



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE  
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

# First Certificate in English

---

**Examination Report** 0101 Syllabus

June 2009

---

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2EU United Kingdom

Tel. +44 1223 553355  
Fax. +44 1223 460278  
email [ESOL@CambridgeESOL.org](mailto:ESOL@CambridgeESOL.org)  
[www.CambridgeESOL.org](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org)



# **First Certificate in English**

**Examination Report**

**Syllabus 0101**

**June 2009**

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Paper 1 – Reading</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Paper 2 – Writing</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Paper 3 – Use of English</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Paper 4 – Listening</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Paper 5 – Speaking</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Feedback Form</b>	<b>30</b>

## INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to provide a general view of how candidates performed on each paper in the June 2009 session, and to offer guidance on the preparation of candidates.

The overall pass rate for Syllabus 0101 was **65.11%**.

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

	<b>0101</b>
GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	5.96
B	12.76
C	46.39
D	9.27
E	25.62

### • Grading

Grading took place during July 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](http://www.cambridgeesol.org)

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

Cambridge ESOL Information  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2EU  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1223 553355  
Fax: +44 1223 553068

Email: [ESOLinfo@cambridgeesol.org](mailto:ESOLinfo@cambridgeesol.org)  
Website: [www.cambridgeesol.org](http://www.cambridgeesol.org)

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: Novel extract

This four-option multiple-choice task proved to be the most challenging task on the paper. It focused mainly on detailed comprehension but also included a lexical question, Question 6, and a reference question, Question 2. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 7. A large proportion of the candidates correctly selected option D, that Celeste 'looked down on Pixie'. They realised that this matched the section of the text which states that Celeste acted as though she was the older sister, 'not showing Pixie the respect she might have received ...'.

Question 5 proved to be more demanding. In this question, candidates had to decide what Miss McGovern's attitude towards Pixie was. A good proportion of the stronger candidates rightly selected option D ('She tried at first to convince herself that Pixie was typical of her family'). The text clearly states, 'It had taken a long time, but finally she had come to expect no more wonders.' However, some of the stronger candidates and a considerable number of the weaker candidates chose option C ('She realised that Pixie was using her imagination in a different way'). The word 'imagination' is mentioned twice in the following paragraph, but it is

clear that Pixie was not in fact using her imagination, instead she was looking at plants with a scientist's analytical eye – 'Pixie was interested in the veins of the leaf, how photosynthesis worked...'. It would be very helpful if candidates were warned of the dangers of choosing answers purely on the basis of matching a word in the option with one in the text. They need to read each option carefully and then check the meaning as a whole against what is stated in the text.

## **Part 2, Questions 9–15: From £5 to £250 million**

In this gapped-sentence task, focusing on text structure, candidates coped very well with Question 14. Most of the stronger candidates and a good proportion of the weaker candidates correctly selected option B. They linked the information in the option, 'If you cannot trust your family, then who can you trust?' with the reference in the text, 'My brother and I have built this business together ... We know each other inside out.'

Question 15 proved to be the most challenging in this task. Few of the weaker candidates chose the correct option, which was D. They failed to link the pronoun 'it' in the option with 'a country' in the preceding sentence in the text. They also failed to connect the notion in that sentence of being 'lucky enough to live in a country that never stood in our way' with 'We took every opportunity it gave us' in the option. The notion is continued after the gap by 'His message for young people is to do the same', that is, to take every opportunity they are given. It is important for candidates to read the text both before and after the gap and trace the development of the writer's ideas. A significant number of the weaker candidates chose options F and C. It is difficult to see why they were attracted by F because it refers to 'this award' which is actually mentioned at the start of the passage. Option C states 'Instead, he hopes that his sons will take over the business...'. This is a good example of the need to use all the clues in the text and the option and pay particular attention to the force of discourse markers. 'Instead' introduces a change of direction in a text, but this paragraph deals with being good citizens and taking advantage of what a country offers in business terms. The text after the gap continues in the same vein, so clearly there is no change of direction.

## **Part 3, Questions 16–30: On the Road**

This multiple-matching task, which focused on candidates' ability to retrieve specific information from four short texts about women travel writers, proved to be the most successfully answered task on the paper. Candidates coped particularly well with Question 28. They successfully matched 'she chose her method of transport because of lack of funds' in the question with 'I went by camel because I was broke and couldn't afford a vehicle' in text D. Some of the weaker candidates chose text C where the writer mentions a number of different methods of transport, e.g. she 'hitch-hiked ... canoed ... and rode horseback'. However, there is no mention of the reason being lack of money. This is a good example of the need to check each question carefully and then ensure that all elements in the question are present in the text that is chosen. Partial matching will not be successful.

Question 27 proved to be the most challenging in this task. The majority of the stronger candidates successfully matched 'she takes pleasure in her surroundings' in Question 27 with the writer stating in text B that she can 'sit around and appreciate the scenery'. A significant number of the weaker candidates, however, chose text C. They were perhaps attracted by the words 'The emptiness that lay ahead was wonderful'. They may have assumed that the writer was referring to her physical surroundings. However, if they had read the end of the sentence – 'days waiting to be filled' – they would have realised that the emptiness actually referred to time and an empty schedule: 'a three-and-a-half-year journey'. Some candidates selected text A. This may have been because the text states that 'her main love was travelling'. However, the text does not go on to explain that it was the scenery she particularly enjoyed, rather that it was the varied experiences she had on the way that she chose to write about. Candidates may find it helpful to underline key words in the question, in this instance 'pleasure' and 'surroundings',

in order to focus on the main elements required. When they are making their final selection, the underlining may remind them to check that both elements are in fact present in the text.

- **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.

## DO's and DON'Ts for FCE PAPER 1 – READING

- DO** make sure that you choose the correct option(s), when you find similar information in different sections of the text in 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><i>Focus:</i> 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><i>Focus:</i> 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, 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**

In general, the paper was very accessible to the candidates in terms of topic and task type. Performance overall was good, reflecting the fact that candidates had been well prepared for the exam.

### **Part 1, Question 1**

For this compulsory task, candidates were asked to reply to an email from a reporter, Mrs Nolan, who was coming to their college to write an article about a concert.

Candidates were able to develop the task well within the word length of 120–150 words. They clearly understood the scenario; most answers were well-organised into clear paragraphs, and points were dealt with systematically. There were very few task point omissions and the functions prompted by each content point (responding positively, describing, suggesting and recommending) were addressed confidently.

In terms of register, most candidates sensibly followed the example of the input and opted for a consistently neutral tone, which was entirely appropriate for the situation. They also used a range of linking words, mostly to good effect, such as ‘first of all’, ‘furthermore’, ‘in my opinion’, ‘finally’ and ‘last but not least’.

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

Most candidates managed the first point well, and responded briefly to the fact that Mrs Nolan said that she could attend the concert in an appropriately positive way: ‘I am very pleased to learn that you will come to our college concert’. This point was intended as a way for candidates to open their email, and expansion was not expected.

For the second point, candidates had to describe the concert. They managed this well, talking about all kinds of music from rock to classical. Some candidates also mentioned in detail the refreshments, decorations and timings. There was a good range of vocabulary relating to music and the organisation of the event: ‘the concert will be a mix of rock, rap and hip-hop, combined with a classic orchestra’; ‘special effects with fireworks’; and ‘the college will be decorated for the event’. There was, however, some confusion about the use of the phrases ‘take place’ and ‘take part’.

The third point required candidates to suggest when photos of the concert could be taken. The majority of candidates dealt with this effectively, explaining that photography could be done any time before, during or after the concert: ‘the best time to take some photos is two days before the concert as the band is going to be here for rehearsals’. Alternatively they said that the photos could be taken ‘backstage’, ‘near the front of the audience’ or ‘from a special seat for reporters’. Answers that suggested that there was no need to take photos because someone else was doing so, or that it was not possible to take photos, e.g. ‘it will be best you not to take photos because at the concert there are very young people’, were also accepted, as they were felt to represent a reasonable interpretation of the input email and the prompt. However, candidates who omitted the point, or did not address it in the right context, e.g. ‘if you want you can see Athens and take photos’, were penalised. Some candidates also had difficulty using

the future tense when they talked about the arrangements, e.g. 'the best opportunity will be when the band will play solos and the crowd will go crazy' or 'when the lights will go out'.

The fourth point required the students to recommend someone to interview and explain why they were recommended. Most candidates suggested an interview with the band or singer or the principal of the college, and examples of good expansion here included 'the person you should interview is the singer because some of the other members of the band are a little shy' and 'I strongly recommend our headmaster, as he can provide you with any information you ask on any topic.'

A few candidates suggested that they would get back to Mrs Nolan with such details, or that she could decide, e.g. 'I would like you to decide who should be interviewed and is more interesting, because you are the professional.' Both these approaches were accepted, as it was felt they represented a reasonable approach to the task.

## **Part 2**

Question 3, the story, was chosen by 35% of candidates. Question 4, the report, was chosen by 31% of candidates, and Question 2, the review, was chosen by 28%. A smaller number of candidates answered Questions 5a and 5b, the set text questions, with 5b being more popular than 5a.

### **Question 2**

The review of a restaurant suitable for a class outing was mostly done reasonably well, with stronger candidates demonstrating a good lexical and grammatical range. They were able to describe the atmosphere, design, food and why it would be a suitable choice for the class. Most opted to write about a Greek restaurant, but Italian and Chinese food was also popular.

### **Question 3**

The story question was popular and there were some very imaginative answers. Most candidates correctly placed the prompt sentence at the start of their stories, and the narrative flowed well from it. Most candidates showed they could handle a range of past tenses effectively, although those candidates who introduced a 'flashback' element to their stories occasionally made errors in their use of the past perfect tense. Some candidates introduced elements of direct speech, mostly to good effect.

There was a pleasing variety of narrative contexts explaining why Simon saw himself on TV, including the fact that he was wanted by the police, that he had won a competition and that he had a twin brother he knew nothing about. However, there was one very prevalent language error, with candidates confusing the use of 'see' and 'watch', as in 'when he watched his face on TV'.

### **Question 4**

The report question asked candidates to explain ways of improving their English in their free time. They wrote mainly about watching films, listening to songs in English, reading novels, using the internet, writing to penfriends, and of course, having extra English lessons. Stronger candidates organised their answers logically. They also used effective phrases to introduce their points, such as 'the aim of this report is to', 'I have presented my findings below' and 'On the basis of the points mentioned above'.

One area of difficulty was lack of verb/noun agreement, which produced errors such as 'English are difficult', 'everyone come across internet sites' and 'watching TV also have a lot to

offer'. There was also a lot of confusion between adjectives and adverbs, e.g. 'a lot of people cannot learn English very easy' and 'in this way, you can understand English easier.'

### **Questions 5a and 5b**

Some candidates attempted the text-specific set book questions. Good answers to Questions 5a and 5b dealt with the task well and made appropriate references to the book, film or (in the case of Phantom of the Opera) show.

#### **Question 5a**

Candidates were asked to write an essay explaining who they thought was the most unhappy character in Phantom of the Opera. Those who chose this question showed good knowledge of the story, and opted to write about the tragic life of the phantom himself, describing what had happened to him and why he was so unhappy.

#### **Question 5b**

Candidates were asked to reply to a letter from a friend and say what they thought of the character of Abel Magwitch and explain how he changed in the course of the story. Stronger candidates did this well, and wrote answers which demonstrated a clear understanding of the storyline and Magwitch's role in it.

Unfortunately some candidates simply wrote a letter to a friend in which they either failed to mention Great Expectations or completely invented a story of their own which bore no resemblance to the set text at all. Both these approaches were heavily penalised, so it is important that teachers advise their students not to attempt the set text questions unless they have a sound knowledge of the relevant story and characters and are able to write about them.

### **• 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.

#### **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 appropriate register. It is important that students are instructed in the importance of maintaining a consistent tone throughout their email or letter.

Students should be encouraged to make a plan before they start writing, and to think carefully about how to organise their ideas and what to 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

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.

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.

To write an effective report, students need to be trained to identify what is expected in the task and to organise their ideas into sections/paragraphs, preferably with headings. It should also be pointed out that report tasks are usually designed so that candidates can draw on their own experience; they are not expected to invent facts and figures. Suggestions or recommendations are often required, and in this instance it is again the candidates' personal opinion which is relevant.

Students need to be very aware that set text tasks are now text specific, not general, and very different in kind to Questions 2–4 in Part 2 of the paper. They should therefore be advised to avoid Question 5 unless they have a sound understanding of the storyline and a good knowledge of the main characters. It is expected that this knowledge will have been gained by studying the story in class and discussing the events and characters. Students should be warned NOT to attempt this task if they have no knowledge of the story; such answers will be penalised.

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

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

#### Multiple-choice Cloze

The multiple-choice cloze task is broadly lexical in its testing focus. This version had collocations ('can't stand', 'conduct an experiment'), longer fixed phrases ('in a good mood'), phrasal verbs ('start out'), questions testing semantic meaning, and questions containing a grammatical element ('access to a film', 'contribute to medical research') where a following preposition constrains the answer. Candidates can expect a similar broad mix in future versions – including the possibility of linking words or phrases, which were not tested on this occasion. Candidates performed best on Questions 9 and 11 and had most problems with Questions 4, 5 and 7 – only a minority of candidates answered these correctly. In Question 4, a large percentage chose D as their answer. D is certainly tempting – it is possible to 'set up an experiment', but the presence of the following preposition 'on' makes this answer wrong. Question 5 also tests a collocation with 'experiment'. A considerable number of stronger candidates went for B – again this option is tempting because of course 'carry out' would

collocate here. In Question 7, C was a very common wrong answer with both stronger and weaker candidates. Among other questions, 2A, 3C, 6B, 8C and 12B were particularly common wrong answers.

## **Part 2, Questions 13–24: History from the sea**

### **Open Cloze**

The open cloze task is broadly grammatical in its focus. This version tested knowledge of dependent prepositions, relative pronouns, aspect and tense through auxiliary verbs, pronouns and articles. Phrasal verbs, linkers and words in common fixed phrases are also frequently tested. Candidates found this task the most challenging in the Use of English paper. However, Questions 17, 20, 22 and 23 were very well answered. For Question 20, several candidates ingeniously put 'she', which was allowed. This personification of a ship is of course quite common in literary works. Questions 14, 18 and 24 proved much more challenging for the candidature as a whole. Question 14 tests a dependent proposition and so was perhaps predictably difficult. With Question 18, many candidates failed to spot the importance of 'it' later in the sentence and therefore produced a plural determiner – 'some' being the most common, but also 'lots', 'many' and 'most'. For Question 24, a very common wrong answer was 'how'. One other common wrong answer of note: in Question 16, some candidates, seemingly unfamiliar with the word 'undertaken' and perhaps believing it to have a similar meaning to 'under', produced 'the'.

## **Part 3, Questions 25–34: Sport in society**

### **Word Formation**

Candidates performed best on this part of the paper, a particularly high proportion answering correctly for Questions 27, 28, 29, 30 and 33. It was pleasing to see that candidates spotted the need for a prefix in Question 30 – this type of question has proved challenging in the past, especially when a double negative is involved. Candidates also did well to spot the need for a plural in Question 27. Both these questions are typical, and illustrate perhaps the hardest challenge to candidates with this task – the need to read the surrounding text closely and pick up the argument of the piece at each point. Candidates' errors on this task fell into two distinct categories. Firstly, and much more prevalent, were errors of word form, such as 'pleasant' for Question 34, where candidates did not spot the need for a noun. Secondly, correctly identified words were spelled wrongly, such as 'plessure'. On the whole, candidates who were aware of the correct form of the word were far less likely to produce a misspelling. The word with the greatest number of wrong answers was 'significant' (Question 32), where candidates produced spellings like 'significal', 'signific' and 'significient'. The word with the most mis-spellings was 'professional' (Question 33), where there was considerable confusion over whether a double consonant was required, and if so which one. However, in this case there was no need to alter the given word – the change required was simply 'profession' to 'professional'.

## **Part 4, Questions 35–42**

### **Key Word Transformations**

Overall, candidates found this part of the paper relatively straightforward. In particular, Questions 35 and 38 were correctly answered by the great majority of candidates. In Question 35, a common wrong answer was to produce the wrong determiner with 'wedding', i.e. 'the wedding' or 'our wedding'. Yet it is stated 'he got married' in the first sentence, so there is no need for candidates to make such a transformation. Candidates should beware of 'over-transforming' in this way. Another common wrong answer of note occurred in Question 40. A number of candidates misinterpreted 'Melissa had...'. Thinking that it signalled the past

perfect, they changed the keyword 'take' into 'taken'. Candidates should also take great care with this – they will automatically lose marks for transforming the keyword, as clearly stated in the rubric for the task.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANDIDATE PREPARATION**

The administrators of the exam have produced comments on the poor quality of some students' handwriting, including the scripts of strong candidates. Candidates should not underestimate the importance of this aspect of their work. Illegible answers will lose marks.

In all the text-based parts of the paper, candidates should attempt as far as possible to engage with the whole text. The choice of correct answer often depends upon understanding of the surrounding context. Weaker candidates can focus so hard on individual items of language that they overlook the clues which a reading of the whole text would give them. As a result, they come up with something which does not make sense in the context.

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.

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

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>DO</b>    | check your spelling and make sure you copy things down correctly.   |
| <b>DO</b>    | be sure to write individual letters clearly.  |
| <b>DO</b>    | make sure that an answer in Part 3 is based only on the word at the end of the same line.                       |
| <b>DO</b>    | remember always to write the prompt word unchanged in your answer for Part 4.                                   |
| <b>DO</b>    | make sure that the sentence you complete in Part 4 is as close in meaning to the first sentence as possible.    |
| <b>DON'T</b> | decide on an answer without reading the whole of a sentence.  |
| <b>DON'T</b> | forget to look carefully at the text in Part 3 in order to decide on the grammatical form of the missing words. |
| <b>DON'T</b> | write more than 5 words in your answer in Part 4.   |
| <b>DON'T</b> | change more than you need to in Part 4.   |
| <b>DON'T</b> | write an answer in Part 4 which forms two sentences.  |

## 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 three 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 three 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 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 this version of the paper; Part 3 was the most accessible and Part 4 marginally 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, 2 and 7, but Questions 6 and 8 proved more demanding. However, there was a significant difference in performance in some of the questions between strong and weak candidates. In Question 1, for example, many weaker candidates were distracted by option A, 'to read more widely', in answer to the question: 'What did the teacher encourage him to do?' This is probably because the speaker, in the course of talking about his Literature teacher at school, says of his teacher, 'She knew I loved reading plays, unlike some of my classmates, and I didn't need to be persuaded to read more!' Stronger candidates chose the correct option, B, 'to do some acting', in response to the speaker's comment, 'I was thinking at the time of joining the school theatre group, but needed someone to say, come on, you'll be good, go for it. And that's what she did.'

Many candidates, both weak and strong, found Question 6 challenging. Candidates had to listen to a woman describing an event she had recently attended, and option C, 'a talk', proved particularly distracting, probably because candidates heard '... people complained ... they couldn't hear what he said between each piece', and did not listen carefully to what the woman then went on to say. She continued, 'They were really impressed by the fact they were all his own compositions and the quality of the sound was superb especially on the high notes.' The correct option, A, 'a concert', was chosen by those candidates who correctly understood the references to 'quality of the sound' and 'high notes'.

In Question 8, candidates had to identify what a tennis player thought had caused his injury. Many weaker candidates opted for C, 'playing a difficult shot during a game', probably as a result of hearing him say '... but the first ball I hit – well that was it. I felt this shooting pain right down my arm ...'. Weaker candidates overlooked what the man had previously said, '... I managed to get my bike over the fence. And that's when it must have happened ...'. Those candidates who chose the correct option, A, 'lifting something before a game', understood the reference to 'it' reinforced by his remark, 'stupid really ... I couldn't be bothered to cycle round to the main entrance.'

## Part 2, Questions 9–18

This was a sentence-completion task based on an interview with a man talking about different ways of travelling in northern Finland.

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

Of the ten questions, Questions 10, 13, 17 and 18 stand out as having been tackled very well by the majority of candidates, while Questions 11 and 14 proved the most challenging in this part of the test.

In Question 11, the most common wrong answers were 'concentration', 'eyes', 'control' and the mishearing 'wide ears'. The prompt sentence read, 'When travelling by sled, Jeremy tried to focus on the ..... of the lead dog.' Candidates heard, 'I didn't take my eyes off the lead dog. It had white ears and if I looked at them, it helped me concentrate on where we were going.' Strong candidates picked up the consonant sound in the correct answer, 'white ears'.

Similarly, in Question 14, the correct answer was 'branch(es)'. The most common wrong answer from weaker candidates was 'birds'. This suggests that candidates had not understood Jeremy's comment: 'We disturbed a few birds, and snow would come falling down out of the trees. But branches were the things I really had to look out for. I certainly didn't want to get one

in my face!’ A number of weaker candidates also struggled with the correct spelling of the key word.

Strong candidates coped well with Question 16 by identifying and accurately spelling the correct answer ‘speed boat’, whereas weaker candidates wrote ‘motorbike’. The speaker says ‘... some people compare a skidoo to a motorbike; but to my mind it feels much more like travelling on a speed boat.’ The common wrong answer suggests weaker candidates opted for the first word they heard, overlooking the force of ‘to my mind’, and thus missing the key word.

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 shopping for clothes. Candidates coped extremely well with this part of the test.

Questions 19, 21 and 22 were tackled well by most candidates, but Questions 20 and 23 were found to be more challenging.

Question 23 proved to be the most challenging, with weaker candidates choosing a range of options, most notably A and B. This suggests that weaker candidates had not listened carefully enough to connect the speaker’s comments, ‘When I get fed up with something, it’s pointless keeping it; I don’t like clothes that go on for years’, with option D, ‘I tend to become bored with clothes I buy.’ Candidates who opted for A, ‘I often buy clothes I don’t need’ or B, ‘I admit I spend too much on clothes’, were wrongly tempted by hearing ‘My parents accuse me of being extravagant with clothes, but that’s rubbish.’ Whereas option B was a distractor across all the questions, Option A, ‘I often buy clothes I don’t need’, was the key to Question 21 and matched the speaker’s comment, ‘I caught sight of a dress in a shop window ... it looked great when I tried it on – but I’ve never actually worn it – like a lot of things in my wardrobe.’ If candidates have made the wrong choice in one of the preceding questions, they lose the potential use of that option in another question, and the domino effect may become most marked by the final question in this task.

In Question 20, a significant number of both stronger and weaker candidates were attracted to option B, ‘I admit I spend too much on clothes’, probably because the speaker says ‘I do spend a lot on my clothes, but I think it’s worth investing in quality ...’. The correct option, C, ‘I plan in advance the clothes I need to buy’, relies on understanding the speaker’s remark, ‘I can buy exactly what I need – I like to think I have the right thing for when the weather changes – rather than dashing into the shops at the last minute.’

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 multiple-matching task.

### **Part 4, Questions 24–30**

This was a 3-option multiple-choice task based on an interview with a man who was both an actor and film director. Results show that candidates coped well with this part of the test.

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

In Question 28, candidates had to listen for the reason why the speaker offered a part in the first film he directed to his friend, also an actor/director. Weaker candidates, tempted by the

speaker's remark, 'I used to joke ... that, if I got stuck when I was telling the actors what to do, he'd be there to help out', opted for A, 'hoped to get advice on how to direct it.' The correct option, B, 'thought this would help his friend's career', relied on understanding the speaker's earlier comment that the reason for choosing his friend '... was that he'd become a better director if he had to be an actor for a change, just as I became a better actor by getting behind the camera.'

In Question 29, candidates had to identify why the speaker thought that 'working with actors is like conducting an orchestra'. Weak candidates, who did not appear to listen to the speaker's complete response, were attracted to both options A, 'there needs to be a lot of time for actors to practise their parts', and B, 'it is not easy to get a group of actors to work together well.' Strong candidates who listened more carefully to the whole of the relevant section, correctly chose option C, 'good actors may interpret their parts in unexpected ways', based on the speaker's concluding comment, 'The first time you hear the music that you've just seen as notes on a page, some sections surprise you.'

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 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.

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 'water' and 'hands' 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 attitude towards shopping for clothes. 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.

Candidates 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 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**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>DO</b>    | listen to and read the instructions. Make sure you understand what you are listening for and what you have to do.   |
| <b>DO</b>    | use the time allowed before hearing each recording to read through all the questions carefully, so you are prepared for what you hear.                            |
| <b>DO</b>    | use the information on the question paper to help you follow the listening text.  |
| <b>DO</b>    | look carefully at what is printed <b>before</b> and <b>after</b> the gap in Part 2 and think about the kind of information that you are listening for.            |
| <b>DO</b>    | write only the missing information on the answer sheet.   |
| <b>DO</b>    | write your answers as <b>clearly</b> as possible in Part 2, using capital letters.  |
| <b>DO</b>    | 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.                           |
| <b>DO</b>    | remember that any wrong answer you discover in Part 3 when hearing the recording for a second time may affect your other answers.                                 |
| <b>DO</b>    | 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. |
| <b>DO</b>    | answer all the questions – even if you are not sure; you've probably understood more than you think.  |
| <b>DO</b>    | make sure that you copy your answers accurately onto the answer sheet.  |
| <b>DON'T</b> | rephrase what you hear in Part 2; do write down the figure(s) or word(s) that you hear spoken.  |
| <b>DON'T</b> | complicate an answer in Part 2 by writing extra, irrelevant information.  |
| <b>DON'T</b> | 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 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 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 candidate's overall effectiveness in tackling the tasks. These scores are converted by computer to provide 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 December 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**

The tendency in this part of the test is for weaker candidates to focus on the visuals without listening carefully and responding to the task set by the examiner. Simply describing the two sets of visuals often results in the candidate 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, contrast 'and say ... (something specific about the visuals) ...', e.g. 'what the people are enjoying about spending time in these different streets'. 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 candidates' 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 may 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**

### **A Day Out**

As can be seen in the sample paper, the visuals show different places where people go for a day out. The first shows a group of people visiting a historical site and the second shows people on horseback in the mountains. Candidates were asked to compare the visuals and say why people go to places like these for a day out. A strong candidate will have used the pictures to answer the task along the following lines:

'In the first picture, some people are visiting a place for tourists. They're sitting looking at an old building. Parts of the building have fallen down. I think it is a castle or something like that and I think the people might be feeling tired and they're having a rest. A lot of people go to places like this when they're on holiday because they want to learn about history and see very famous places, especially when they're visiting another country. It can be an important part of a holiday. Sometimes I think they do it just so they can tell their friends that they've been there and they take photographs to show people when they get home. In the second picture, some people are in the mountains. They're riding horses and looking at the views. I think this is a really nice way to see the countryside if you can ride a horse. People go out into the countryside to get away from the noisy towns and to have some peace and quiet. It's also a very healthy thing to do. I think I'd prefer to go to the beach though if I went on holiday because I like the sea and also because I can't ride a horse.'

Here, the candidate describes each photograph and then moves on to spend the majority of the long turn focusing on why people go to the different places rather than talking about specific but

irrelevant details in the picture, such as how many people there are or what the people are wearing. Finally, the student adds a personal comment in order to keep going for the full minute.

### **City Streets**

Candidates were given visual prompts showing streets in different cities. In the first visual, some people can be seen walking down a shopping street in a town, and in the second, several children are having fun playing a ball game in a residential street. Again, candidates were not only expected to describe the two photographs in great detail, but to say what they thought the people were enjoying about spending time in the different streets. Candidates who performed well produced answers along the following lines:

'In the first picture, I can see some people who are walking down a street in town. Maybe they're going to do some shopping or go to a restaurant and have a meal or maybe they're just going for a walk with their friends. The street isn't as busy as in the town where I live and it doesn't seem to be very interesting. I think the people are just enjoying being outside and having a day off work. Also it's nice to go out of your house sometimes and have a coffee and a talk or buy some new clothes. I enjoy going out shopping with my friends. In the second picture, I can see some children playing with a ball in the street. They're really enjoying their game and having a good time. There are a lot of cars in the street but it seems quite safe because all the cars are parked at the side of the road. Maybe the children know each other because they all live in the houses there. I think they're just enjoying being together and not having the parents there. Maybe it's the summer holidays and they're enjoying not being at school. I used to play games like this with my friends when I was younger.'

Candidates who performed well responded with their own ideas as to what the people were enjoying about spending time in the different streets.

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 'ruins' for the 'A Day Out' task and it was not necessary for them to do so in order to complete the task. Responses that were restricted to a description merely of what candidates could see in each visual were inadequate. Candidates who did this tended to have problems completing their long turn or ran into difficulties with lexis.

## **Parts 3 and 4 Special Photographs**

### **Part 3**

This task was popular with candidates and they generally found plenty to say. Candidates were given eight visual prompts which were examples of pictures that people had decided to keep in order to remind themselves of special times in their lives: a young boy winning a race at a school sports day, a group of children with their musical instruments, a couple on their wedding day, some people who had just completed a trip in the winter, a child's birthday party, people walking in the mountains, a mother with her baby, and students on their graduation day. Candidates were asked to talk about why they thought the people had kept the different photographs, and were then asked to decide which photograph they thought was the most special. Most candidates found this task very accessible, generally performed well and spoke fully about all the pictures. Candidates were able to discuss the importance of taking photographs on different occasions and the different happy memories that could be shared. They were also able to discuss the reasons why it was very important to remember the birth of a new baby, the enjoyment of a birthday party and what made it enjoyable, why people wanted to remember achievements such as the feeling of winning a race or successfully completing

your studies, and so on. As in other tasks, some candidates were tempted to start with the second part of the task, e.g. 'I think the mother with her baby is the most special photograph...'. 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, not just describing the picture, but giving as many reasons as possible why each picture had been taken and what made it special, agreeing and disagreeing with each other and following up on each other's ideas. For example, with the picture of the wedding day, candidates could have commented on the fact that a wedding is one of the most important days in people's lives and people want to be able to show all their friends what the wedding was like. When they get older they might want to show their children how they used to look when they were younger or remember the happy day. Then, having discussed why people might want to keep each of the photographs, candidates should have attempted to come to a negotiated decision as to which photograph was the most special 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 expedition visual, perhaps because the photograph was taken in close up and they just did not have so much to say. There is no need for candidates to speak in the same detail about every visual. Candidates should be encouraged to speak more about the visuals they are comfortable with and deal with visuals they are not so sure about in as much detail as they are able to. They should also be reassured that, for example, they are not expected to know individual items of lexis such as the names of particular musical instruments, or the word for balloons or graduation gowns. These words were not necessary for the successful completion of the task. If students are unsure of the activity in a particular picture, for example the graduation day, a useful technique would have been to point, for example, to the visual and say:

'I think this is a very special photograph because the students would like to remember all the hard work they'd done and how they celebrated ....'

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**

Candidates generally performed well and spoke fully about the questions they were asked in Part 4 of the 'Special Photographs' task. They were able to talk about the sort of photographs that they like to keep and whether they like it when people take photographs of them, and why they thought people were interested in looking at photographs of famous people. They also spoke fully about whether it was better to take photographs or buy souvenirs to remember places they'd visited and whether they thought it was a good idea to take a camera with them when they went on holiday. Candidates were also asked to talk about whether it was a good idea to keep a diary to remember special times and some candidates found this question more difficult to answer. Candidates should be encouraged not to spend a long time wondering what to say but to start talking promptly. Examiners do not expect a particular answer to any question they ask. Questions are opinion-based and candidates should be told that there is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. A confident response in which candidates simply state their opinion using language appropriate for this level will be sufficient. Candidates should be advised to give a brief response in a confident way to questions they are less familiar with 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 'A Day Out', candidates were not just asked to describe photographs but were asked to talk about why people go to places like these for a day out. 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 FCE-level language. 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 express 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 question in the task 'Special Photographs', 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**

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

## FEEDBACK FORM

### FCE Examination Report – June 2009 (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  
United Kingdom

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.