



CAMBRIDGE
English

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English Qualifications

B2 First

B2 First for Schools

Teaching Tips

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Introduction

These teaching tips have been designed to support teachers who are preparing learners for their exams. There are general teaching tips and ideas, exam strategies and information, with an extract of each task type from each of the four exam papers.

There are helpful links throughout that take you directly to classroom resources, videos, sample tests and webinars. All the tasks supplied in this document are taken from and linked to the [B2 First for Schools](#) and [B2 First](#) Handbooks for Teachers and the [B2 First for Schools](#) and [B2 First](#) pages of the [Exam preparation](#) section of our website.

Reading and Use of English

General teaching tips

- Help students read extensively to boost their range of grammar, vocabulary and familiarity with features of different genres of text (also helpful for the Writing paper):
 - Use a range of texts such as coursebooks, interesting articles from the internet, newspapers and magazines, graded readers, brochures, etc.
 - Create homework assignments around a weekly reading scheme and ask students to give verbal or written reviews of texts they have read.
- Use pre-reading questions to create interest in the topic of the text and train students in valuable prediction techniques.
- Try these ideas to help students understand the task format in Parts 1 to 7:
 - Use exam practice tasks from coursebooks and sample papers (available in the [Exam preparation](#) section of our website). Ask students to focus on instructions by highlighting key points.
 - Check understanding with questions, e.g. *How many words should you write?*
 - Many of the [B2 First and B2 First for Schools lesson plans](#) on our website can help you familiarise students with the exam format.
 - The Information for Candidates booklets for [B2 First](#) and [B2 First for Schools](#) give a simple summary of each paper with ideas to help your students prepare. Watch the [Information for Candidates Booklets webinar](#) to learn practical ideas on how to use them in class.
- Discuss different ways of dealing with texts such as skimming for the general idea or scanning for key words. Watch our webinar, [Preparing your students online for Reading papers in Cambridge English Qualifications](#), or check out the [teacher guide for Reading](#) for practical ideas to help students practise different reading sub-skills.

- Vocabulary cards are a good way for students to record new vocabulary (see the [B2 First for Schools Reading and Use of English Part 1 Self-study lesson plan](#)).

appeal (n.)	
Form	Spoken: ____ syllables. Phonemic transcription: /_____/
	Written: ea spelling sounds like ____
Meaning	Definition: _____
	Equivalent in my language: _____
Use	Common combinations with other words: _____
	Example sentence: _____

- Encourage students to plan their time carefully and not spend too long on any one part of the test. Students should make sure they leave a few minutes before the end of the test to check their answers.
- Find out more about helping students with timed practice tests in the [Mock test toolkit](#).

Completing the digital test

- All answers are typed directly onto the computer screen.
- In the Reading test, candidates can make notes, highlight text and review answers.
- Correct spelling is important in the Reading and Use of English paper. There is no spellchecker in the digital test.

Completing the answer sheet in a paper-based test in a paper-based test

- Candidates write answers on a separate answer sheet. They can transfer their answers after each task or after they finish all the tasks but must do this within the time limit.
- Give students practice completing the answer sheet below. You can find a printable version in the Handbooks for Teachers for [B2 First](#) and [B2 First for Schools](#).
- A 'Spot the Mistakes' activity is a fun way to check students understand these instructions. Prepare a badly completed answer sheet, e.g., with spelling mistakes, a mix of capitals/lower case, coloured pencil, scored-out answers, etc. Ask the students to circle all the mistakes they can find.

Part 1: Multiple-choice cloze

Key task information

- The task is a short text with eight gaps.
- Candidates have to decide which option best fits the gap.
- There is only one answer for each question.
- The focus is grammar and vocabulary, e.g., linking words, phrasal verbs, collocations or words with similar meaning, as well as understanding of the text at sentence and paragraph level.

Questions 1–8

For each question, choose the correct answer for each gap.

Ballet dancer by chance

After five years of karate lessons, Hans Jensen, 13, swapped his black belt for ballet shoes.

✕ gave showed put passed

Hans **1** his first public performance only a year ago when he danced in

'The Nutcracker' with the local dance school. Hans's mother said 'He was actually helping

2 his little sister. She was very shy on stage until her brother was given

a small part as a soldier. Hans enjoyed it so much that he **3** himself in

ballet classes.'

- Build a habit of reading the whole text before filling in the answers. Ask students to read the heading and the text quickly and to then summarise it in one or two sentences.
- Allocate time during feedback to allow students to compare and justify their answers. Be prepared to discuss why one word is correct and the others are not.
- As a follow-up, students could research the definitions of similar words, e.g., *fee* and *price*, in the [Cambridge Learner's Dictionary](#) and write sentences that highlight the difference.
- Matching activities are a fun way to review words that typically go together such as phrasal verbs or collocations. Write verbs on one set of cards and nouns on another set and students could play 'go fish' or 'snap' to match cards to make correct collocations or phrasal verbs.

Part 2: Open cloze

Key task information

- The task is a gap fill – this time candidates have to think of the best word to fill the gap.
- The answer is always one word. Note: contractions (*I'll*, *didn't*, etc.) count as two words.
- The focus is vocabulary and grammar.

Questions 9–16
For each question, write the correct answer. Write **one** word for each gap.

Camels

The most distinctive feature of a camel is the hump, or humps, on its back. In these humps camels store fat is used as energy when they don't have access to food. They can put with very difficult conditions, drinking only a little no water for up to seven days. When they reach a place where they can drink, they soak up water a sponge – they can drink 135 litres in 13 minutes! And their mouths are tough that they can eat most types of plant.

← →

- Many of the tips, e.g., reading the text and title first, and the activity ideas for Part 1 are useful for this part too.
- Is spelling a weak area for your students? If so, give them regular spelling tests for new vocabulary or commonly misspelled words and do crosswords and wordsearches.
- Build a checklist of common mistakes, e.g., subject–verb agreement, plurals and common spelling errors. Students use the checklist to check their own and each other's work.

Part 3: Word formation

Key task information

- The task consists of a short, gapped text. Candidates have to change the form of the word in capitals, e.g. *COMMON* to *COMMONLY*, to best fit the gap on the same line.
- The answer is always one word. Note that contractions (*I'll*, *didn't*, etc.) count as two words.
- Incorrect punctuation is ignored, but spelling must be correct.
- Each word in capitals only applies to the gap on the same line.
- The focus is on vocabulary and grammar.

Questions 17–24

For each question, use the word in CAPITALS on the right to form a word that fits in the gap.

Playing chess

Have you ever played chess? Some say you need to be very skilful to play it well but it is quite easy to learn. I started learning when I was only six years old and it helped me develop my powers of . If you want to achieve as a chess player, the main requirement is an ability to analyse a situation . Chess even helped me find various to the mathematical problems I was given for homework.

Keyword List

17. CONCENTRATE

18. SUCCEED

19. EFFECTIVE

20. SOLVE

21. PATIENT

22. CARE

23. PUNISH

24. ADVANTAGE

- Activities focused on word families, e.g., *compete*, *competition/s*, *competitor/s*, *competitive*, *competitively* are useful. For example, teams could race to brainstorm the most words from a given root word or categorise words from the same family by part of speech, e.g., noun, adjective, adverb.
- Familiarise students with general rules related to prefixes and suffixes. For example, *il*, *un*, *dis*, *mis* suggest negative meaning.
- Sometimes the missing word is plural or internal changes are needed (e.g., *long* to *length*), so it is a good idea to provide particular practice of such transformations.
- The **Cambridge Learner's Dictionary** includes information about the related forms of a word. Encourage students to research and record them in their vocabulary notebooks or on vocabulary cards.

Part 4: Key word transformation

Key task information

- The task consists of pairs of sentences. Candidates have to complete the second sentence using a given word, so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.
- The answers must be two to five words. Contracted forms (*I'll*, *didn't*, etc.) count as two words.
- The word given in bold must be used and cannot be changed.
- Students should only write the words they put in the gap on their answer sheet, not the complete sentence.
- The focus is on vocabulary and grammar.

Questions 25–30

For each question, complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

It's been over six months since I last saw Dan.

SEEN

I over six months.



- Give students practice in paraphrasing. This could include rewriting sentences from texts or matching words and phrases with a similar meaning.
- Ask students to pay careful attention to:
 - any clues about time as this indicates the tense to be used
 - any clues in verbs or nouns that indicate whether to use a singular or plural form in the answer, but remember that the word in bold shouldn't be changed
 - what comes before and after the gap.

Part 5: Multiple choice

Key task information

- The task is a text, followed by six 4-option multiple-choice questions.
- Only one answer is possible for each question.
- The questions are in the same order as the information in the text.
- The focus is on detailed understanding of a text, including opinions, attitude, purpose, main idea, detail and gist.

Questions 31–36

Read the extract from a novel below. For each question, choose the correct answer.

'How did I ever manage to get myself into this?' Sandy wondered aloud and then groaned, although no one was there to hear her. She looked down again from the top of the slope and quickly shut her eyes to block out the sight. 'Help!' she said pleadingly in barely more than a whisper with her eyes still closed. 'Michael? Anyone? Please, oh please... somebody help me out of this mess!' She was louder the second time, but without anyone nearby to respond – not even Michael, her best friend – it did little to resolve her present dilemma.

At thirteen, short-haired Sandy was quite tall for her age, but thin, which only gave her an appearance of greater height. At the moment, she was dressed in a colorful, thick winter jacket that had a bold bright pink and white design sweeping across a purple background. Her smooth water-repellent pants were the same purple color as her jacket – it was obviously a fashionable, co-ordinated outfit. Warm dark purple gloves covered her hands, and her attire was topped off – literally – with a purple ski hat, scarf and stylish ski goggles. If anyone had been around to see her

31 What is the writer's purpose in the first paragraph?

- ☐ to explain why Sandy was in this difficult situation
- ☐ to give relevant details of Sandy's character
- ☐ to introduce the fact that Sandy was facing a challenge
- ☐ to describe how Sandy was planning to solve a problem

32 What does the writer suggest about Sandy's clothes?

- ☐ They made it unlikely that she would be spotted

- Teach students to read the text quickly for general understanding before looking at the questions. As three out of the four options are incorrect, there is no point in trying to absorb these options before reading the text.
- Next, students should read each question carefully, highlighting key words to help them keep in mind the information they need to scan for when they look at the text again.
- Warn students about the risks of 'word spotting' (assuming that an option must be correct because it contains a word that is also in the text). Students should check that the meaning of an option is *fully* stated in the text, not just one word from it.
- When questions are incomplete statements like the question in the example above, encourage students to read both parts of the sentence carefully then check that the whole sentence matches what is in the text and not just the phrase in one of the four options.
- Encourage students to underline the section of text where they find each answer. To follow up, give them the chance to discuss their choices with each other before sharing as a class.

Part 6: Gapped text

Key task information

- The task is a text with six missing sentences. These sentences are given in jumbled order together with a seventh sentence which does not fit in any of the gaps.
- Candidates have to select the sentence that best fits each gap.
- The focus is on text structure, cohesion and coherence, and the candidates' ability to follow the development of a long text.

Questions 37–42
Read the article about a schoolboy who has come up with a clever invention. Six sentences have been removed from the text below. For each question, choose the correct answer. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Young Inventor

Schoolboy Tim Freeman has come up with a clever idea to improve the efficiency of school buses.

Tim Freeman was just twelve years old when he came up with a revolutionary idea that would make school buses more energy efficient. This would not only save money, but also help the environment. Five years later, the schoolboy finally saw his dream come true.

It all began when Tim did a short summer course on aerodynamics, the study of the movement of air around objects. 37 He realised that the perfect candidate was his school bus. It had a very square front which meant it did not use petrol efficiently, only travelling 3km per litre, compared to a private car that can average about 8.5km per litre. He decided it was high time the vehicle was improved.

So they began writing to local universities to see if anyone would provide the advice and knowledge they needed.

This made it clear to them that the design would have to be changed.

This prompted him to look for a way to use what he had learned.

The data from these were good and his idea was looking promising.

He knew that was the only way to see if his design really worked.

This design provides the same benefits but costs less to manufacture and install.

In this way, the bus would become more energy efficient.

- Train students to read the text with the gaps first so that they gain an overall idea of the structure and the development of the writer's ideas.
- It is important that students look carefully at the information before and after each gap to check that the sentence they choose fits logically.
- Give students plenty of practice in recognising clues that mark logical and cohesive development of texts. These include:
 - words and phrases indicating time, and how they link with tenses, e.g., *over the past month/year/decade* link with present perfect
 - linking words of contrast, addition, etc., e.g., *however, furthermore*
 - repetition and synonyms, e.g., *the sea, the water, the waves*
 - sequence of tenses, e.g., tenses used in clauses before and after the gap
 - pronouns, e.g., *this, that, these, those*.
- Here are some helpful activities to try with your students:
 - familiarise students with the function of linking words and create opportunities to use them in sentence completion activities (*Learning English can be challenging, however, ...*) and discussions
 - circling all of the pronouns in a text and asking students to draw an arrow to the noun/noun phrase they refer to.

Part 7: Multiple matching

Key task information

- The task consists of one long text or up to six shorter texts, preceded by 10 questions.
- Candidates must locate a section of text where a particular idea is expressed, avoiding ideas in other sections that seem similar but do not reflect the whole of the question accurately.
- Candidates can choose a particular section more than once.
- The focus is on locating specific information, detail and recognising opinion and attitude.

Questions 43–52

Read the article below about four teenagers who went to different summer camps. For each question, choose the correct answer. Each answer may be chosen more than once.

Teenage Summer Camps

Adam – Nature Camp

We helped on a nature reserve for a week. We did different things every day, but I did get a bit fed up because we had cheese sandwiches every lunchtime. I kept quiet about it though because I didn't want to seem awkward. I was starving by twelve every day anyway, and it really was good fun, although we worked incredibly hard. One day, the schedule was changed at the last minute, and instead of our planned activity, we all helped the staff finish cutting the reeds by the lake. That was the toughest day – and also the best. They actually needed our help, we weren't just being kept occupied. Every day, we took it in turns to cook, in teams of five. When it was our team's turn, we made a simple dinner of pasta and salad for everyone. Judging by the fact that there was none left, we didn't do too badly!

Sarah – Culture Camp

Every morning we had the same breakfast, and then cleaned up the camp. Nobody could opt out and it was only when it was all

Which teenager

43 felt relieved they were kept so busy?

- ☐ Adam
- ☐ Sarah
- ☐ Oliver
- ☐ Malika

44 was pleased to have achieved something hard but worthwhile?

- ☐ Adam

- Give students practice in reading the text quickly first to get a general idea of the content of each section before trying to match the answers – the 10 questions relate directly to the text but they are expressed using different words and sentence structure, so this overview will give students an idea of where to start looking for the matching information.
- Set tasks that encourage students to read reviews of books, films, hotels, etc. and highlight clues to the writer's opinion or attitude, e.g., words with positive or negative connotations.
- Students can choose a text and devise their own Part 7 tasks in pairs or small groups. Writing challenging questions for classmates can help them understand what clues to look for when tackling a real Part 7 task and will give them practice in paraphrasing, which is also useful for Part 4 (key word transformation).

Writing

General teaching tips

- Encourage students to use a range of language. If they make mistakes, they still receive marks for effort as long as mistakes do not impede communication.
- Help your students to improve their writing with the practical ideas in this webinar: [Writing at CEFR Level B2 and above](#).
- Practise different ways of planning to write, e.g., by creating mind maps, and emphasise how this can help meet the criteria for content and organisation. The time for the Writing paper (80 minutes) is enough for candidates to make brief plans and write two answers.
- Read a variety of texts in class, including model answers to Writing Parts 1 and 2. Highlight features of style and tone to help your students adopt them in their writing.
- A class or school magazine may encourage interest in writing.
- The [Writing guide for B2 First for Schools](#) has practical teaching ideas and detailed information on using the assessment criteria.
- Are your students aware of the online tool called [Write & Improve](#)? It's a great way to get extra practice and feedback on their writing.
- Spelling and punctuation errors are not specifically penalised but may impede communication. Keep a checklist of students' common spelling errors and encourage them to refer to this for self- and peer-checking activities. Note that American usage and spelling are acceptable in the exam.
- Each question on the Writing paper carries equal marks so students should put equal effort into both Parts 1 and 2. Initially, students might find writing two tasks in 80 minutes challenging but encourage them to keep a record of how long they spend each time – it's a great way to show them they are making progress.
- Candidates are asked to write 140–190 words for each question in Parts 1 and 2. Encourage learners to focus on fully answering the question, checking that the content is relevant, rather than counting the number of words they have written.

Digital test

- In the digital writing test, students can change the text and screen colour.
- There is a word count as they type their answers.

Completing the answer booklet

- Make sure students know that they need to write their answers in the answer booklet. Several lined pages are provided for candidates to write their answers.
- Candidates should write neatly but it is not important if they write in upper or lower case, or if their writing is or isn't joined up. What is important is that their handwriting is clear and easy to read. Any corrections they make should be clear so that the examiner can follow and mark their work.

Part 1: Compulsory task

Key task information

- Candidates have to write an essay of between 140 and 190 words giving their opinion along with justifications, using a neutral or formal register.
- There is no choice of tasks in this part.
- Two ideas are provided and candidates should add a third idea of their own in addition to responding to the two ideas provided.

Question 1
You **must** answer this question. Write **140–190 words** in an appropriate style.

In your English class you have been talking about education. Now, your English teacher has asked you to write an essay for homework.

Write an essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view.

Some parents teach their children at home rather than sending them to school.
Is this a good or a bad thing for the children?

Notes

Write about:

1. having a parent as a teacher
2. making friends
3. (your own idea)

- Students lose marks if they fail to respond to one of the ideas or if they go off topic, so advise them to underline key instructions and tick off each idea as they write about it.
- Brainstorming ideas for different topics in pairs and groups and setting tasks to research the arguments for and against a particular issue will give students valuable experience in writing this type of essay.
- Use model answers and other texts to point out how varying the length of sentences, using direct and indirect questions and a variety of structures and vocabulary can all help to communicate ideas more effectively.
- Practise and develop techniques for organising writing: using paragraphs to guide the reader, using linking words and phrases (e.g., *but*, *so*, *however*, *on the other hand*, etc.) as well as cohesive devices (e.g., using pronouns for referencing).
- Familiarise students with a range of phrases and structures for comparing, contrasting, agreeing, disagreeing, explaining, informing and giving opinions with reasons or examples. Exam preparation coursebooks are a useful resource as they often include lists of functional phrases at the right level.

Part 2: Choose a task

Key task information

- The task consists of three questions from which candidates choose one.
- Candidates may have the option of writing an article, an essay, a review, a letter, an email or a short story of between 140 and 190 words.
- Since there is always a choice of task types in Part 2, students should avoid a particular task type if it is unsuited to their interests or experience or if they feel the instructions are unclear.

Teaching tips for emails/letters

- Candidates may be asked to write emails or letters, for example, to an English-speaking friend or a school or college principal.

Questions 2–4

Answer one of these questions. Write **140–190 words** in an appropriate style.

You have received an email from your English-speaking friend.

Can you help me with a class project? I have to write about places which are special to people. Can you tell me about a place that is special to you? Where is it? What does it look like? It doesn't have to be a famous place. Just explain why it's important to you.

Write soon, Sam

Write your email.

Answering this question?

0 of 1 questions selected.

Undecided ?

← →

- Practise thinking about the situation and target reader and deciding whether the style and tone should be formal or informal. Make students aware that abbreviations used in text messages are not considered appropriate.
- Practise expressions for beginning and ending emails and formal/informal letters, as well as a range of functions, including explaining, expressing enthusiasm and persuading. If letters aren't relevant to your students, advise them not to choose this option in the exam.

Teaching tips for reviews

- A review is usually written for an English-language magazine or website. Description, explanation, giving positive and negative opinions and recommendations are key functions for this task as well as the use of a range of adjectives.
- Students should be encouraged to read as wide a range of reviews as possible, such as those for holidays, books, films, television programmes and consumer goods.

Questions 2–4
Answer one of these questions. Write **140–190 words** in an appropriate style.

You have seen this advert in an international fashion magazine.

Reviews wanted

Teenage Clothes Shop

We are looking for reviews of a clothes shop for teenagers where you live. Your review should include information about what the shop looks like, the kind of clothes it sells and the shop assistants. Would you recommend this shop to other people your age?

The best reviews will be published in next month's magazine.

Write your review.

Answering this question?
0 of 1 questions selected.

Undecided ▾ ?

←
→

Teaching tips for short stories

- A short story is usually written for an English-language magazine or website. The main purpose is to engage the interest of the reader, so there is a lot of scope for imagination in this task. Encourage students to use interesting adjectives, adverbs and expressions.

Questions 2–4
Answer one of these questions. Write **140–190 words** in an appropriate style.

You have seen this announcement in a new English-language magazine for young people.

Stories wanted

We are looking for stories for our new English-language magazine for young people. Your story must **begin** with this sentence:

Tom got off the train and as the train left, he realised he was holding the wrong suitcase.

Your story must include:

- an address
- a surprise

Answering this question?
0 of 1 questions selected.

Undecided ▾ ?

←
→

- Effective answers have a clear storyline that links coherently to the prompt sentence, includes the context points and demonstrates that candidates can use narrative tenses, e.g., the simple past and past continuous. Good use of linking words, particularly time expressions, is also important in this task.

Teaching tips for articles

- An article is usually written for an English-language magazine or newsletter, such as this example from **B2 First for Schools Sample Paper 2**. The main purpose is to interest and engage the reader, so there should be some opinion or comment.

You see this notice in an international English-language magazine for teenagers.

Articles wanted

We're looking for articles about unusual objects.

Have you, or a member of your family, ever owned an unusual object?

Tell us about it – describe the object and explain why it's so unusual.

The best articles will be published in our next issue.

Write your **article**.

- Descriptions, examples and personal anecdotes are often appropriate, and effective answers are lively and include some colourful use of language. A catchy title attracts attention and the use of direct and indirect questions involves the reader. Looking at examples from English-language magazines should help.

Listening

General teaching tips

- Students' ability to understand what they hear can improve dramatically if they regularly listen to audio and video materials both in class and at home. The more English they hear, the more readily they will pick out individual words, followed by phrases and sentences.
- Select listening materials from B2-level coursebooks as well as authentic materials that you think might be interesting for your students. They should include a range of voices, accents and styles of delivery, e.g.:
 - podcasts
 - radio and TV programmes
 - station and airport announcements
 - informal conversations
 - lectures.
- It helps if students feel relaxed and focused during listening activities. Try these ideas to build up their confidence and listening skills step by step:
 - Classroom discussion activities are a great source of listening practice. Give students plenty of opportunities to talk together and listen to one another in pairs and groups.
 - Make students aware of how much they themselves bring to a listening task. For example, discuss with them what they can expect to hear, e.g., names and places when they turn on the news, or numbers and times if they listen to announcements.
 - Make sure students have enough time to read the questions before they listen so they know what to listen for.
 - Encourage students to identify the stressed syllables and words in a listening text (the ones which carry the message) rather than trying to listen for every single syllable.
 - If a listening is particularly challenging, make use of the audioscript to listen again. This time students can read and listen. Allow time for them to note down any new vocabulary or ask about features of pronunciation.
- The [Listening guide for B2 First for Schools](#) will help you assess and develop your students' listening skills for both the B2 First and B2 First for Schools exams. It includes practical teaching ideas to help you implement some of the teaching tips listed above. You can also get an overview of the guide in the related [webinar](#).
- When your students are ready, run a practice test under exam conditions. Find out more about how to prepare your students, run the Listening paper and give useful feedback in the [Mock test toolkit](#).

- Make sure your students know the following information about the test:
 - they will hear each recording twice
 - there is time for them to read the questions before each recording
- Candidates won't lose marks for minor spelling errors in the Listening paper, but the intended meaning must be clear.
- Students should enter an answer for all the questions, even if they are not sure of the correct answer – they've probably understood more than they think.

Completing the digital test

- All answers are typed directly onto the computer screen.
- Headphones with volume control help candidates listen comfortably and concentrate.

Completing the answer sheet in a paper-based test

- Candidates write answers on a separate answer sheet. They can transfer their answers after each task or after they finish all the tasks but must do this within the time limit. They have 5 minutes at the end of the test to transfer their answers to the answer sheet.
- Give students practice completing an answer sheet within the time limit. You can find a printable version in the **B2 First for Schools** and **B2 First** Handbooks for Teachers.
- A 'Spot the Mistakes' activity is a fun way to check students understand these instructions. Prepare a poorly completed answer sheet, e.g., with spelling mistakes, a mix of capitals/lower case, coloured pencil, scored-out answers, etc. Ask the students to circle all the mistakes they can find.
- Students should write answers in pencil, using capital letters and clear, neat handwriting, so that the markers can read it easily. Circles should be shaded in firmly and clearly.

Part 1: Multiple choice

Key task information

- The task consists of eight multiple-choice questions with three options.
- Candidates should select only one option for each question.
- This part tests candidates' ability to listen for gist, detail, function, purpose, attitude, opinion, genre, agreement, etc. in a series of unrelated short texts.

Questions 1–8

For each question, choose the correct answer.

1 You hear a young singer talking about his childhood.

What is he grateful for?

☐ being encouraged to sing by his father

☐ being exposed to music at an early age

☐ inheriting his mother's talent as a singer

- Give students a discussion task and/or an image linked to the topic of the recording *before* they listen and ask them to predict key ideas and language they might expect to hear.
- Ease students into the task step by step, e.g., let the students listen without the questions first to check their predictions, or have them listen with the question but without the multiple-choice options. This can make it easier for them to spot the distractors when they listen again with the options.
- Candidates sometimes get distracted by hearing words or phrases in the recording which appear in one of the incorrect options. Use the audioscripts provided in coursebooks and sample papers to draw students' attention to this, e.g., ask them to underline the section that gives the correct answer.
- After listening to the recording, go over the answers, discuss the distractors with students and help them understand the reasons behind both the right and the wrong answers.

Part 2: Sentence completion

Key task information

- The task consists of 10 sentences with gaps. Candidates have to fill in the gaps with words from the recording.
- The questions follow the order of the information in the recording.
- Answers can be up to three words in length. The word, number or phrase required will be heard on the recording and does not need to be changed in any way.
- This part tests the candidates' ability to listen for specific information and opinions in a single long recording and produce written answers by completing gapped sentences. Recordings may be broadcasts, talks or classroom presentations.

Questions 9–18

You will hear a student called Duncan Heap talking about his recent trip to Iceland to study sea birds called puffins. For each question, write the correct answer in the gap. Write a word or short phrase.

Puffins

Duncan uses the word to describe the puffin's appearance out of the water.

Duncan was surprised to learn a puffin's can help it to change direction when flying.

Duncan explains that puffins create as a place to make their nests.

- Students sometimes assume they will hear the sentence spoken exactly as it is written in the question. However, the information is usually paraphrased, so preparation for this part should include lots of practice with gap-fill listening exercises to help students get used to this.
- Before listening, students should predict what type of word might go in the gap. The teacher can prompt with questions such as *Do you think it's a noun, a verb ...?* This will help build the habit of reading the text in front of the gap *and* the text which follows the gap.
- Another way to support students the first time they do this type of task is to give them the first and/ or the last letters of the word/s that go in the gaps.
- After listening, put students in pairs to compare answers and think about what the answers might be. For example, did they miss important grammatical information like an indefinite article (*a/an*) which indicated a singular noun?

Part 3: Multiple matching

Key task information

- The task consists of five short extracts. Candidates must match what the speaker says with a statement from a choice of eight options.
- The letters for the options can only be used once, so three options are not used.
- This part tests the skill of listening for gist, detail, attitude, opinion, etc.

Questions 19–23

You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about photography. What does each speaker say about it? For each question, choose the correct answer. Use each answer only once. There are three extra answers which you do not need to use.

	19 Speaker 1	20 Speaker 2	21 Speaker 3	22 Speaker 4	23 Speaker 5
Learning to use new photographic software is fun.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have found some useful advice online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Photography helps me to remember events.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It's my goal to become an expert in photography.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

- It is really important for candidates to use the time given to read through the questions, since they need to have a clear idea of what they are listening for.
- If your students are unsure about an answer, they should wait for the second listening before making their final decision. Making a decision too quickly may mean that a candidate 'uses up' an answer that belongs to another speaker.

Part 4: Multiple choice

Key task information

- The task consists of seven multiple-choice questions with three options.
- Candidates should select only one option for each question
- This part tests the candidates' ability to listen for opinion, attitude, gist, main idea and specific information. The recording is usually an interview or discussion featuring two speakers.

Questions 24–30

You will hear an interview with a teenager called Luke Fuller, who's talking about working as a junior reporter for his local radio station. For each question, choose the correct answer.

24 What was the aim of Luke's work at the radio station?

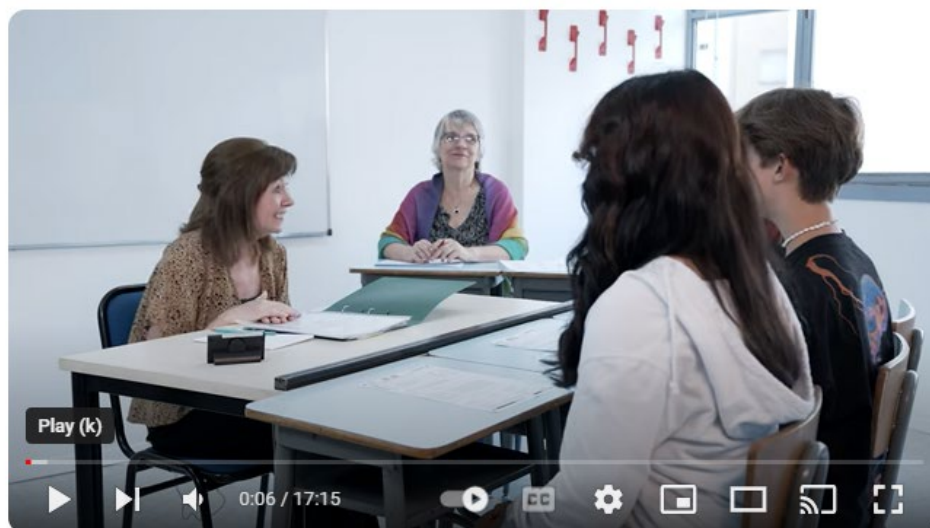
- ☐ to encourage teenagers to have a media career
- ☐ to help teenagers find out about well-known people
- ☐ to make teenagers realise how interesting their lives are

- Discussion and prediction activities before listening will help students prepare to listen and understand.
- When preparing for multiple-choice questions in class, a useful strategy is for students to try and answer questions in their own words before they look at the options; they can then decide which option they think matches their own answer most closely.

Speaking

General teaching tips

- Show students exactly what to expect on exam day using videos of candidates taking the Speaking test. You can find links to these videos and ideas on how to use them in class in the [Mock test toolkit](#).
- The standard format of the Speaking test is two candidates and two examiners, as shown in the [B2 First](#) and [B2 First for Schools](#) videos. However, tell students that it is possible that there will be three candidates. When there are three candidates, the test lasts longer. Examiners are trained to ensure each candidate has the same opportunity to speak whether they are in pairs or in groups of three.



- Classroom activities which involve students working in pairs and groups will give practice in skills such as starting the conversation and responding, which are essential to success in the Speaking test.
- The more speaking students do, the more confident they become. This will help them speak clearly and audibly in the exam. Make sure students know that different varieties of English accents in the UK and elsewhere in the world are acceptable.
- Ask students to watch the video [5 tips for preparing for Cambridge Speaking exams](#), and to try out some of the ideas. As a follow-up they can discuss which ones they liked and share ideas of their own.
- To ensure all candidates are treated fairly, the examiner uses a script (you can see this in the [sample papers](#)). However, remind students they can ask the examiner to repeat instructions or a question. Make sure they are familiar with the phrases they need to do this confidently, e.g., *I'm sorry, would you mind repeating that please?*
- Give students practice in paraphrasing when they do not know or cannot remember a word. You could do this by teaching functional phrases like *It's the thing you use for ...*, *I'm not sure of the exact word but ...*, *It's the person who ...*, etc.
- Encourage students to look for opportunities to practise their English, e.g., find study buddies, or, if possible, socialise with English speakers.

Part 1: Interview

Key task information

- The examiner asks questions related to the candidates' own lives, e.g., about leisure time, future plans, etc.
- Candidates answer the questions individually and do not need to interact.
- This part of the test takes 2 minutes (or 3 minutes with three candidates) and tests candidates' ability to take part in general social interaction.
- The example given is taken from **B2 First for Schools Sample Paper 2**.

People you know

- Who are you most like in your family? Tell us about him/her.
- Do you have a best friend? (What do you like about him/her?)
- Who do you spend time with after school? (What do you do together?)
- Tell us about a good teacher you've had.

- Give students lots of practice talking about themselves:
 - Brainstorm typical Part 1 topics as a class, e.g., everyday lives, sports they enjoy, holidays, school and so on.
 - Ask students to prepare around five questions on a few of the topics and to ask and answer these in pairs.
 - Remind them to give answers which are complete and spontaneous – they should avoid memorising set answers as these might not fit the question.
- Create a **random wheel of topics** (search online for *picker* or *random wheel* tools) to provide prompts for asking and answering questions. This activity can be used for 5 to 10 minutes at the start or end of class to help build students' confidence in speaking on a range of topics.

Part 2: Long turn

Key task information

- Candidates compare two photographs then answer a further question about both photographs in response to a question read out by the examiner. This question is also written above the photographs.
- The focus is on the candidates' ability to speak individually for an extended period of time (1 minute). The other candidate is also asked to comment briefly (for about 30 seconds) after their partner's long turn, so they must listen carefully. They should not speak during their partner's long turn.
- The example given is taken from **B2 First for Schools Sample Paper 2**.

What might be good for the students about learning in these ways?



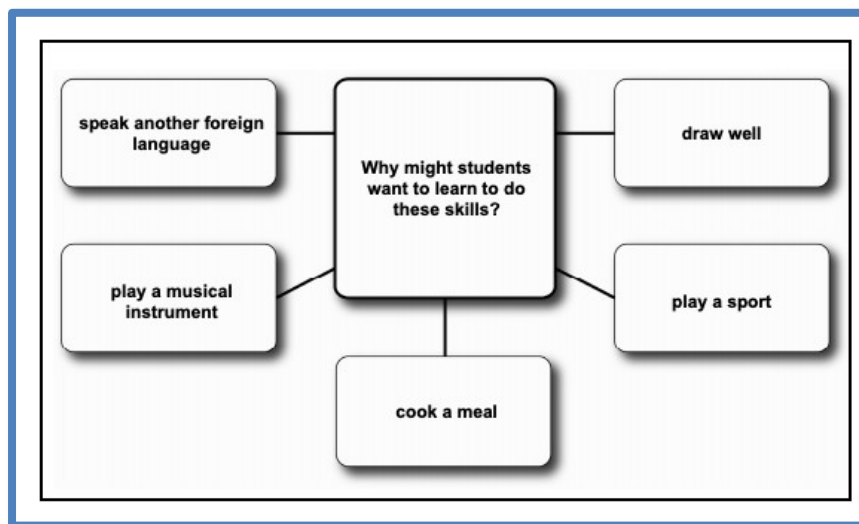
- Advise students to listen carefully to the instructions and read the question above the photographs. They should take a few seconds to look at the pictures so they know what they want to say before they start speaking.
- Students sometimes feel that a minute is quite a long time. Give your students timed talking tasks, so they get a feel for how long a minute is. Play games such as 'Just a Minute' where students have to speak for 1 minute without repeating themselves.
- Give students practice in organising their 1-minute talk, comparing the two pictures and linking their ideas together. Practise linking words for sequencing and adding or contrasting ideas, e.g., *firstly*, *what's more*, *on the other hand*. Review comparatives and other ways of expressing similarity and difference, e.g., *one similarity is that ...; in this picture there's ... whereas in the other there's ...*
- You and your students can select linked photographs from magazines or online and create similar tasks for practice. For example, you might choose photographs of two different types of holiday and ask your students to compare the photographs and say what people would enjoy about a holiday in each of the different places.

- Remind students not to give detailed descriptions of each picture. They will be asked to compare the pictures and give their reaction. You can build their confidence step by step by:
 - allowing them to work in pairs or small groups to share their ideas about what they might say, before they attempt a task
 - giving feedback and then allowing students time to repeat the same task to try and improve their performance
 - letting them observe and borrow strategies from good model answers given by a more advanced learner of English or by the teacher.

Part 3: Collaborative task

Key task information

- The task consists of a discussion question with five written prompts designed to provide ideas. Candidates are not expected to discuss all five prompts in the time available but should continue their discussion until asked to stop.
- Candidates are then asked to briefly summarise their discussion and come to a decision.
- They are assessed on their ability to hold a conversation, taking turns appropriately, and using the language of negotiation and collaboration.
- The example given is taken from **B2 First for Schools Sample Paper 2**.



- Reassure students that it is okay if they don't reach a negotiated decision. The task is opinion based – there is no right or wrong answer. They can also disagree with each other politely.
- Candidates are assessed on their ability to interact with each other in the Part 3 task, so classroom discussion in pairs and small groups provides excellent preparation. Try nominating a group chairperson to ensure that every member of the group joins in the discussion. This helps emphasise the importance of interacting and turn-taking.

- Give students practice in accurate production of functional language that is useful in this type of discussion. This should include ways of managing the discussion, e.g., *Shall we start with this one?*, *What do you think?*, *Shall we move on to ...?*, ways of expressing and justifying opinions and agreeing and disagreeing (politely). **Exam preparation coursebooks** are a good source of these types of phrases at the appropriate level.

Part 4: Discussion

Key task information

- The examiner will direct the interaction by asking questions which encourage the candidates to discuss the topics introduced in Part 3 further.
- This part of the test gives candidates an opportunity to show they are capable of discussing issues in more depth.
- The example given is taken from **B2 First for Schools Sample Paper 2**.

Part 4

Interlocutor Use the following questions, in order, as appropriate:

- Do you think school trips should take place on a school day or at the weekend? (Why?)
- If you go on a school trip, is it better to visit a city, or go to the countryside? (Why?)
- What can students do in class after going on a school trip? (Why?)
- What's a good place for students to visit in (candidate's country)? (Why?)
- What's the most interesting thing about visiting other countries? (Why?)
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? (Why?)

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

Select any of the following prompts, as appropriate:

- What do you think?
- Do you agree?
- And you?

- To help students give full answers to the questions, try the *Where?*, *When?*, *Who?*, *Why?* technique. For example, in response to the question *If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?*, students could answer by giving the reasons *why* they would like a particular destination, *when* they would like to go, *where* they would go, and so on. The question *Why?* is useful for nearly all Part 4 questions.
- Candidates may be asked individual questions, but they may also be asked to involve their partner in the discussion, so pair and small group discussions of this type provide excellent preparation.

List of useful links

Exam preparation – Exam Essentials, Teacher Essentials and more

B2 First Handbook for Teachers

B2 First for Schools Handbook for Teachers

Mock test toolkit – everything you need for running an effective practice test

Official Cambridge exam preparation materials

Cambridge English YouTube channel – for more videos, webinars and teaching tips

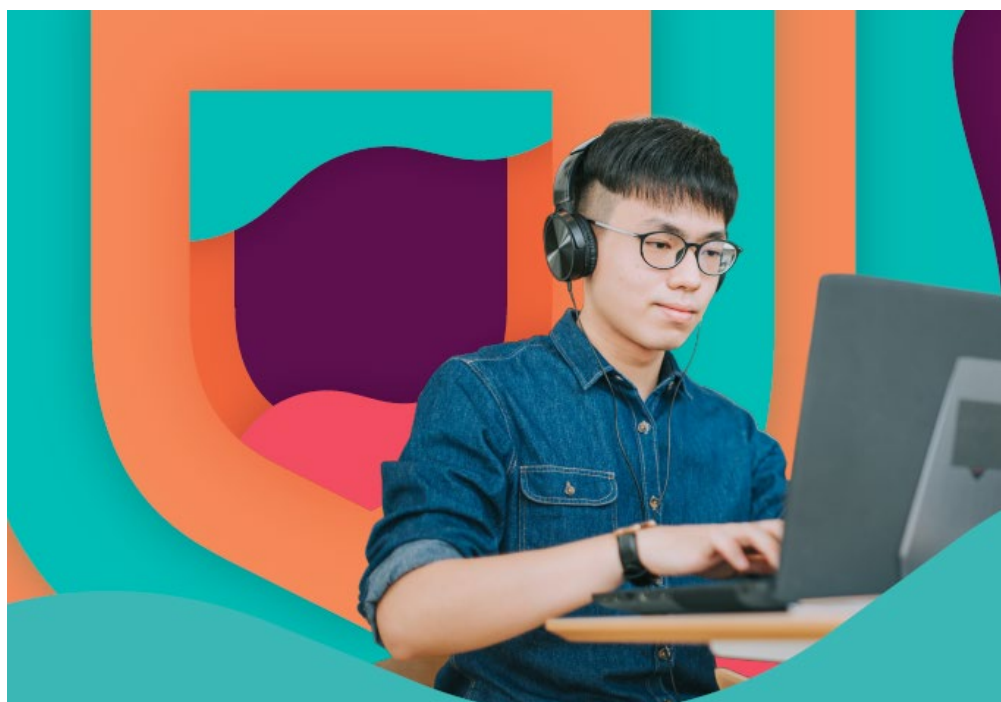
Information for Candidates – B2 First for Schools, B2 First

Practice activities for all levels

Write & Improve

Test and Train

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