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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

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# Cambridge BEC Higher 4

WITH ANSWERS

*Examination papers from  
University of Cambridge  
ESOL Examinations:  
English for Speakers of  
Other Languages*



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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

**Thanks and acknowledgements** 4

**Introduction** 5

**Test 1**    Reading    22  
              Writing    32  
              Listening 34  
              Speaking  38

**Test 2**    Reading    40  
              Writing    50  
              Listening 52  
              Speaking  56

**Test 3**    Reading    58  
              Writing    68  
              Listening 70  
              Speaking  74

**Test 4**    Reading    76  
              Writing    86  
              Listening 88  
              Speaking  92

**Key (including tapescripts and sample answers)**

Test 1    94  
Test 2    102  
Test 3    110  
Test 4    118

**Speaking test interlocutor frames** 127

**Sample Answer Sheets** 128

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-73920-7 - Cambridge BEC Higher 4: With Answers: Examination Papers from University of Cambridge

ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Introduction

### TO THE STUDENT

This book is for candidates preparing for the Cambridge Business English Certificate Higher examination. It contains four complete tests based on past papers.

#### The BEC Suite

The Business English Certificates (BEC) are certificated examinations which can be taken on various dates throughout the year at approved Cambridge BEC centres. They are aimed primarily at individual learners who wish to obtain a business-related English language qualification, and provide an ideal focus for courses in Business English. Set in a business context, BEC tests English language, not business knowledge. BEC is available at three levels – Preliminary, Vantage and Higher.

The BEC Suite is linked to the five ALTE/Cambridge levels for language assessment, and to the Council of Europe's Framework for Modern Languages. It is also aligned with the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's National Standards for Literacy, within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

BEC	Equivalent Main Suite Exam	Council of Europe Framework Level	UK NQF Level
	Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)	C2 (ALTE Level 5)	
BEC Higher	Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)	C1 (ALTE Level 4)	Level 2*
BEC Vantage	First Certificate in English (FCE)	B2 (ALTE Level 3)	Level 1
BEC Preliminary	Preliminary English Test (PET)	B1 (ALTE Level 2)	Entry 3
	Key English Test (KET)	A2 (ALTE Level 1)	

\* This represents the level typically required for employment purposes to signify the successful completion of compulsory secondary education in the UK.

#### BEC Higher

The BEC Higher examination consists of four papers:

Reading	1 hour
Writing	1 hour 10 minutes
Listening	40 minutes (approximately)
Speaking	16 minutes

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Introduction*

### **Test of Reading (1 hour)**

This paper consists of six parts with 52 questions, which take the form of two multiple-matching tasks, two multiple-choice tasks, a cloze test and an error-identification task. Part 1 contains five short texts or a longer text divided into five sections, and Parts 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 each contain one longer text. The texts are taken from newspapers, business magazines, business correspondence, books, leaflets, brochures, etc. They are all business-related, and are selected to test a wide range of reading skills and strategies.

### **Test of Writing (1 hour 10 minutes)**

For this paper, candidates are required to produce two pieces of writing. For Part 1, they write a short report based on graphic input. For Part 2, they choose whether to write a short report, a piece of business correspondence or a proposal. Candidates are asked to write 120 to 140 words for Part 1 and 200 to 250 words for Part 2. Assessment is based on achievement of task, range and accuracy of vocabulary and grammatical structures, organisation, content, and appropriacy of register and format.

### **Test of Listening (approximately 40 minutes)**

This paper consists of three parts with 30 questions, which take the form of a note-completion task, a multiple-matching task and a multiple-choice task. Part 1 contains a monologue in a work-related situation, Part 2 contains five very short monologues, and Part 3 contains one longer conversation between two or more people. The texts are audio recordings based on a variety of sources including interviews, face-to-face conversations and documentary features. They are all business-related, and are selected to test a wide range of listening skills and strategies.

### **Test of Speaking (16 minutes)**

The Speaking test consists of three parts, which take the form of an interview section, a short presentation on a business topic, and a discussion. In the standard test format, candidates are examined in pairs by two examiners: an interlocutor and an assessor. The assessor awards a mark based on the following four criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. The interlocutor provides a global mark for the whole test.

### **Marks and results**

The four BEC Higher papers total 120 marks, after weighting. Each paper is weighted to 30 marks. A candidate's overall grade is based on the total score gained in all four papers. It is not necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in all four papers in order to pass the examination. Certificates are given to candidates who pass the examination with grade A, B or C. A is the highest. The minimum successful performance in order to achieve a grade C corresponds to about 60% of the total marks. You will also be informed if you do particularly well in any individual paper. D and E are failing grades. Every candidate is provided with a Statement of Results, which includes a graphical display of their performance in

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction*

each paper. These are shown against the scale Exceptional – Good – Borderline – Weak and indicate the candidate's relative performance in each paper.

**TO THE TEACHER****Candidature**

Each year BEC is taken by over 120,000 candidates throughout the world. Most candidates are either already in work or studying in preparation for the world of work.

**Content, preparation and assessment**

Material used throughout BEC is as far as possible authentic and free of bias, and reflects the international flavour of the examination. The subject matter should not advantage or disadvantage certain groups of candidates, nor should it offend in areas such as religion, politics or sex.

**TEST OF READING**

Part	Main Skill Focus	Input	Response	No. of Questions
1	Reading for gist and global meaning	Authentic business-related text – either a single text or five short, related texts (approx. 450 words in total)	Matching	8
2	Reading for structure and detail	Authentic business-related text (approx. 450–500 words) with sentence-length gaps	Matching	6
3	Understanding general points and specific details	Longer text based on authentic source material (approx. 500–600 words)	4-option multiple choice	6
4	Reading – vocabulary and structure	Single business-related text with primarily lexical gaps (approx. 250 words)	4-option multiple-choice cloze	10
5	Reading – structure and discourse features	Single business-related text with structure and discourse gaps (approx. 250 words)	Rational deletion Open cloze	10
6	Reading – understanding sentence structure; error identification	Short text (approx. 150–200 words). Identification of additional unnecessary words in text	Proof-reading	12

**Reading Part One**

This is a matching task. The text is approximately 450 words long, and is made up of five related short texts of authentic origin. Examples could be a set of related product descriptions, a set of advertisements (for instance, for

*Introduction*

different types of services), notices or messages, book or video reviews, short newspaper items on related topics. Texts may be edited, but the source is authentic. They are identified as texts A–E.

There are eight statements, each of which is one sentence long, numbered 1–8. Each statement can be matched with only one of the texts. The candidate's task is to read the statement and then scan the texts for the one to which each statement applies. Candidates are tested on whether they can understand the language of the statement and relate it to the meaning of the text, which is expressed in different language.

**Preparation**

- Present students with sets of related short texts (e.g. job advertisements, hotel information, etc.) from newspapers, magazines, brochures;
- Longer texts may also be divided into sub-headed sections;
- Students should be encouraged to identify facts or ideas within each text, describing how the texts are similar and what differences they contain;
- The register or style of the task sentences is likely to differ from that of the texts, and students should be given practice in recognising the same information in different styles, e.g. by rewriting advertisements into objective prose;
- The task is designed to go beyond simple word-matching, and students will need to practise paraphrasing;
- Activities that help students to identify target information among otherwise superfluous text (e.g. choosing what to watch from TV listings) would be beneficial;
- Above all, students should treat the task as an example of information-processing skills which are frequently employed in social and professional life.

**Reading Part Two**

This is a gapped text with six sentence-length gaps. The text is about 450 to 500 words long, and comes from an authentic business-related source, although it may be edited. Sources include business articles from newspapers or magazines, books on topics such as management, or company literature such as annual reports. Candidates have to read the text and then identify the correct sentence to fill each gap from a set of eight sentences marked A–H. Sentence H is the example, and one other sentence is a distractor which does not fit any of the gaps. Understanding of not only the meaning of the text but some of the features of its structure is tested.

**Preparation**

- This task requires an overt focus on cohesion and coherence, to which many students may not be accustomed;
- It would be helpful for students to reassemble texts that have been cut up, discussing why texts fit together as they do;
- It would also be useful for students to discuss why sentences do or do not fit together;
- Students could benefit from altering the cohesion of texts to make sentences that do not fit together do so, and vice versa;



- Since culture affects discourse, including the order of argument development, discussions exploring this would be beneficial;
- The cut-and-paste functions of word-processing, where available, could be exploited for this task.

### **Reading Part Three**

This task consists of a text accompanied by four-option multiple-choice items. The stem of a multiple-choice item may take the form of a question or an incomplete sentence. There are six items, which are placed after the text. The text is about 500 to 600 words long. Sources of original texts may be the general and business press, company literature, and books on topics such as management. Texts may be edited, but the source is authentic.

#### **Preparation**

- Multiple-choice questions are a familiar and long-standing type of test; here, they are used to test opinion and inference rather than straightforward facts;
- Correct answers are designed not to depend on simple word-matching, and students' ability to interpret paraphrasing should be developed;
- Students should be encouraged to pursue their own interpretation of relevant parts of the text and then check their idea against the options offered, rather than reading all the options first;
- It could be useful for students to be given perhaps one of the wrong options only, and for them to try to write the correct answer and another wrong option.

### **Reading Part Four**

This task is a modified cloze: in other words, a gapped text in which the gaps are carefully chosen. There are ten multiple-choice items, most of which test vocabulary. The text is approximately 250 words long and is based on authentic source material of one of the text types listed above. The candidate's task is to choose the correct option, from the four available, to fill each gap.

#### **Preparation**

- It is important for students to appreciate that the correct answer in each case is correct in relation to the gap itself, rather than in relation to the other three options;
- It is worth emphasising that this task tests lexical and collocational knowledge, and that the best route to this knowledge is to read widely within the kinds of texts that the task employs;
- It is worth discussing what aspects of linguistic knowledge are tested (collocations, fixed phrases, register, etc.);
- It might be useful to give students gapped texts and have them produce alternative words which fit and which do not fit the gaps;
- Any vocabulary-building activity is likely to be helpful in preparing for this task.

## Introduction

### Reading Part Five

This task is an open cloze: a gapped text in which the candidate has to supply the word to fill each gap. There are ten items. Gaps are formed by rational deletion, being chosen rather than being simply those which occur if (for example) every seventh word is deleted. The focus is on structure, and coherence/cohesion in the text. Items tested may include prepositions, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, etc. The text is based on authentic material, and it is approximately 250 words long. A title is usually included.

#### Preparation

- The kinds of words which are gapped may well correspond to the kinds of errors students make, and therefore discussion of photocopied examples of students' compositions could be helpful;
- Students should be encouraged to circle the word or words in the text that dictate what the answer will be, in order for them to see that such clues to the answer may be adjacent to the gap or several words distant;
- Students should brainstorm various likely words which might fit a particular gap, and then discuss why the ones that do not fit do not do so;
- Students could be given several possible answers for a gap and discuss why the correct answer is correct;
- This task tests grammatical and structural aspects of language, and any practice in these areas should be beneficial.

### Reading Part Six

This is an error-correction or proof-reading task based on a text of about 150 to 200 words, with 12 items. Candidates identify additional or unnecessary words in a text. This task can be related to the authentic task of checking a text for errors, and suitable text types are therefore letters, publicity materials, etc. The text is presented with 12 numbered lines, which are the lines containing the items. Further lines at the end may complete the text, but these are not numbered.

#### Preparation

- Students should be reminded that this task represents a kind of editing that is common practice, even in their first language;
- Any work on error analysis is likely to be helpful for this task;
- It may well be that photocopies of students' own writing could provide an authentic source for practice;
- A reverse of the exercise (giving students texts with missing words) might prove beneficial.

### Marks

One mark is given for each correct answer. The total score is then weighted to 30 marks for the whole Reading paper.

**TEST OF WRITING**

Part	Functions/Communicative Task	Input	Response	Register
1	e.g. describing or comparing figures from graphic input, making inferences	Rubric and graphic input	Short report (medium may be memo or email) (120–140 words)	Neutral/formal
2	Report: describing, summarising Correspondence: e.g. explaining, apologising, reassuring, complaining Proposal: describing, summarising, recommending, persuading	Rubric, possibly supplemented by brief input text, e.g. notice, advert	Candidates choose from report (medium could be memo or email) or business correspondence (medium may be letter, fax or email) or proposal (medium could be memo or email) (200–250 words)	Neutral/formal

For BEC Higher, candidates are required to produce two pieces of writing:

- a short report based on graphic input;
- one of the following (of the candidate's choosing):
  - a report: the report will contain an introduction, main body of findings and conclusion; it is possible that the report may be delivered through the medium of a memo or an email;
  - a piece of business correspondence: this means correspondence with somebody outside the company (e.g. a customer or supplier) on a business-related matter, and the delivery medium may be a letter, fax or email;
  - a proposal: this has a similar format to a report but, unlike the report, the focus of the proposal is on the future, with the main focus being on recommendations for discussion; it is possible that the proposal may be delivered through the medium of a memo or an email.

**Writing Part One**

This is a guided writing task, in which the candidate produces a brief (120–140-word) report. The task provides a realistic situation in which it is necessary to analyse some sort of graphic input and express the information it conveys in words. Graphs, bar charts and pie charts of the type frequently used in the business pages of newspapers, company reports and brochures may provide a starting point. The graphic input is taken from an authentic source, but may be modified in the same way that a text may be edited. The rubric acts to amplify and clarify the situation, as well as making clear what the task involves.

**Writing Part Two**

In most parts of the BEC Writing tests, all candidates are required to perform the same task because there is no danger of individuals or groups of candidates being disadvantaged by that task. The exception is BEC Higher Writing Part Two: in order to generate the range of language which is characteristic of this

## *Introduction*

level of language learner, the task contains no input or minimal input, resulting in a relatively high background knowledge requirement from the candidate. In the absence of a choice of tasks, this would be likely to disadvantage some candidates, so a choice of tasks is given.

Candidates choose from three options: a report, a piece of business correspondence or a proposal. The task is supplied by the rubric, which provides an authentic reason for writing, and indicates who the piece of writing is being produced for. The input is therefore more detailed and specific than that of the traditional 'essay question' task type.

### **Preparing for the Writing paper**

The first Writing task involves the kind of graphic input of information which is common in the business world, and students should be exposed to a wide range of examples of graphs and charts from newspapers, magazines, company literature, etc. The interpretation involved is the translating of the graphic input into prose, rather than the recommending of action. Students should have practice in the clear and concise presentation of written information. Specific vocabulary and phrasing should also be developed.

The second Writing task requires students to plan carefully in order to be able to produce successful answers. They should be given practice in considering:

- the target reader
- the purpose of writing
- the requirements of the format (letter, report, etc.)
- the main points to be addressed
- the approximate number of words to be written for each point
- suitable openings and closings
- the level of formality required.

Exposure to, and discussion of, as wide a range as possible of relevant texts would be beneficial.

### **Assessment**

An impression mark is awarded for each piece of writing. The General Impression Mark Scheme is used in conjunction with a task-specific mark scheme, which focuses on criteria specific to each particular task. This summarises the content, organisation, register, format and target reader indicated in the task.

The band scores awarded are translated to a mark out of 10 for Part 1 and a mark out of 20 for Part 2. A total of 30 marks is available for Writing.

The General Impression Mark Scheme is interpreted at Council of Europe Level C1.

A summary of the General Impression Mark Scheme is reproduced opposite. Examiners work with a more detailed version, which is subject to regular updating.

**General Impression Mark Scheme – Writing**

Band	
5	<p>Full realisation of the task set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All content points included.</li> <li>● Controlled, natural use of language; minimal errors.</li> <li>● Wide range of structures and vocabulary.</li> <li>● Effectively organised, with appropriate use of cohesive devices.</li> <li>● Register and format consistently appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Very positive effect on the reader.</p>
4	<p>Good realisation of the task set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All major content points included; possibly minor omissions.</li> <li>● Natural use of language; errors only when complex language is attempted.</li> <li>● Good range of structures and vocabulary.</li> <li>● Generally well organised, with attention paid to cohesion.</li> <li>● Register and format on the whole appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Positive effect on the reader.</p>
3	<p>Reasonable achievement of the task set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All major content points included; possibly minor omissions.</li> <li>● Reasonable control, although a more ambitious attempt at the task may lead to a number of non-impeding errors.</li> <li>● Adequate range of structures and vocabulary.</li> <li>● Organisation and cohesion are satisfactory.</li> <li>● Register and format reasonable, although not entirely successful.</li> </ul> <p>Satisfactory effect on the reader.</p>
2	<p>Inadequate attempt at the task set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some major content points omitted or inadequately dealt with; possibly some irrelevance.</li> <li>● Errors sometimes obscure communication and are likely to be numerous.</li> <li>● Limited range of structures and vocabulary; language is too elementary for this level.</li> <li>● Content is not clearly organised.</li> <li>● Unsuccessful attempt at appropriate register and format.</li> </ul> <p>Negative effect on the reader.</p>
1	<p>Poor attempt at the task set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notable content omissions and/or considerable irrelevance.</li> <li>● Serious lack of control; frequent basic errors.</li> <li>● Narrow range of structures and vocabulary.</li> <li>● Lack of organisation.</li> <li>● Little attempt at appropriate register and format.</li> </ul> <p>Very negative effect on the reader.</p>
0	<p>Achieves nothing. Either fewer than 25% of the required number of words or totally illegible or totally irrelevant.</p>

*Introduction***TEST OF LISTENING**

Part	Main Skill Focus	Input	Response	No. of Questions
1	Listening for and noting specific information	Informational monologue	Gap-filling requiring limited written responses (i.e. no more than three words)	12
2	Listening to identify topic, context, function, speaker's opinion, etc.	Five short monologues linked by theme or topic, from five different speakers	Multiple matching	10
3	Listening for gist, specific information, attitudes, etc.	Conversation/interview/discussion between two or more people	3-option multiple choice	8

**Listening Part One**

This is a sentence-completion, gap-filling or note-taking task. The candidate has to supply only the key words of the answer, which will not be more than three words per item.

The spoken text lasts about two or three minutes and is a monologue. The text is heard twice. It is informational, and focuses on a series of identifiable facts. Topics might involve instructions, changes in arrangements or instructions, the programme for an event or meeting of some kind, or a presentation about a company. The setting for the task could be someone giving information over the telephone, or a speaker addressing a roomful of delegates at a conference or people on a training course.

Listening tasks may be based on recorded material taken from authentic sources or more usually on scripted material. There are 12 items, which are distributed evenly throughout the text, so that candidates have time to record their answers. Answers to items may be numbers or amounts of money, but these will not involve the candidate in any calculations. Items of information are tested in the same order in which the information occurs in the text.

**Listening Part Two**

This is a matching task based on five short extracts linked by theme or topic and spoken by five different speakers, in monologue form. The texts last a total of approximately three to four minutes.

There are two tasks for each of the five extracts. These tasks relate to the content and purpose of the extracts, and candidates are asked to do any combination of the following: identify speakers, interpret context, recognise the function of what is said, identify the topic, understand specific information, identify a speaker's opinion or feelings.

The series of extracts is heard twice, and candidates must attempt both tasks during this time. It is for the candidates to decide whether they choose to do the first task the first time they listen to the text, and the second task the second time, or whether to deal with the two tasks for each extract together. For each task, they have a list of eight options to choose from.

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Introduction*

Materials for this task are scripted, and relate to a business topic or situation.

### **Listening Part Three**

This task consists of a dialogue, usually with two or more speakers. There are eight items, which are three-option multiple choice. The task relates to a topic of interest or concern in the world of work. The text is heard twice.

#### **Preparing for the Listening paper**

All listening practice should be helpful for students, whether authentic or specially prepared. In particular, discussion should focus on:

- the purpose of speeches and conversations or discussions
- the speakers' roles
- the opinions expressed
- the language functions employed
- relevant aspects of phonology such as stress, linking and weak forms, etc.

In addition, students should be encouraged to appreciate the differing demands of each task type. It will be helpful not only to practise the task types in order to develop a sense of familiarity and confidence, but also to discuss how the three task types relate to real-life skills and situations:

- the first is note-taking (and therefore productive), and students should reflect on the various situations in which they take notes from a spoken input; they should also be encouraged to try to predict the kinds of words or numbers that might go in the gaps;
- the second is a matching (with discrimination) exercise, and reflects the ability to interrelate information between reading and listening and across differing styles and registers;
- the third involves the correct interpretation of spoken input, with correct answers often being delivered across different speakers.

In all three tasks, successful listening depends on correct reading, and students should be encouraged to make full use of the pauses during the test to check the written input.

#### **Marks**

One mark is given for each correct answer, giving a total score of 30 marks for the whole Listening paper.

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction***TEST OF SPEAKING**

Part	Format/Content	Time	Interaction Focus
1	Conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate  Giving personal information; talking about present circumstances, past experiences and future plans, expressing opinions, speculating, etc.	About 3 minutes	The interlocutor encourages the candidates to give information about themselves and to express personal opinions.
2	A 'mini presentation' by each candidate on a business theme  Organising a larger unit of discourse  Giving information and expressing opinions	About 6 minutes	Each candidate is given prompts which they use to prepare and give a short talk on a business-related topic.
3	Two-way conversation between candidates followed by further prompting from the interlocutor  Expressing and justifying opinions, speculating, comparing and contrasting, agreeing and disagreeing, etc.	About 7 minutes	The candidates are presented with a business-related situation to discuss.  The interlocutor extends the discussion with further spoken prompts.

The Speaking test is conducted by two oral examiners (an interlocutor and an assessor), with pairs of candidates. The interlocutor is responsible for conducting the Speaking test and is also required to give a mark for each candidate's performance during the whole test. The assessor is responsible for providing an analytical assessment of each candidate's performance and, after being introduced by the interlocutor, takes no further part in the interaction.

The Speaking test is designed for pairs of candidates. However, where a centre has an uneven number of candidates, the last three candidates will be examined together.

**Speaking Part One**

For this part of the test, the interlocutor asks the candidates questions on a number of personal or work-related subjects.

**Speaking Part Two**

In this part, each candidate's task is to choose one topic from a set of three, and to talk on it for about one minute. Candidates have one minute in which to prepare, and should use this time to make brief notes. While one candidate speaks, the other listens (and may make notes), after which they ask the candidate who gave the talk a question.



Candidates are again advised to keep in mind the business orientation of this test. It is wise to structure the one-minute talk, for example, as points, with an introduction and conclusion (however brief these must, of necessity, be), and to make the structure explicit when giving the talk in order to show some evidence of planning. Candidates should approach the task as if giving a presentation in a business environment.

Examples of topic areas for the individual Speaking task include the following: advertising, career planning, communications, customer relations, finance, health and safety, management (personnel, production, transport, etc.), marketing, recruitment, sales, technology, training and travel.

### **Speaking Part Three**

This is a two-way collaborative task based on a prompt, which is given to both candidates. The prompt consists of several sentences stating a business-related situation followed by two or three discussion points. Candidates are given time to read the prompt and then they discuss the situation together.

Candidates need to approach the task as a simulation, imagining themselves in a work environment, faced with a real situation to discuss and on which they should try to reach some decisions. The opinions they express, however, are their own. They are not instructed, as in some kinds of role play, to assume particular attitudes or opinions.

### **Preparing for the Speaking test**

Students should be made familiar with the seating arrangements and paired assessment procedures that the Speaking test employs. Any speaking practice should be of benefit, in particular paired and small-group work.

- For **Part One**, students should be familiar with the topics that the test covers. Activities designed to develop fluency will be of considerable benefit, as the students need to demonstrate as wide a range of language as possible within the time limits of the test. It should be noted not only that the test is designed to minimise the possibility of attempts to use rehearsed speech, but also that examiners will quickly identify it.
- For **Part Two**, they need to develop the ability to prepare effectively for the long turn they are required to take. They should be given help in developing the skill of long-turn-taking, and in building up a range of discourse features to make their speech both coherent and cohesive. It is also important for them to listen to each other's talks, and be ready to ask relevant questions.
- For **Part Three**, students will benefit from practice in this kind of simulation, where they have to put themselves into a work environment, and collaborate to discuss and decide issues. They should be helped to build up a range of resources for turn-taking and the general negotiating of ideas and opinions.

## *Introduction*

### **Assessment**

Candidates are assessed on their own performance and not in relation to each other according to the following analytical criteria: Grammatical Resource, Vocabulary Resource, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. These criteria are interpreted at Higher level. Assessment is based on performance in the whole test and is not related to particular parts of the test.

Both examiners assess the candidates. The assessor applies detailed analytical scales, and the interlocutor applies a Global Achievement Scale, which is based on the analytical scales. The analytical criteria are further described below.

### **Grammatical Resource**

This refers to the accurate and appropriate use of a range of both simple and complex forms. Performance is viewed in terms of the overall effectiveness of the language used in spoken interaction.

### **Vocabulary Resource**

This refers to the candidate's ability to use a range of vocabulary to meet task requirements. At BEC Higher level, the tasks require candidates to speculate and exchange views on unfamiliar topics. Performance is viewed in terms of the overall effectiveness of the language used in spoken interaction.

### **Discourse Management**

This refers to the candidate's ability to link utterances together to form coherent speech, without undue hesitation. The utterances should be relevant to the tasks and should be arranged logically to develop the themes or arguments required by the tasks.

### **Pronunciation**

This refers to the candidate's ability to produce intelligible utterances to fulfil the task requirements. This includes stress and intonation as well as individual sounds. Examiners put themselves in the position of a non-ESOL specialist and assess the overall impact of the pronunciation and the degree of effort required to understand the candidate.

### **Interactive Communication**

This refers to the candidate's ability to take an active part in the development of the discourse. This requires an ability to participate in the range of interactive situations in the test and to develop discussions on a range of topics by initiating and responding appropriately. This also refers to the deployment of strategies to maintain interaction at an appropriate level throughout the test so that the tasks can be fulfilled.

**Global Achievement**

This refers to the candidate's overall effectiveness in dealing with the tasks in the three separate parts of the test. The global mark is an independent impression mark which reflects the assessment of the candidate's performance from the interlocutor's perspective. Throughout the Speaking test, candidates are assessed on their language skills and, in order to be able to make a fair and accurate assessment of each candidate's performance, the examiners must be given an adequate sample of language to assess. Candidates must, therefore, be prepared to provide full answers to the questions asked by either the interlocutor or the other candidate, and to speak clearly and audibly. While it is the responsibility of the interlocutor, where necessary, to manage or direct the interaction, thus ensuring that both candidates are given an equal opportunity to speak, it is the responsibility of the candidates to maintain the interaction as much as possible. Candidates who take equal turns in the interchange will utilise to best effect the amount of time available.

**Grading and results**

Grading takes place once all scripts have been returned to Cambridge ESOL and marking is complete. This is approximately five weeks after the examination. There are two main stages: grading and awards.

**Grading**

The four papers total 120 marks, after weighting. Each paper represents 25% of the total marks available. The grade boundaries (A, B, C, D and E) are set using the following information:

- statistics on the candidature
- statistics on the overall candidate performance
- statistics on individual items, for those parts of the examination for which this is appropriate (Reading and Listening)
- the advice of the Principal Examiners, based on the performance of candidates, and on the recommendation of examiners where this is relevant (Writing)
- comparison with statistics from previous years' examination performance and candidature.

A candidate's overall grade is based on the total score gained in all four papers. It is not necessary to achieve a satisfactory level in all four papers in order to pass the examination.

**Awards**

The Awarding Committee deals with all cases presented for special consideration, e.g. temporary disability, unsatisfactory examination conditions, suspected collusion, etc. The Committee can decide to ask for scripts to be re-marked, to check results, to change grades, to withhold results, etc. Results may be withheld because of infringement of regulations or because further investigation is needed. Centres are notified if a candidate's results have been scrutinised by the Awarding Committee.

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ESOL Examinations: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Introduction*

### **Results**

Results are reported as three passing grades (A, B and C) and two failing grades (D and E). The minimum successful performance which a candidate typically requires in order to achieve a Grade C corresponds to about 60% of the total marks. Candidates are given a Statement of Results which, in addition to their grades, shows a graphical profile of their performance on each paper. These are shown against the scale Exceptional – Good – Borderline – Weak and indicate the candidate's relative performance in each paper. Certificates are issued to passing candidates after the issue of the Statement of Results and there is no limit on the validity of the certificates.

### **Further information**

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In some areas, this information can also be obtained from the British Council.