s new?

Reading and Writing have been divided into separate papers. There are now four papers (rather than three). For more information visit our website – cambridgeenglish.org/key-and-preliminary

Reading

45 minutes

Six parts, 32 questions. Some parts are in a different order and some are shorter (previously five parts, 35 questions).

Part	Task	Format	No. of questions
1	Multiple-choice short texts	Understanding five short messages of different types. Same as old Part 1.	5
2	Matching	Match five descriptions of people to eight short texts, reading for specific information and detailed comprehension. Same as old Part 2.	5
3	Multiple choice	Read to understand gist, global and detailed meaning, attitude, opinions and feelings, and answer five multiple-choice questions with four options (A, B, C, D). Same as old Part 4.	5
4	Multiple-choice gapped text	Read to understand gist and text structure: choose the correct sentence to put in the gaps.	5
5	Multiple-choice gap fill	Read a text and choose missing words (A, B, C, D) to fill in the gaps. Same as old Part 5 but shorter.	6
6	Open gap fill	Read a text and write words in the gaps.	6

Writing

45 minutes

Two parts. The paper was previously three parts, seven questions.

Part	Task	Format
1	Write an email	Write an email in response to information given. This is a longer task (100 words) than the message task in the old paper (35–45 words).
2	Write an article or story	Write either an article or a story on the topic given (100 words). The article option is instead of the letter option in the old paper.

Key

Revised tasks

New tasks



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Listening

30 minutes

Four parts, 25 questions, as before. Some parts are in a different order.

Part	Task	Format	No. of questions
1	Multiple-choice short texts	Listen to seven short texts for specific information and choose the right picture (A, B, C). Same as old Part 1.	7
2	Multiple-choice short texts	Listen to six short texts for attitudes and opinions, and choose the right option (A, B, C).	6
3	Gap fill	Listen to a longer text and write down missing information in the gaps. Same as old Part 3.	6
4	Multiple-choice long text	Listen to a longer text for specific information, detailed meaning, attitudes and opinions. Same as old Part 2.	6

Speaking

12 minutes

Four parts, as before.

Part	Task	Format
1	Introductory phase	Candidates show ability to use general interactional and social language. Same as old Part 1.
2	Individual long turn	Describing photographs and managing discourse, using appropriate vocabulary in a longer turn. Same as old Part 3 but photos are not necessarily on the same topic.
3	Collaborative task	Using functional language to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement, based on picture prompts. Same as old Part 2.
4	Discussion	Talking about likes/dislikes, preferences, habits, opinions and agreeing/disagreeing. Similar to old Part 4 but is now linked to the collaborative task. In the old paper it was linked to the long turn picture description.

Grades have changed to be in line with higher level Cambridge English Qualifications.

Pass with Distinction changes to A
 Pass with Merit changes to B
 Pass changes to C

Key

Revised tasks

New tasks

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