## CAMBRIDGE English

## Information for candidates

Cambridge B2 First<br>English Qualifications<br>for Schools



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## Cambridge Digital

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## How to use this guide



## Cambridge $\underset{\substack{\text { roschools }}}{\mathrm{B2} \text { First }}$ <br> English Qualifications <br> for Schools

This guide is designed to help you on each step of your learning journey. There's information and advice for how to prepare before the exam, what to expect in the exam and what will happen after the exam.

This guide also includes lots of helpful boxes with (i) key information and advice $\star$ study tips and Questions which people often ask about the exam:



Where can I find practice tests? You can find official exam preparation $\frac{\text { materials online and in bookshops, }}{\text { including coursebooks and practice test }}$ books. There are also free paper-based and digital sample tests on our website. You can find a tutorial for the digital test on our website.

Read these tips carefully - they will help you to feel well prepared for the exam and to avoid common mistakes or problems.
And ... good luck with your exam!

## About the exam

B2 First for Schools is a qualification for learners who have an upper-intermediate level of English. The exam:
$\checkmark$ tests your knowledge and ability in English at Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
$\checkmark$ is accepted by thousands of colleges universities and employers around the world as evidence that you can use spoken and written English for study, work and life
$\checkmark$ includes the same tasks and question types as B2 First, but uses topics that are interesting for teenage learners who are at school
is based on extensive research to make sure that each paper is the right length and the right level, so your exam result will reflect your abilities fairly and accurately
$\checkmark$ is designed to show your ability to use English in a range of different ways
$\checkmark$ can be taken as a digital or paperbased exam.

The exam has four papers. Each one is equally important.

| 1. Reading and Use of English <br> This paper tests your reading skills, such as reading for detail or understanding how a text is organised, and your knowledge and use of a range of vocabulary and grammar. | 2. Writing <br> This tests the content, communicative achievement, organisation and language of your written English. |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Your scores for (Paper 1 (Reading) + Paper 1 (Use of English) + Paper 2 + Paper 3 + Paper 4) $\div 5$ = your exam result! |  |  |
| 3. Listening <br> This paper tests reallife listening skills, such as listening for general meaning, information, opinion or detail. | 4. Speaking <br> This tests your ability to interact with other speakers, how you organise your ideas, your pronunciation and your use of grammar and vocabulary. | The content of the exams is the same, the scoring is the same and the final certificate is the same Cambridge English offers two versions of the exam (digital and paper-based) just so you have more choice and flexibility in how you take it. |

## Preparing for the exam

A successful and enjoyable journey begins with good preparation. For B2 First for Schools, this means you should:

- practise your English in all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking improve your grammar and vocabulary for communication at B2 level
understand how the exam is organised and assessed
understand what will happen on exam day.
Keep reading to find out more about how you can prepare for each paper in the B2 First for Schools exam.

Paper 1: Reading and Use of English

| Parts 1-3 | Three short texts (one text for each part), with different tasks. You <br> must complete the gaps with different kinds of words. |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{1}$ hour | Part 4 | No text. You must rewrite sentences in a different way. |
| $\mathbf{1 5}$ minutes | Part 5 | One long text with six multiple-choice questions. |
| $\mathbf{7}$ parts | Part 6 | One text with six gaps. You must choose the correct sentence for <br> each gap. |
| Part 7 | One text or several short texts, with 10 questions. You must match <br> each question to something in the text(s). |  |

Follow time limits when you do practic tests. This will help you prepare for the time to complete the tasks and fill in the answer sheet. (And remember if you have answer sheet. (And remember, if you have
extra time at the end of the Writing and the Reading and Use of English tests, you can go back to a task and look at it again.)
Self-study is very important when preparing for an exam, because sometimes you don't have a teacher or a book to help you. Try these ways to make your learning journey more personal:

Write interesting vocabulary in a notebook Include the meaning the pronunciation an example sentence and a translation in your first language.
Find a 'study buddy' - a friend or classmate. It's great if they have them and they can help you!

Do I have to be a teenager to take B2 First for Schools?
No. You can take this exam at any age, but the content of the 'for Schools' exams is aimed at teenage learners, so older learners might refer to take the B2 Fist What's the difference between 32 First and B2 First for Schools? B2 First and B2 First for Schools exams follow exactly the same format. The CEFR level is th same (B2) and candidates are tested in all the same skills. However, the content of the 'or Schools' version is a little bit different because it's designed for the interests and xperiences of teenagers.
Is there a difference between the certificates for B2 First and B2 Firs for Schools?
No. Students who pass B2 First for Schools ceive the same certificate as students who pass the standard version of the exam. Both ertificates are widely accepted around the world.
Is there a wordlist for this exam? No. Exams that are at CEFR Level B2 or above e 2 First for Schools, do not have partic language specifications or vocabulary lists.

There are many different types of text in the exam: newspaper and magazine articles, reports, fiction, advertisements, letters, messages and informational material (such as brochures, guides, manuals, etc.). They're all about topics which are interesting to teenage students. Before you take the exam, it's important that you have seen these kinds of text before and that you know how to do the kind of tasks which appear in the exam. Extra help online
You can find a sample test and self-study lesson plans on our website to practise different parts of the Reading and Use of English paper


To improve your reading skills, it's really important to read many different types of text which you really enjoy. If you have a special interest or hobby, try reading about it in English as much as you can. You can read anything: blogs, books, magazine articles, social media, informational websites or encyclopaedias. The important thing is just to read as much as possible and to enjoy it! For this paper you need to study things like collocations (words which often go together), phrasal verbs, linking words and to understand how writers use different words to express similar meanings. (All of these are important for the Writing paper, too!) When you're preparing for the exam, keep a notebook and write down vocabulary which yol see oter could use this to test yourself later.
$\checkmark$ Read the sources, titles and subtitles of the texts. These will help you choose the best answers.
$\checkmark$ In Parts 1 and 2, read the words which come after the gaps. These words might affect the answer.
$\checkmark$ In Part 3, remember to change the words that you write. They might have to change into a negative or a plural, so look carefully at the text to decide which form is best.
$\checkmark$ In Part 4, only write between two and five words. Don't write out the full sentence!
$\checkmark$ In Part 5 , read the questions carefully and check each option with the text before rejecting it
$\checkmark$ In Part 6 , check the words around the gap carefully, because the missing word(s) may be part of an idiom, fixed phrase or collocation.
$\checkmark$ In Part 6 , check that the completed paragraph makes sense in the text as a whole, because the missing sentence must fit the overall context.
$\checkmark$ Check your spelling in all parts of the test. (American spelling is OK - but don't mix American and British)

Don't..
$x$ Don't spend too much time on any one part of the paper. All seven parts are equally important, and you only have 75 minutes to do this paper - including copying your answers to the answer sheet

Don't try to answer any questions before reading the whole text first. It's important to understand the whole context.
$x$ Don't assume that you have found the right answer if the same word appears in the text and in an option You might need to look for a synonym or related word instead.
$x$ Don't write more than one answer for any question, even if you think there are two possible answers.

If you're taking the test on paper .. Do ...

For the paper-based test, allow enough time to transfer your answers to the answer sheet accurately and clearly, because it will be scanned into a computer.

## Don't

$x$ Don't use a pen on the answer sheet. Use a pencil Answers written in pen cannot be read by the marking machine i.e. o points! Rub out any answers you want to change using an eraser.
$x$ Don't write the answers to any of the examples on your answer sheets.
hill receive 1 has two parts, so you wilreceive 1 mark for correctly completing one part of the means that you a small mistake the other part.

Just continue reading and try to understand as much as possible. Use the context to help you. In the exa you can't use a dictionary, so it's stopping to look up all the words.

No. A correct answer gets 1 or 2 marks, an incorrect answer gets 0 marks and no answer gets 0 marks. So if you're not sure about an answer, it is best to guess something!

Two. Your Reading score is based on Parts 1,5,6 and 7, and your Use of English score is based on Parts 2,3 and 4. Your Statement of Results will show both scores, plus three more: one scor for Writing, one for Listening and one for Speaking. Each of these five scores is equally important when calculating your overall score.



## Paper 2: Writing

## 1 hour <br> 20 minutes <br> 2 parts

Writing 140-190 words. There is only one question
You must write an essay which shows your opinion about the topic, using the ideas which are given in the question and one extra idea of your own.
Part 2

Writing 140-190 words. There are three questions and you must choose only one. You could write an article, email, letter, review or story.

There are four assessment criteria for the tasks in the Writing paper
$\checkmark$ Content (How well have you completed the task? Have you done what you were asked to do?)
$\checkmark$ Communicative Achievement (Is the writing appropriate for the task? For example, is the style right for a magazine article? Have you used the right register, for example formal or informal?)
$\checkmark$ Organisation (How is the piece of writing put together? Is it logical and ordered?)
$\checkmark$ Language (Do you use a good range of vocabulary and grammar? Are there any vocabulary and grammar? Are there any
mistakes which would make it difficult for the reader to understand?)
For both exam tasks, you receive marks from 0 to 5 for each of the four criteria. These scores are combined to calculate your final mark for the Writing paper
Extra help online
You can find a sample test and self-study lesson plans to practise writing for the exam on our website.
Try the exam tasks on Write \& Improve and get fast, free automated feedback on your writing.


The instructions will tell you how much to write. The most important thing is to answer the question completely and clearly. If you write too much, you will only lose marks if you have included details which aren't important or which confuse the reader. If you write a shorter answer wich includes required information this is OK


Do ..
$\checkmark$ Read every part of the question carefully and use the digital tools to highlight parts of the question, or, in the paper-based test, underline important parts.
$\checkmark$ Allow enough time to plan, write and check your work for each answer. It's OK if you need to make corrections - just make sure they are clear so the examiner can understand what you have written!
$\checkmark$ Add detail to the points in Part 1, using relevant ideas and information.
$\checkmark$ Use a range of vocabulary, even if you are not completely sure about the correct spelling.
$\checkmark$ Check your grammar, especially the ends of verbs, irregular past tenses, plural forms, question forms and word order
$\checkmark$ Use formal or informal language in the right way - you should know which is best for the task.
$\checkmark$ Choose a Part 2 question that you feel confident you can
write about.

Don't.
$x$ Don't use the exact words from the question paper too much. And if you use some key words from the question, make sure you spell them correctly!

Don't mix formal and informal language. For example, don't use formal linking words in an informal letter.
Don't type or write addresses for a letter. They are not required, so typing or writing these will waste time.


## If you're taking the test on paper..

 Do ...Write clearly so your answers are clear and easy to read. However, it is not important if you write in CAPITALS, in lower case, or if your writing is joined up or not.

## Don't...

$x$ Don't use a pencil. For this paper you must wite pen.



Do ...
$\checkmark$ Listen to all the instructions in the test - and read them too! It's really important to understand what you're listening for and what you have to do.
$\checkmark$ Use the time before each recording to prepare to listen: read the question and think about the context.
$\checkmark$ While you listen, use the information on the page to help you follow the recording.
$\checkmark$ In Part 2 , look carefully at what is before and after the gap and think about the kind of information that you are listening for. Only include the missing information on the answer sheet.
$\checkmark$ Try to answer the questions when the recording is played the first time. Then you can check these answers when you hear the recording for the second time.
$\checkmark$ Answer all the questions, even if you're not sure

Don't..
$x$ Don't use different words in Part 2. You should write the exact word(s) or number(s) that you hear in the recording.
$x$ Don't spend too much time thinking about a difficult question. You might miss the next one
$x$ Don't rush to type or write an answer for Parts 1,3 and 4 just because you heard one word or phrase. You need to concentrate on the overall meaning.

In the digital test, you type your answers onto the screen and they are saved automatically. For the paper-based test, you must write all your answers on a separate answer sheet. While you're listening, you can write on the question paper, but you must transfer your answers
to the answer sheet. You will have 5 minutes at the end of the test to do this.


If you're taking the test on paper ... Don't.
$x$ Don't use a pen on the answer sheet. Use a pencil. Answers written in pen cannot be read by the marking machine i.e. o points! Rub out any answers you want to change using an eraser.

For the digital exams, all candidates will wear headphones and you can hange the volume. For the paper based test, if you can't hear, raise your hand immediately so that someone can resolve the problem.

It's OK to make some small spelling mistakes in the Listening paper of this exam, but it must be clear what you were trying to write.




## Paper 4: Speaking

Candidates are tested together in pairs or groups of three. If there are three candidates together, the test lasts longer so each candidate gets enough time to speak.

|  | Part 1 | Each candidate has a brief general conversation with the examiner. |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| About <br> 14 minutes | Part 2 | You and the other candidate(s) each speak for 1 minute about two <br> (photographs. After the other candidate has spoken, you also have <br> 4 parts seconds to respond to what they said. |
|  | Part 3 | You and the other candidate(s) discuss and complete a decision- <br> making task. |
| Part 4 | The candidates and the examiner all speak together about topics <br> related to the task in Part 3. |  |

(i)
Don't try to prepare and memorise
general answers for the Speaking or Writing tests. They almost certainly won't answer the questions which you
are asked. are asked.
Extra help online
Watch an example Speaking test
video and read the examiners' video and read the examiners our webpage.

4
If you don't know about a topic in the Speaking paper, do not speak about something else! You need to show your language skills, not your knowledge about a specific subject.
It might help you to practise some strategies in advance, such as:
how to explain that you don't know a lot about a topic
how to connect this topic logically to something you are more familiar with, so hat you still answer the examiner's question describing what a friend or family member might say about the topic instead. Like all language skills, your speaking will improve if you practise more. Speak to different people, in different situations about different topics. You can also practise for Part 2 of the Speaking test by using podcasting or video websites to record yourself, then you can listen back to see what you could improve.


Ask your exam centre. Different exam centres have different rules about this. But there is no evidence that candidates perform better or know their Sp know heir partner. Some pea onfle but other cand may find this situation difficult may find this
or unnatural.


Examiners are specially trained fo situations where one candidate is stronger or weaker, or if one person talks too much or not enough. Don't worry - they will make sure you get fair opportunity to show your speaking skills in the test.
$\checkmark$ Listen carefully to the instructions and questions during the test, so you can respond appropriately.
$\checkmark$ Speak clearly so that both the interlocutor and assessor can hear you
$\checkmark$ Use all the opportunities that you are given to speak in the test, and extend your responses whenever possible.
$\checkmark$ Listen to your partner when it is their turn to speak.
$\checkmark$ Ask the examiner to repeat the question or instructions if you don't understand.

Don't ...
$x$ Don't prepare long answers in advance, and don't simply learn and practise a speech. You must answer the question which the examiner asks you in the test.
$x$ Don't talk at the same time as your partner or interrupt them suddenly when they are speaking.
$x$ Try not to leave long or frequent pauses, try to speak as naturally as you can.
$x$ Don't worry if the examiner interrupts you when you are stil speaking. This shows that you have spoken enough. Part of the examiner's $j$ job is to control the time limits of the test.

The two examiners are doing different jobs. One person is an interlocutor, which means they speak to you and manage the test. The other perso an assessor, who only listens and does not partipater, whor and the assessor decide how well you performed he interlocutor gives you a general mark for how well you did in the whole test, and the assessor specifically considers four criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication.

## Taking the exam

Even after lots of preparation, many people still feel nervous on exam day. That's why it's really important to feel ready and to know what to expect. Watch
the What to expect on exam day video.


## Before exam day, you should:

$\checkmark$ Register for the exam. If you are preparing for the exam as part of a course at a school, independently, you can look online to find a centre that offers the exam and register $\frac{\text { a centre that offers the exam and register }}{\text { directly with them. They will give you advice }}$ about preparation and tell you how much your exam will cost.
$\checkmark$ Check the date, time and address of your Check the date, time and address of your
$\checkmark$ Sign up for our free online results service The fastest way to get your results is to register with our Results Service for Candidates. When wou register for the exam, you'll be given your Candidate ID Number and your Secret Number. You'll need these details to register to receive your results online.
$\checkmark$ Check that you know where the exam is happening and how to get there, because you must arrive before the exam starts.

You should register with our free Results Service for Candidates a few weeks before your exam.


Can I choose to take different exam papers on different days?
No, the Speaking test is the only paper which usually happens on a different day. All the other papers must be taken together on the same day.
Do I need to bring anything with me on exam day? Yes, you should bring:

1. Identification (for example, your passport or national ID card). It must be the original document with your photo and it must be valid on the day of your exam.
2. Pens (black or dark blue).
3. Pencils (B or HB ) and an eraser
4. A clear plastic bottle of water.

Your exam centre will have extra pens and pencils if you need them. You cannot bring your mobile phone or other electronic items inside the exam room. Your exam centre can tell you if you should leave these
at home or if they can keep them somewhere safe during the exam.

## Top tips for exam day

$\checkmark$ In the Reading and Use of English and Writing papers, you can do the tasks in any order, so papers, you can do the tasks in any order
you might want to start with the questions which you find easier. Just make sure that you type or write your answers in the correct order on the screen or the answer sheet!
$\checkmark$ It's important to have enough energy when you're taking an exam! Before exam day, check you're taking an exam! Before exam day, check
with your exam centre if it's possible to buy food and drink there. If not, you might want to bring something to eat. You can't bring food to your desk, but you can eat it during breaks.

- Check you know what you can and can't do in the exam room. For example, you can't bring food to your desk with you but you can bring a clear plastic bottle of water. All of this information is in the Summary Regulations, which you can read online before exam day. Your exam centre will also provide a copy of these rules.
$\checkmark$ There will be a clock or timer in the exam room (or on your screen if you're taking the digital exam). Remember to use the time well. Try not to panic by looking at the clock every few minutes!
$\checkmark$ Follow all instructions carefully. In the digital exam, the instructions will be on your screen. In the paper-based exam, they will be on the exam paper. If you have any questions, if you need help or if you want to leave the room, raise your hand to ask the invigilator (the person who helps manage the exams).
$\checkmark$ Your exam centre will take your photo. They might also make a note of your passport or ID number. These steps are very important if you want to use your exam result in future for immigration or higher education.
$\checkmark$ Finally ... try to sleep well the night before your exam!

During the exam, you must not talk to
other people or try to see what they other people or try to see what they are writing or typing.
In the digital test, the timer will tel you how much time you have left. and the test will finish when your time is up. At the end of the paper based exam, the invigilator will tell you to stop writing and you must stop immediately. Then you must give them all your papers, including the question papers, answer sheets and any notes which you took, and will tell you when you can leave t will tell you when you can leave the room.


## After the exam

Well done! You prepared, you took the exam and now you're just waiting for your results. So what happens now?

## Getting your results and certificate

All candidates receive a Statement of Results. You can access this online. If you are successful in the exam, you will also receive a certificate. This is sent to your exam centre.

|  | Digital exam | Paper-based exam |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Statement of Results | 1-2 weeks after the exam | $4-6$ weeks after the exam |
| Certificate | 3-4 weeks after the exam | $7-9$ weeks after the exam |

## Your Statement of Results will look like this:

your grade for the whole exam

the CEFR level (B2) of the whole exam
your score on the Cambridge English Scale for each of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and Use of English
$?$
What does my 'overall score' mean?
Your overall score uses the Cambridge English Scale to show how well you did in the exam.

| If you score ... | You will receive ... | Your certificate will show ... |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 180 or more <br> (grade A) | a certificate for B2 First | ... that you demonstrated ability at CEFR Level C1. |
| 160-179 <br> (grade B or C) | a certificate for B2 First | ... that you demonstrated ability at CEFR Level B2. |
| $\mathbf{1 4 0 - 1 5 9}$ | a certificate from Cambridge <br> English | ... that you demonstrated ability at CEFR Level B1. |

139 or below You will not receive a certificate.

What happens if I don't pass one of the papers?
You can't fail a paper. Your 'overall score' is based on the whole exam, so it's possible to pass the exam even if you don't do very well in one paper. Your Statement of Results will show your overall score and your scores for the different parts of the exam
How can I receive my results online?
You'll need your Candidate ID Number and Secret Number to register with the Results Service for Candidates. You can find these numbers on the Confirmation of Entry document from your exam centre.
How can a university, college or employer check my exam results?
They can use the online Results Verification Service. You will need to give them your Candidate ID Number
and Secret Number. If you've lost these numbers, the centre where you took your exam can provide them.

If you do not want to prepare for another exam but you want to continue developing and improving your English, there are many things you could do. For example

Continue to read and listen to things in English which interest you, for example novels, television shows, blogs or podcasts
Join a club or project which involves reading (like a book club) or writing (like a Facebook group where members submit their own short stories)
Continue to keep a vocabulary notebook. Add any interesting or useful words and Add any interesting or useful words and read and listen to in English

Next steps in your learning journey With your B2 First for Schools qualification, you could:

Begin a course of higher education. Cambridge English Qualifications are efficial colleges and universities globally.
Travel, study or work abroad. Cambridge English Qualifications are so well known opportunities in other countries.

Prepare for the next level: C1 Advanced. A C1 Advanced qualification will help you develop the skills for studying, working o living in English-speaking countries.


## Where your world grows

Find out more at cambridge.org/english
unlock a lifetime of experiences and, together with teachers and our partners, we help people to learn and confidently prove their skills to the world.
Where your world grows
We believe that English can

This document was initially designed for print and as such does not reach accessibility standard WCAG 2.1 in a number of ways including missing text alternatives and missing document structure.

If you need this document in a different format contact BrandAdmin.C@cambridgeenglish.org telling us your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

