



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

First Certificate in English

Examination Report 0101 Syllabus

December 2007

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First Certificate in English

Examination Report

Syllabus 0101

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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 2007 session, and to offer guidance on the preparation of candidates.

The overall pass rate for Syllabus 0101 was **59.29%**

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

	0101
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	5.43
B	13.11
C	40.75
D	9.70
E	31.01

- **Grading**

Grading took place during January 2008 (approximately six weeks after the examination).

The five FCE papers total 200 marks, after weighting. Papers 1-5 are each weighted to 40 marks. A 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 <i>Main focus: main points</i>	7	A text preceded by a list of headings. Candidates must match the headings to elements in the text.
2	Multiple choice <i>Main focus: detail, opinion, gist, deducing meaning</i>	7	A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.
3	Gapped text <i>Main focus: text structure</i>	7	A text from which sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. Candidates must decide from where in the text the sentences have been removed.
4	Multiple matching, Multiple choice <i>Main focus: specific information, detail</i>	14	A text preceded by a list of questions. Candidates must match the questions to elements in the text.

- **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 tree doctors

This headings task, focusing on the understanding of the main points in the text, was generally handled well by the stronger candidates. Candidates performed best on Question 3. Here, the majority of the stronger candidates successfully matched heading A, 'Developing a system', with the explanation that the tree doctors are 'in the process of putting details into the computer of every tree in the parks as an aid to planning future work.' The most challenging question in this task proved to be Question 2. Here, candidates were required to match heading F, 'The most effective place to be', with the explanation of why the tree doctors need to be on top of a very tall tree – 'they can identify any weaknesses, diseases or associated problems...'. The majority of the stronger candidates chose the correct option. However, many of the weaker candidates failed to make the connection. Instead, they chose predominantly options G and H. It is not very clear why they made these choices. They may have been led to 'An unusual **record**' (option G) because the paragraph after Question 2 mentions 'the collection of 15,000 mature trees', although there is no

indication that this is a record number of trees. Some may have selected 'A view worth preserving' (option H) because the writer mentions that the tree doctors can 'cast their eyes over most of London', but this point is mentioned as something pleasant that arises from the nature of the men's work, rather than a suggestion that the skyline of the capital city is in need of protectors. It is important in this type of task to encourage candidates to take time to decide what each heading means, rather than going straight to match individual words in the headings with paraphrases in the paragraphs.

Part 2, Questions 8-14: The Birthday Party

This four-option multiple-choice task focused mainly on detailed comprehension but also included a lexical question, Question 13, and a reference question, Question 11. Candidates coped particularly well with this reference question. The majority of the candidates worked out that 'it' referred to 'the small box' (option B). Some of the weaker candidates selected options A or C ('the pink ribbon' and 'the tight-fitting cover'), possibly because these two items came immediately before the pronoun 'it'. Neither of these options, however, fitted with the verb 'contained'. Candidates need to learn to use all the clues at their disposal and, in the case of reference questions, read the sentence again, substituting their selected option for the pronoun and checking whether it would make sense.

The lexical question proved to be much more challenging. In this question, candidates had to work out the meaning of 'You're revelling in it' from the context. The clues in the text were quite clear. Lizzie says, '**Not** many people look forward to their 30th birthday... . **But** you're revelling in it.' Candidates should note the negative before 'look forward to', followed by the 'but' which suggests an opposition. They should then be able to arrive at the answer that Debbie is not dreading her birthday, but actually enjoying it. The only option which reflects this position is A, 'you're making the most of it'. Candidates also found Question 9 quite challenging. The stronger candidates correctly selected option C, realising that Debbie was 'keen to show her gratitude' when Maureen gave her a present. A significant proportion of the weaker candidates chose option A – she 'was surprised that her friend knew her tastes'. If candidates had read on carefully to the end of the paragraph, they would have seen that Debbie had 'talked of nothing else for days', referring to her favourite brand of chocolates. It is very important that candidates should read all the information in the text and not focus exclusively on the lines around the point where they believe a question is focused.

Part 3, Questions 15-21: Walking with lions

In this gapped-sentence task, focusing on text structure, the least challenging question proved to be Question 18. Most of the stronger candidates correctly selected option G. They followed the progression from the writer and the guide going across a dried-up lake to 'soon the long grass had closed around us' in G. They also used the clues of 'the giant footprints of hippo and elephant' in the sentence before the gap and linked that to 'the bulky creatures that could have made such tracks' in option G and on to 'our game scout carried a rifle ... stop any animal if it charged' in the text following the gap. It is important to encourage candidates to try to follow the progression of an argument or the development of a narrative in this type of task. It is a skill which will stand them in good stead if they need to read English academic texts at a later stage. Some of the weaker candidates chose option D. This was an unsuitable choice as it starts 'Soon afterwards, we **drove**...'. The candidates had obviously not understood that the writer was describing the different stages of a long walk he had taken. In the last paragraph, he describes going home in a Land Rover and the lights picking out the eyes of animals in the bush and this is where option D fits, (Question 21).

Question 15 proved to be the most challenging in this task. The majority of the stronger candidates correctly chose option F, matching 'the Luangwa National Park with scores of

bush camps and safari lodges' in the text before the gap with 'The emphasis **here** is on walking safaris ...' in the option. A significant number of the weaker candidates chose option A – 'But in Zambia, wearing faded shorts ... **he** looked the true professional safari companion.' They probably made this choice because of the 'wordspots' – 'Zambia' and 'safari'. This is a clear example of candidates matching identical words in the text and the option to find the answer, rather than reading everything carefully. The pronoun 'he' should have warned them that option A was an inappropriate choice as there is no male subject in the text before the gap for 'he' to refer to. A careful check on the correct matching of reference words and subjects is also a key skill in this type of task.

Part 4, Questions 22-35: What golf means to me

This multiple-matching task, which focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from five short texts about different golf players, proved to be the most successfully answered task on the paper. Candidates coped very well with Questions 24 and 25. They successfully matched 'feels their life is not complete without golf' in Question 24 with 'I can get depressed if I go for any period of time without playing' in option E. Similarly, in Question 25, the majority of the candidates matched 'says golf is a good way of relaxing with other people' with 'It's a wonderful way to spend time with your friends,' in option D. Question 34 proved to be the most challenging one in this task. The question was 'which person doesn't get the chance to play golf with business colleagues?' This matched the text in option D – 'My husband plays a lot of golf for business, but with the work I do, I don't really get the opportunity.' Quite a significant proportion of candidates chose option A instead. It is difficult to see why they made this choice except that the words 'female executives' appear in it. However, it is not stated that these are the writer's colleagues or that she wants to play golf with them. Once again, it is clear that candidates have not read the question and the text carefully enough and have not tried to match all the elements in the question with the passage.

• 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.

• **DO's 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.

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 task, candidates were asked to write a letter to the director of an international college they had attended, giving their response to various questions about the college social programme. They were expected to be enthusiastic about the previous summer's social programme and to suggest ideas for encouraging more students to get involved with the college clubs. They were then expected to suggest a speaker, say why Friday evening was not a good time for this and give an opinion as to what the college should organise for the end of the course.

Candidates were able to develop the task well and clearly understood the scenario in the question. Most answers were well-organised into clear paragraphs, and points were dealt with in a logical order. It is clear that candidates continue to be very well prepared for the Part 1 task as there were very few task point omissions and the functions prompted by each content point (suggest, tell him, etc) were addressed confidently.

In terms of style, candidates were free to decide on the degree of formality to use in their reply to the college director as this would vary according to their experience in school or college. The majority of candidates wrote in a consistently neutral and polite tone, which worked well. Some candidates were able to use more formal expressions such as 'I would like to thank you in advance for taking my letter into consideration' although this style was not always consistent throughout the letter. There was considerable overuse and misuse of very formal linking words such as 'moreover' and 'furthermore'. Candidates need further practice in using these words more sparingly and only when introducing points that support a previous point or add to one. Candidates also experienced difficulty when referring to the text in the input letter in order to introduce their responses to the various content points and there was frequent incorrect use of 'according to'.

Most candidates handled the letter format well and opened and closed their letters with appropriate expressions such as 'I am writing in connection with' and 'I look forward to hearing from you soon'. There was, however, considerable confusion over the use of 'hope' and 'wish' resulting in tense errors – 'I wish my help will be valuable', 'I hope my help would be useful'. 'Lifting' complete phrases from the question was also problematic and candidates need to be reminded that they should use only key words from the question and then develop their answers in their own words to show their range of language.

The first point was done adequately with positive responses to the social programme. Many used the language from the question but added to it appropriately – 'I enjoyed the social programme, it was fantastic'; 'It was splendid!' There were some errors in word order among those candidates who tried to strengthen the phrase – 'I enjoyed very much the programme'.

For the second point, candidates had to suggest one or more ideas for increasing involvement in the college clubs. This point was done well and many candidates expanded their answers with a good range of language. Many suggested organising competitions or contests or tournaments, with suggestions for attractive prizes – 'prizes to the winners such as tours for groups to foreign countries'. There were, however, errors arising from the confusion of 'prize', 'price' and 'present'. Other candidates suggested advertising the clubs, improving the facilities and introducing more popular sports – 'Chess is boring for young people'. Reference to one of the clubs in the question was sufficient, although many candidates referred to both.

The third point asked candidates to suggest a speaker to give a talk to the college students. The most popular choices were film stars and footballers – 'invite an athlete such as a

footballer or tennis player' – and some candidates were successful in linking this point to the second point, suggesting successful swimmers or chess players to encourage people to join those clubs. Some candidates interpreted 'speak' rather more as a conversation and suggested parents and former students. This approach was accepted. There was widespread 'lifting' of the phrase 'to invite some people to come and speak to the students in the evenings'; candidates need more practice in reformulating language from the question and only using key words.

There were various approaches to developing point four. Many candidates explained why Friday was not a good time with the most common reasons being the need to do homework, being tired at the end of the week or students having other hobbies or commitments – 'probably all the students will be in night clubs having fun'. Some explained why Friday was inconvenient for them as individuals and some argued for an alternative date, inferring that Friday was not ideal. These approaches were accepted.

For the fifth point, candidates had to choose either the disco or the sports day. This point was done well, with the two events being equal in popularity, and candidates able to give reasons for their choice and many able to draw comparisons with the previous year. Some suggested organising both events, and some an alternative, and both approaches were accepted.

Overall, the performance on the first question ranged from satisfactory to good.

Part 2

Question 4, the informal letter, was chosen by 39% of candidates. Question 3, the composition, was answered by 32% of candidates, and Question 2, the story, was chosen by 28%. A very small number of candidates (below 1%) answered Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions, with 5a being slightly more popular than 5b.

Question 2

The story was generally done well with the most popular topic of the message being the organising of a surprise party. The most successful stories were those which moved forward from the prompt line, revealing the content of the message as the story progressed. This approach allowed candidates to use the past simple and continuous tenses and helped with the general coherence of the story. Many candidates used the flashback technique, narrating events prior to the reading of the message. This approach is acceptable, of course, but it does require very good and consistent control of tenses, especially the past perfect and past simple. This control was not always apparent and led to some confusion in the narratives.

There was widespread confusion between 'got' and 'went' – 'she got into the house' – and overall the sequencing of tenses is an area in which students need more practice – 'her brother was getting into the house when the lights turn on'.

Question 3

This was a popular question and was done generally quite well. Candidates clearly identified with the topic and made some well-expressed points about air pollution, difficulties of parking, the impact of living a long way from one's place of work and the effect on stress levels of driving on busy roads. A reasonable range of appropriate vocabulary was used.

Candidates were able to organise their answers into clear paragraphs. Some had a clear framework for a composition with a range of linking phrases – 'It is widely believed that... , On

the one hand...on the other hand... , In conclusion', but the points they made did not always follow logically from the linking phrases used. This created confusion for the reader. Students need more practice not only in using the linking expressions but in understanding the nature of the language (positive, negative, contrastive, etc) which follows.

Question 4

This was a very popular question and was done well. Candidates addressed the task with great enthusiasm and wrote in a good, informal style. Some candidates wrote as if the wedding were their own and some wrote about Greek weddings in general; both approaches were accepted.

Some started their letters with reassurances – 'Don't worry because you didn't come' – or sympathy – 'It's really a shame that you couldn't attend this great event' – and promises to describe everything in detail, which they then did. The letters were concluded appropriately – 'I believe the couple will remember that day forever!', 'We had a ball at this one!'. There were some uncertainties with the vocabulary of weddings: 'bride' was confused with 'pride' and 'wife'. It is important when choosing which question to answer in Part 2 to consider the key vocabulary required and not to choose the question solely because the topic looks attractive.

Questions 5a and 5b

There were very few answers to the set book questions. Some answers to Question 5a dealt with the task well and made suitable reference to the book.

Some candidates who attempted the questions unfortunately wrote about books not on the set book list. Candidates should be reminded that Questions 5a and 5b can only be answered with reference to the books on the set text list. Answers relating to a book not on the set book list, or those in which the candidate has invented a story line, are 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.

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.

It is important for students to remember that the focus of the informal letter is that they should supply the information the friend has requested. This needs to be dealt with in some detail and students may need practice in identifying the key functions, usually describing, explaining and giving opinions. It is natural, of course, to include some social language in the introduction and conclusion but this should not intrude into the main body of the letter.

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.

• **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 <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: Ice skating

Multiple-choice Cloze

Candidates performed consistently well in this task. Almost all candidates answered correctly for Question 10. The items testing collocation were answered correctly by most candidates: 'do (an hour's) exercise', 'heart rate' and 'develop (greater) confidence' (Questions 5, 12 and 15 respectively), and candidates on the whole had few problems with the two phrasal verbs in this task: 'set up (a class)' and 'take up (a sport)' (Questions 7 and 9). The fixed phrase in Question 4, 'before you know it', was less well-known, being answered correctly by slightly under half of all candidates. For Question 1, a common wrong answer chosen was B. This option is wrong because 'concerned' is followed by the

preposition 'with' rather than 'of'. Candidates and teachers should be aware that some questions or parts of questions may have a lexico-grammatical element of this nature. Another example was Question 8, option C: 'appeals' can be ruled out here as it must be followed by 'to' when it has this meaning.

Part 2, Questions 16-30: At the bottom of the sea

Open Cloze

Candidates coped fairly well with this task, the great majority answering correctly for Questions 19, 20 and 21. The converse was true of Questions 22, 26 and 30. For Question 22, many candidates chose 'so' or 'as', which are tempting given the surrounding words, but do not fit with the sense at sentence level. There are also clues elsewhere in the paragraph, notably in the last sentence, which refers to 13,000 previously unseen plants and animals. For Question 26, there were many different wrong answers, the most common being 'no' – contradicted by the word 'impossible' which follows. For Question 30, weaker candidates tended to supply a verb, either in the base form or as a participle. 'According' was also a fairly popular answer. The wrong answer for Question 22 illustrates the importance of reading and engaging with the meaning of the whole text. The same was true at the beginning of the task. Many candidates put 'the' as the answer to Question 16. This certainly makes sense as you first read the text until you reach the final clause beginning with 'such'. This clause makes it clear that something else is required as the gapped word, and that the clause the missing word introduces must be subordinate.

Part 3, Questions 31-40

'Key' Word Transformations

Overall, candidates found this part of the paper straightforward, especially Questions 31, 33, 34 and 37, which featured fairly standard grammatical transformations involving 'used to', the present simple passive and 'wish'. No question posed particular difficulty for the candidature as a whole. However, for Question 32, there were some mistakes of tense, with candidates retaining 'can' from the first sentence, and some missing of the negative among weaker candidates. In Question 36, the second element in the answer caused problems for weaker candidates, who came up with 'much as', 'as many as' and 'so many as' in substantial numbers. In Question 38, weaker candidates tended not to spot the need for a modal, and began the answer with the key word. For Question 39, which tested the grammar of the verb 'accuse', many candidates wrote '...accused me that I have...'. With Question 40, it was the first element that tended to produce wrong answers among weaker candidates: 'addition', 'contrast' and 'despite' all featured regularly. Finally, some candidates lost marks for 'over-transforming', where they needlessly transformed a lexical element from the first sentence. For example, in Question 32, they produced 'go outside' and 'leave', both of which changed the meaning of the first sentence too much. A further example was Question 34, where some candidates wrote 'lend', 'use' or 'borrow', none of which convey the idea, present in the first sentence, of *paying* for the hall.

Part 4, Questions 41-55: Class reunion

Error Correction

Many candidates found this part of the paper challenging. This was particularly true for Questions 49, 54 and 55. With Question 49, many candidates may have confused 'contact somebody' and 'make contact with somebody', as they assumed this was a correct line. For Question 54, a considerable number of candidates wrongly put 'some' as the extra word. While the word 'some' **can** be omitted here, it is definitely not wrong to say 'go out for some

lunch', so 'some' is not an extra wrong word in this line. Candidates should beware of such words, which **could** be omitted but are not actually wrong. Candidates performed best on Questions 42, 50, 52 and especially 46.

Part 5, Questions 56-65: Louis Pasteur

Word Formation

Candidates performed best on this part of the paper, a particularly high proportion answering correctly for Questions 57, 59 and 64, with Question 58 being the only one answered correctly by a minority of candidates. Spelling was an issue with Questions 62 (e.g. 'harmfull'), 63, 64 ('developement' or 'developpment') and 65 (dropping an 's'). This task contained some items which tested singular/plural agreement. In the case of Questions 60 and 63, a number of weaker candidates made plurals singular, while the opposite was true of Questions 59, 61 and 64.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

In all the text-based parts of the paper, candidates should concentrate on the sense of the text surrounding the gaps, and follow the argument as it develops through the text.

In Part 3, candidates sometimes lose marks for 'over-transforming' – that is, they change elements from the lead-in 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 lead-in 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 lead-in sentence as possible. The task is simply to rewrite the lead-in sentence using different words.

When preparing for Part 4, candidates should be made aware that extra words must definitely be incorrect because they do not fit the sense of the text or they do not fit grammatically. For example, in the sentence 'I decided to go along to the party' the word 'along' is perfectly correct, even though it **could** be omitted.

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 read all instructions carefully. |
| DO | give yourself time to check your work. |
| DO | be careful to spell the prompt word correctly in your answer for Part 3. |
| DO | make sure that the sentence you complete in Part 3 is as close in meaning to the first sentence as possible. |
| DO | remember that in Part 4 you are looking for 'extra' words that are actually incorrect . |
| 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 | write more than 5 words in your answer in Part 3. |
| DON'T | leave blanks in Part 4 when you think a line is correct – put a tick (✓). |
| 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, detail, function, purpose, attitude, opinion, relationship, topic, place, situation, genre, agreement, etc.	8	A series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. The multiple-choice questions (one per extract) have three options.
2	Sentence completion, note completion or blank filling <i>Focus:</i> Understanding detail, specific information, stated opinion	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 monologues, of approximately 30 seconds each. 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> Understanding opinion, attitude, gist, main idea, specific information	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 versions of the paper prior to the modifications which come into force in December 2008. Until then, 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, 2 and 5, but Questions 3 and 6 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 A, 'People are lucky to be given a number of choices', in answer to the question: 'What point is the man making about life today?' This is probably because the speaker, in the course of giving examples to illustrate his point, says 'You make your decision, only to be lucky enough to be offered a third job...', and weaker candidates attracted by this reference to 'lucky' overlooked the fact that the speaker went on to say '...as a result you are left feeling confused and wondering how best to get that perfect job and lifestyle.' Stronger candidates, however, who waited until they had heard the complete text, chose the correct option C.

Many candidates, both weaker and stronger, found Question 3 challenging. Candidates had to listen to a reviewer's opinion of a new travel book, and option B, 'It is a surprisingly detailed account', proved especially distracting. The reviewer lists various aspects of the book which are attractive and at one point says the book '...is a fascinating mix of historical detail, adventure and humour'. However, this is immediately followed by 'My only reservation concerns the illustrations and much as I enjoyed the descriptive passages, a few more photos to help me visualise the place would have been welcome.' Stronger candidates who opted correctly for option C, 'It relies too heavily on written descriptions', had listened carefully to the complete text and picked up the force of this qualifying remark.

In Question 8, candidates had to listen to two teachers talking about sorting out details for a school event and identify the event they are planning. Many weaker candidates opted for A or C, 'an educational trip' or 'a musical event', respectively. They were perhaps distracted by the mention of '...school trip...' and '...school's music week...' and so chose these options based on the words they had heard. Those candidates who understood the comments '...get the players up to fitness, invite the parents, print the list of competitors...', chose the correct option B, 'a sports event'.

Part 2, Questions 9-18

This was a sentence-completion task based on a talk by a radio reporter for a travel programme about his recent visit to a tropical island. Overall, candidates coped very 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 and 16 stand out as being tackled very well by the majority of candidates, while Questions 11, 13 and 18 proved the most challenging in this part of the test.

In Question 11, a variety of common wrong answers such as 'water', 'helicopter service', 'park' and 'hotel' suggests that candidates had not read the prompt carefully enough, or did not listen to the speaker's comment, '...you could ask for the car park to be moved a bit further away from the other side of the hotel. If you've got a room on that side, it can be a bit noisy...'. In addition to 'car park', the responses 'parking lot' and 'parking' were also allowed.

Similarly, in Question 13, the most common wrong answer from weaker candidates was 'car'. This suggests that candidates had not listened carefully enough, or paid attention to the question sentence which features the word 'hired' mentioned by the speaker. The reporter says, 'I hired a motorbike one day and drove around. Cars and jeeps are also available.' The majority of candidates who wrote the right answer 'motorbike' also spelled it correctly; 'motorcycle' was also acceptable.

In Question 18, stronger candidates once again coped well by identifying the correct answer 'marmalade', whereas many weaker candidates wrote 'chocolate' or 'ice-cream'. The speaker remarks that these latter two food items are 'rather expensive', and goes on to say, 'the only thing you can't get for some reason is marmalade' so that this is the only 'type of food unavailable on the island'. A range of spelling variables for 'marmalade' were allowed; for example, 'marmalaid', 'marmelade' and 'marmallade'.

In the context of this part of the test, it is relevant to draw attention to handwriting. Poor handwriting in Part 2 may result in the loss of marks. For example, in keys such as 'mountains' (Question 14), where strings of vowels were required, candidates who did not form these letters with due care (and so left their responses ambiguous) were not rewarded. 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 their work in art and design. Results suggest that candidates found this the most challenging part of the test.

Questions 20 and 22 were tackled 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 stronger 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 B and C. The range of answers suggests that weaker candidates had not listened to the complete text before choosing their option. Option B, 'I want to learn to work more quickly', was possibly attractive as a result of candidates misinterpreting the speaker's comment '...it took me over three months to complete the piece, so it wasn't very cost effective'. Option C, 'I like to see new artistic ideas develop', might have distracted weaker candidates who had chosen option F incorrectly as the answer to Question 19 and were tempted by the lexical connection between the speaker's reference to 'new textures' and 'new artistic ideas' in the option. However, the correct option F, 'I enjoy experimenting with different materials', selected by stronger candidates, was supported by the speaker's remark, '...I'm always looking for new textures and shapes. I tried working with marble this year...'.

The disparity between stronger and weaker candidates was also reflected in Question 23; weaker candidates were attracted to options B, D and E, possibly because they had already selected C (the correct option) as the key to Question 21, even after a second listening. Further distraction was created by the speaker referring to 'talent', the length of time it takes to produce a good painting and the practicalities of being a commercial artist, but the

statement, 'It's a thrill working with other people's creativity', was quite clearly reflected in option C, 'I like to see new artistic ideas develop', and not in the options B, D or E.

The contrast in performance between candidates suggests that weaker candidates are tempted to match words they hear with the same or similar words printed, or choose an answer without listening to the complete extract. 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 3-option multiple choice task based on a radio interview with a woman whose father wrote natural history articles for newspapers and magazines. Results show that candidates coped well with this part of the test.

Questions 24, 28 and 29 were answered best and Questions 26 and 30 proved the most demanding. In Question 26, candidates had to listen for the reason why the woman's father took the family on 'long bus trips'. In response to being asked what her father did in his spare time, she says that writing '...articles really became part of his hobby It was sometimes difficult for him to find a subject So at the weekends the whole family used to go on long bus rides...'. It was necessary to listen to her complete reply in order to select the correct option, B, 'to get ideas for his articles'. In Question 30, candidates had to listen for what the woman particularly remembers about her father. She replies that '...he always found something to interest him; he could never walk past something without having a look', so the correct option A, 'his sense of curiosity' was chosen by stronger candidates.

This part of the test includes more questions 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 and options. 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 an

understanding of the gist of the text. 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 rhythm 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. Legible handwriting is important, especially when writing the following letters: vowels such as 'a', 'i', 'o' and 'u' which can be easily confused, and the consonants 'n' and 'v'. Every effort is made to achieve fair marking but illegible or ambiguous 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. 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 'market' and 'mountains' 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 talked about their work in art and design. Students should be encouraged to listen for the meaning of the whole text, and

to focus on identifying each speaker's opinion or message, 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.

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 sentence to reflect the **exact** meaning expressed in the text; candidates should not expect to see key information which they have heard printed word for word on the paper.

• **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; using capital letters can make writing clearer.
- 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've 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 2007 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.

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, and 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.

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. It 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 answering 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.

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 their knowledge of the world or 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.

• Comments on Released Test Materials

Children learning

As can be seen in the sample paper, the visuals show children learning different things in different ways. The first is a photograph of a primary school classroom where children are looking at leaves with their teacher. The second is of a secondary school classroom where students are discussing maths with the teacher. Candidates were asked to compare the visuals and say how useful it is for the different groups of children to learn about these things. A strong candidate will have used the pictures to answer the task along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see some children in class with their teacher. They're having a lesson about the natural world. The teacher has brought different kinds of leaves into the classroom for the children to look at and touch. I think it's very important to teach children about the world around us. Many children these days don't spend enough time outside learning about nature. But I think the teacher should take the children to the park for this lesson. It's nicer for them if they see the leaves near the trees than just see them in class. In the second picture, some older boys are learning about maths with their teacher. The teacher's explaining some rules on the board and they're listening to him carefully. I think it's very useful for students to know about maths. We need to know maths for a lot of different

jobs, so it might help them in future with their careers. I don't like maths very much and I'm not very good at it, so I don't think it would be useful for me because this maths looks very hard.'

Here, the candidate describes each photograph and then moves on to spend the majority of the long turn focusing on how useful it is for the children to learn these things. Finally, the student adds a personal comment in order to keep going for the full minute.

Taking a break

Candidates were given visual prompts of people taking a break in two different places. In the first visual, a group of teenagers are in a forest and are taking a break from their walk, and in the second, several people are taking a break in a pleasant outdoor café. Fountains can be seen in the background. Again, candidates were not only expected to describe the two photographs, but to say why they thought the people were taking a break in these places. Candidates who performed well produced answers along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see some friends in a forest. They're resting and talking. It's a nice place to take a break but they're all sitting on the ground because there aren't any benches. They've got walking boots on and some of them have got rucksacks, so I think they're having a rest because they've been for a long walk together. Maybe they're tired and thirsty and they still have a long way to go before they get home so they need to take this break. In the second picture, I can see some older people who are also sitting outside in the sun. These people are sitting at tables and I think there is a café near them, but we can't see it in the picture. Some of them are drinking coffee, one man's reading a book and one man's on the phone. It's also a really nice place to take a break because there are fountains behind the people. I think these people are probably in town because we can see buildings near to them, so maybe some of the people have been shopping or perhaps they work in an office and they're spending their lunch break outside. But both places seem really nice places to sit and relax.'

Candidates who performed well responded with their own ideas as to why they thought the people were taking a break. Although a degree of speculation is required 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, if the word 'fountain' is not known to candidates, they should employ tactics such as paraphrasing in order to complete the task. 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.

Wedding day

Candidates generally found plenty to say about this task. Candidates were given seven visual prompts which were examples of different things that might help guests to enjoy a wedding day celebration: the food, the type of entertainment, a guest list showing the people invited, a photographer, the time the celebration should take place (day or night), the effect of the weather, and the speeches. Candidates were asked to talk about why these things can make a difference to a wedding day, and then to decide which three would be most important in order for the day to be enjoyable for all the guests. Candidates found this task very accessible and generally performed well and spoke fully. Candidates were able to discuss the relative merits of the different ideas and were able to talk about the problems of guests not getting on, the importance of the food, venue, whether it would be better to have an outdoor or indoor event, and so on. 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 the entertainment...'. 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, 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 how the different things could affect the success of the wedding, agreeing and disagreeing with each other and following up on each other's ideas. For example, with the picture of the guest list, candidates could have commented on the fact that it's really important to decide how many people to invite to the wedding because that can affect the price of the event, and that sometimes people don't get on well with each other so it's important to think about where everyone should sit for the meal, whether to mix friends and family and what the problems might be. Then, having discussed how each of the alternatives would affect the enjoyment of the wedding day, candidates should have attempted to come to a negotiated decision as to which three things they thought were most important for the day to be enjoyable and why. Candidates were not penalised if they ran out of time and failed to come to a final decision.

When doing this task, candidates tended to talk less about the speeches, perhaps because they just did not have so much to say. There is no need for candidates to speak in the same detail about every visual. Candidates should be encouraged to speak more about the visuals they are comfortable with and deal with visuals they are not so sure about in as much detail as they are able to. They should also be reassured that, for example, they are not expected to know individual items of lexis in the visuals, for example 'steel band' or 'cello' in the entertainment picture. They are only expected to provide acceptable paraphrases, in this case, talking very generally about the sort of entertainment that might be enjoyable for all the guests. A useful technique would also have been to point, for example, to the visual of the cello and say:

'I don't think that this sort of music would be popular with everyone because...'

As has been mentioned in Part 2, examiners are not looking for or testing specific lexical items. Candidates will, however, be expected to have developed strategies, such as paraphrasing, for dealing with unknown words.

Candidates generally performed well and spoke fully on the task 'Wedding day'. They were able to discuss their enjoyment of special occasions such as weddings, and whether people should spend a lot of money celebrating a special occasion. Candidates were asked to talk about a public celebration they'd been to and some found this question difficult as they found it hard to think of one particular celebration quickly. Candidates should be encouraged not to spend a long time wondering what to say but to start to talk promptly. Examiners are not judging, for example, whether they have chosen a good celebration to talk about. Candidates also found the question about whether it's better to go to public events or to watch them on television a little more difficult to answer, possibly because they had not considered the question before.

• 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

Candidates 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. Candidates should time themselves to check that they are able to keep going for a full minute. Without practice, candidates may find it difficult to speak for a full minute during the test. Candidates should attempt 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 'Taking a break', candidates were not just asked to describe photographs but were asked to talk about why they thought the people were taking a break in the 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 one 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. Candidates with a quieter disposition should be encouraged to develop strategies to ensure they are able to take their turn. Stronger candidates should be encouraged to invite opinions from others. Suitable thematic areas for discussion can be found in FCE coursebooks and should relate to the candidate'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. Candidates 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.

Part 4

As in Part 3, candidates 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 'Wedding day', candidates 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 FCE 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 2007 – 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. (Optional) Your name.....
Centre/School

Thank you.