



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

First Certificate in English

Examination Report 0100 Syllabus

December 2006

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First Certificate in English

Examination Report

Syllabus 0100

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WEBSITE REFERENCE

This report can be accessed through the Cambridge ESOL Website at:

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INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to provide a general view of how candidates performed on each paper in the December 2006 session, and to offer guidance on the preparation of candidates.

The overall pass rate for Syllabus 0100 was **75.01%**.

The following table gives details of the percentage of candidates at each grade.

	0100
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	8.35
B	23.87
C	42.79
D	9.92
E	15.07

- **Grading**

Grading took place during February 2007 (approximately six weeks after the examination).

The five FCE papers total 200 marks, after weighting. Papers 1-5 are each weighted to 40 marks. The candidate's overall FCE grade is based on the total score gained by the candidate in all five papers. Candidates do not 'pass' or 'fail' in a particular paper, but rather in the examination as a whole.

The overall grades (A, B, C, D and E) are set according to the following information:

- statistics on the candidature
- statistics on the overall candidate performance
- statistics on individual questions, for those parts of the examination for which this is appropriate (Papers 1, 3 and 4)
- the advice of the Principal Examiners, based on the performance of candidates, and on the recommendation of examiners where this is relevant (Papers 2 and 5)
- comparison with statistics from previous years' examination performance and candidature.

Results are reported as three passing grades (A, B and C) and two failing grades (D and E). The minimum successful performance which a candidate typically requires in order to achieve a grade C corresponds to about 60% of the total marks. Every candidate is provided with a Statement of Results which includes a graphical display of the candidate's performance in each component. These are shown against the scale Exceptional – Good – Borderline – Weak and indicate the candidate's relative performance in each paper.

- **Special Consideration**

Special Consideration can be given to candidates affected by adverse circumstances immediately before or during an examination. Examples of acceptable reasons for giving Special Consideration include illness and bereavement. All applications for Special Consideration must be made through the local Centre as soon as possible after the examination affected.

- **Irregular Conduct**

The cases of candidates who are suspected of copying, collusion or breaking the examination regulations in some other way will be considered by the Cambridge ESOL Malpractice Committee. Results may be withheld because further investigation is needed or because of infringement of the regulations.

- **Notification of Results**

Candidates' Statements of Results are issued through their local Centre approximately two months after the examination has been taken. Certificates are issued about six weeks after the issue of Statements of Results. Requests for a check on results may be made through the local Centre within one month of the issue of Statements of Results.

Cambridge ESOL produces the following documents which may be of use in preparing candidates for FCE:

- *Regulations* (produced annually, for information on dates, etc.)
- *FCE Handbook* (for detailed information on the examination and sample materials)
- *Examination Report* (produced twice a year)
- *Past Paper Pack* (available approximately 10 weeks after each examination session, including question papers for Papers 1-4, sample Speaking test materials, answer keys, CD and tapescript for Paper 4, and Paper 2 mark schemes and sample scripts).

Users of this Examination Report may find it useful to refer simultaneously to the relevant Past Paper Pack. This, together with further copies of this report, is available from the Centre through which candidates entered, or can be purchased using the order form on-line at www.CambridgeESOL.org

If you do not have access to the internet, you can obtain an order form from:

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PAPER 1 – READING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple matching <i>Main focus: main points</i>	7	A text preceded by multiple-matching questions. Candidates must match prompts to elements in the text.
2	Multiple choice <i>Main focus: detail, opinion, gist, deducing meaning</i>	8	A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.
3	Gapped text <i>Main focus: text structure</i>	6	A text from which paragraphs or sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. Candidates must decide from where in the text the paragraphs or sentences have been removed.
4	Multiple matching, Multiple choice <i>Main focus: specific information, detail</i>	14	As Part 1.

- **Marking**

Candidates record their answers on a separate answer sheet, which is scanned by computer. Questions in Parts 1, 2 and 3 carry two marks each. Questions in Part 4 carry one mark each. The total score is adjusted to give a mark out of 40.

- **Candidate Performance**

In general, candidates coped competently with the four task formats of the paper. Statistical evidence showed that the questions in all four parts provided a reliable assessment of candidates' relative ability levels.

Part 1, Questions 1-7: The world of television

This headings task, focusing on the understanding of the main points in the text, discriminated well between stronger and weaker candidates. Question 1 proved to be the most challenging for the weaker candidates. The heading G, 'Clues to the content', referred to the 'clues' of scary and lively music, dim or well-lit sets that give audiences an idea of 'the content' of the programme they have tuned in to. This is a good example of a heading which encapsulates what is written in the whole of a paragraph. Candidates, therefore, need to be trained to read the text carefully, identifying the main point of each paragraph, before trying to match it to a heading. A considerable number of the weaker candidates selected heading B for Question 1, 'The viewer's attitude to TV', although there is no mention of any attitude in the paragraph.

Candidates performed particularly well on Question 3. They correctly chose heading H, matching 'Bringing emotions to the screen' with the main point outlined in, for example, 'each character's personality and feelings' and 'a long shot ... may indicate a feeling of loneliness...'

Part 2, Questions 8-15: Just learn to trust me

This four-option multiple-choice task focused on candidates' detailed comprehension and included a lexical and a gist question. Candidates performed well on this task, particularly on Question 13. Here, the stronger candidates chose option A, correctly identifying that Mr Treselyan believes his work can stop children from having the negative attitude of some adults – 'We often go in with the belief that we are going to lose. We need to change that mentality...'. However, some of the weaker candidates selected option B, 'He learnt something from it that surprised him'. The text states that this was the first time that Mr Treselyan had worked with children, but there is no indication that he was surprised by the reactions he saw or that he learned anything new. Candidates need to read the options carefully and then check them against the information in the text before making their selection.

The most challenging question proved to be number 8. Candidates were asked to identify the writer's main point in the first paragraph. Most of the stronger candidates correctly chose option B, realising that 'Something unusual happened at Friars Primary School'. This is clearly stated in phrases like 'one of the most extraordinary starts' and 'revolutionary opening'. Quite a number of the weaker candidates chose option A – 'Friars Primary School is not typical of schools in Britain'. This is not stated in the text. In fact Friars is referred to as 'an otherwise unremarkable school in south London'. This illustrates how careful scrutiny of prefixes, particularly the negative ones, will help candidates work out the meaning of a section of text.

Candidates did well on the final question which required them to identify the best summary for the text as a whole. This is an important skill at this level.

Part 3, Questions 16-21: Camping in the wild

This gapped-paragraph task, focusing on text structure, proved to be the most challenging task on the paper. Weaker candidates had most difficulty with Question 20. Few of the weaker candidates chose the correct answer, option C. They failed to link the idea of making friends while camping in the previous paragraph to 'Tent life demands trust and co-operation, and friendships formed here have a way of lasting'. Instead, a considerable number chose option D, possibly because they saw the words 'enjoyed' and 'people'. They failed to pick up on the negative emphasis, '**However**, it is enjoyed by **so few** people'. Candidates need training in recognising the way linkers like 'however' change the direction of a text and also need to be aware of the possible negative connotation of words like 'few'.

In this task candidates were most successful with Question 19. All the stronger candidates successfully linked the mention of the storm in the previous paragraph with the description of bad weather conditions in option G. They may not have known the word 'gust' but were able to get the meaning from the context, 'Gust after gust bent the tent poles double, flattening the roof onto my face.' Understanding meaning from context is a very important skill to acquire. Half of the weaker candidates chose other options, in particular option C. They failed to notice that the initial pronoun in option C, 'we', does not fit with the end of the previous paragraph, where the writer uses the first person singular. It is important to check that pronouns, tenses, singular and plural verbs, etc., follow on appropriately. Weaker candidates sometimes go astray because they have made a wrong choice earlier on in the

task, for example, by selecting option C for gap 19. They then do not select it for gap 20 where it fits well, continuing on from 'we'd chat long into the night'. This emphasises the need to keep checking choices and options all the way through the task. Candidates should be prepared to revisit previous questions and question their initial decision. This checking phase is an important feature of any reading or writing task.

Part 4, Questions 22-35: Here come the agricultural heroines!

This multiple-matching task focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from four short passages. Candidates performed particularly well on this task. The strongest performance was on Questions 23 and 26. In Question 23, nearly all the candidates correctly matched 'set up facilities for holiday-makers' with 'she established bed-and-breakfast accommodation on the farm for tourists' in text B. Similarly in Question 26, they realised that 'became interested in a career in dairy farming as a child' matched the information in text C, 'it was all I ever wanted to do from the age of six, when I was taught to milk a cow'. Some of the weaker candidates chose text D instead, possibly because the word 'child' is used there. However, there is no mention of an interest in dairy farming. This illustrates the danger of selecting an answer by 'wordspotting' rather than by checking the meaning of the question as a whole.

The most challenging question in this section proved to be number 22. Very few of the weaker candidates were able to match 'earns an income from renting out property to different firms' with the information in text D, 'has converted some barns in her farmyard into workshops, which she lets to businesses ranging from a jam factory to a jeweller'. Instead, nearly half of the weaker candidates opted for text B. This is perhaps because of the mention of 'bed-and-breakfast accommodation'. It is true that the farmer's wife in text B is earning an income from her property in a sense, but from tourists, not from 'different firms'. This is a good example of where failing to match up **all** the elements in a question with the information in the text will lead to the wrong answer.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

Teachers and students should note that no single FCE 1 paper includes all possible tasks or question types. The FCE Handbook lists all the task types which may appear on the paper.

In addition to specific examination practice, students should be advised to read as widely as they can, with a range of reading purposes reflecting those sampled in the paper (retrieving relevant information, getting the 'gist', understanding detail, etc.). Many of the texts for the Reading paper are drawn from magazines and newspapers, although extracts from novels and short stories are also used, and students will benefit from being familiar with these different types of text.

Specific work on the identification, location and presentation of main ideas would benefit candidates in Parts 1 and 3.

Focusing on the sequence of tenses in continuous text and the use of pronouns for referencing would also be beneficial, particularly in Part 3.

• **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 1 READING**

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO | make sure that you choose the correct option(s) when you find similar information in different sections of the text in Parts 1 and 4. |
| DO | read and re-read your answers in Parts 1 and 3, and be prepared to change your mind. If you find that none of the choices you have left fits, you may need to think again about the choices you have already made. Always be prepared to go back and check. |
| DO | read through the main text in Part 3, so you have a good idea of what it is about before you look at the extracts and choose any answers. |
| DO | think about the text before and after each gap in Part 3 and try to guess what is missing. |
| DO | pay careful attention to references to places, people and things (pronouns) in the extracts in Part 3. They must refer correctly to the nouns in the text before and after the gap. |
| DO | fill what you think are the easy gaps first in Parts 1 and 3, and leave the problem areas until last. |
| DO | read through Part 3 after making your choices to check that everything makes sense. Check that linking words, tenses and time references all fit with the choices you have made. |
| DO | prepare for the FCE Reading paper by reading as widely as you can in English, both fiction and non-fiction. |
| DO | remember, in your personal reading as well as in the exam, you will not need to know the exact meaning of every word. Use clues like the title or any pictures to help you understand what a text is about, and then try to read for the main idea. Getting into this habit will help you to read quickly and effectively. |
| DON'T | choose an answer just because you see the same word in the text and in the question option ('word-spotting'). In all parts of the paper, seeing the same (or similar) word in both text and question is no guarantee that you have found the correct answer. |
| DON'T | forget that in Part 3, introductory adverbs or phrases in the extracts must be connected with the ideas which go before the gap, e.g. 'However' must be preceded by a contrasting idea; 'Another mistake we made...' must be preceded by a previous mistake, etc. |
| DON'T | forget that, if a Part 2 multiple-choice question is an incomplete sentence, the whole sentence must match the text, not just the phrase presented as A, B, C or D. The information in these options may be true in itself, but may not work with the sentence beginning you are given. |
| DON'T | choose your answers too quickly in Part 3. Only start to look at the extracts when you have a good idea of what the main text is about. |

PAPER 2 – WRITING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Tasks and Length	Task Format
1	Question 1 Writing a transactional letter (formal/informal)	1 compulsory task 120-180 words	Candidates are required to deal with input material of up to 250 words, which may include graphic and pictorial material. Texts may include advertisements, letters, postcards, diaries, short articles, etc.
2	Questions 2-4 Writing one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an article • a non-transactional informal letter • a report • a discursive composition • a descriptive/narrative short story 	4 tasks from which the candidates choose 1 120-180 words	A situationally-based writing task specified in no more than 70 words.
	Question 5 Writing a composition, article, report or an informal letter on a prescribed background reading text	Question 5 has two options	

• Marking

All scripts are marked by experienced examiners, who must attend a training and standardisation day before they commence any marking. Examiners award marks according to a General Mark Scheme, which has detailed Performance Bands from 0-5, where Band 3 describes a 'satisfactory' level. Within the bands, examiners place the script more exactly at bottom, mid or top of the band range, e.g. 3·1, 3·2, 3·3. These scores are converted to provide a mark out of 20 for each piece of writing.

Examiners also use a Task-specific Mark Scheme for each question. This describes satisfactory Band 3 performance and covers content, organisation, range, register and format, and effect on target reader. Examples of the mark schemes are included in the FCE Past Paper Pack.

Examiners work in small teams and are monitored and advised by Team Leaders, who in turn are monitored by the Principal Examiner.

- **Candidate Performance**

Part 1, Question 1

For this compulsory question, candidates were asked to respond to a leaflet requesting ideas for improvements to a cinema. The letter was to be written to Mr Dixon, the manager of the cinema, and a formal register and tone was expected. Most candidates found the question accessible and engaged well with the task, showing a clear understanding of what was required in terms of content. The wording of the question (particularly points 2 and 3) encouraged expansion, and the use of a range of functions. Good candidates were able to grasp the scenario with ease, and link the points accordingly, maintaining a suitable tone. It was clear from the way candidates addressed the points in the task and attempted to link them together with an appropriate range of functions that they were well trained in what was expected.

Many candidates showed that they had a good command of formal register, using an appropriate range of linking words and suitable opening and closing formulae (e.g. 'Dear Mr Dixon', 'Yours sincerely'). Stronger candidates also showed a good grasp of relevant vocabulary, e.g. 'screen', 'performance', 'classic films', etc.

There were, however, two kinds of error that were remarkably prevalent. One was the overuse of commas in sentences such as 'Although, I think, it is the best cinema in town, there are number of problems, which could be improved'. Linking also caused problems, with 'although' used instead of 'also' and paragraph markers like 'in the end' being used at inappropriate moments.

The first point of any Part 1 task is designed to offer the candidates a successful way into their response. In this case, candidates were expected to make a positive comment about the fact that there was extra money for improvements/changes. Good candidates made full and appreciative comments about the improvements and their part to play in the changes, (e.g. 'It's great to hear some improvements will be made at the cinema'). However, a surprising number of candidates missed this point completely or failed to make a positive comment. Teachers should explain the purpose of this opening point to their students, and make sure they are aware that there are five points to be covered in every Part 1 task. Candidates are penalised for failing to address one of the points.

The majority of candidates covered the second point well and often gave a list of the sort of film they enjoyed seeing. Better candidates were able to elaborate on different genres and use some interesting and relevant vocabulary. One typical error was the different use of 'various' and 'varied', e.g. 'a various range of films'.

There was an opportunity to use a good range of vocabulary on the third point too, with suggestions made about improving the food, drinks, staff and decor. One common error, however, was the fact that some candidates thought 'café' meant 'coffee', but fortunately they often talked about other improvements to the café facilities as well, and thus avoided being penalised.

Most candidates were able to expand on the fourth point and some wrote at length about website technicalities and suggestions for how to deal with the problems, although this was not expected. Most candidates simply commented on the fact that the website was not updated frequently enough or lacked information about film length, title, reviews, etc. Candidates needed to give a reason for this point and were penalised if they failed to do so.

The final point was generally well done, and candidates produced some good language, making requests for such things as children's clubs, discounts, loyalty cards, disabled facilities, car parking, organising special film days, etc.

Part 2

The most popular task was Question 4, the letter, chosen by over 55% of candidates. Question 2, the article, was selected by 23% of candidates and Question 3, the story, was chosen by 20% of candidates. A very small number of candidates (under 2%) responded to Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions.

Question 2

The article on eating habits was generally very well done, with lots of reference to fast food, healthy eating and organic food being made. Some candidates focused more on eating habits and others more on types of food; both approaches were very acceptable. One typical error was the use of 'fast food' to mean a restaurant, e.g. 'eating in a fast food'. The best answers were lively and descriptive and engaged the reader.

Question 3

This story question was well done, with some very good narratives being produced. Many candidates described trips abroad or experiences of sport, music or acting. There was generally good control of past tenses, although some candidates who attempted to write about a flashback did not always manage to make the sequence clear. There were hardly any problems with the prompt; the vast majority of candidates wrote a story which flowed effectively from the given sentence.

Question 4

Candidates also handled the letter question well, adopting a suitable tone for an informal letter to their penfriend. Their answers were interesting to read, since a great range of people were described, from politicians (dead and alive) to poets, musicians and footballers. The best answers were those in which the candidate described their chosen famous person and his/her achievements and importance in some detail and with enthusiasm, explaining why he/she had become famous.

Questions 5a and 5b

The small number of candidates who answered these questions mostly wrote successfully about either *Pride and Prejudice* or *1984*. A few candidates wrote about books not on the list and were penalised.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

As always stated in these reports, candidates must read each question carefully and carry out what is required, including all the necessary points and keeping to the task set. Information about the target reader and the reason for writing is given in each question to help the candidate, and this should be borne in mind during classroom preparation. Working with past papers in pairs or groups, where students spend time identifying the reader, the text type, and the important content points, is very useful in planning what to write.

It is often very helpful for students to work on a second draft of a homework answer. In this way, the teacher, or other students, can make useful suggestions regarding organisation, language, and content omissions. The second draft can then be compared to the first, an activity which is not only instructive regarding weaknesses, but also builds confidence. Students should be encouraged to experiment with a wider range of language in the second draft, for example, replacing any repeated words with near synonyms. Candidates who use a variety of adjectives rather than repeating the word 'great' several times will usually score a higher mark. Classroom brainstorming of relevant adjectives and verbs with similar meanings can be useful preparation immediately prior to a homework assignment. It is also very important that students are taught the importance of accurate punctuation and effective use of linking words. Error correction can be a useful way of approaching these issues.

Part 1

In this type of task especially, students need to consider the 'bigger picture' of why they are writing, and be sensitive to the type of scenario described and who the target reader is. This will help them to decide whether formal or informal language is required. They should also be prepared to express their ideas using a range of functions within each letter, such as expressing enthusiasm, suggesting, giving information and opinions, offering, etc.

Students should be encouraged to make a plan before they start writing, and should then think carefully about how to organise their ideas and what they can say on each point. It is good to explain to students how a content point can be developed, perhaps by the use of obviously contrasting sample answers, where one is only minimally expanded and the other includes good development. In class, paired discussion can often lead to more ideas for expansion. Where candidates develop the points, they generally score higher marks.

Students should also be encouraged to make sensible use of paragraphing and use a variety of linkers. This is another reason for developing a plan prior to writing. In class, students could be given a text without paragraphs and asked to suggest paragraphs for it, or add appropriate linkers to it. They also need to be taught which linking words and phrases are appropriate to formal and informal letters; many errors identified by markers involved the incorrect use of linking words and phrases.

Finally, students should be aware of the need to write in a consistent register throughout the letter, using formal or informal language, as appropriate.

Part 2

The special style and layout used in articles, which usually have catchy titles, rhetorical questions and lively tone, can be taught in class with the help of real material (course books usually contain examples of them). The register of articles is generally less formal than that of compositions, and it is worth exploring in class colourful adjectives, adverbs and expressions that can be used in this kind of task.

In order to write an effective story, students need training in how to link a story coherently to a given prompt sentence. They should also be instructed to take note of who is referred to in the sentence, so that they can continue from the prompt sentence appropriately. Finally, they should note whether the prompt sentence is in the first or third person, so that they use the same name, if one appears in the question. Students may also need to revise past tenses, especially the irregular forms and perfect tenses.

Candidates need to be aware of the appropriate tone to use in an informal letter, and ways of beginning and ending their answers. In addition, it should be pointed out that the main point

of the letter is to supply the information that their penfriend has requested and that they should therefore deal with this in some detail. The key functions needed are describing, explaining and giving opinions.

There are many ways to incorporate a set text into classroom work, and parts of it can be assigned for homework. Students will benefit from reading on their own, both in terms of new vocabulary and the reinforcement of structures already learnt. Looking at past papers in class will allow students to practise questions regularly, in relation to different parts of the book.

• **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 2 WRITING**

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO | read the whole question thoroughly and underline important parts. |
| DO | write clearly, so that the examiner can read your answer. |
| DO | make a plan for each answer, including ALL the points. |
| DO | write in paragraphs, whenever appropriate. |
| DO | use a range of vocabulary, even if you are unsure of the correct spelling. |
| DO | check tense endings, plural forms and word order in sentences. |
| DO | check irregular past tenses and question formation. |
| DO | use language that is appropriately formal or informal for the task. |
| DO | expand the points in Part 1 if you can, using relevant ideas and information. |
| DO | choose a Part 2 question that you feel confident you can write about. |
| DO | write the correct number of words for both answers. |
|
 | |
| DON'T | misspell key words which appear on the question paper. |
| DON'T | 'lift' too much language from the question paper. |
| DON'T | mix formal and informal language. |

PAPER 3 – USE OF ENGLISH

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple-choice cloze <i>Focus: vocabulary</i>	15	A modified cloze text containing 15 gaps and followed by 15 four-option multiple-choice questions.
2	Open cloze <i>Focus: grammar and vocabulary</i>	15	A modified cloze text containing 15 gaps.
3	'Key' word transformations <i>Focus: grammar and vocabulary</i>	10	Discrete questions with a lead-in sentence and a gapped response to complete using a given word.
4	Error correction <i>Focus: grammar</i>	15	A text containing errors. Some lines of the text are correct, other lines contain an extra and unnecessary word which must be identified.
5	Word formation <i>Focus: vocabulary</i>	10	A text containing 10 gaps. Each gap corresponds to a word. The 'stems' of the missing words are given beside the text and must be transformed to provide the missing word.

- **Marking**

Candidates write their answers on a separate answer sheet, which is marked according to a mark scheme and then scanned by computer.

Questions 1-30 and 41-65 carry one mark each. Questions 31-40 are marked on a scale 0-1-2. The total score is adjusted to give a mark out of 40.

- **Candidate Performance**

Part 1, Questions 1-15: Nature photography

Multiple-choice Cloze

This part of the paper tests both the meaning of words in context and 'fixed' lexis such as collocations and idioms. Those questions testing fixed language tended to prove challenging for candidates. Questions 5 and 8, both testing fixed phrases, were a case in point. For Question 8 many candidates put option D. While 'positive aspect' does collocate, it does not fit in the wider lexical phrase beginning with 'on'. Two other questions were also challenging, correctly answered only by a minority of candidates: 9 and 14. For Question 9, many candidates put option A as the answer. This option is certainly tempting in the sentence, but a wider look at the context rules it out. Candidates coped best with Questions 10, 11 and 13,

a high proportion answering correctly. Weaker candidates were attracted in considerable numbers to options 4C, 6C and 14B. With Questions 4 and 14, these options are of course wrong, partly for grammatical reasons – the following preposition or absence of it in Question 4 makes them wrong. Candidates should be aware that choosing the correct option can sometimes involve grammar as well as lexical knowledge.

Part 2, Questions 16-30: Wall-climbing

Open Cloze

This part of the paper had the best overall candidate performance. The great majority of candidates answered correctly for Questions 16 and 18. Perhaps, predictably, Questions 22 and 23 proved the most challenging. Candidates will see from past papers that this part of the paper has some questions which test beyond sentence level, in other words, they require an understanding of the argument of the text around the sentence containing the gap. Words like ‘although’ come into this category, and have tended to prove challenging. Weaker candidates sometimes failed to read even at sentence level. For example, for Question 20 some put ‘not’ or ‘be’. Presumably, they were recalling knowledge of ‘would rather not’ or ‘would rather be’, rather than connecting with the meaning of the sentence. Similarly, some put ‘solved’ for Question 30, recalling a known collocation inappropriately. Other common wrong answers included ‘part’ for Question 18, ‘is’ for 22, ‘she’ for 25 and ‘it’ for 28.

Part 3, Questions 31-40

‘Key’ Word Transformations

Overall, this part of the paper proved the most challenging, but performance was remarkably consistent. Slightly fewer than half of the total number of candidates answered correctly for Questions 36 and 39. It was the first half of the answer for 36 that candidates found more difficult – there were several common variations such as ‘for ages’ and ‘for long’. With Question 39, some candidates used the past simple of the verb, making a perfectly correct sentence – except that in doing so they were changing the keyword, and so lost marks unnecessarily. Other candidates put ‘the’ before coffee, again penalising themselves rather unnecessarily, as there are clues in the first sentence that no article is required. Candidates should be careful not to change the keyword. Some stronger candidates also lost marks for ‘over-transforming’ – that is, making too many changes that are not necessary. In Question 32, for example, the answer ‘(what) worries me **the most** is’ was not uncommon, adding a layer of meaning that is not present in the first sentence. In Question 33, weaker candidates tended not to know the grammar of the verb ‘prevent’ – although most got the first half of this question right. With Question 37, ‘not used to work’ was a common wrong answer from weaker candidates. It is unsuitable here as this is not the ‘used to do something’ structure, but ‘be used to doing something’. For Question 40, it is possible that some candidates confused ‘breaking’ and ‘braking’, as ‘(caused) by a breaking lorry’ was a relatively common wrong answer.

Part 4, Questions 41-55: Australian cowboy

Error Correction

Candidates also performed very consistently on this part of the paper. They found Questions 43 and 46 very straightforward, but had most problems with 41, 44 and 47. It is sometimes said that this part of the paper bears some relation to the real-life skill of proofreading, and it is certainly true that candidates should check their answers carefully, as it is easy to miss

errors in this part if one reads too quickly or without concentration. Equally, it is occasionally the case that the eye subconsciously supplies an extra word that it wants to see but which, actually, is not there. This was arguably true of Questions 41 and 47, where, if you read too fast, the eye could supply a word that actually is not there ('18 years [old]' and 'As soon [as] my confidence grew'). Interestingly, it was some of the correct lines that provided a large number of common wrong answers – especially from the phrase 'making the most of' in Question 44.

Part 5, Questions 56-65: The Grand Canyon

Word Formation

Generally, candidates found this part of the paper quite challenging. However, it was highly encouraging to see that, even where mistakes were made, there were very few instances of the wrong part of speech being chosen. In other words, with Question 61, for example, almost all candidates recognised the need for a noun, even if some of them then chose the wrong noun or misspelt it. On the other hand, it was noticeable that some candidates are still failing to change the given word – particularly, where Questions 60 and 65 were concerned. Spelling mistakes tended to dominate the common wrong answers: notably 'explorors', 'visiters' and 'impresive', while it was also clear that there was some first language interference in the forming of words, with plenty of examples of 'explorators', 'compagnons' and 'ordinair'. Question 62 proved to be the least difficult for candidates, while Questions 58, 59, 63 and 65 were all answered incorrectly by a majority of candidates. Candidates should be aware that, as with Question 59, some questions may test what is called an 'internal change' such as 'long → length' – a change that does not involve the addition of an affix. Equally, candidates can observe from past papers that, as with Question 65, at least one question will normally contain a prefix.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

Some candidates prefer to write their answers on the question paper and then transfer them to the answer sheet. Candidates who do this should be sure to give themselves enough time to transfer their answers accurately. Some students miscopied their answers, making spelling mistakes.

Hurried copying out of answers also produced some poor quality handwriting. Candidates risk losing marks unnecessarily, since illegible answers cannot be marked.

In Part 3, candidates sometimes lose marks for 'over-transforming' – that is, they change elements from the first sentence needlessly and make mistakes in doing so. Alternatively, they introduce new ideas and write a new sentence that is too far in meaning from the first sentence. In view of this, the best way for candidates to approach this part is always to get as close to the meaning of the first sentence as possible. The task is simply to rewrite the first sentence using different words.

In Part 4, candidates should read the text very carefully. As when checking one's written work in real life, concentration is needed. It is easy for the eye to miss certain extra words, so it is useful to read the text aloud in one's head and to keep checking that it makes sense. Also, if candidates read too quickly, their eyes may 'trick' them into thinking a word is present, so they wrongly assume the line is correct.

- **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 3 USE OF ENGLISH**

DO	be sure to write individual letters clearly.
DO	give yourself time to check your work.
DO	make sure that the sentence you complete in Part 3 is as close in meaning to the first sentence as possible.
DO	write the prompt word in your answer for Part 3.
DO	make sure that every answer in Part 5 makes a change to the word at the end of the same line.
DON'T	decide on an answer without reading the whole of a sentence.
DON'T	change more than you need to in Part 3.
DON'T	forget to concentrate hard when you are doing Part 4, as it is easy for your eye to miss certain words.
DON'T	leave the word which is in capitals in Part 5 unchanged.
DON'T	forget to look carefully at the text in Part 5 in order to decide on the grammatical form of the missing words.

PAPER 4 – LISTENING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple choice <i>Focus:</i> Understanding gist, main points, detail, function, location, roles and relationships, mood, attitude, intention, feeling or opinion	8	A series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. The multiple-choice questions have three options.
2	Sentence completion, note completion or blank filling <i>Focus:</i> Understanding gist, main points, detail or specific information, or deducing meaning	10	A monologue or text involving interacting speakers and lasting approximately 3 minutes.
3	Multiple matching <i>Focus:</i> As for Part 1	5	A series of short related extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. The multiple-matching questions require selection of the correct option from a list of 6.
4	Selection from 2 or 3 possible answers <i>Focus:</i> As for Part 2	7	A monologue or text involving interacting speakers and lasting approximately 3 minutes. The questions require candidates to select between 2 or 3 possible answers, e.g. true/false; yes/no; three-option multiple-choice; which speaker said what, etc.

• Marking

Candidates write their answers on a separate answer sheet, which is marked according to a detailed mark scheme and then scanned by computer.

Each question carries one mark. The total score is adjusted to give a mark out of 40.

For security reasons, more than one version of the Paper 4 Listening test is made available at each session. As with all other FCE papers, rigorous checks are built into the question paper production process to ensure that all versions of the test are of comparable content and difficulty. In addition, for Paper 4, the marks are adjusted to ensure that there is no advantage or disadvantage to candidates taking one particular version.

All texts and tasks were representative of what can be expected in future versions of the paper. In Part 4, three-way matching tasks and two-option tasks, as outlined in the FCE Handbook, may appear in future versions.

- **Candidate performance**

Candidates performed very well on all versions of the paper. In each version, no one part was significantly more difficult than another. This report is based on results from candidates who took version A of the Listening test.

Part 1, Questions 1-8

The eight short listening texts in Part 1 provide a range of text types and voices as well as a range of focuses across the eight questions. Generally, candidates had few difficulties with these questions, which are intended to provide a lead-in to the test, though some questions did prove more challenging than others.

Candidates coped best with Questions 1, 4 and 7, though there was a notable disparity between strong and weak candidates in Questions 4 and 7. For example, in Question 4, a significant number of weak candidates were attracted to option A, 'It was more graceful than gymnastics'. The question asked candidates to focus on how the woman felt when she was training to be a ballet dancer, and candidates who chose option A were distracted by her remark '...to train to be more elegant...'. This option is not supported by the woman's comment later in the extract when she says, '...I didn't like the training at the beginning. I thought it was...dull...it was stiff. For me, gymnastics meant more freedom...more fun'. Stronger candidates who listened to the complete text more carefully, correctly chose option C, 'It was less interesting than gymnastics'.

The most challenging questions in Part 1 were Questions 5, 6 and 8. Question 5 proved the most challenging; many weaker candidates opted for B, 'He was there just as a professional photographer', as did some of the stronger candidates. They were perhaps distracted by the reference to the fact that the tourist 'seemed arrogant' and 'handed a camera to one of the staff'. Strong candidates, however, understood that the comments '...we reached Peter Island...it was the whole reason why he'd come...had his photo taken...' supported the correct option C, 'He was only interested in impressing his friends'.

Question 8 proved very challenging for weaker candidates many of whom were wrongly attracted by the phrase '...I don't really normally like music being transmitted over the TV...' and opted for C as a result of this. Strong candidates who listened carefully to the complete text chose the correct option B, which was supported by the woman's comment about watching a Beethoven concert, '...the power of the music overwhelmed me and it succeeded in actually making me feel quite agitated'.

Part 2, Questions 9-18

This was a sentence-completion task based on a radio interview with a young man who makes and sells chocolates. Candidates in general coped very well with this topic.

The questions which posed candidates the fewest problems were 9, 15, 17 and 18, all of which had clear references in the text or required straightforward factual answers. Nevertheless, many answers to Question 18, for example, demonstrate that weaker candidates tend to lose marks by not listening carefully and having heard correctly that the answer was 'café', they then forfeited the mark by writing 'big café' based on the speaker adding, 'I don't want to get too big as I like to be in control so don't expect to see a chain of them or anything!'

Candidates should remember that poor handwriting may result in the loss of marks. For example, poor formation of vowels, such as 'a' and 'o', meant that it was often difficult to

differentiate between these letters in words like 'rabbit' and 'biology' in Questions 14 and 17 respectively. Consonants such as 'b' were also sometimes carelessly formed in Question 14; the Co-ordinating Examiner reports that 'b' was sometimes written as a 'formless slash'. In Question 16, the final 'r' in 'sugar' was not always completed correctly and was often 'just a squiggle'. Candidates who write neatly or who print their answers in capitals fare best in this part of the test.

Questions 11 and 13 attracted the largest number of incorrect answers and, in Question 13 in particular, there was a marked difference in the performance of strong and weak candidates. Here, many of the weaker candidates were tempted by the speaker's reference to 'metal table and sink', which were included in his comment, 'I had very little when I moved in, just a large pan to add to the metal table and sink...'. In Question 11, the common wrong answer, 'waiter', suggests that candidates either did not read the question prompt 'Soon after he left university...' carefully enough, or did not listen to what the speaker went on to say having mentioned that he did work as a waiter in a hotel when he was at university, namely, 'Anyway, after I'd graduated they offered me the job of junior manager and I took it...'.

Part 3, Questions 19-23

This was a multiple-matching task based on five short texts in which five different people talk about going on holiday alone. Results suggest that candidates had no problems relating to the topic, and coped very well with this part of the test.

Questions 21 and 23 proved to be the most challenging questions, particularly for weaker candidates. In Question 21, weaker candidates were attracted to option C, 'I believe that planning a trip is easier when you travel alone', having heard, 'There wasn't really anyone I knew who was free to go with me' and 'when you're single, you get used to doing things your way'. The correct option F, 'I like a holiday company which respects your independence.' was cued by the speaker's next comment, 'So I go on holiday with *Solo*, a travel firm which allows you to do just that, but with the safety net of having a group to mix with when you want'. Strong candidates understood 'just that' referred back to being independent if you chose to be.

The disparity between strong and weak candidates was also reflected in Question 23. For example, weak candidates were attracted to option F, possibly because they had wrongly thought that the speaker's comment early in the text was made in the context of a travel company, 'Coming back from my latest holiday, I thought, "Yes, I coped with that quite well." It gives you a boost and makes you feel quite good about yourself – ...', whereas the correct option was A, 'I think travelling alone makes you more self-confident'.

Questions 20 and 22 were handled particularly well by most candidates.

The contrast in performance between stronger and weaker candidates suggests that the weaker ones are tempted to match words which they hear with the same or similar words which are printed, and do not listen carefully for the general point that the speaker is making.

Part 4, Questions 24-30

This was a three-option multiple-choice task based on a radio interview with a science-fiction writer.

Candidates found this part of the test the most challenging, although they coped well with Questions 25 and 27. Question 26 proved the most difficult. In this question, although the speaker talks about the subjects he did for his degree at university and mentions changing to

a new subject when he did a second degree, he goes on to say, 'A large aircraft company paid all my costs'; in other words, he is expressing the sentiment contained in option B, 'didn't have to worry about money'. Strong candidates were able to appreciate the implicit meaning of the speaker's statement and match it with option B and were not tempted by the other references.

This part of the test includes other similar questions, namely 28, 29 and 30, which focus on understanding the expression of feelings and opinions rather than facts, and candidates need to be prepared to listen for a speaker's attitude or point of view.

● RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

The Listening test is based on recorded material taken from various authentic contexts and is designed to test a range of listening skills. The test lasts about 40 minutes and contains 30 questions. There are four parts to the test, and a range of text and task types is represented. All instructions, rubrics, repeats and pauses are included on the recording, as is the copying time at the end.

Candidates record their answers in one of two ways: in Parts 1, 3 and 4, candidates must choose the appropriate answer from those provided and mark or write the appropriate letter (A, B, C, etc.) on their answer sheet. No part of the wording of the chosen option should be copied onto the answer sheet. In Part 2, candidates must write a word, a number or a short phrase in response to a written prompt, and only the candidate's answer should be copied onto the answer sheet.

Part 1

This part of the paper is designed to enable candidates to settle into the Listening test in a relatively gentle way. Unlike the other parts of the paper, they both hear and read the questions. Students should be encouraged to use the information contained in the questions and options to help them focus on what they are about to hear and what they are listening for. Some texts may target points of detail in the question, others call for elements of gist understanding. Attitudes, opinions or feelings may also be tested, or the focus may be on the topic, function, speaker or the main point of what is heard.

Candidates should listen carefully when the text is repeated, particularly when an option seems to be obviously correct, and is supported by an individual word or phrase used in the text. Careful listening to the surrounding text may reveal shades of meaning not appreciated at first. Additionally, teachers should give students plenty of practice in dealing with the range of text types and focuses, so that candidates are prepared for the varying character and pace of both monologues and dialogues in Part 1.

Part 2

In Part 2, candidates are required to produce written answers in response to various types of prompt. The task consists of 10 gaps in either a set of notes or a set of sentences. Texts may be either monologues or dialogues, and a contextualising rubric sets the scene in terms of speaker(s), topic and context. Students should be reminded that questions are chronological, following the order of the information in the text. Adequate time is given for candidates to read the task before they hear the recording, and they should use this time to think about the type of information which is missing.

In preparing for this part of the test, students should be encouraged to practise writing the short answers which are required in a productive task. The Co-ordinating Examiner continues to point out the necessity for legible handwriting, especially when writing the following letters: vowels such as 'a', 'o' and 'e' which can be easily confused, the consonants 'r', 'm', 'w' and 'n' and those which have tails such as 'g', 'p' and 'q'. Every effort is made to achieve fair marking, but completely illegible handwriting cannot be rewarded. It is also important that great care is taken to ensure that an answer fits and makes sense with what comes before and, if relevant, **after** the gap, and does not repeat information already included in the question stem.

Most answers will be a single word, a number or a very short phrase, and students should be warned that writing unnecessarily wordy answers will almost certainly lose them marks. Occasionally, an answer requires two separate words, separated by 'and' in the box on the question paper. In this case, candidates may write their answers in either order. It is very unlikely that any answer will need more than four words and, more often than not, questions can be answered using fewer. Where keys focus on numerical information, they may be written in number form and need not be written out in words. Candidates are not expected to rephrase what they hear and should therefore focus on writing down the key information as it is heard in the text. They are not asked to reformulate language in note form in note-completion tasks, or to make grammatical transformations from text to task in sentence-completion tasks. Some minor spelling mistakes are accepted if the meaning of the word is not changed, but the main words and phrases tested are limited to those which candidates can reasonably be expected to spell correctly at this level.

Whatever the task type, sentence completion or note completion, the keys usually focus on concrete items of information such as 'rabbit' and 'sugar' in Test A, for example. Both British and American spellings are accepted.

Part 3

In Part 3, the focus is on gist listening skills. Candidates listen to five short texts on a topic which is indicated in the contextualising rubric, and the task is multiple matching. Students should be encouraged to think carefully about the context and should use the preparation time to read the options; this will help them to know what it is they are listening for. In Test A, for example, the task focused on the way in which each speaker reflects on going on holiday alone. Students should be encouraged to listen for the meaning of the whole text, and to focus on identifying each speaker's opinion, which is expressed in the options listed.

Students should be advised to make good use of the repetition of the texts, even if they have answered every question on the first listening. They may find that they need to change more than one answer if they discover a mistake, because one incorrect answer may have a knock-on effect on the other questions.

Part 4

Students should be prepared to encounter any of the following task types: 3-option multiple choice, 3-way matching and 2-option tasks (TRUE/FALSE, YES/NO), as any of them could appear in any version. They should know that with all the task types, adequate time is given for them to read the questions before they hear the recording. In the multiple-choice task, candidates are given one minute to read through the questions.

As in Part 2, the questions follow the order of the text. Each question focuses on one part of the text, and will generally test understanding of that whole section rather than isolated words and phrases. The questions may test points of detail, gist meaning and the understanding of

opinions, feelings and attitudes. Students should be reminded that all three options in multiple-choice questions will include ideas and information from the text, but only one (the key) will combine with the question prompt to reflect the exact meaning expressed in the text.

• **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 4 LISTENING**

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO | listen to and read the instructions. Make sure you understand what you are listening for and what you have to do. |
| DO | use the time allowed before hearing each recording to read through all the questions carefully, so you are prepared for what you hear. |
| DO | use the information on the question paper to help you follow the listening text. |
| DO | look carefully at what is printed before and after the gap in Part 2, and think about the kind of information that you are listening for. |
| DO | write only the missing information on the answer sheet. |
| DO | write your answers as clearly as possible in Part 2; if in doubt, use capital letters. |
| DO | check that your idea of what the correct answer is when you first hear the recording is confirmed when you hear it for the second time. |
| DO | remember that any wrong answer you discover in Part 3 when hearing the recording for a second time may affect your other answers. |
| DO | concentrate on understanding in as much depth as possible what speakers say, especially in Parts 1, 3 and 4; don't be distracted by word-spotting individual words and phrases. |
| DO | answer all the questions – even if you are not sure; you have probably understood more than you think. |
| DO | make sure that you copy your answers accurately onto the answer sheet. |
| DON'T | rephrase what you hear in Part 2; do write down the figure(s) or word(s) that you hear spoken. |
| DON'T | complicate an answer in Part 2 by writing extra, irrelevant information. |
| DON'T | spend too much time on a question you are having difficulty with, as you may miss the next question. |

PAPER 5 – SPEAKING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Length	Task Format
1	Short exchanges between each candidate and the Interlocutor <i>Focus:</i> Giving personal information; socialising	3 minutes	The Interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves.
2	Long turn from each candidate, with a brief response from the other candidate <i>Focus:</i> Exchanging personal and factual information; expressing attitudes and opinions; employing discourse functions related to managing a long turn	4 minutes	The candidates are in turn given visual prompts (two colour photographs) which they each talk about for approximately 1 minute. They are also asked to comment briefly on each other's photographs.
3	Candidates talk with one another <i>Focus:</i> Exchanging information, expressing attitudes and opinions	3 minutes	The candidates are given visual prompts (photographs, line drawings, diagrams, etc.) which generate discussion through engagement in tasks such as planning, problem solving, decision making, prioritising, speculating, etc.
4	Candidates talk with one another and the Interlocutor <i>Focus:</i> Exchanging and justifying opinions	4 minutes	The Interlocutor encourages a discussion of matters related to the theme of Part 3.

• Marking

The Speaking tests are conducted by trained examiners, who attend annual co-ordination sessions to ensure that standards are maintained.

The Assessor awards marks to each candidate for performance throughout the test according to the four Analytical Criteria (Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication). The Interlocutor awards marks according to the Global Achievement Scale, which assesses the candidates' overall effectiveness in tackling the tasks. These scores are converted by computer to provide a mark out of 40.

• Candidate Performance

Candidate performance in this administration was consistent with that of June 2006 and historical norms. Feedback from Oral Examiners has been very positive and students, as

always, were well prepared for this paper. Candidates who performed less well were those who did not listen carefully to the instructions, did not respond fully to questions asked, or who dominated the interaction. To perform well, a candidate should answer the task set and therefore should not be afraid to ask for repetition of instructions before embarking on the task. Students should be made aware that asking for the instructions to be repeated will not affect their marks in any way, whereas redirection by the examiner once the task has begun may affect their performance.

Part 1

This part of the test focuses on areas which deal directly with the candidates' personal experience (e.g. work and education, leisure activities, travel and holidays, etc.). It gives the examiners their first impression of the candidates, and it is therefore important that the candidates speak naturally and with appropriate detail. One-word responses are inadequate and will affect the score for Interactive Communication. Students should also be advised not to prepare long responses to questions they feel they may be asked as this often means that they do not answer appropriately. This tactic does not lead to effective interactive communication, and is noticed by examiners. Candidates who have not met prior to the test should not feel concerned, as feedback from examiners indicates that this does not affect performance in this, or any other, part of the test.

Part 2

The tendency in this part of the test is for weaker candidates to focus on the visuals without listening carefully to the task set by the examiner. Simply describing the two sets of visuals often results in the candidate producing a limited range of grammar and vocabulary, and is unlikely to provide enough to talk about for a full minute. Candidates will always be asked to compare, contrast 'and say... (something specific about the visuals)...'. They should listen very carefully for the 'and say...', so that they complete the task and are able to continue for the full minute, using a range of language appropriate to this level. Candidates should not feel concerned if the examiner interrupts as this simply means that they have talked for the allotted time. It is important for candidates to start talking as soon as they can in order to make full use of their long turn.

● Comments on Released Test Materials

People on the phone

As can be seen in the sample paper, the visuals show people using the phone in different situations. In the first visual, some people are working in an office and using phones, while in the second visual, a group of young people can be seen standing in a park using their mobile phones. Candidates were asked to compare and contrast the visuals and say why they thought the phones were important to the different groups of people. A strong candidate will have used the visuals to answer the task along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see some men in an office talking on the phone. They look very serious. They are looking at computer screens while they're talking on the phone, so maybe they are telling other people about what they can see on their screens. I think the phones are very important to these people because maybe they wouldn't be able to do their jobs if they didn't have the telephones. In the second picture, the young people are spending their free time together. Maybe they are using their phones to speak to other friends or maybe to send texts. I think the phones are important to them because they like to keep in contact with their friends and arrange to meet each other. They probably like playing games on their

phones as well, but I think that it would be good if they didn't use these phones so much. Maybe they would speak to each other more if they put their phones away. So I think the phones are more important in the first picture.'

Here, the candidate describes each visual and then moves on to spend the majority of the long turn focusing on the importance of the phone to the different people, in order to keep going for the full minute.

Enjoying the open air

Candidates were given visual prompts of people doing different things in the open air. In the first visual, a group of people are enjoying a meal together, and in the second, two men are walking together in the hills. Again, candidates were not only expected to describe the two visuals, but to say what they thought the people were enjoying about being outside. Candidates who performed well, produced answers along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see some young people sitting having a meal together. It's a bit unusual because they are outside, but they aren't having a picnic, they're sitting at a table. You can't see a restaurant. They seem to be in a field and having a good time together. There are a lot of people, so maybe they're celebrating a birthday or something like that. I think they are enjoying being outside because they can talk together and there's no-one near them to disturb them. In a restaurant maybe it wouldn't be so nice to have so many people together like this. Also the weather is nice, so they are enjoying that, too. In the second picture, two men are spending their free time walking in the hills. They have bags with them, so maybe they have gone out for the whole day. I think they're enjoying the peace and getting away from a noisy city. They're also enjoying the exercise and they'll enjoy the view when they get to the top of the hill. I think I would enjoy doing both these things outside.'

At this level, candidates are not expected to move beyond giving simple reasons from their personal experience to deal with the task. It should be noted that tasks are not designed to test specific items of vocabulary; candidates should not simply tell the examiner that they do not know certain words, for example, the word 'rucksack' in this task, but should employ tactics such as paraphrasing in order to complete the task, as in this example. Responses that were restricted to a description merely of what candidates could see in each visual were inadequate. Candidates who did this tended to have problems completing their long turn or ran into difficulties with lexis.

Part 3

The aim of this part of the test is for candidates to discuss the task outlined by the examiner as fully as possible, and to work towards a negotiated outcome in the time available. In this part of the test, candidates are always invited to do two things. They are required to respond to and give their views on a range of visual prompts, then to come to a negotiated decision. The Interlocutor asks them to:

'First talk to each other about... . Then decide... .'

Candidates, presented with the visual stimulus, occasionally fail to hear the first part of the instructions, which is in fact the bulk of the task. Candidates who performed less well were therefore those who made their decisions very early on in the interaction, without first considering and discussing as fully as possible the range of suggestions presented to them, and, as a result, ran out of things to say. Candidates should listen carefully for the words, 'First talk to each other about...' and internalise the task set. As already mentioned, students should be made aware that they will not lose marks if they need to ask the examiner to repeat the instructions.

To perform well in this part of the test, candidates should be able to take a full and active part in the interaction, making use of the range of visual prompts available, expressing their own views clearly, listening to their partner and developing their partner's comments. However, candidates should be aware of the importance of inviting their partner to respond, ensuring that both candidates take an equal part in the development of the interaction.

Candidates are expected to work towards a negotiated outcome but should not be concerned if they do not make a final decision or if they do not agree. Disagreeing in a friendly way can be an effective part of interactive communication. However, strong disagreement can undermine their partner's confidence and an overbearing candidate may lose marks. Candidates should make full use of the time available, starting promptly and finishing only when the examiner interjects. They should not feel concerned if they are asked to stop as this will simply mean that they have talked for the allotted time.

- **Comments on Released Test Material**

Cycling trip

This was a very popular task and candidates found plenty to say about it. Candidates were asked to imagine that some friends were planning to go on a two-week cycling trip and were given seven visual prompts highlighting things that the friends would need to think about before going on the trip: where to stay, getting fit, planning the route, what to take, checking the bikes, finding out about the weather, passports and visas. Candidates were asked to talk about why the friends needed to think about these things before their trip and which two things were most important for their trip to be successful. As in other tasks, some candidates were tempted to start with the second part of the task, e.g. 'I think the most important thing is planning the route because ...'. Candidates who did this often performed less well because they came to their final decision without having fully explored the alternatives.

Candidates should not have felt concerned if they were unable to make use of the full range of visual prompts in the time allowed, but they should have managed to discuss several pictures before making their decision. Candidates should discuss the different ideas offered as fully as possible in the available time and come to a negotiated decision towards the end of their three minutes, rather than making a decision at the outset, which may lead to them running out of things to say. In this case, candidates should have discussed each picture together, saying why each of the ideas was important for the success of the trip, agreeing and disagreeing with each other and following up on each other's ideas. For example, with the picture showing alternative places to stay, candidates could have commented on the fact that a tent was cheaper than a hotel but they would have to carry the tent with them so they would be able to take fewer other things, that the tent could be put up anywhere and they would have to book the hotel in advance, etc. Then, having discussed why it was important to think about each of the alternatives, candidates should have attempted to come to a negotiated decision as to which two things they considered to be the most important for the success of the trip and why. Candidates were not penalised if they ran out of time and failed to come to a final decision.

Candidates did not have any difficulty with lexis when doing this task. Many candidates tended to dismiss the passport and visa visual, assuming that the friends were not travelling abroad. This was acceptable but they could have got more mileage out of this visual if they had explored the possibility of cycling in another country and compared it with the merits of doing the trip in their own country.

Part 4

In this part of the test, candidates are given a further opportunity to demonstrate their language ability by engaging in a three-way discussion with their partner and the examiner. Part 4 also provides an opportunity for examiners to redress any imbalances in turn-taking that may have occurred in other parts of the test. It is therefore vital that candidates offer more than a minimal response and take the opportunity to initiate discussion as well as answer the examiner's questions. Strong candidates were able to develop and illustrate the topic by giving their opinions and talking about the reasons behind them, thus demonstrating a range of vocabulary.

● Comments on Released Test Materials

Candidates generally performed well and spoke fully on the task 'Cycling trip'. They were able to talk about whether they would go on a cycling trip themselves and what people could learn from travelling to other countries. They were also able to talk at length on the more general holiday questions, for example whether they thought it was a good idea to go back to the same place for holidays or whether it was better to go somewhere different each time, whether a holiday should be relaxing or full of activity, and whether it was necessary to spend a lot of money in order to have a good time. However, some candidates found the following question more challenging to answer: 'If you have to do something important, how do you make sure that you don't forget to do it?' They generally had less to say about this question. Some candidates seemed to find this question more difficult to talk about because, unlike the more general holiday questions, they probably had not considered this question before.

Candidates should be reminded that there is no right or wrong answer and that they are being marked on the language they use, not on how well they justify their opinions. Candidates sometimes feel that the questions sound as if they merit a more sophisticated response than they feel able to give and are therefore reluctant to respond. They should be reassured that their contribution will be appropriate if it provides an appropriate response to the question asked. Candidates will find, however, that there are certain questions that they are less familiar with, and these questions are likely to result in shorter answers. This is natural in any interaction and will not be penalised. Candidates should therefore try not to be affected by an unfamiliar question but should give a short, confident response and give fuller responses to other questions asked.

● RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

Candidates are expected to take a full and active part in the test. It is important, therefore, that students seek as many opportunities to practise their spoken English as possible, inside and outside the classroom. 'Exam training' can help with nervousness, and candidates certainly benefit from being familiar with the different parts of the test, but this is no substitute for a genuine interest in the language. Candidates who put themselves in a position where they need to use English on a regular basis are likely to perform well.

Part 1

For this part of the test, students will benefit from finding opportunities to practise talking about themselves (their likes and dislikes, personal/educational history, present circumstances, plans and hopes for the future, etc.).

Part 2

Students can improve their performance in this part of the test by choosing pairs of thematically-linked visuals, practising comparing and contrasting them, and going on to talk about the theme in a more general way. Students should time themselves to check that they are able to keep going for a full minute. Without practice, students may find it difficult to speak for a full minute during the test. Students should attempt to use visuals with which they may be less familiar, and try to talk for a minute on a question related to the visuals. For example, in the task entitled 'Enjoying the open air', candidates were asked to talk about what they thought different people were enjoying about being outside in different situations. This task looks quite challenging as it seems to demand a degree of speculation. However, candidates should not be put off by tasks like this, as they only involve speculation on the basis of what is evident in the picture, or on the basis of candidates' personal experience. Candidates are not expected to move beyond this simple degree of speculation at this level.

Part 3

The best preparation for this part of the test is for students to practise taking part in discussions in small groups, so that all students have the opportunity to take the floor. Students with a quieter disposition should be encouraged to develop strategies to ensure they are able to take their turn. Stronger students should be encouraged to invite opinions from others. Suitable thematic areas for discussion can be found in FCE coursebooks and should relate to the student's own experience rather than more abstract concepts (see the FCE Handbook for a list of topic areas). It is a good idea to give students practice in interpreting the pictures that they see in coursebooks or magazines, as they will have to do this in Part 3 of the test.

In the task 'Cycling Trip', one picture showed a weather man giving a weather report. Some students talked about the importance of checking the weather before the trip, others talked about the importance of planning for adverse weather conditions. Students should be reassured that it does not matter if their partner interprets a picture in a different way, but that this forms part of the interaction and negotiation, and that they will have completed the task successfully if they answer the question set by discussing with their partner the visuals given, using language at the level. They should not feel concerned about different interpretations of the visual materials or about voicing their different opinions.

Part 4

As in Part 3, students will benefit from being given as many opportunities as possible to give their opinions on a range of issues, and to expand on their views while inviting opinions from others and responding to them. As with the more challenging questions in the task 'Cycling trip', students need to learn to respond confidently, even if answers are short, and should be discouraged from making responses such as, 'I don't know', 'I'm not sure' or 'I haven't thought about that'.

• **DOs and DON'Ts FOR PAPER 5 SPEAKING**

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO | familiarise yourself with the focus, function and procedures of all parts of the test. |
| DO | take every opportunity to practise your English in groups and pairs both inside and outside the classroom before the test. |
| DO | listen carefully to instructions given and questions asked throughout the test and focus your answers appropriately. |
| DO | ask for repetition of instructions if you are unclear about what you should do. |
| DO | speak clearly so that both the Assessor and the Interlocutor can hear you. |
| DO | make sure that you talk about the additional 'and say...' task in Part 2, when comparing and contrasting the visuals. |
| DO | respond to your partner's contributions and invite your partner to contribute in Parts 3 and 4. |
| DO | make use of opportunities to speak in all parts of the test and give extended contributions where you can. |
| DON'T | prepare long responses in advance. You are unlikely to answer questions appropriately. |
| DON'T | try to give your views during your partner's long turn. |
| DON'T | try to dominate your partner or to interrupt him or her in an abrupt way. |
| DON'T | make frequent pauses and hesitations during the interaction or during your own turn. |
| DON'T | worry if you disagree with your partner in Parts 3 and 4. As long as you are polite and not overbearing, this is all part of interactive communication. |
| DON'T | worry about being interrupted by the examiner. For administrative reasons, it is important that tests do not overrun. |

FEEDBACK FORM

FCE Examination Report December 2006 – 0100

We are interested in hearing your views on how useful this report has been.

We would be most grateful if you could briefly answer the following questions and return a photocopy of this page to the following address:

University of Cambridge
ESOL Examinations
Reports Co-ordinator
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

Fax: +44 1223 460278

1. Please describe your situation: (e.g. EFL/ESOL teacher, Director of Studies, Examinations Officer, Local Secretary, etc.)

2. Have you prepared candidates for FCE? YES/NO

3. Do you plan to prepare candidates for FCE in the future? YES/NO

4. How have you used this report? (e.g. to provide feedback to other teachers, for examination practice, etc.)

5. Which parts of this report did you find most useful?

6. Which parts are not so useful?

7. What extra information would you like to see included in this report?

8. Your name (optional)

- Centre/School

Thank you.