UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

First Certificate in English

Examination Report 0101 Syllabus

June 2007

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Examination Report Syllabus 0101

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INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to provide a general view of how candidates performed on each paper in the June 2007 session, and to offer guidance on the preparation of candidates.

The overall pass rate for Syllabus 0101 was **54.94**%

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

	0101
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	4.86
B	11.73
C	38.35
D	10.09
E	34.97

- **Grading**

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

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

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

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

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

- **Special Consideration**

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

- **Irregular Conduct**

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

- **Notification of Results**

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

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

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

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

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

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PAPER 1 – READING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Questions	Task Format
1	Multiple matching *Main focus:* main points	6	A text preceded by a list of headings. Candidates must match the headings to elements in the text.
2	Multiple choice *Main focus:* detail, opinion, gist, deducing meaning	7	A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions.
3	Gapped text *Main focus:* text structure	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 *Main focus:* specific information, detail	15	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 1-6: Relaxing by the pool

This headings task, focusing on the understanding of the main points in the text, was generally handled well by most candidates. Candidates performed best on Question 2. Here, nearly all the stronger candidates successfully matched heading F, 'A successful design', with the description of the waterhole in front of Gorah House. Some of the weaker candidates, however, chose option A – 'Safety Concerns'. They may have thought that when the reporter says, 'There were no fences, nothing but grass between the house and the water', this indicates a potential safety issue. However, the previous sentence mentions that the pool was 'ideally placed to give the best view of elephants to observers'. This positive language indicates that concerns would be misplaced.

The most challenging question in this task proved to be Question 4. Here, candidates were required to match heading B, 'A regular event', with a description of the elephants' daily visits to the waterhole. This is introduced with the phrase 'hardly a day goes past … without a small herd paying a visit'. Most of the stronger candidates chose the correct option.

However, many of the weaker candidates failed to make the connection. Instead they chose predominantly options E and G. It is not very clear why they made these choices. They may have been led to 'Unlikely **timing**' (option G) because the paragraph mentions 'the early afternoon', while they might have misread 'An early **inspection**' (option E) and thought it matched the word '**exception**' in the text. This is a good example of the importance of reading the options very carefully and paying particular attention to less obvious time phrases, such as 'hardly a day goes past'.

Part 2, Questions 7-13: The stranger

This four-option multiple-choice task focused mainly on detailed comprehension but also included a lexical question, Question 7. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 12. Most of the stronger candidates realised that the stranger was in poor physical condition as stated in option B because the text mentions that he was apparently warming his hands on the hot mug of tea in spite of the sun's heat and he appeared 'very thin and pale'. Quite a number of the weaker candidates chose option C, although the stranger drank the tea quickly which does not seem to indicate that he did not like the taste. They may have chosen this option because of the word 'untasted' two lines above. Unfortunately, it refers to the woman rather than the stranger. This emphasises the importance of reading the text carefully and checking the meaning, rather than relying solely on the presence of similar words in the text and the question.

The most challenging question in the task was Question 13. In this question, candidates had to decide what the stranger was doing when he sat down. The majority of the stronger candidates correctly chose option B, recognising that the stranger was not content to be looking at the mountain because 'he stared at it blankly, as if he would look anywhere else if he could…'. A significant number of the weaker candidates selected option A, 'He did not look in the same direction as the woman had done'. The word 'elsewhere' in the text may have caused them to make this choice. However, the writer is suggesting that 'his attention' is elsewhere, rather than his gaze. It is important to check the subject of a clause or sentence. Similarly, some of the weaker candidates went for option C, 'He looked around him', possibly because of the suggestion in the text that the stranger '**would** look anywhere else, **if he could**'. Candidates should be encouraged to pay attention to modal verbs. Here, they indicate the writer's suppositions rather than reality and so make option C impossible.

Part 3, Questions 14-20: Open All Hours

It was pleasing to note that this gapped-sentence task, focusing on text structure, was the one that candidates performed best on. They coped particularly well with Questions 15 and 16. In Question 15, virtually all the stronger candidates and a good proportion of the weaker candidates correctly selected option F. They matched 'the damage' mentioned in the option with the effect of the storms in the text preceding the gap. They also linked mention of the insurance with the following reference to the fact that 'Julie and Vince only lost about £120'. In Question 16, a similar proportion of stronger and weaker candidates correctly chose option G, matching 'a bit of a mess financially' in the sentence before the gap with the introduction to option G, 'In desperation as more and more bills arrived...'.

The weaker candidates found Question 19 the most demanding, while many of the stronger candidates coped well with it. They were able to match the different jobs outlined in the previous paragraph with 'Obviously, it was the type of work that didn't suit everyone' in option D. The sentence following the gap begins with 'But', indicating a contrast, and continues 'Vince and Julie have now got a loyal band of two full-time and six part-time workers', which goes against the more negative impression given by the option. It is important to ensure that candidates understand the use of discourse markers, such as 'but' and 'however', to help them spot changes of direction and mood in a text. A significant proportion of the weaker

candidates were unable to do this and went for option A instead, 'The joys of employing staff were something else they learned by experience'. They were probably led to this choice by the word 'staff', but the sense of the option does not fit with the previously mentioned 'but'. Completing one of these gapped tasks successfully relies on being able to trace the main ideas through the whole text, with the help of discourse markers, time phrases and reference words such as pronouns. Another reason why some of the weaker candidates did not choose the correct option for Question 19 was that they had already used it in Question 18, presumably because the word 'work' is mentioned four lines after the gap. When doing this type of task, it is important to keep all the options in play and not to make a final decision on any of them until all the gaps have been checked.

Part 4, Questions 21-35: Familiar Faces

This multiple-matching task, which focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from four short texts about different photographic models, proved to be the most challenging task on the paper. Questions 23 and 34 proved to be the most demanding in this task. In Question 23, candidates were required to match the model who is 'currently fulfilling a long-held ambition' with Barry Neville, who writes, 'I've always wanted to act' and modelling 'allows me free time to attend drama school'. The majority of the stronger candidates made the correct choice. However, a significant proportion of the weaker candidates chose the other options. All three models write enthusiastically about what they do outside modelling but none of them mentions that they have always wanted to pursue that particular interest. Question 34 proved challenging for most candidates. They failed to match the model who 'welcomes the social aspect of modelling work' with Colin Danvers, who writes, 'art is a very solitary life, so it's great to get out with a whole film crew'. Many candidates chose option D instead. Daniel Ortolano does indeed mention parties, but these are private parties he runs as a business outside his modelling work. This emphasises the importance of reading the question carefully and ensuring that the chosen option matches all the elements of the question, i.e. not just 'the social aspect' but also 'of modelling work'.

Candidates coped best with Questions 27 and 32. In Question 27, nearly all the stronger candidates successfully chose option C, recognising that Colin Danvers is 'currently learning a new skill as a hobby' – the classical guitar. Similarly, in Question 32, they recognised that the model who prefers doing work for the broadcast media is Barry Neville, who writes, 'I'd rather do commercials for TV than fashion shoots…'.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

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

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

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

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

- **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 1 – READING**

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

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PAPER 2 – WRITING

Part	Task Type and Focus	Number of Tasks and Length	Task Format
1	Question 1 Writing a transactional letter (formal/informal)	1 compulsory task 120-180 words	Candidates are required to deal with input material of up to 250 words, which may include graphic and pictorial material. Texts may include advertisements, letters, postcards, diaries, short articles, etc.
2	Questions 2-4 Writing one of the following: • an article • a non-transactional informal letter • a report • a discursive composition • a descriptive/narrative short story	4 tasks from which the candidates choose 1 120-180 words	A situationally-based writing task specified in no more than 70 words.
	Question 5 Writing a composition, article, report or an informal letter on a prescribed background reading text	Question 5 has two options	

- **Marking**

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

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

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

- **Candidate Performance**

Part 1, Question 1

For this compulsory task, candidates were asked to write a letter to their English-speaking friend, Alex, giving their response to various questions about going on an activity holiday together in Ireland. They were expected to be enthusiastic about the plan and to choose one of three months as the best time for them to go. Candidates were then expected to choose a Centre for climbing or watersports, to suggest staying in rooms at the Centre rather than in town and to comment on the good price of the holiday. The topic of the question proved very accessible and candidates were able to expand their ideas for the points quite well. Generally, the answers were well-planned, with clear paragraphs, and the five points were dealt with systematically. There were few omissions of content points, a measure of how well candidates have been trained to read the question carefully and are familiar with the requirement to address all five points.

Most candidates were able to write in an informal style quite satisfactorily except for widespread use of over-formal linking words such as 'moreover' and 'furthermore'. Even the use of 'firstly', 'secondly', etc. can seem very heavy in an otherwise friendly letter to a friend. Students need practice in linking ideas in informal writing with shorter linking expressions such as 'as for' and 'and now about'. Some candidates mixed informality with formality at times, and again, students need practice in using a consistent tone throughout. All were familiar with the letter format and opened and closed their letters appropriately. There was some inaccuracy over the use of the word 'holiday', with many candidates unable to use 'holiday', 'go on holiday' and 'holidays' correctly.

Although some candidates 'lifted' language from the question, most were able to use the input material and adapt it appropriately. The question offered opportunities for candidates to expand and most did this adequately, although instances of answers with a wide range of language were relatively few. Students need to practise expanding the points, using as wide a range of language as possible, always avoiding using too much language from the question itself.

The first point was generally well done, with candidates responding positively to the idea of going on holiday together. There was some good use of enthusiastic expression here in suitably informal tone for the letter to Alex – 'Of course I would!' and 'There's no way I'm going to miss it!'.

For the second point, candidates were expected to choose one of the months to go and to explain why. This they dealt with in a straightforward way, most choosing August and providing realistic reasons such as 'the school starts again in September', or 'I'm visiting relatives in July'. Some referred to the season and this was accepted.

The third point required candidates to choose a Centre and explain the reason for their choice, and most dealt with this appropriately. Many chose watersports ('I'm a big fan of watersports myself and I know you love water') and some gave reasons for rejecting climbing ('I find climbing too risky for me'). Some candidates allowed Alex a voice in choosing, which sounded quite natural. However, candidates who made no choice were penalised. It is essential that each point is addressed and the language of the point (e.g. 'Say which and why') is clearly demonstrated in the answer.

Although most candidates dealt with the fourth point satisfactorily, there were numbers of candidates who confused 'Centre' with 'town centre' and wrote answers that were not wholly logical. It is important for candidates to keep the scenario of the question in mind as they write and refer to the question as they work through the points. Candidates who chose guest-houses were penalised as the content point directed them to choose rooms at the

Centre. Careless reading of the question and content point was, perhaps, responsible for this misinterpretation.

The fifth point was addressed clearly, with many candidates repeating the information in brackets in the input advertisement in their answer as the reason for their approval of the price. This worked adequately if they had expanded on other points. There was widespread misspelling of 'accommodation' despite the fact that it was in the question!

Overall, performance on the first question was satisfactory, although there were disappointingly few instances of candidates producing a wide range of language in their answers.

Part 2

Question 4, the letter of application, was chosen by 48% of candidates. Question 2, the report, was answered by 29% of candidates, and Question 3, the composition, was selected by 23%. A small number of candidates (below 1%) responded to Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions, with 5a being slightly more popular than 5b.

Question 2

The report was generally well done, with candidates covering all three points. Some candidates kept closely to the scenario of the international festival while others referred to it briefly, but this did not affect the success of the answer. The topics of the three points were very accessible, with candidates able to supply details of music, television and clothes and show some range of expression – 'they mostly wear jeans and trendy shirts with weird logos'. The reports were generally well-organised with clear paragraphs and some with headings. Some were written as letters to the organisers of the festival and this was not penalised; but candidates should be alert to the type of text the question requires them to write.

Question 3

Most candidates who chose this composition question about zoos answered the question in a satisfactory way although the success of the answers depended quite significantly on whether the candidates could show a range of relevant vocabulary. Some good candidates were able to refer to 'endangered species' and the desirability (or otherwise) of returning them 'to their natural habitat' but candidates with a more narrow range of vocabulary wrote rather repetitive answers. Candidates should think carefully about the topic before deciding which Part 2 question to choose, as a lack of relevant vocabulary is a considerable disadvantage.

Although candidates had clearly been well trained in writing compositions in terms of well-defined paragraphs, many used far too many linking words in relatively short answers, which made their answers sound very unnatural.

Question 4

This was a very popular question and was done reasonably well. Candidates had been trained well in writing letters of application and were able to produce a range of appropriate language. They were able to open their letters with suitable introductory phrases ('I am writing with reference to your advertisement') and expanded their answers quite well with information about their experience and reasons for the popularity of computer games ('go to a world where they can do the most amazing things'). Some candidates wrote answers which discussed the pros and cons of computers in too general a way and were less successful in expressing more abstract ideas. It is always better to illustrate ideas with

concrete examples and keep close to the topic in the question than to try to discuss ideas in a general way.

Questions 5a and 5b

There were very few answers to the set book questions, and 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 set texts. Answers relating to a book not on the set book list, or those in which the candidate has invented a story line, are heavily penalised.

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

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

It is often very helpful for students to work on a second draft of a homework answer. In this way, the teacher, or fellow students, can make useful suggestions regarding organisation, language, and content omissions. The second draft can then be compared to the first, an activity which is not only instructive regarding weaknesses, but also builds confidence. Students should be encouraged to experiment with a wider range of language in the second draft, for example, replacing any repeated words with near synonyms. Classroom brainstorming of relevant adjectives and verbs with similar meanings can be useful preparation immediately prior to a homework assignment.

Part 1

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

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

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

Part 2

Students need to be taught how to link a story coherently to a given prompt sentence. They should also be instructed to take note of who is referred to in the sentence so that they can continue from the prompt sentence appropriately, whether in the first or third person, and use

the same name, if one appears in the question. Students may also need to revise past tenses, especially the irregular forms and perfect tenses, and the use of adverbs.

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

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

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

- **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 2 – WRITING**

DO	read the whole question thoroughly and underline important parts.
DO	write clearly, so that the examiner can read your answer.
DO	make a plan for each answer, including ALL the points.
DO	write in paragraphs, whenever appropriate.
DO	use a range of vocabulary, even if you are unsure of the correct spelling.
DO	check tense endings, plural forms and word order in sentences.
DO	check irregular past tenses and question formation.
DO	use language that is appropriately formal or informal for the task.
DO	expand the points in Part 1 if you can, using relevant ideas and information.
DO	choose a Part 2 question that you feel confident you can write about.
DON'T	misspell key words which appear on the question paper.
DON'T	'lift' too much language from the question paper.
DON'T	mix formal and informal language.
DON'T	answer Question 5 if you have not read one of the books.

PAPER 3 – USE OF ENGLISH

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

- **Marking**

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

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

- **Candidate Performance**

Part 1, Questions 1-15: Sightseeing passes

Multiple-choice Cloze

Overall candidates coped very well with this part of the paper. This was particularly true of Questions 6, 7, 9 and 12. It was pleasing to see the great majority of candidates get the phrasal verb in Question 6 correct, as this is an area of language that has often proved difficult in this part of the paper. On the whole, candidates were not troubled by those questions which tested fixed language, such as set phrases and collocations. These included Questions 3, 5 and 7. The exception to this was Question 15, which was answered correctly by a minority of candidates. The only other question which proved particularly challenging was Question 2, with candidates well spread across the different options. This

question contains a lexico-grammatical element, since 'intending' is the only option which requires a following infinitive. It can be useful in class feedback on past papers to focus on this. Option D would be correct if it said 'thinking of doing', option C would have to be 'considering doing' to be correct, while option A cannot be used with a following verb ('organising a great deal of sightseeing').

Part 2, Questions 16-30: Some amazing caves

Open Cloze

Candidates performed best of all in this task. The first three questions were answered correctly by the great majority of candidates, as was Question 29. The converse is true of Questions 19, 21 and 25. Question 19 produced a wide variety of common wrong answers, notably 'for', 'to', 'from' and 'in'. For Question 21, a significant number of candidates put 'would' or 'could'. However any verb which implies a past tense is not appropriate here given the tense in the surrounding sentence. This shows the importance of considering the gapped word in conjunction with a careful reading of the text on either side of the gap.

An analysis of the common wrong answers is interesting. For Question 22, a number of stronger candidates wrote 'after'. At first sight this does look tempting, but for 'after all' to be correct here, there would have to have been some previous suggestion that the pictures did not survive. Another common wrong answer that can be ruled out by the context is 'without' in Question 24. Candidates who only look at the gap may come up with 'without doubt', but this clearly does not fit either with the grammar or the sense of the sentence.

Part 3, Questions 31-40

'Key' Word Transformations

Performance on this part of the paper was highly consistent, although candidates found Part 3 the most challenging. For Question 31, some weaker candidates failed to distinguish between 'Would you mind if + past verb' and 'Do you mind if + present verb'. For Question 33, some weaker candidates completed the first element in the answer correctly, but then repeated the 'when' from the first sentence. They failed to spot the need for 'since', prompted by the present perfect in the second sentence. With Question 34, there were a large number of alternative main verbs, typically 'got', 'put' and 'pulled'. In Question 36, the 'cause somebody to do something' verb structure was not well known by weaker candidates; there was a tendency to repeat 'left' from the first sentence. The same was true with 'speak' in Question 37. Candidates had most difficulty with Questions 38 and 40. A rather ingenious common wrong answer was 'as many old buildings' for Question 38.

Part 4, Questions 41-55: A teaching assistant from Japan

Error Correction

Many candidates found this part of the paper challenging. This was particularly true of the first three questions and Question 50. With Question 43, if you do not read carefully enough, it is easy for the eye to supply an extra word ('an'), thus making the line appear to be correct. Similarly, with Question 50, if you read in insufficient detail, the eye may see 'coloured paper'. Thus with this task it is important for candidates to take their time and concentrate hard, focusing all the time on the sense of the piece and the developing argument/story line. Candidates performed best on Questions 44, 46 and 55.

Part 5, Questions 56-65: Collecting books

Word Formation

Candidates performed very well on Part 5, a particularly high percentage answering correctly for Questions 60, 62, 63 and 65. Conversely, Questions 57 and 59 proved the most challenging, with many candidates putting 'speciality' and 'important' respectively. Questions which require candidates to come up with a prefix, like Question 59, have tended to be challenging in recent versions. The prefix is often negative, so candidates are required to spot this arising from the sense of the text. It is therefore important for them to keep in mind the argument as it flows through the text. With some questions, weaker candidates failed to do this, and so came up with words that were the wrong part of speech: 'speciality' in Question 57, 'relatives' in Question 61, for example. With some other questions, weaker candidates produced words that were misspelt but otherwise correct: 'valueable', 'invetion' and 'explainations'. Candidates can expect to find questions that test such changes in spelling ('value' → 'valuable'), and should take care in this respect when adding suffixes. Finally, candidates should check their answers carefully, as the example of 'invetion' shows that marks can be lost needlessly.

• 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 should be discouraged from adding any comments or alternate answers, even if these are put in brackets. Candidates who do so run the risk of producing more than six words in their response, and losing marks unnecessarily.

In Part 3, candidates must read the prompt word carefully before using it in their answer. The word must not be changed in any way. The word must be written out in full in its correct place in the answer. Candidates should not leave a blank or a series of dots, as markers may assume that the sentence is incomplete and not award marks.

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	make sure in all parts that you put your answer by the correct number on your answer sheet.
DO	give yourself time to check your work.
DO	read all the options before deciding on your answer in Part 1.
DO	write the prompt word 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.
DON'T	use more than one word in your answers for Parts 2, 4 and 5.
DON'T	change more than you need to in Part 3.
DON'T	forget to concentrate hard when you are doing Part 4, as it's easy for your eye to miss certain words.
DON'T	leave the word which is in capitals in Part 5 unchanged.
DON'T	forget to look carefully at the text in Part 5 in order to decide on the grammatical form of the missing words.

PAPER 4 – LISTENING

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

- **Marking**

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

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

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

All texts and tasks were representative of what can be expected in 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 gentle lead-in to the test and most candidates tackled them well.

Candidates coped best with Questions 1, 5 and 6, but Questions 3, 7 and 8 proved more challenging. However, there was a significant difference in performance in some of the questions between the strong and weak candidates. In Question 3, for example, many weaker candidates were distracted by option C, 'better canteen facilities' in answer to the question about a man's work conditions: 'From his point of view, how could conditions be improved?' This is probably because the speaker says '…most people don't like … the new catering company that runs the canteen', and weak candidates were attracted by the word 'canteen'. They overlooked his next comment, 'The food isn't very good now. I understand their viewpoint, though I don't mind because I bring sandwiches'. Strong candidates, however, understood the earlier remark which the man makes, 'Some people aren't happy about the small amount of space we have to work in, and I agree about that' and chose the correct option B, 'more desk space'.

In Question 8, candidates had to listen to a woman talking about a new detective novel and identify what she says about it. Many weak candidates, as well as strong candidates, opted for option A, 'It is different from the writer's other work'. They were perhaps distracted by the reference to the writer being 'the grand master of the unexpected ending' and did not listen to the complete sentence in which the speaker concluded '…John Deakins … has produced yet another entertaining mystery full of amazing deception'. Those candidates who listened carefully to the complete text and understood the statement, 'You'll need to accept the unreality of it all, but it's worth it' chose the correct option B, 'It should not be taken too seriously'.

Question 7 also proved a challenging question for weaker candidates, who were attracted to options B and C, 'an art gallery owner' and 'a supplier of artists' materials' respectively. Those opting for B had probably reacted to hearing '…it's sometimes not the price that counts', and those who chose C responded to '…I'll tape it for you – to make sure the colours don't rub against the glass…'. Strong candidates who opted correctly for option A, 'an artist', had listened carefully to the complete text in which the man concludes by saying, 'I'm happy it's going to you … it's knowing someone appreciates what you're trying to say in your work'.

Part 2, Questions 9-18

This was a sentence-completion task based on an interview with a long-distance runner. Overall, candidates coped very well with the topic in this part of the test, though, once again, there was a range of performances. Results suggest that candidates found this the least challenging part of the test.

Of the ten questions, Questions 9, 11, 12 and 18 stand out as being tackled very well by the majority of candidates.

Questions 10, 14 and 15 were the most challenging in this part of the test, though, again, it was very clearly the weaker candidates who had the most problems. In Question 10, the

common wrong answer, 'strength', suggests that candidates had not read the prompt carefully enough, or did not listen to the speaker's response to the interviewer's question, 'Would you say you're a fast runner?' The woman's response is quite emphatic: 'Not at all! I'm always among the last to finish any run – my strength is definitely not speed!' Strong candidates were able to process the woman's lack of speed and correctly interpret the 'weakness' in the context of the question prompt.

In Question 14, many of the weaker candidates wrote 'farmer', and overlooked the fact that the speaker, although she mentions 'farmer', points out that 'being a farmer …wasn't an option'. She continues by saying 'I tried being a journalist … but I didn't make a very good one…', so the correct answer was 'journalist'. It was notable that the correct answers to this question were marred by poor handwriting and the combination of 'o', 'u' and 'r' was often difficult to decipher.

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, a poor sequence of letters as in 'journalist' (Question 14) has already been referred to. The answers to Questions 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18 all drew comments from the Co-ordinating Examiner. Vowels such as 'a' and 'o' in 'Canada', 'cow', 'boat' and 'potatoes' were carelessly formed, as were the consonants 'w' and 'n'. In Question 18, the final 'f' in 'golf' was often written as an undefined stick or squiggle. Candidates who write neatly or who print their answers in capitals fare best in this part of the test.

Part 3, Questions 19-23

This was a multiple-matching task based on five short texts in which five different people talk about paintings they bought at an art fair. Results suggest that candidates found this the most challenging part of the test.

The contrast between the performances of strong and weak candidates in this part of the test was once again clearly evident. Weaker candidates were consistently attracted to a wide range of 'wrong' options, whilst strong candidates were less attracted.

Questions 19 and 21 proved to be the most challenging. In Question 19, weak candidates chose a range of options, but most notably D. The range of answers suggests that these candidates had not listened to the complete text before choosing their option. Option D, 'I wanted a painting that would look exciting in my room', was possibly attractive as a result of having heard the speaker say, 'Suddenly, I spotted this really incredible Japanese painting and just had to have it'. However, the speaker went on to say '…I could barely afford it… . Luckily, I'd saved up some cash for a new computer which I used for this instead'. This final comment cued the correct option E, 'The painting I bought was just within my budget,' which strong candidates who had listened until the end of the extract correctly chose.

The disparity between strong and weak candidates was also reflected in Question 21; weaker candidates were attracted to options E and F, possibly because they had already selected D (the correct option) as the key to Question 19, even after a second listening. In talking about the painting which he had bought, the speaker says, '...I wanted something bolder, more daring, to match the new colour scheme' which quite clearly is reflected in option D, 'I wanted a painting that would look exciting in my room', and not in either of the options E or F.

The contrast in performance between strong and weak candidates suggests that weaker candidates are tempted to match words they hear with the same or similar words printed. It is essential that candidates make effective use of the second hearing in all the tasks, but especially so in this task. If they make the wrong choice in the first question, they also lose

the potential use of that option in another question. In extreme cases, more than one incorrect choice can produce a domino effect and result in several wrong answers.

Part 4, Questions 24-30

This was a True/False task based on a radio interview with a fourteen-year-old violinist who had recently won a music competition. Candidates coped well with this part of the test.

Questions 24 and 29 were answered best and Questions 25 and 26 proved the most demanding. In Question 25, the violinist is asked whether she thought she had a chance of winning the competition. She replies, '…people thought I was young and inexperienced – all except my teacher… but I was really, really surprised when they announced I had won'. Weak candidates overlooked the fact that that remark was her individual reaction, not the reaction of 'everyone', so the answer is False. In Question 26, the girl mentions that her sister 'doesn't play an instrument and even though she teases me, she makes up for it by giving me a hand with my homework', so the answer to this question is True.

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. Students should be encouraged to use the information contained in the questions and options to help them focus on what they are about to hear and what they are listening for. Some texts may target points of detail in the question, others call for elements of gist understanding. Attitudes, opinions or feelings may also be tested, or the focus may be on the topic, function, speaker or the main point of what is heard.

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

Part 2

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

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

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

Whatever the task type, sentence completion or note completion, the keys usually focus on concrete items of information such as 'boat' and 'golf' 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 what each speaker said about a painting they had bought at an art fair. Students should be encouraged to listen for the meaning of the whole text, and to focus on identifying each speaker's opinion, which is expressed in the options listed.

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

Part 4

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

As in Part 2, the questions follow the order of the text. Each question focuses on one part of the text, and will generally test understanding of that whole section rather than isolated words and phrases. The questions may test points of detail, gist meaning and the understanding of opinions, feelings and attitudes. Students should be reminded that all three options in multiple-choice questions will include ideas and information from the text, but only one (the key) will combine with the question prompt to reflect the exact meaning expressed in the text.

- **DOs and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 4 – LISTENING**

DO	listen to and read the instructions. Make sure you understand what you are listening for and what you have to do.
DO	use the time allowed before hearing each recording to read through all the questions carefully, so you are prepared for what you hear.
DO	use the information on the question paper to help you follow the listening text.
DO	look carefully at what is printed **before** and **after** the gap in Part 2 and think about the kind of information that you are listening for.
DO	write only the missing information on the answer sheet.
DO	write your answers as **clearly** as possible in Part 2; 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're 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 *Focus:* Giving personal information; socialising	3 minutes	The Interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves.
2	Long turn from each candidate, with a brief response from the other candidate *Focus:* Exchanging personal and factual information; expressing attitudes and opinions; employing discourse functions related to managing a long turn	4 minutes	The candidates are in turn given visual prompts (two colour photographs) which they each talk about for approximately 1 minute. They are also asked to comment briefly on each other's photographs.
3	Candidates talk with one another *Focus:* Exchanging information, expressing attitudes and opinions	3 minutes	The candidates are given visual prompts (photographs, line drawings, diagrams, etc.) which generate discussion through engagement in tasks such as planning, problem solving, decision making, prioritising, speculating, etc.
4	Candidates talk with one another and the Interlocutor *Focus:* Exchanging and justifying opinions	4 minutes	The Interlocutor encourages a discussion of matters related to the theme of Part 3.

- **Marking**

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

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

- **Candidate Performance**

Candidate performance in this administration was consistent with that of December 2006 and historical norms. Feedback from Oral Examiners has been very positive and students, as always, were well prepared for this paper. Candidates who performed less well were those

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

Part 1

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

Part 2

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

- **Comments on Released Test Materials**

Spending time together

As can be seen in the sample paper, the visuals show families spending time together in different situations. The first is a photograph of a family inside their home. The parents are watching while the children play a board game together. The second is of a father spending time with his three children, who are exploring nature by the side of a river. Candidates were asked to compare and contrast the visuals and say what the people are enjoying about spending time together in the different situations. 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 playing a game together. Their mother and father are watching them. I think the children are having a good time because they like the game and they are happy to play it together. The parents are enjoying themselves because the children are quiet and are playing nicely together and not arguing, so the parents are able to take a rest. The mother is drinking a coffee and the father is enjoying reading the newspaper. In the second picture a father is enjoying spending time with his children. The two boys are showing him something they've found and the older child is looking at something in the river. I think they're happy to be outside in the sun and they are enjoying

learning about nature together. I think I'd like to go to this river because it looks very peaceful; there aren't many people there and I enjoy spending time outside.'

Here, the candidate describes each photograph and then moves on to spend the majority of the long turn focusing on why the people are enjoying spending time together in the different ways, in order to keep going for the full minute.

Problems

Candidates were given visual prompts of people experiencing problems in different situations. In the first visual, a woman is getting help from a mechanic because her car has broken down, and in the second, a woman is at her desk with a lot of paperwork and a small child beside her is playing with a toy and demanding her attention. Again, candidates were not only expected to describe the two photographs, but to say what problems they thought the different people were having. Candidates who performed well produced answers along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see two people looking at the engine of a car. I think that one of the people has broken down in her car and the man is helping her with the problem. The man who is helping her has come in his truck and I think he knows what to do to solve the problem. This is a bad problem if you're driving alone. In the second picture, I can see a woman and her son. I think they're at home. The woman is working at her desk and she's looking at her papers, but she has a lot of work to do. She looks tired and worried. The little boy wants his mother to play with him, but she isn't looking at him because she's working. He seems to be a bit sad. I think this is a big problem because the mother can't do her work and look after her little boy at the same time. The little boy is bored and he wants someone to play with, so he's not going to leave his mother to finish her work. I think that the first problem is probably the worst, though, because it can be frightening to break down in your car if you don't have any help and you're on your own. And maybe the mother could do her work later when the boy has gone to bed.'

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

Part 3

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

Modern technology

Candidates generally found plenty to say about this task. Candidates were given seven visual prompts which were examples of modern technology often used by people these days: a television, a hand-held games console, a washing machine, a computer, a mobile phone, a camcorder and a cashpoint machine. Candidates were asked to talk about how these things have improved people's lives, and then to decide which two things have improved people's lives most. Candidates generally performed very well and spoke fully. Candidates were able to discuss the relative merits of the different ideas and had as much to say about the ways in which the different ideas had had a negative effect on our lives. As in other tasks, some candidates were tempted to start with the second part of the task, e.g. 'I think the television is the most important thing because...'. Candidates who did this often performed less well because they came to their final decision without having fully explored the alternatives.

Candidates should not have felt concerned if they were unable to make use of the full range of visual prompts, 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 improve people's lives, agreeing and disagreeing with each other and following up on each other's ideas. For example, with the picture of the television, candidates could have commented on the fact that televisions improve our lives by entertaining us and giving us information about all sorts of things, but that in some ways televisions could have disadvantages, discouraging people from communicating with each other and encouraging children, for example, to stay indoors when it would be healthier for them to play active games in the fresh air. Then, having discussed how each of the alternatives has, or has not, improved people's lives, candidates should have attempted to come to a negotiated decision as to which two things they thought had improved people's lives most 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 avoid speaking about the camcorder, perhaps because they were not sure of the word. They should be reassured that 'a camera which takes pictures of people when they're moving' would have been an acceptable paraphrase which would have allowed them to discuss how this is good for remembering the past, how entertaining it is to watch pictures of how we used to be, and so on.

Similarly, some candidates felt the need to know the exact word for a children's hand-held games console and sometimes admitted to examiners or to each other that they did not know the word for these games machines. A useful technique would have been to point to the visual and say:

'I don't think that games like these improve children's lives 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

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.

Comments on Released Test Materials

Candidates generally performed well and spoke fully on the task 'Modern Technology'. They were able to discuss their favourite piece of technology, whether they thought technology was useful in schools and why some people find it difficult to use the latest technology. Candidates found the question about whether or not it is a good thing that we are able to travel faster and further than ever before, more difficult and they tended to have less to say. They also found difficult the question about the possibility of speaking more easily and cheaply to people all over the world, and how this affects our lives. Some candidates had less to say in response to these questions, possibly because they had not considered questions like these before.

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

• RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION

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

Part 1

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

Part 2

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 'Problems', candidates were not just asked to describe photographs but were asked to talk about what they thought the problems were 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 'Modern Technology', 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 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 June 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.

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