



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

First Certificate in English

Examination Report 0100 Syllabus

December 2008

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First Certificate in English

Examination Report

Syllabus 0100

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INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to provide a general view of how candidates performed on each paper in the December 2008 session, and to offer guidance on the preparation of candidates.

The overall pass rate for Syllabus 0100 was **74.23%**.

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

	0100
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	8.12
B	21.71
C	44.40
D	10.63
E	15.14

• Grading

Grading took place during January 2009 (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). Every candidate is provided with a Statement of Results which includes a graphical display of the candidate's performance in each component, shown against the scale Exceptional – Good – Borderline – Weak.

In addition, the Statement of Results includes a standardised score out of 100 (which is converted from the aggregate mark of 200). This score allows candidates to see exactly how they performed. It has set values for each grade, allowing comparison across sessions of the examination:

Grade A = 80-100 marks
Grade B = 75-79 marks
Grade C = 60-74 marks
Grade D = 55-59 marks
Grade E = 54 marks or below.

This means that the score a candidate needs to achieve a passing grade will always be 60.

- **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 to candidates gaining a passing grade (A, B or C) 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* (available online, for information on dates, etc.)
- *FCE Handbook* (for detailed information on the examination and sample materials)
- *Examination Report* (produced in conjunction with the release of certain Past Papers)
- *Past Paper Pack* (made available periodically, approximately 10 weeks after the relevant 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 online 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	Format	Number of Questions
1	Multiple choice <i>Focus:</i> detail, opinion, gist, attitude, tone, purpose, main idea, meaning from context, text organisation features (exemplification, comparison, reference)	A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.	8
2	Gapped text <i>Focus:</i> text structure, cohesion and coherence	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.	7
3	Multiple matching <i>Focus:</i> specific information, detail, opinion and attitude	A text or several short texts preceded by multiple-matching questions. Candidates must match prompts to elements in the text.	15

- **Marking**

Candidates record their answers on a separate answer sheet, which is scanned by computer. Questions in Parts 1 and 2 carry two marks each. Questions in Part 3 carry one mark each.

- **Candidate Performance**

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

Part 1, Questions 1-8: The Best Kind of Know-it-all

This four-option multiple-choice task focused mainly on detailed comprehension but also included a lexical question, Question 7, and a reference question, Question 5. Candidates coped particularly well with this reference question. The majority of the candidates worked out that 'it' in 'It was quite stressful' referred to 'arranging courses' (option D). Some of the weaker candidates selected option C ('becoming a guide'), possibly because this was mentioned two lines earlier. However, the writer goes on to explain that he had enjoyed showing students round London and so becoming a guide 'seemed an obvious move to make', which means he did not consider it stressful. Weaker students might benefit from being trained to deal with reference questions by substituting their chosen option for the targeted reference word and checking whether it would make sense in the context of the surrounding paragraph.

The lexical question proved to be more challenging. In Question 7, candidates had to work out the meaning of 'some of it sticks' from the context. The majority of the stronger candidates rightly selected option B ('Some information is remembered'). The clues in the text were 'you have to know so much to guide well, different places, all kinds of architecture, agriculture' – that is the information that is required and which is remembered 'eventually'. A significant number of

the weaker candidates chose option A or option C. They may have been tempted by option A ('Some facts are up to date') because the phrase 'up to date' is used in the text, but the writer uses this phrase to indicate that he keeps himself abreast of what is happening. Option C is 'Some questions are answered'. Candidates may have been attracted by this option because the word 'question' is in the sentence before the targeted phrase. However, it is in the singular in the text and 'questions' would not collocate with 'some of **it** sticks'. This is a clear example of the danger of choosing an answer simply because it contains a word which features in the text, without reading carefully to ensure that the meaning in the option matches what the writer says.

Part 2, Questions 9-15: The little chefs

In this gapped-sentence task focusing on text structure, the candidates coped best with Question 9. Most of the stronger candidates and a good proportion of the weaker candidates correctly selected option F. They linked children who 'are always hungry' in the text with 'boys who are happy to do anything that will end in a meal' in F. Some of the weaker candidates, however, chose option B. They may have been attempting to link the pronoun 'She' in B with the 'She' in the text before the gap, which refers to Anna Wilson. This is a commendable strategy. However, it is also important to see that all the elements in the selected option fit with the surrounding text. Option B mentions 'profit motive', but the financial side of the cookery course is not mentioned until the final paragraph of the text and so option B fits there.

Question 13 proved to be the most demanding one in this task. Most of the stronger candidates correctly chose option H, matching the 'contrast' in the option with the description of the contrasting ways in which the girls and boys chop onions and knead dough. Significant numbers of the weaker candidates selected options A, C, E and F. Option A begins 'This is followed by...' which does not continue well grammatically after the preceding sentence – '...while the girls work carefully, concentrating on being neat'. Option C begins 'As they wander round...' which does not match the description of the children working in one place, i.e. at a table in the kitchen. Option E focuses on 'obvious tiredness'. However, this has not been suggested at all in the text and it is not until the next paragraph which deals with the second day of the course that we learn that the boys stayed awake chatting until 4.30 a.m. Option F mentions the word 'boys' which may be the reason for its selection. However, it focuses on the boys' hunger (see above for the comments on Question 9), rather than their slapdash way of preparing ingredients. In all four cases it is clear that candidates did not match the option to the text carefully enough in terms of grammatical form or meaning. It also suggests that they were not attempting to follow the development of the argument through the text, perhaps because they had not read the text through first before starting to look at the individual gaps. It is also important to train students to re-examine the option choices they have already made when they are trying to fit later options into place.

Part 3, Questions 16-30: A short cut to Hollywood

This multiple-matching task, which focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from four short texts about different film-makers, proved to be the most successfully answered task on the paper. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 25. They successfully matched 'felt their studies were not providing them with what they wanted' in Question 25 with this segment from text C: 'disenchanted with the theoretical rather than practical experience of the industry that was provided, both men left university before completing their courses'.

Question 19 proved to be the most challenging one in this task. The question was 'which film-makers made **early career decisions** that would lead them towards film-making?' This matched the text in option C – Both men left university and 'went to work for production companies in London. They place enormous value on the hands-on experience that their work on film sets provided them with.' This extract clearly matches the 'early' in the question, since the men went to production companies immediately after leaving university. They worked for the production companies, rather than, for example, visiting them in their free time, so it was

obviously a 'career decision'. A significant number of candidates selected option B. They may have been attracted by the description of the Collins brothers falling in love with film-making when they were young boys and sending their father video diaries. This matched the 'early' part of Question 19, but it cannot be said to be a 'career decision'. This is a clear example of candidates failing to read the question carefully enough and thus not matching all the elements in the question with the passage.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION**

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 2.

• **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 Part 3.
- DO** read and re-read your answers in Part 2, 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 2 first, 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 2 and try to guess what is missing.
- DO** pay careful attention to references to places, people and things (pronouns) in Parts 1 and 2.
- DO** fill what you think are the easy gaps first in Part 2, and leave the problem areas until last.
- DO** read through your choices in all three parts of the paper to check that everything makes sense. Check that you have matched all elements of the questions in Parts 1 and 3 with the information in the text. Also check that linking words, tenses and time references all fit with the choices you have made in Part 2.
- 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 2, 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 1 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	Format	Number of Tasks and Length
1	<p>QUESTION 1</p> <p>Writing a letter or email</p> <p>Focus: advising, apologising, comparing, describing, explaining, expressing opinions, justifying, persuading, recommending and suggesting</p>	<p>Candidates are required to deal with input material of up to 160 words. This may include material taken from advertisements, extracts from letters, emails, schedules, etc.</p>	<p>One compulsory task</p> <p>120–150 words</p>
2	<p>QUESTIONS 2-4</p> <p>Writing one of the following: an article, an essay, a letter, a report, a review, a story</p> <p>QUESTION 5 (Question 5 has two options)</p> <p>Writing one of the following, based on one of two prescribed reading texts: an article, an essay, a letter, a report, a review</p> <p>Focus: varies according to the task, including: advising, comparing, describing, explaining, expressing opinions, justifying, recommending</p>	<p>A situationally based writing task specified in no more than 70 words.</p>	<p>One task to be selected from a choice of five</p> <p>120–180 words</p>

• 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, middle 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

This was the first session of the newly modified and updated paper, and candidates generally performed well in both Part 1 and Part 2. The new task type in Part 2, the review, was chosen by a number of candidates. Far fewer chose the new, text-specific tasks on *Phantom of the Opera* and *Great Expectations*, although there were some very satisfactory answers.

Part 1, Question 1

For this compulsory task, candidates were asked to reply to a letter from a friend, Chris, about going to a Science Festival during a weekend visit. The topic of science was used quite effectively by some candidates to bring in a range of vocabulary such as 'global warming' and 'eco-friendly' to their responses.

Candidates were able to develop the task well within the new word length of 120–150 words. They clearly understood the scenario; most answers were well-organised into clear paragraphs, and points were dealt with in a logical order. There were very few task point omissions and the functions prompted by each content point (agreeing, stating preference, asking for information, giving reasons) were addressed confidently.

In terms of style, most candidates opted for an informal tone, which was entirely appropriate for the situation, and their opening greetings reflected this: 'Hello again'; 'Hey'; 'Hi Chris'. Closing formulae were also handled successfully with expressions like 'can't wait to see you'; 'counting the days'; 'do drop me a line with the details and see you soon!' A few candidates opted for a more neutral and polite tone, perhaps because they assumed that Chris was not yet a close friend. This approach also worked well, provided the tone was maintained consistently throughout the letter.

It was obvious that candidates had been well trained to do this task, with stronger candidates using only key words from the input and then developing their answers in their own words to show their range of language.

Almost all candidates managed the first point well, with positive responses being made to the idea of attending the Science Festival: 'I'm a big fan of science'; 'I really appreciate the invitation'; 'We'll spend a great time there', and/or to the idea of seeing their friend again: 'I can't wait to see you again'; 'I've been waiting for ages and finally we can meet'.

However, there were instances of confusion between the words 'travel' and 'trip', as in 'this travel would be great'. There was also some confusion about the use of the words 'great' and 'grateful', which produced responses such as 'it will be grateful going to the festival'.

For the second point, candidates had to say which science talk they would prefer to attend and why. The point was generally developed well and allowed candidates to show their range. Most acknowledged the difficulty of the choice: 'It's a hard choice given that I'm interested in both but...'. Those who opted for the talk about the sun referred to environmental issues: 'the sun can harm us but is also an environmental issue'; 'global warming is an international issue the world is facing nowadays and I'd like to know more about it to help things change'. Others opted for the talk about animals with much reference to pets: 'I've wondered how do animals communicate for years'; 'because I have a pet'; 'I wonder if my dog can understand what I say?'

There were general comments about both talks, using some good lexical expressions: 'a thought-provoking topic'; 'it could be a fascinating experience'; 'really exciting for us both'. Others just stated the reason for the choice very simply by saying 'because it will be more

interesting'. Candidates should remember that some of the points invite development and that this is a good way to demonstrate range of structure and vocabulary.

One fairly common error on this point was that candidates often confused the words 'called' and 'named' and so wrongly wrote 'the talk named...'. In addition, a few candidates missed the need to explain the choice and were penalised.

The third point required candidates to ask another question about the festival. Most candidates opted to ask about cost: 'How much does the entrance fee cost?'; 'I need to know if I have to take more money'. Others asked about other aspects of the festival: 'Is there going to be food or shall I take some with me?'; 'Is it inside or outside as I don't know if I need warm clothes?' Some candidates did not read the prompt carefully, so although the line from the note went to the word 'festival', they asked about another aspect of the visit. Although this approach was not penalised, all candidates should be reminded to read the prompts carefully and address the point precisely.

The fourth point worked well, with candidates giving a range of reasons for why they could not stay longer. These were often related to studying: 'I have a really important exam to sit for'; 'My parents will kill me if I don't do my geography project'. Some reasons were related to work: 'this week people will need me in the office'; and family commitments such as 'my mother's birthday'; 'my sister's party'.

Weaker candidates managed the point, but made errors: 'so I mustn't stay in your house'; 'I have an important exam and I won't failed it'. There was also a lot of confusion between the verbs 'hope' and 'expect': 'I expect you to write to me'; 'I expect you reply'.

Nonetheless, most candidates handled the end of the letter well, linking the closing expressions to not being able to stay longer: 'anyway, thanks again for the invitation'; 'thank you anyway'; 'much as I'd have liked to stay'; 'don't be upset, will you?'

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

Part 2

Question 2, the article, was chosen by 53.75% of candidates. Question 3, the story, was answered by 32.36% of candidates, and Question 4, the review, was chosen by 10.22%. A very small number of candidates (below 2% each) answered Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions, with 5a being slightly more popular than 5b.

Question 2

The article about friendship was a very popular question, and was mostly done well.

Good answers very effectively described various ways of making friends, sometimes starting with childhood: 'I went to the park and met with a lot of children there' and then going on to acknowledge the difference with making friends later: 'but when you grow up and have a personality and that playing thing has disappeared, things change'. Candidates talked about making friends at various social gatherings: 'at the sports club'; 'dancing and sometimes only hanging out'; and also at school or university: 'the perfect place because there I can meet people with different backgrounds but with similar plans for the future'. Many answers talked about the impact of technology: 'you can meet friends on the internet'; 'Facebook is good'; but generally the opinion seemed to be that making friends was better done face-to-face: 'I want to hug my friends a lot and if they are not with me I can't'. Some commented that friends must be chosen carefully: 'we must choose a friend with great caution – trust and loyalty are the basis'; although for others it was a matter of chance: 'a simple funny comment at the supermarket can lead to a friendship for life, you never know'.

The second bullet point generated some good reasoning about whether friends have to agree on everything. It seems they do not: 'we have different ideas and we argue them with respect'; 'we are all different and that is what really matters, being able to exchange opinions'.

As is often the case with tasks requiring discussion of a topic, weaker candidates who tried to discuss their ideas in a very abstract way had difficulty expressing them: 'humankind will certainly create relationship between everyone which is called friendship'; 'friendship is being down and if it is continuing it can disappear'. There was no requirement in the question to define friendship; candidates should read the question carefully and answer it directly, looking for ways of illustrating their ideas from their own experience.

Some candidates forgot to address the second bullet point, and if nothing could be found in the answer about friends agreeing, then the answer was penalised.

Question 3

The story question was also popular and was done well.

The suitcase played an appropriately central role in most stories. In a few, someone had come to stay and was already upstairs, with some guests being more welcome than others: 'she had never liked aunty Susan'; 'at last her sister had come after so many years'. Boyfriends returned, and even unknown brothers: 'You don't know me but I'm your brother'. More often relationships were breaking up, so mothers were leaving fathers; sometimes husbands had packed their cases before telling Stella: 'Stella, let's face it, it's better that way'. In other stories Stella already knew: 'love had died slowly, breaking her heart little by little'. One husband was tired of trying to persuade his workaholic wife to go on holiday and was already packing the second case: "'I'm also doing all the package so you have no excuse", said Paul'.

Sometimes the contents of the suitcase were the focus of the story. It often contained money: 'money thrown all over the place'; and sometimes something romantic: 'a small box with a gold ring which overwhelmed her'. In one story the boyfriend spent some time in the suitcase before emerging to ask Stella to marry him!

Candidates wrote with good narrative control and a wide range of vocabulary. They also demonstrated considerable skill at integrating direct speech into their stories: 'Boston, huh? I see, you couldn't keep me because the other one doesn't want to be the second lady anymore, huh?'

There were only a few instances of stories not following on from the prompt: 'Stella saw the suitcase, fainted and then went for a new job in her dream'. These answers were penalised.

There was some confusion about the use of 'saw', 'looked' and 'watched': 'she stayed watching the suitcase'; 'she saw the kitchen and nothing happened'.

Question 4

The film review of a thriller was the least popular of the Part 2 questions and, although it was done quite well by some candidates, other responses were less successful.

Those candidates who had been well prepared for the review task chose suitable films and used appropriate vocabulary: 'the cast is unique'; 'the special effects were convincing'; 'the soundtrack was wonderful'. Good answers indicated the storyline and were able to describe exciting aspects of the film: 'this makes the film frighteningly realistic'; 'a gripping thriller that has an unpredictable ending'.

There were some reviews of films that were not thrillers by genre, but where candidates were able to convince the reader by their use of language that the film had elements of a thriller;

these answers were not penalised. However, candidates who wrote about genres such as documentaries and romantic comedies (and often told the reader in the introduction that the film was not a thriller) were penalised. Candidates should read the question carefully and identify exactly what is required in their answer.

Some candidates who had not been well trained to write reviews wrote general descriptions of films but with less successful control of appropriate vocabulary: 'the watcher can see explosions'; 'the film was placed in the US'; 'all spectators are too frightened'.

Questions 5a and 5b

Very few candidates attempted the new-style set book questions. Good answers to Questions 5a and 5b dealt with the task well and made appropriate references to the book or film.

Question 5a

Candidates were asked to write an essay explaining who the Phantom was and what information was given about his past life in the story. Candidates who dealt with the question well stated that in fact the Phantom was a real man whose life was blighted by a disfigured face 'so ugly his mother gave him a mask so she didn't have to look at him'; 'a rejected man looking for someone to love him'; and went on to explain a few key events from his early life and how he had ended up in the Opera House.

Question 5b

Candidates had to write an article explaining why Miss Havisham was strange. Stronger candidates explained that she had been jilted by the man she had expected to marry, and had never recovered from the shock. Unfortunately, some weaker candidates wrote answers that revealed they had no idea who Miss Havisham was – in one version she was happily married with two children – and were penalised.

● RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

Candidates should 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 task 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 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 or email.

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

To write an effective article, students need to look at real examples, and consider how a good choice of title and the use of colourful expressions, questions and personal anecdotes can make a positive impact on the target reader. Students can also be advised to revise word order in questions, and the vocabulary and structures needed for description, explanation and giving opinion.

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.

In order to produce a good review, students need practice in writing different types of review on a wide range of subjects. They need to learn good descriptive phrases and how to explain their own opinion in a clear and lively way. They should also be trained to read the question carefully to identify exactly what is required; the review will be specific and students should be advised that they will not simply be able to reproduce a learned answer.

There are many ways to incorporate set texts into classroom work, and reading 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. Students need to be aware that set text tasks are now text-specific, not general. They should also be advised not to attempt Question 5 unless they have a sound understanding of the storyline and a good knowledge of the main characters.

• **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 verb 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	Format	Number of Questions
1	Multiple-choice cloze <i>Focus:</i> lexical/lexico-grammatical	A modified cloze text containing 12 gaps and followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.	12
2	Open cloze <i>Focus:</i> grammatical/lexico-grammatical	A modified cloze text containing 12 gaps.	12
3	Word formation <i>Focus:</i> lexical/lexico-grammatical	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 changed to form the missing word.	10
4	Key word transformations <i>Focus:</i> lexical and grammatical	Eight separate items, each with a lead-in sentence and a gapped second sentence to be completed in two to five words, one of which is a given 'key word'.	8

- **Marking**

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

For Parts 1, 2 and 3, each correct answer receives 1 mark. For Part 4, each answer receives up to 2 marks.

- **Candidate Performance**

Part 1, Questions 1-12: Mount Fuji

Multiple-choice Cloze

Unusually, compared to previous papers in recent years, of the four parts of the paper, candidates found this part the most challenging. Questions 4 and 7 were answered correctly by just under half of all candidates. Question 4 tested a word that good candidates at this level could be expected to know as a noun, used here as a verb. Stronger candidates were essentially choosing from A and C – for them 'lean' was also a tempting option, whereas weaker candidates opted for D. Question 7 was also predictably challenging as here the use of 'lie' is figurative. Interestingly, the highest percentage of correct answers was on Question 9; the use of 'turn + colour' was well-known. Weaker candidates were attracted in considerable numbers to certain distractors: for example they tended not to know the collocation 'play a part' in Question 2, choosing option B instead. For Question 5 they went for a known collocation – 'ground floor' without realising that the context rules option A out. Perhaps not surprisingly, weaker candidates tended to answer incorrectly for Question 10, which tests a 'linker'. Such

questions also require an understanding of the surrounding text. A and D were common wrong answers for this question. Also particularly attractive to weaker candidates were options 6C, 7B, and 8A.

Part 2, Questions 13-24: A man of many parts

Open Cloze

Candidates coped fairly well with this task, particularly Questions 18 and 24. Conversely, Questions 22, 23 and especially 17 were the least well answered. The grammatical collocation 'hardly any' in Question 22 was known by stronger candidates, while weaker candidates produced 'no' and 'ever' in large numbers, but also 'few' and 'never'. In Question 23, weaker candidates spotted the need for a modal verb, but frequently wrote 'will' or 'must' – both of which are contradicted by 'who knows' earlier in the sentence. For Question 17 there was a wide variety of incorrect responses, 'just', 'soon' and 'only' being particularly common. This suggests the phrase 'not long after' was not well known by candidates. Question 14 also tested recognition of a fixed phrase ('the one and only'); 'the' was the most common incorrect answer. Candidates can expect to find a few such 'lexico-grammatical' questions in Part 2. It was pleasing to see Question 20, which tested the verb part of a phrasal verb, was very well answered, as such questions can sometimes prove challenging.

Part 3, Questions 25-34: The Warrumbungle National Park

Word Formation

Overall performance on this task was fairly standard. In numerical order, Question 25 proved accessible to candidates, the great majority answering correctly. Questions 26 and 27 were particularly challenging. With Question 26, many candidates made the correct transformation from verb to noun, but failed to notice from clues in the surrounding text that it had to be plural. The most common problem with Question 27 was one of misspelling of the end of the word. Candidates found Question 28 very straightforward, while Question 29 was answered correctly only by a minority of candidates. A common wrong misspelling was 'scenary'. Question 30 saw some weaker candidates trying to put 'double l' on the end of the word, while in Question 31 we saw the invention of some ingenious new words, notably 'spectaculous'! Question 32 was answered correctly by almost all candidates. With the longer texts this task now draws upon (following the 2008 Exam Modifications), it is more important than ever for candidates to read the text to pick up clues as to the word class and whether it is singular or plural.

Part 4, Questions 35-42

'Key' Word Transformations

Overall, candidates found this part of the paper the most challenging, although this was principally because of the last two questions, which were not well answered. In Question 41, the most frequently occurring problem was a failure to supply the gerund form of the verb. Instead many candidates used 'was'. Question 42 was perhaps predictably challenging, as candidates had to come up with the word 'guilty' to complete a fixed phrase. Probably the most common inappropriate response was 'found convicted of'. Some candidates who did produce 'guilty' followed this with an inappropriate preposition such as 'on' or 'by'. Performance in the other questions was remarkably consistent. An interesting wrong answer from several candidates was 'warmer than it should be' in Question 36. In itself this is a good, meaningful statement; unfortunately, however, there is no sense of 'should' in the first sentence, so this answer was marked wrong. Candidates should beware of 'over-transforming' or introducing new ideas into the gapped sentence.

- **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 4, 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.

Also in Part 4, some candidates leave a blank or a series of dots to indicate where the prompt word should be. This is not acceptable as the markers cannot be certain that the candidates are using the prompt word in exactly the same form as written on the question paper. Candidates should remember to write out the given prompt word in full.

Candidates should not give alternative answers in any part of the paper. Sometimes candidates write two or more answers next to each other; at other times they write their answer and then one or more alternatives in brackets. Candidates should not do this as they are likely to lose marks. Only if all their alternative answers are correct will a mark be given.

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

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO | check your spelling and make sure you copy things down correctly. |
| DO | make sure that your handwriting is clear. |
| DO | make sure that an answer in Part 3 is based only on the word at the end of the same line. |
| DO | remember always to write the prompt word unchanged in your answer for Part 4. |
| DO | make sure that the sentence you complete in Part 4 is as close in meaning to the first sentence as possible. |
| DON'T | decide on an answer without reading the whole of a sentence. |
| DON'T | forget to look carefully at the text in Part 3 in order to decide on the grammatical form of the missing words. |
| DON'T | write more than five words in your answer in Part 4. |
| DON'T | change more than you need to in Part 4. |
| DON'T | give alternative answers in any part of the paper. |

PAPER 4 – LISTENING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Format	Number of Questions
1	Multiple choice <i>Focus:</i> general gist, detail, function, purpose, attitude, opinion, relationship, topic, place, situation, genre, agreement, etc.	A series of short unrelated extracts, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. There is one multiple-choice question per text, each with three options.	8
2	Sentence completion <i>Focus:</i> detail, specific information, stated opinion	A monologue or text involving interacting speakers and lasting approximately 3 minutes. Candidates are required to complete the sentences with information heard on the recording.	10
3	Multiple matching <i>Focus:</i> general gist, detail, function, purpose, attitude, opinion, relationship, topic, place, situation, genre, agreement, etc.	Five short related monologues, of approximately 30 seconds each. The multiple-matching questions require selection of the correct option from a list of six.	5
4	Multiple choice <i>Focus:</i> opinion, attitude, gist, main idea, specific information	A monologue or text involving interacting speakers and lasting approximately 3 minutes. There are seven multiple-choice questions, each with three options.	7

- **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.

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.

- **Candidate Performance**

Candidates performed very well on all versions of the paper; Part 2 was the most accessible and Part 4 the most challenging. 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 extracts in Part 1 provide a range of contexts 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, 6 and 7, but Questions 2 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 4, for example, many weaker candidates were distracted by option B, 'He accepts that he had no chance against top athletes', in answer to the question: 'How does he feel about his performance?' This is probably because the speaker, in the course of talking about his performance in the Olympic trials, says '...but I just didn't do well enough... . Anyway, it was a great experience to line up alongside all those top athletes', and weaker candidates, attracted by this reference to 'top athletes', overlooked the fact that the speaker said 'I suppose my mind was on other things. I'd just started a new job...'. Stronger candidates chose the correct option A, 'He realises he did not concentrate enough'.

Many candidates, both weak and strong, found Question 2 challenging. Candidates had to listen to a woman talking about naming children, and option B, 'She thinks names will become more and more strange', proved especially distracting. The correct option A, 'She likes to avoid the most common names', was chosen by candidates who correctly heard the woman say that, '...I wanted to choose original names, but I think some parents take it too far and make names up. I wouldn't do that. I think that's really unnatural'. Strong candidates who chose correctly understood the force of this remark.

In Question 8, candidates had to identify what had surprised a mother as she talked about her relationship with her daughter. Many weaker candidates opted for A or C, 'her daughter's decision to leave home' or 'the way that her daughter's attitude has changed', respectively. Option A attracted weaker candidates because of the mother's reference to the fact that her daughter 'has her own place right now, but not so long ago she was living with me'. She went on to say that her daughter had talked about adopting 'a positive attitude when things change' and weaker candidates were distracted by the words 'attitude' and 'changed' that appeared in option C. Those candidates who chose the correct option B, 'how her daughter has been able to help her', understood the woman's surprise, also reinforced by her intonation, that her daughter 'was really supportive' and 'It's incredible actually, because these are things I felt I'd taught her, and there she was giving me that same advice and reinforcing it back into my life'.

Part 2, Questions 9-18

This was a sentence-completion task based on an interview with a man who had just returned from the Arctic where he was filming polar bears.

Overall, candidates coped extremely 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, 10 and 15 stand out as being tackled very well by the majority of candidates, while Questions 11 and 16 proved the most challenging in this part of the test.

In Question 11, the most common wrong answer was 'wall'. This suggests that candidates had not read the prompt sentence carefully enough to focus on listening for the name of a material: 'Alan found that clothes made of were best for keeping warm', and did not recognise the vowel sound in the correct answer 'wool'.

Similarly, in Question 16, the correct answer was 'April'. The most common wrong answer from weaker candidates was '4 months'. This suggests that candidates had not listened carefully enough, or paid attention to the prompt sentence which includes the word 'month': 'Baby polar

bears can be seen playing in the snow from the month of' In talking about the polar bears, the speaker says they '...don't see the outside world until April, when they are about four months old'.

Strong candidates coped well with Question 14 by identifying the correct answer 'half', whereas weaker candidates wrote '600 kilos'. The speaker remarks that a male polar bear can 'easily reach a weight of more than 600 kilos, although in the summer, when there's less food, they can lose up to half their body weight'. A range of correct answers such as 'half', '50%' and '300 kilos' were allowed to complete the sentence: 'In the summer, polar bears may lose as much as of their body weight'.

The new answer sheets introduced for this session provide candidates with an example of how to write in capital letters; candidates who clearly 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 extracts in which five different people talk about their experiences as owners of small local shops. Candidates coped well with this part of the test.

Questions 19, 20 and 23 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, with the exception of Question 22, rarely were.

Questions 21 and 22 proved to be the most challenging. In Question 21, weaker candidates chose a range of options, most notably C. The range of answers suggests that weaker candidates had not listened carefully enough to connect the speaker's comments, 'This used to be the only shop in the area ... Things have changed, though, and I don't believe this shop will be operating in, say, four or five years ... There are too many small shops in this area, selling the same things at very similar prices' with option E, 'I feel competition may one day force me to close down'. These candidates opted for C, 'I think small shop owners should lower their prices to compete', possibly as a result of wrongly matching the single word 'prices' with what they had heard.

In Question 22, a significant number of both stronger and weaker candidates were attracted to option C. The correct option B, 'I don't mind hard work as long as I can be my own boss', relies on understanding the implicit meaning behind the speaker's remark, 'It's very hard work ... If you work for someone else there's no reward apart from pay, and when it comes to it, the owner can turn to you and say, "You're too old".'

The disparity between stronger and weaker candidates was reflected in Question 19; weaker candidates were attracted to options C and E, possibly because they heard references to 'compete' and 'prices'. In Question 20, weaker candidates were attracted to option A, possibly hearing the word 'customers' and matching it wrongly to option A, 'I think customers are starting to value small shops more'.

The continuing contrast in performance between candidates suggests that weaker candidates are tempted to match words they hear with the same or similar words printed on the question paper, 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 young television actress. Results show that candidates coped well with this part of the test.

Questions 24, 26 and 29 were answered best and Questions 28 and 30 proved the most demanding.

In Question 28, candidates had to listen for the reason why the actress believed she had won a school singing competition. In response to being asked about whether she was expected to sing when she was a student at a stage school, she replies that, although it was only once a term that she had to perform a song in front of the whole school, 'my knees used to shake I was so nervous – but it was good practice and, gradually, it built up my confidence. That was important because in the final year there was a singing competition'. She goes on to mention that she decided to sing a Frank Sinatra number from her father's record collection, whereas most of the other students sang a classical piece. Weaker candidates opted for B, 'she had chosen to perform her favourite song', and overlooked her remark 'I don't think the choice of music had anything to do with it'. The correct option was A, 'she had learnt to be less nervous when performing', which was rooted in her conviction that she had gained in confidence.

In Question 30, candidates had to listen for what the actress says about her future in response to the interviewer's question, 'So, what can we expect?' She replies that she has just completed a CD with a blues band and has been asked to sing with them on tour. 'That was a lovely surprise but, sadly, I had to turn it down because I'd already agreed to do a month in a stage play in London on those dates.' Strong candidates understood the force of 'sadly' and correctly chose option C, 'she has had to make a difficult choice', whereas weaker candidates opted for A, 'she has agreed to record a music CD soon', or B, 'she has accepted an unexpected invitation'.

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

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 read and hear 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 extracts may target points of detail in the question, others call for an understanding of the gist of the extract. 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 extract is repeated, particularly when an option seems to be obviously correct and is supported by an individual word or phrase used in the extract. Careful listening to the surrounding extract 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 a set of sentences. Recordings 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 recording. 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 handwritten capital letters are important. 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.

All answers will be a single word, a number or a 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 required to make grammatical transformations from text to task. 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 FCE level.

The keys usually focus on concrete items of information, such as 'wool' and 'tent' in Test A, for example. Both British and American spellings are accepted.

Part 3

In Part 3, the focus is principally on gist listening skills. Candidates listen to five short extracts 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 understand 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 individual experience of owning a small shop. Students should be encouraged to listen for the meaning of the whole extract, 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 recording, 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

Adequate time is given for candidates to read the 3-option multiple-choice questions before they hear the recording.

As in Part 2, the questions follow the order of the recording. Each question focuses on one part of the recording, 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 words from the text, but only one (the key) will combine with the question sentence to reflect the **exact** meaning expressed in the recording; candidates should not expect to see key information which they have heard printed word for word on the question 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. |
| 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 Format	Focus	Timing
1	A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (spoken questions).	General interactional and social language.	3 minutes
2	An individual 'long turn' for each candidate with a brief response from the second candidate. In turn, the candidates are given a pair of photographs to talk about.	Organising a larger unit of discourse; comparing, describing, expressing opinions.	A 1 minute 'long turn' for each candidate, plus 20-second response from the second candidate
3	A two-way conversation between the candidates. The candidates are given spoken instructions with written and visual stimuli, which are used in a decision-making task.	Sustaining an interaction; exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.	3 minutes
4	A discussion on topics related to the collaborative task (spoken questions).	Expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing.	4 minutes

- **Marking**

The FCE Speaking test is 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 four analytical criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. The interlocutor provides a mark for global achievement for each candidate, which assesses the candidate's overall effectiveness in tackling the tasks. These scores are converted to a mark out of 40. Combining the analytical marks of the assessor and a global achievement mark from the interlocutor gives a balanced view of a candidate's performance.

- **Candidate Performance**

Candidate performance in this administration was consistent with that of June 2008. 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 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

There is a tendency in this part of the test 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 candidates producing a limited range of language for assessment, and is unlikely to provide enough to talk about for a full minute. Candidates will always be asked to compare 'and say... (something specific about the visuals)...', e.g. 'why you think the people are playing music in these places'. This will appear, in the form of a direct question, above the visuals on the task sheet handed to the candidates. Candidates should be encouraged to refer to this question so that they complete the task appropriately and are able to continue for the full minute, using a range of language appropriate to the 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... .'

The two parts of the task will appear on the candidate's sheet in the form of two direct questions. The first of these questions provides 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.

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 before moving on to the second part of the task where they try to negotiate an outcome. 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 before they have reached their final decision 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 a full 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

Part 2 Music

As can be seen in the sample paper, the visuals show people playing music in different places. The first shows a group of people busking in the street. The second is of a school orchestra with the choir visible in the background. Candidates were asked to compare the visuals and say why they thought the people were playing music in the different places. A strong candidate will have used the pictures to answer the task along the following lines:

'In the first picture, some people are playing different musical instruments in the street. Three of the men are playing guitars and one man has got some drums. Another man is holding an instrument but I can't see what it is. They are concentrating hard on their music. I think they're playing this music just because they want to make some money. The place where they're standing looks like somewhere tourists might go and I can see some people watching them. The musicians have got a box in front of them to collect the money but unfortunately it's empty. I don't think they're having very much luck! In the second picture, some school children are playing music together – I think it's a school concert. The people in the audience are standing and they have books open. I think they're the parents and they're singing to the music. And now the children are showing their parents what they've learnt to play. It's very good for children to play music together like this. I was in a school orchestra when I was at school and I thought it was a really good thing.'

Here, the candidate describes each photograph and then moves on to spend the majority of the long turn focusing on why the people are playing music in the different places rather than specific but irrelevant details in the picture, such as what the people are wearing. Finally, the student adds a personal comment in order to keep going for the full minute.

Part 2 Water

Candidates were given visual prompts of people using water in different ways. In the first visual, a man can be seen in a greenhouse watering some plants he has grown, and in the second, several children are having fun playing with water and throwing it at each other. Again, candidates were not only expected to describe the two photographs in detail, but to say why they thought the water was important to the different people. Candidates who performed well produced answers along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see a man. He's been growing some plants and he's giving them water to help them to grow strong. He's working very hard and he looks proud of these plants. The water is very important for this man because he needs it to make sure his plants don't die. There are a lot of plants so maybe he grows them for his job and he wants to sell them. So if there was no water he wouldn't have any plants to sell. I've tried to grow plants but I'm not very good at it because I forget to give them water and they always die! In the second picture, I can see some children playing with water. They're having a really good time and getting very wet. It seems to be something very special for them so maybe they live in a hot country and it doesn't rain there very often. So for them the water is really important and when the rain comes they're really happy. I think water is really good fun for all children. So I think that the water is really very important to the people in both these photographs but for different reasons.'

Candidates who performed well responded with their own ideas as to why they thought water was important to the different people. 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, to complete these tasks candidates were not expected to produce the word 'cello' for the 'Music' task or 'greenhouse' for the 'Water' task and it was not necessary for them to do so in order to complete either 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.

Part 3 Sports Centre

Candidates generally found plenty to say about this task. Candidates were given seven visual prompts which were examples of different activities that might attract people who don't usually do much exercise to go to a sports centre: tennis, swimming in a pool, karate, gymnastics, running indoors on treadmills, exercise in the form of an aerobics class, and indoor wall climbing. Candidates were asked to talk about what people would find easy or difficult about the different activities, and were then asked to decide which two activities would be most popular with people who do not usually do much exercise. Most candidates were on familiar territory with the topic of sport and so found this task very accessible, generally performed well and spoke fully. Candidates were able to discuss the fact that many people had experience of playing tennis, wall climbing may be of more interest to younger people, that people might find it more pleasant to run outside than in a gym, the fact that swimming was a good sport for everyone, and so on. As in other tasks, some candidates were tempted to start with the second part of the task, e.g. 'I think swimming would definitely be most popular...'. 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 what they both felt was easy and/or difficult about each activity in turn, agreeing and disagreeing with each other

and following up on each other's ideas. For example, with the picture of the man doing gymnastics, candidates could have commented on the fact that gymnastics might be a very good sport for getting exercise but that the man in this photograph was already very good at gymnastics and had probably trained for many years to be able to do it so well and therefore it was not an appropriate activity for someone who had done very little exercise before. Then, having discussed how appropriate each of the alternatives was for people who did not usually do much exercise, candidates should have attempted to come to a negotiated decision as to which two activities they thought would be most popular 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 karate visual, perhaps because they just did not have so much to say or because they were worried about naming the particular sport. 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 case of the karate visual, they were expected to talk about whether the activity was appropriate for people who had not done much exercise, which they could still do without naming the activity. A useful technique would have been to point, for example, to the karate visual and say:

'I don't think that this sort of exercise would be very good for people who haven't exercised before 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.

Part 4 Sports Centre

Candidates generally performed well and spoke fully about the questions they were asked in Part 4 of the 'Sports Centre' task. They were able to talk about their own experiences of going to sports centres and what they did there, and why they thought more people were going to sports centres these days. They also spoke fully about whether children should be taught to play sports at school and why they thought people liked belonging to clubs in general. Candidates were asked to talk about whether it was a good thing for a country to hold big international sporting events like the Olympic Games and found this question more difficult to answer. 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, how much they know about international sporting events. A confident response in which candidates simply state their opinion using language at this level will be appropriate. Candidates also found the question about why famous sportsmen and women are popular with young people a little more difficult to answer, possibly because they had not considered the question before. Candidates should be advised to give a brief response in a confident way and answer other questions more fully.

• 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 'Water', candidates were not just asked to describe the photographs but were asked to talk about why they thought water was important to different people. 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 this 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 'Sports Centre', 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 | refer to the written direct questions at the top of your task in Parts 2 and 3 of the test so that you don't forget what you have to talk about. |
| 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 2008 (0100)

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

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

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

Fax: + 44 1223 460278

1. Please describe your situation (e.g. EFL/ESOL teacher, Director of Studies, Examinations Officer, Centre Exams Manager):

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.