UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

First Certificate in English

Examination Report 0101 Syllabus

December 2006

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First Certificate in English

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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 0101 was **57.06**%

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

	0101
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	5.05
B	12.03
C	39.98
D	9.47
E	33.47

- **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 after each administration)
- *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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Feedback on this report is very welcome and should be sent to the Reports Co-ordinator, Cambridge ESOL, at the above address. Please use the feedback form at the end of this report.

PAPER 1 – READING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple matching *Main focus:* main points	7	A text preceded by multiple-matching questions. Candidates must match prompts to elements in the text.
2	Multiple choice *Main focus:* detail, opinion, gist, deducing meaning	8	A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.
3	Gapped text *Main focus:* text structure	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 *Main focus:* specific information, detail	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 reasonably well 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 flying fish

This headings task, focusing on the understanding of the main points in the text, was generally handled quite well by most candidates. Candidates performed best on Questions 4 and 7. In Question 4, most of the stronger candidates successfully matched heading C, 'A difficult journey to safety', with the description of Mr Rees' journey to the aquarium on a mountain bike while trying to balance a bucket on the carrier behind the saddle. Some of the weaker candidates chose option E. They may have matched the word 'rapid' in the heading 'Rapid response proves successful' with 'quickly' in the paragraph. However, the main point of this paragraph concerns the problems involved in transporting the fish to the aquarium, rather than the speed of Mr Rees' response, which is dealt with in the second paragraph. In Question 7, candidates needed to match heading D, 'Not going back', with the information that the fish is going to remain at the aquarium. Most of the stronger candidates made the correct choice, while a large proportion of the weaker candidates were fairly evenly spread

over the other options. The most challenging question in this first section proved to be Question 2. Here a good proportion of the stronger candidates selected heading G, 'A highly appropriate name', because the paragraph states that 'a flounder is also called a fluke, a word which can also mean "a very lucky event"'. However, quite a number of candidates opted for heading B instead, 'A rare **type** of fish'. Although it was 'miraculous' that the fish survived being dropped by a seagull – so the event could be seen as 'rare' – there is no information in the text to suggest that a flounder is a rare type of fish. This is a good example of how important it is for candidates to read the options very carefully and match each element in the option with the information in the text.

Part 2, Questions 8-15: Holiday on Ice

This four-option multiple-choice task focused mainly on detailed comprehension but also included a lexical question, Question 14. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 11. Most of the stronger candidates realised that Robin Cousins stresses the importance of the skaters' positions on the ice (option D), because he says, 'The aim is to make sure they're all still getting to exactly the right place on the ice at the right time.' Time and lights are also mentioned but in relation to the skaters' positions.

The two most challenging questions in this task were Questions 8 and 9. In 8, candidates had to decide what surprises the writer about the popularity of *Holiday on Ice.* A large proportion of the stronger candidates correctly chose option B, since the writer states that 'given that most people don't seem to be acquainted with anyone who's ever been, the show's statistics are extraordinary.' The word 'surprised' is not used, but 'extraordinary' expresses his amazement at the disparity between the audience numbers and the general public's apparent lack of awareness of the show's existence. Quite a number of candidates chose option A instead. The text mentions the year when the show started (1943), but does not say that it has not changed since then.

Question 9 required candidates to work out why the writer describes the backstage area. A high proportion of the stronger candidates chose option A, 'to show the conditions that the skaters put up with', such as 'cracked walls and cheap temporary tables', etc. Over half of the weaker candidates chose option D instead, 'to show how much preparation is needed for a performance'. 'Hard work' is certainly mentioned, but that refers to skating in the show rather than the backstage area. This illustrates that it is important to read the first half of the question closely and check how it links with the options that make up the second half.

Part 3, Questions 16-21: Biking Adventure

This gapped-paragraph task, focusing on text structure, proved to be the most challenging task on the paper. The weaker candidates found Question 17 the most demanding, while most of the stronger candidates coped well with it. They were able to match 'we still knew our route was going to be difficult' in the previous paragraph with 'we prepared for a long struggle' in option F. The end of the option mentions, 'we set off from the mountain town of Tafroute'. This links into the first sentence of the following paragraph, 'from that point, we travelled 275 kilometres.' Weaker candidates went for a number of options, particularly option A. This begins, 'Riding across flat, sandy land…', which does not make a logical continuation from 'our route was going to be difficult' at the end of the previous paragraph.

Candidates performed better on Question 19. Nearly all the stronger candidates correctly chose option G which starts, 'The reaction of the children was very different, however.' The word 'however' indicates that their reaction must contrast with something and that is 'the puzzled gaze of the elderly inhabitants' in the previous paragraph. The option continues with the children screaming a welcome as the cyclists went past and this is neatly continued in

the following paragraph, 'There was barely time to yell "hello" in answer to their greetings...'. Weaker candidates chose a variety of options, such as E, which praises the bicycle as a means of transport and which does not fit with the sense of either of the two flanking paragraphs.

Part 4, Questions 22-35: My best teacher

This multiple-matching task, which focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from four short texts about different teachers, proved to be the easiest task on the paper. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 29. In this question, they were able to link 'developed their pupils' physical and mental skills' in the question with learning 'to control your anger and control your body...' in text A. Some of the weaker candidates chose text D, perhaps because the teacher 'taught a lot of his classes standing on *his* head'. However, there is no suggestion that the pupils also stood on their heads. The pronoun 'his' indicates this, together with the information that his behaviour was seen as 'extremely peculiar'.

Question 33 proved to be the most challenging in this task. The correct answer is A, the teacher 'used to demonstrate rather than explain'. This matches the question, 'Which teacher showed what was necessary instead of talking about it?' Quite a number of candidates chose text D or C instead. However, there is no reference to 'showing' rather than 'talking' in the texts. Perhaps some candidates were attracted by the fact that the word 'talk' is mentioned in text C, but that is in the context of discussing global issues and not demonstrating anything. This illustrates the importance of connecting the information in the question with appropriate information in the text rather than just matching one word out of context.

• 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.

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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: • 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 task, candidates were asked to write a letter to their English-speaking friend, Sam, giving their response to a series of questions about various aspects of a study trip to their country. They were expected to be enthusiastic about the plan, to say whether the capital would be the best place to stay and whether it would be easy to learn the language. Candidates were then expected to inform Sam about sports facilities and the best time to start a course. The majority of candidates engaged well with the question, showing evidence of having read the instructions carefully and understood the scenario. As a result, they produced letters of the correct length, which were well-paragraphed and contained all the necessary points.

Some candidates wrote relatively formal letters, obviously assuming that they did not know Sam well, or that he was a penfriend they had never met. Others wrote a warm and friendly letter, making it clear they had met Sam and were on good terms. Both approaches were acceptable, since they were appropriate to the situation and the target reader, Sam. However, students should be reminded that over-formal linking expressions such as 'furthermore', 'moreover' and 'in addition' sound very strange if they are mixed with a chatty style elsewhere in a letter. They are more suited to formal letters such as letters of application. Linking is an area that students can usefully work on in order to develop their awareness of less formal expressions such as 'as for', 'concerning', and 'about'. They should also think about how they will close their letters. Some candidates used, 'Yours faithfully', which would, again, only be appropriate in a business context; 'best wishes' and 'looking forward to hearing from you' were far more appropriate. Students should also be told that the tone of their letter should be consistent, and that it sounds odd to use an expression such as 'I would like to inform you that…' in a letter to a young friend – it is simply too formal.

There was remarkably little misinterpretation, and relatively few candidates were penalised for not following the task instructions. Most had clearly been well-trained in the importance of addressing all of the points. There were, however, a few very prevalent grammatical errors. Many candidates used the verb 'suggest' wrongly, writing 'I suggest you to come' and seemed unaware that the correct structure to follow 'it's a good idea' is 'to do something', and instead used the gerund or a clause with 'that', e.g. 'it's a good idea that you to come in the summer'. Another common problem was spelling, with much confusion between the verbs 'live'/'leave', and 'studing' being a common misspelling of 'studying'.

The first point was generally well done, with candidates responding most enthusiastically to the idea of a year spent studying abroad, some picking up on the fact that Sam's sister had just spent a successful year abroad, and saying that Sam would enjoy the experience too – 'I'm sure you'll have a great time like your sister did'.

In the second point, candidates were expected to expand and give some information about their capital city and how appropriate it was for a study visit. Some wrote about it being 'the perfect place for a year abroad because it has so much to offer', while others warned of the problems of 'too much pollution and traffic jams'. Candidates who advised against the capital then went on to talk about the merits of another city, 'Thessaloniki is a cultural place and a much better choice' or suggested going to an island. All these responses were acceptable, and the candidates' opinions were generally interesting to read. For a small percentage of candidates, Greece was clearly not the home country, and so a response based on another country and city was acceptable.

Most candidates addressed the third point appropriately, giving clear opinions about whether Greek was an easy language to learn. There was an interesting diversity of view, with some

candidates insisting that Greek could be learnt 'in a few weeks', while others insisted that 'the grammatik and vocabulary is extremely hard and it would be better to learn another language'. Others wrote about a language other than Greek, and this was also acceptable, as long as the overall scenario of the letter was clear to the target reader.

The majority of candidates dealt convincingly with the fourth point, the details of sport and sports facilities. Many candidates referred specifically to the sports facilities built for the Olympic Games in 2004, but opinions about the quality of the facilities differed widely, with some candidates expressing very positive views, and others very negative ones. There were also some inadvertently negative views caused by grammatical error, 'There are many football grounds where you can waste your free time'; 'there are too many sports facilities in this area'.

The final point elicited a range of responses, with candidates again having interesting and varied reasons for rejecting March as a possible time to start a course and recommending another month. 'The course will be nearly finished then' was one very common reason, but weather conditions, with March being described either as 'too hot' or 'too cold/snowy', also figured prominently.

Overall, performance on the first question was very successful, with the vast majority of answers being satisfactory and a significant number of them showing language of a very high level.

Part 2

Question 2, the story, was chosen by early 46% of candidates. Question 4, the composition, was answered by over 28% of candidates, and Question 3, the article was selected by nearly 25%. A small number of candidates (below 1%) responded to Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions, with 5a being slightly more popular than 5b.

Question 2

The story question was well done, and brought out the best in many candidates. There were a wide range of possible scenarios, abandoned babies, robberies, surprise parties and lost relatives all featured strongly, as did ghosts, aliens, dreams and nightmares. There were few examples of candidates producing answers that did not fit the prompt, which was pleasing as such answers are penalised. Stronger candidates displayed a good range of lexis and showed good awareness of narrative tenses and appropriate linkers. Less competent candidates were, however, unsure of the use of past perfect, past simple and past continuous tenses and there were some sudden and inappropriate switches to present tenses. Students should be advised that stories are best written consistently in the past tense (the prompt sentence is usually in the past tense). It is helpful to review use of these tenses regularly, and to revise irregular verb forms at the same time.

There were some recurrent errors in this question. Many candidates wrote 'David got out of his house' instead of 'David left his house' and used 'and' when they meant 'also' and 'thinks' instead of 'things'. Candidates who wrote a crime story also frequently misused the verbs 'rob' and 'steal' in sentences such as 'David's house had been stolen'. Other interesting concepts included 'after a while the door knocked' and 'fingertips were not found so the burglar had to wear gloves'.

Question 3

Most candidates answered this question in a satisfactory way, although a few wrote a letter with an article embedded in it. Candidates simply need to give their article a title, and to start writing. There is no need for an opening or closing formula. The majority of candidates also made errors with the verbs 'hear'/'listen to', as in 'every day when I get up I turn my ipod on and hear music'.

Some candidates seemed to run out of ideas quite quickly on this task. The bullet points in the question were there to help candidates with content, so they should be advised to read them carefully and respond to them. Stronger candidates realised this, writing passionately about when they first heard a piece of music and why it was important to them, with favourites including everything from favourite pop songs to Chopin's Nocturne.

Question 4

This was a popular question and many candidates produced extremely sound answers which contained interesting arguments both for and against the prompt statement. Most candidates had a sound grasp of relevant vocabulary, using terms like 'team spirit' and 'cooperation' very competently. It was also appropriate to use formal linkers in this task, and most candidates did so effectively.

Questions 5a and 5b

There were few answers to the set book questions, but some candidates who attempted the questions unfortunately wrote about their chosen book in general terms, rather than addressing the specific questions. More candidates attempted Question 5a than 5b, and there were some effective answers to both. Most candidates related their answers to *Three adventures of Sherlock Holmes* or *Pride and Prejudice*.

Candidates should be reminded that Questions 5a and 5b can only be answered with reference to the set texts. Answers relating to a book not on the set book list, or those in which the candidate has invented a storyline, are heavily penalised.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

As previously 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 pointed out 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 also 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 fellow 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. Classroom brainstorming of relevant adjectives and verbs with similar meanings can be useful preparation immediately prior to a homework assignment.

Part 1

In this task students need to consider the bigger picture of why they are writing and be sensitive to the type of scenario described. They need to have a clear idea of the situation and the target reader; this will enable them to write in an appropriately formal or informal way. It is important that students are instructed in the importance of maintaining a consistent tone and register throughout their letter.

Students should be encouraged to make a plan before they start writing, and to think carefully how to organise their ideas and what they can say on each point. It is good to help students to understand how a content point can be expanded, perhaps by use of obviously contrasting sample answers, where one is only minimally expanded and the other includes good development. Candidates who expand on points generally score higher marks.

Students should also be encouraged to make sensible use of paragraphing and use a variety of linkers. In class, students could be given a text without paragraphs and asked to suggest paragraphs for it or add appropriate linkers to it.

Part 2

Students need to be taught 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, whether in the first or third person, and 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, and the use of adverbs.

Training for writing an article should include awareness of the sort of tone and structures appropriate to the task, including rhetorical questions and lively anecdotes and examples. A wide range of colourful vocabulary is also helpful, as are occasional idioms and expressions. The difference in style and tone between an article and a composition should also be taught, and candidates should be clear that an article should not be written in letter or report format. Awareness of genres is important at FCE level.

Students may be unfamiliar with composition as a type of writing, and may need to be shown examples written in a suitable style. Work can be done in class on how to organise and present an opinion, and on the kind of linkers which are appropriate to introducing ideas and drawing conclusions in this context. It is also useful to consider how to put ideas into paragraphs, and to discuss which formal phrases are appropriate for bringing the composition to a conclusion.

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 structure already learnt. Looking at past papers in class will allow students to practise questions regularly in relation to different parts of the book.

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- **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.
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.
DON'T	answer Question 5 if you have not read one of the books.

PAPER 3 – USE OF ENGLISH

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple-choice cloze *Focus:* vocabulary	15	A modified cloze text containing 15 gaps and followed by 15 four-option multiple-choice questions.
2	Open cloze *Focus:* grammar and vocabulary	15	A modified cloze text containing 15 gaps.
3	'Key' word transformations *Focus:* grammar and vocabulary	10	Discrete questions with a lead-in sentence and a gapped response to complete using a given word.
4	Error correction *Focus:* grammar	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 *Focus:* vocabulary	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: Holidays in space

Multiple-choice Cloze

Overall, candidates found this part of the paper the most challenging. This was particularly true of Questions 2, 5, 9, 14 and 15. A large number of candidates chose option A for Question 14 – though this is the right area of meaning, it does not fit grammatically. The following verb would need to be 'show**ing**' or '**which** shows' for this option to fit correctly. Question 15 tested knowledge of a whole phrasal verb. This question proved challenging, which suggests that most candidates only knew 'put off' to mean 'postpone' rather than 'deterred', as was the case here.

Candidates should be aware that Part 1, although primarily testing vocabulary, also has a lexico-grammatical element. Questions 3 and 4, for example, which were well answered, rely on a fit with the following preposition.

A large number of both weaker and stronger candidates went for option C in Question 5, (which does not make sense in the context), option A in Question 8 (which does not fit grammatically as there is no following 'with') and option B in Question 10 (which does collocate but is not meaningful in this context). Questions 3, 7, 9 and 11 were answered correctly by stronger candidates, while weaker ones were attracted to option A in Question 3 (which does not fit grammatically), option A in Question 7 (which is not the fixed phrase) option D in Question 9 (not a grammatical fit), and option D in Question 11 (which does not collocate).

Part 2, Questions 16-30: The Lydney Circus

Open Cloze

Candidates found this part of the paper challenging, although there were two questions, 17 and 29, which were answered correctly by the great majority. Candidates coped less well with Questions 20, 25, 30 and especially 22. With Question 20, 'in demand' was not commonly known, 'on' and 'of' being prevalent wrong answers. Question 25 proved difficult, as it was testing the use of 'where' to mean 'in which'. Subsequently, 'which' was indeed the most common wrong answer. Question 30 was a phrasal verb, and 22 ('a good/great many') has been tested before on the paper, but certainly proved challenging. Other common wrong answers included 'charge' and 'case' in Question 16, 'who' and 'where' for Question 21 – incorrectly chosen relative pronouns – and 'few'/'much'/'many' in Question 23. Candidates should be aware that, as with Part 1, Part 2 contains a lexico-grammatical element, although the primary focus is grammatical. This can be seen in Questions 16, 22, 23 and 29, which all target words within fixed phrases.

Part 3, Questions 31-40

'Key' Word Transformations

Candidates coped very well with this part of the paper, especially with Questions 31 and 33, which were answered correctly by almost all candidates. Question 38 was the most challenging; many candidates did not recognise 'changed my mind' and came up with 'changed my opinion', possibly because of interference from their first language. In Question 34, a considerable number of candidates put '...'s car had been broken', which is incorrect because of the past simple time reference 'last night'. In Question 35, a similar number did not recognise the phrasal verb 'turn down', meaning 'not accept', and supplied other particles such as 'off', 'up' and 'out'. The distinction between 'few' and 'little' caused some problems in Question 36, as did the grammar of the verb 'succeed'. Also, some candidates miscopied the key word, missing out one of the 'e's. For Question 39, a common wrong answer was 'in addition he directed'. This would have been correct if the second sentence had been divided into two sentences, but it is clear from the punctuation and the rubric that this is not the case. With Question 40, some candidates failed to differentiate between 'telling' and 'saying', while others wrongly tried to make an 'accuse + **that** clause' structure.

Part 4, Questions 41-55: My favourite restaurant

Error Correction

Candidates found this part of the paper very straightforward, with its accessible subject matter. Particularly well answered were Questions 41, 45, 48, 50 and 52, while 46 and 55 were answered correctly by almost all candidates. Question 44 was the only one which a majority of candidates got wrong. The phrase 'As for the name of the place' does of course exist as the beginning of a sentence, but not with a following verb. Candidates should be encouraged to read at sentence level and, indeed, beyond to pick up the story being told in the text.

Part 5, Questions 56-65: Language

Word Formation

Overall, candidates performed best in Part 5, a particularly high percentage answering correctly for Questions 57, 59, 61, 64 and an even higher percentage for Questions 58 and 62. Question 56 was the only one which a majority of candidates answered incorrectly, mainly because of misspelling. There were other reasonably common misspellings from weaker candidates: notably, 'spokers', 'easely', 'knoledge' and 'strengh'. With Question 63, some candidates were perhaps still thinking in terms of supplying a suffix, as most of the questions require, and so came up with 'strongness'. Candidates should be aware that the formation of words can also involve an 'internal' change such as 'strong → strength'. For Question 65, some candidates felt that a noun was needed ('impossibility'). For this to be correct, it would have needed an article before the gap.

- **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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 well on all versions of the paper. In each version, no one part was significantly more difficult overall 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. These questions are intended to be a lead-in to the test and most candidates tackled them well.

Candidates coped best with Questions 1, 4 and 7, but Questions 5 and 8 proved more challenging. However, there was a significant difference in performance in some of the questions between strong and weak candidates. In Question 6, for example, many weaker candidates were distracted by option B, 'It has a better plot than *Mars Mission*' in answer to the question about a new film: 'What does the man say about *The Eagle*?' This is probably because the speaker says '*Mars Mission* … may have a great plot' and weak candidates were attracted by the use of the word 'plot'. Strong candidates, however, understood the various remarks which the man makes about *The Eagle*, such as '…a wonderful fantasy film, full of great exploits … this film is a triumph … the director has succeeded where many…have failed', and chose the correct option A, 'It is better than other fantasy films'.

In Question 5, many weaker candidates as well as strong candidates opted for B, 'He was there just as a professional photographer'. They were perhaps distracted by the reference to the fact that the tourist 'seemed arrogant' and 'handed a camera to one of the staff'. Those candidates who understood the comments '…we reached Peter Island … it was the whole reason why he'd come … had his photo taken…' chose the correct option C, 'He was only interested in impressing his friends'.

Question 8 also proved a challenging question for weaker candidates who were attracted to option C in particular, 'the unsuitability of TV as a medium for music'. Those opting for C had probably reacted to hearing '…I don't really normally like music being transmitted over the TV'. Strong candidates who opted correctly for option B, 'the impressive effect it had on her', had listened carefully to the complete text in which the woman, talking about watching a Beethoven concert, says '…the power of the music overwhelmed me and it succeeded in actually making me feel quite agitated'.

A similar pattern in the response between weak and strong candidates was reflected in Question 2. Weaker candidates picked up on the man's comment, 'I'm stuck in a traffic jam every morning!' and opted for option B, supposing that the man's complaint was about 'the length of time he is delayed in traffic'. However, the focus of the question is on the research into traffic problems, not his own experience, and the man's remarks in the course of the dialogue include, 'The so-called "experts" …. took over a year …. Why take a year to say what most people know already?' which led stronger candidates to choose the correct option C, 'the time taken to complete the research'.

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. Overall, candidates coped reasonably well with the topic in this part of the test, though once again there was a range of performances.

Of the ten questions, Questions 9, 15, 17 and 18 stand out as being tackled very well by the majority of candidates.

Questions 11, 12 and 13 proved the most challenging in this part of the test, though again, it was clearly the weaker candidates who had the most problems. In Question 11, the common wrong answer, 'waiter', suggests that candidates had not read the prompt carefully enough, or did not listen to what the speaker went on to say he did after leaving university: 'Anyway, after I'd graduated they offered me the job of junior manager and I took it…', so the correct answer was 'manager'.

In Question 12, many of the weaker candidates wrote 'building', and overlooked the fact that the speaker who, although he mentions 'building' twice, specifically states that the building 'used to be a post office'. The gap in the question for the key is preceded by the word 'former' and stronger candidates correctly wrote 'post office', as they had picked up the connection between 'used to be' and 'former'.

In the context of this part of the test, it is relevant to mention handwriting. Poor handwriting in Part 2 may result in the loss of marks. For example, poor formation of vowels such as 'a' and 'o' meant that it was often very difficult to differentiate between these letters in words like 'rabbit' and 'banana' 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.

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 were able to relate to the topic, and generally coped well with this part of the test.

Questions 19 and 20 were tackled very well by most candidates, but the contrast between the performances of strong and weak candidates in this part of the test was once again clearly evident. Weaker candidates were consistently attracted to a wide range of wrong options, whilst strong candidates rarely were.

Questions 21 and 23 proved to be the most challenging. In Question 21, weaker candidates chose a range of options, but notably C, A and D, in order of preference. The range of answers suggests that weaker candidates had not listened to the complete text before choosing their option. The most popular wrong option C, 'I believe that planning a trip is easier when you travel alone', was attractive as a result of having heard the speaker say, 'There wasn't really anyone I knew who was free to travel 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 that '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; weaker candidates were attracted to option F, possibly because they had overlooked that F was the key to Question 21, even after a second listening. The speaker says, '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… ,' so stronger candidates chose the correct option A, 'I think travelling alone makes you more self-confident'.

The contrast in performance between strong and weak candidates suggests that weaker candidates are tempted to match words they hear with the same or similar words printed. It is essential that candidates make effective use of the second hearing in all the tasks, but especially so in this task. If they make the wrong choice in the first question, they also lose the potential use of that option in another question. In extreme cases, more than one incorrect choice can produce a domino effect and result in several wrong answers.

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.

Questions 25 and 30 were answered best and Questions 26 and 28 proved the most demanding. In Question 26, 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 distractors.

This part of the test includes more questions like Question 26, such as Questions 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 not result in a mark. Occasionally, an answer requires two separate words, divided 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 reflected 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 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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 *Focus:* 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 pictures 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 candidates 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 – 0101

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.