



Cambridge *first*

Newsletter 27 November 2008

Top Tips help learners prepare

Learners getting ready to take the updated FCE now have an extra way to prepare for the exam: *Top Tips for FCE* is a 64-page revision guide for FCE candidates, which comes with a free CD-ROM.

Top Tips has been designed by Cambridge ESOL for candidates to use at home rather than in the classroom, and advises them how to approach the different parts of each paper.

The book has been written by Cambridge ESOL examiners and item writers with clear examples and explanations for the different parts of each paper.

The CD-ROM contains an authentic full practice paper for the updated FCE so learners can practise their skills with real exam materials. The CD-ROM includes the Listening test, with an answer key for each paper and a video showing a sample Speaking test using real FCE students.

Since its release in September, response from centres and schools to *Top Tips* has been extremely positive. Gerardo Valazza, Centre Exams Manager at Instituto Cultural Anglo in Uruguay said: '*Top Tips for FCE is a very practical and reader-friendly book. With one tip per page, it is very easy to read and very simple to integrate with any FCE preparation course. Although the book is clearly aimed at students,*

it can provide the teacher with some very valuable materials to integrate exam practice into their courses on a step-by-step basis.'

Sharon Harvey, an Assistant Director at Cambridge ESOL with responsibility for candidate support, said *Top Tips* had been published in response to demand from learners: '*We have a candidate support website, a teacher support website, handbooks, seminars ... and of course we sell packs of past papers, but our customers have been demanding more support products.*

'*Top Tips for FCE offers students and teachers a systematic approach to exam training and is a valuable addition to the materials students and teachers are already using for FCE preparation.'*

Centres can order copies of *Top Tips* for their students and customers by using the dedicated order form on CentreNet. More information about *Top Tips* can be found at www.CambridgeESOL.org/FCEtips

'A wonderful idea, practical, straightforward, helpful.'

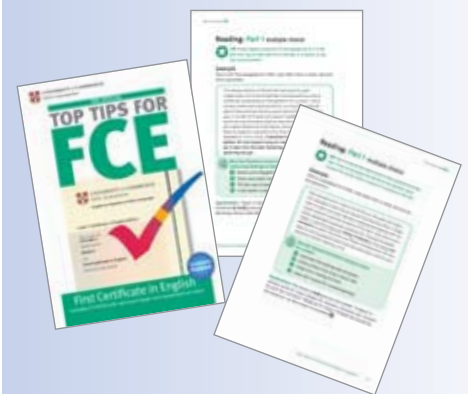
– Maria Cristina Briebe, Centre Exams Manager at CL002, Chile

What's in Top Tips?

Top Tips includes these subjects:

- a guide to the task types in FCE
- how to revise for FCE
- Paper 1: Reading
- Paper 2: Writing
- Paper 3: Use of English
- Paper 4: Listening
- Paper 5: Speaking
- what to do on the day
- what next after FCE?

The CD-ROM that comes with the book contains the practice paper and audio and video files of the Listening and Speaking tests.



BULATS goes online

The Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) is now available in an online format.

Currently the BULATS Listening and Reading test can be taken on a computer via a CD-ROM or as a pen and paper test.

Cambridge ESOL developed the online version of BULATS in response to demand for a robust and reliable Business English language test with the flexibility to be taken at companies' own offices, at times that suit their needs. Online

BULATS results are available immediately, which helps organisations make timely decisions about candidates for recruitment, promotion or international placement.

BULATS Online has been extensively trialled and a worldwide launch began in October 2008. To complement this exciting development, the BULATS brand has also been re-designed to reflect the new product.

Deshini Chetty, Cambridge ESOL's Global

Manager for BULATS commented: '*BULATS Online is an exciting development to the product range, which will give customers the same high quality exam but in a much more flexible format. BULATS remains the premier business English evaluation tool globally with particularly strong growth in Latin America, Asia and Middle Eastern and North African countries.'*

More information can be found at www.BULATS.org/tests/online_test.php

Help is on the way with new Stakeholder Support Unit

Cambridge ESOL has responded to demand for greater support for candidates, teachers and other stakeholders with a new department dedicated to just that.



The Support Products and Services team (from top left: Jenny Grewcock; Sharon Harvey; Heather Saunders and Andrew Nye).

Sharon Harvey, the Assistant Director heading the Support Products and Services team, said her team had a wide range of experience of teaching, publishing and exam administration: *'The team has been created to respond to demand from both test takers and teaching professionals for more materials and for services to support them.'*

The new department is based at our Cambridge HQ and the first project completed by the new team is the *Top Tips for FCE* book (see story page 1), which has already been enthusiastically received.

Sharon said other projects the team is working on include expanding the *Top Tips* range to include other exams, developing more support materials for teachers, increasing the range of online support and practice materials, and also looking at opportunities for providing courses and practice materials through internet and other portable technologies.

UK exams regulator recognises professional English exams

The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual), the UK government's regulator for exams in England, has formally accredited BULATS and other World of Work exams as part of the UK's National Qualifications Framework.

Official accreditation of BULATS, an innovative, multilingual business language testing system, means that some tuition providers in the UK will be able to receive state funding for BULATS preparation courses, and opens the way to recognition in other countries for employment in the state sector. It will also make it easier for employers to understand the value of the test.

Ofqual has also accredited the International Legal English Certificate and International Certificate in Financial English.

Ofqual is one of a growing number of commercial, professional and official organisations around the world that have recognised Cambridge ESOL's range of qualifications in professional English.

The official accreditation titles for these qualifications are:

500/4278/6 Cambridge ESOL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 1) (BULATS)

500/4276/2 Cambridge ESOL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 2) (BULATS)

500/4298/1 Cambridge ESOL Entry Level Certificate in ESOL International (Entry 3) (BULATS)

500/4291/9 Cambridge ESOL Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International (BULATS)

500/4275/0 Cambridge ESOL Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International (BULATS)

500/4290/7 Cambridge ESOL Level 3 Certificate in ESOL International (BULATS)

500/4288/9 Cambridge ESOL Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International (Financial English)

500/4297/X Cambridge ESOL Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International (Financial English)

500/4307/9 Cambridge ESOL Level 1 Certificate in ESOL International (Legal English)

500/4287/7 Cambridge ESOL Level 2 Certificate in ESOL International (Legal English)

You can find out more about recognition at www.CambridgeESOL.org/recognition

Cambridge ESOL exams on Ireland's approved list for foreign students

Cambridge ESOL's exams have been added to the list of qualifications recognised by the Department for Education and Science for non-EEA (European Economic Area) students seeking work during their stay in Ireland.

New students registering from outside the EEA need to prove they are attending a recognised full-time course of study

which lasts for at least one year and provides suitable certification, in order to be able to work legally during their course. The list of recognised courses published by the Department of Education and Science has recently been extended to include courses leading to the Cambridge ESOL English exams at various levels and to IELTS.

New Delta Modules go live

The new modular form of Cambridge ESOL's flagship teaching qualification, Delta, has now gone live with the first exams for Module One being scheduled for December this year.

Delta now comprises three modules:

- Module One focuses on the background to teaching and learning
- Module Two focuses on developing professional practice
- Module Three focuses on a specialist option (e.g. Young Learners, English for Special Purposes, 1–1).

The modular format allows teachers to achieve Delta in stages over a period of time that fits in with their career and other commitments.

Candidates who have already started a course for the old Delta and who need to re-sit the examination will have opportunities until June 2011.

Further information about the Delta Modules including a handbook, syllabuses and sample materials can be found at www.CambridgeESOL.org/delta

Dreams come true for Young Learners

A new book from Cambridge ESOL shows young learners talking about how English helps them realise their dreams. The young learners talk about their plans to become doctors, pilots and fashion designers and how using English is part of the path to their success.

The pocket sized book is brightly illustrated to appeal to the young learner and has information for parents about the Young Learners English Tests. The role models communicate the benefits of learning English and will motivate young learners in their studies.

South East Europe development sees Athens office boost

Cambridge ESOL is developing its offices in Greece as part of its plans to further expand operations in South East Europe.



Regional Manager Andy Chamberlain has recently moved from Cambridge to head our Athens office. Greece is becoming the hub for our rapidly growing business in Central and Eastern Europe, Greece and Cyprus.

Andy Chamberlain said: *'Regional Manager Michael Carty and other staff in Greece and Poland have already accomplished some excellent work and we intend to build on those successes. We will be working closely with our other business partners to give even greater access and support for our exams across the region.'*

New TKT modules now available

The two new modules of the Teaching Knowledge Test are now available.

The two exams, **TKT: Content and Language Integrated Learning** and **TKT: Knowledge About Language** can be taken as standalone modules in the TKT suite of examinations.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) describes an approach to teaching where subjects are taught and studied through the medium of a non-native language. For teachers, adding TKT: Content and Language Integrated Learning to their existing qualifications will enhance their knowledge of this fast-developing field.

TKT: Knowledge About Language will be of benefit to any teachers working with language learning. It tests knowledge of the structures of the English language, the concepts behind language teaching theory, and the framework and terminology used in teaching English.

Further details of the exams including test papers and other free downloads can be found at www.CambridgeESOL.org/KAL and www.CambridgeESOL.org/CLIL

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

The Young Learners

When I grow up
I want to be...



Multilingualism message taken to European Parliament

Cambridge ESOL highlighted the work of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) in October when it co-ordinated an event at the European Parliament, Brussels.



Above left: Leonard Orban, EU Commissioner for Multilingualism spoke of the importance of multilingualism in Europe. Above centre: Cambridge ESOL's Nick Saville gave a speech of thanks. Above right: MEP Hannu Takkula, Vice Chair on the Culture and Education Committee speaks at the reception.

The event, *Supporting Multilingualism Through Language Assessment*, was hosted by The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and MEP Hannu Takkula, Vice Chair on the Culture and Education Committee.

Mr Takkula said he wanted to ensure the European Parliament issued an adequate response to the Commission's Communication on Multilingualism: *'to lay the foundations of what will become a truly multilingual and competitive Europe'*.

MEPs, media and other parties interested in a multilingual policy attended a packed reception where Leonard Orban, EU Commissioner for Multilingualism, gave an opening speech. He said that in 2002, member states promised that every citizen would learn two foreign languages. Some progress has been made, but more needed to be done: *'The chance to acquire empowering language skills should be extended to young people in vocational training, students on non-language courses,*

and adults at all stages of their lives', said Mr Orban, and he underlined the value of clearly described levels of achievement in attaining this.

Nick Saville, Director of Research and Validation for Cambridge ESOL, said that as a founder member of ALTE – and as member of SurveyLang, the consortium that will deliver the European Survey on Language Competences – Cambridge ESOL believed multilingualism would bring substantial economic, cultural and educational benefits to Europe. He said it was gratifying to see the level of interest in multilingualism within the Commission and the European Parliament, and that the role of high-quality language assessment was so clearly understood.

During the week, around 100 visitors to the European Parliament took a computer-based version of BULATS in English, French, German and Spanish. This enabled them to quickly learn the level of their business language abilities in line with common European standards.



New Professional Support Network

Cambridge ESOL has a worldwide resource of around 16,000 examiners, presenters, item writers and other professional consultants who we rely on to maintain the standards of excellence for the two million people who take our tests each year.

Until recently, ensuring each member of this extended group has had the latest information about our exams and has skills at the required level, has been carried out by post and through face-to-face meetings held throughout the world.

While this has worked very well, Cambridge ESOL is now taking advantage of new technology to create an improved and more flexible service.

The new internet-based **Professional Support Network** is being introduced to support all our extended teams, offering them a flexible and powerful range of tools for standardising assessment, managing learning and continuing development.

Benefits will include the following:

- face-to-face team meetings for Oral Examiners will be shorter and focus more on test procedure and administration
- Oral Examiners will be able to complete standardisation at any web-enabled computer at their own convenience, rather than needing to travel to more meetings
- access to a wide range of services, such as a library of key documents, a news area, online discussions and a message system.

The Professional Support Network went live for Main Suite and BEC Oral Examiners in October 2008 and will be introduced to the other teams in stages.



Universities link up for Palestine's first TKT exams

Three Palestinian universities have worked with British Council to run the first TKT exams in the region.

A total of 17 English language lecturers from Al Quds Open, Bethlehem and Hebron Universities have sat Module One of the exam after taking a 20 hour preparatory training course which focused on the background to language teaching and language learning.

The lecturers are now looking forward to employing the techniques and principles

learned on the course to cascade their knowledge on to their students – the future English language teachers of Palestinian primary and secondary schools.

British Council and the heads of the three university departments are discussing the lecturers taking the remaining two modules in order to be awarded the Cambridge ESOL TKT certificate.

Abu Dhabi Education Council use of TKT

The Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) is using the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) as a professional development tool for high school teachers.

Kevin Smythe, English Programmes Manager with ADEC, said that teachers with advanced levels of English usage have been selected to take a course preparing them for TKT. *'The course is expected to add a capability level to teachers' broader classroom skill sets. It is also hoped that TKT will add a dimension of teaching versatility which will enable teachers to develop more diverse lesson plans and in-class activities.'*

19,000+ take BULATS in project with Indian university

More than 19,000 candidates from the affiliated colleges of Anna University in India's Coimbatore region, have taken the Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) test as part of their semester examinations.

This was part of an innovative collaboration between Cambridge ESOL, Anna University and EBK Language Laboratories Pvt. Ltd. The university outsourced its English syllabus from EBK, with assessment by the University of Cambridge. A joint test report from Anna University and the University of Cambridge will be given to successful students.

The examination was the second phase of the collaboration, with the first phase involving training programmes for faculty of English staff in the colleges. The teachers from affiliated colleges received training for the new syllabus and the teaching methods of EBK.

Vice-Chancellor R Radhakrishnan said that outsourcing an entire subject made it one of the first projects of its kind in the country.

'When students enter colleges, the level of English knowledge they possess is not known. Also English is restricted to classrooms. Sometimes the subject itself is taught in Tamil. Teachers have to play an important role in doing away with this practice. The outsourced subject will involve a practical approach.'

The response from the teachers and students was positive: *'Students welcomed the change and performed well. By next semester they will be more than comfortable with the format'*, said one faculty member.

BULATS puts business English to test in Vietnam

More than 900 Vietnamese students have taken part in the national heat of the Asian Business English Competition, organised by Cambridge ESOL in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. The students all took the BULATS test and the 20 highest scoring students from each city were invited to the semi-final rounds in September.

During the semi-finals, the participants gave prepared and impromptu speeches in front of a large audience of students and a panel of judges. Six winners were selected from each semi-final event to participate in the Vietnam national final round in early November.

The first and second prize winners from the Vietnam final will participate in the Asian Business English Competition in Singapore in February 2009.

Cambridge ESOL and Colombian President both stress importance of nation's education policy at major conference

An important national educational conference has taken place in Colombia where the nation's President Álvaro Uribe Vélez stressed the importance of government and educationalists working together.



This view was reflected in one of the plenary speeches delivered by Nick Saville, Cambridge ESOL's Director of Research and Validation, at Colombia's National Education Forum attended by about 2,000 participants. This year the Forum focused on assessment and was entitled 'Evaluar es valorar' (To Evaluate is to Value). The event was held in Bogotá but was also broadcast live on a national educational channel and featured online video forums and chat rooms for people who could not participate in person.

Cambridge ESOL is working with the government to help them achieve their ambitions for English language education and was invited by the Ministry of Education to participate in the Forum.

Nick Saville's speech focused on impact, examining it as both a positive and a

negative force within learning and language assessment.

He said the emphasis on impact reflected the growing importance of an evidence-based approach to educational assessment. He recommended that educators work with governments and education authorities towards an 'impact for design' approach, where data about impact is used to determine strategy and influence both policy and practical outcomes.

President Uribe (pictured above) delivered the closing speech and spent time talking with and listening to educationalists. He emphasised the need for learning, not only to support economic development, but also for citizenship.

After the conference, Nick Saville said: 'It was very gratifying, having focused on closer working

between the government and educationalists in my own speech, that the President himself took time to appear at the Forum and to endorse a commitment to doing exactly that. The government of Colombia views education, including learning foreign languages, as a key way to change the way that Colombia has been perceived in the past and to create an environment to attract inward investment.

'Colombia has an ambitious programme to raise English language standards by 2019 and we have worked closely with the Ministerio de Educación Nacional to develop a system of assessments for that. We have also carried out a project for Colombia's Ministry of Tourism to determine English proficiency within Colombia's tourism and hospitality sector, and create new standards for English within the country's vocational training sector.'

Between the lines: What analysing reading tests tells us about how learners develop reading skills

Two recently published pieces of work have taken a closer look at learners' reading and what it can teach us about the processes of learning to read another language.

Cyril Weir and Hanan Khalifa's *Applying a Cognitive Processing Model to Main Suite Reading Papers* looks at the different types of reading required of learners at different levels and the cognitive processes involved in them.

Types of reading tested within Cambridge ESOL General English examinations include:

Careful reading (local) – understanding propositional reading at clause and sentence level

Careful reading (global) – comprehending across sentences, across a whole text and across more than one text

Expeditious reading (local) – scanning text

Expeditious reading (global) – skimming text for gist or search reading.

Weir and Khalifa look at these reading skills through two exams adjacent to each other on the CEFR scale, PET and FCE (at B1 and B2 levels). In these two exams, the kinds of cognitive skills required include word recognition, lexical access, parsing,

establishing propositional meaning, inferencing and building a mental model.

They conclude that Cambridge ESOL exams closely mirror real-life acquisition of reading skills, both in terms of the task demands at each level, and the kind of cognitive skills that can be expected at the different levels of proficiency.

Exploring Lexical Differences in General English Reading Papers, by Fiona Barker, looks at the entire Cambridge ESOL General English suite of exams, using the lens of lexical analysis to make comparisons between different CEFR levels within the exams, and also the differences between learner vocabulary and that of native speakers.

Lexical analysis shows some entirely expected differences between exams, such as an increase in the length of reading texts as the exams increase in proficiency, and also a broadening of vocabulary. However, comparisons with native speaker use show interesting patterns.

When material from General English reading papers is mapped against native speaker use of the first thousand words of English, it shows that language learners rely more heavily on those first thousand words than native speakers. While 70% of native speaker words come from the first 1,000 word list, at KET (A2) level, the rate is higher than 85%, and while the rate drops as proficiency increases, it only drops below 80% at the levels of CAE and CPE (79% and 75%) respectively. Further evidence of the reliance on the first thousand words is shown in that across the whole General English suite, use of vocabulary from the second thousand words is significantly below that of native speakers. The importance of the first thousand words to language learners has obvious implications for teachers preparing students for any of the exams.

The full texts of both papers reviewed here are in *Research Notes* Issue 31, which can be downloaded from www.CambridgeESOL.org/rs_notes/rs_nts31.pdf

English Profile seminar

A shift towards developing and communicating the English Profile project's outputs was outlined at the sixth English Profile Network Seminar, held in Cambridge in July.

Nick Saville and Project Co-ordinator Dr Svetlana Kurtes opened the seminar with a presentation: *English Profile: ways forward – from 'project' to 'profile'*. Nick Saville said the project was moving from Phase One – the setting up of the project – into Phase Two, where the emphasis would be more on delivering the project's outputs and how these would be communicated.

Dr Tony Green of University of Bedfordshire Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), led the first session with a report on progress being made with research on the differences between B and C levels. Dr John Trim, representing the Council of Europe as an observer, made a valuable contribution on the subject.

Dr Vladimir Îegarac, of the University of Bedfordshire, delivered his paper: *A Cognitive Pragmatic Perspective on Metadiscourse: A Pilot Study*; an interesting talk on writing standards among B1 level students was given by Professor JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer, of the Complutense University of Madrid.



Ron Ragsdale and David Harrison of Cambridge University Press gave a short presentation on how they saw the future of the outputs of English Profile.

Dr Henriette Hendriks outlined how University of Cambridge Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics (RCEAL) is investigating how learners move from forming strings of words to carrying out the functions of discourse.

On the second day, Svetlana Kurtes outlined two new strands of research: language pedagogy and teacher education. The first discussion session was led by Professor Mike McCarthy of the University of Nottingham, and focused on developing spoken corpora.

The second session, on the role of the teacher within English Profile, was led by Cambridge ESOL Director Nick Saville with a supporting presentation from Dr Evelina Galaczi.

Professor Donald Freeman of the University of Michigan gave a presentation on the role of English Profile in teaching and teacher education.

The final presentation, about data collection and increasing engagement, came from RCEAL's Dr Dora Alexopolou.

The seminar finished with a debate about the future direction of English Profile with regard to publishable outputs. A full report on the seminar can be found at www.englishprofile.org

The latest edition of *Research Notes*, number 33 focuses on English Profile and can be downloaded for free from: www.CambridgeESOL.org/rs_notes/rs_nts33.pdf

Japanese teachers in STEP with British life

A group of 24 teachers sponsored by Japan's Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) visited Cambridge ESOL for training in August.

Subjects covered included innovation in British education and finding out more about contemporary British life. One aspect of British culture which is always popular is enjoying the typically English meal of fish and chips with 'mushy' peas, served in the traditional paper wrapping.



Above: Cambridge ESOL's Justin Rodford serves fish and chips to a visiting Japanese teacher.

Left: Teachers pose with Cambridge ESOL staff and trainers on the steps of St John's College.

Greater opportunities for Russian students as Cambridge ESOL network expands

Cambridge ESOL has recently expanded its exam centres network in Russia to a total of 25 operating in locations ranging from Murmansk to Krasnodar and St Petersburg to Krasnoyarsk.

Chris Scott Barrett, Development Manager at Cambridge ESOL explained the benefits the new network of exam centres will bring: *'Since January 2008 we have established a new network of examination centres in the region to give more students the chance to take our exams. This now means a greater number can benefit from having a certificate from Cambridge ESOL.'*

Some of the most recent centres that have gained approval to administer exams include: CET Nizhnevartovsk (Western Siberia), Benedict Kemerovo (Central Siberia) and South Urals Centre Chelyabinsk (Southern Urals).



Golden anniversary for Uruguay exam centre

Instituto Cultural Anglo Uruguayo celebrates its golden anniversary this year as it commemorates 60 years of being a Cambridge exam centre.



Cambridge ESOL Development Manager Litty Mora, presents plaques commemorating the 60th anniversary to Anglo's Director General, Rosina Perrier and Head of Academic Department, Geraldo Valazza.

Every year Cambridge ESOL and Instituto Cultural Anglo Uruguayo (Anglo) together provide thousands of Uruguayans with a full range of English tests that can open up career and educational opportunities.

Christine Nuttall, Cambridge ESOL's Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, welcomed this celebration:

'Building on 60 years of collaboration, we are looking forward to continuing our relationship with Instituto Cultural Anglo Uruguayo to ensure we offer the very best English language opportunities in Uruguay.'

In line with Cambridge ESOL's commitment to supporting students and candidates, Anglo offers a range of extra support through channels such as teacher seminars, pretesting and the distribution of a news bulletin. Looking forward, Anglo plans to extend access to the exams in the provinces. The last two years have seen exams being administered in Artigas, Mercedes, Minas, Paysandú, Punta del Este, Rivera, Salto and Young in addition to Montevideo.



Czech competition winners enjoy day in Cambridge

Winners of a recent competition run by British Council and Cambridge ESOL in the Czech Republic enjoyed a visit to Cambridge as part of their prize.

The 13 students from the Prague area had entered the 'Awake to English' competition to create a video, poster or piece of audio promoting Cambridge ESOL examinations.

The winners, all aged 16–18, spent time in London before making a visit to Cambridge ESOL's headquarters and enjoying the sights of the city from a punt trip on the River Cam.

Goodbye to Béatrix



Colleagues in Paris recently waved farewell to Béatrix Sampsonis who has retired after 13 years of working on BULATS and computer-based language testing as part of the partnership with the Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut and Universidad de Salamanca.

Cambridge ESOL presented Béatrix with a plaque commemorating her work at a farewell ceremony at the Alliance Française.

