

Prepare for Exam Success: B2 First for Schools / C1 Advanced self-access learning

Lesson Summary

The topic of this lesson is **life in lockdown***. In the lesson you will:

- practise research strategies to see what other people say about life in lockdown.
- look at some useful language for talking about the impact of COVID-19 on daily life.
- review strategies for improving your writing and complete a timed Writing Part 2 task (suitable for both B2 First for Schools and C1 Advanced).
- review strategies for improving your speaking and practise Speaking Parts 3 and 4 (suitable for both B2 First for Schools and C1 Advanced).
- reflect on your writing and speaking using a performance checklist.

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lockdown

noun [C or U] mainly US

UK  /'lɒk.daʊn/ US  /'lɑːk.daʊn/

a situation in which people are not allowed to enter or leave a building or area freely because of an emergency:

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Prepare 1: Introduction to the lesson

1. Think about the questions below and make some notes in English in your notebook.

- a. How has your routine changed since the outbreak of COVID-19?
- b. Which of these changes have been positive and which have been more difficult?
- c. Which change has had the most impact on your day-to-day life?

Bonus task! Conduct a survey.

Survey friends or family members. Use social media or messaging to ask them the questions in Exercise 1. Make a note of their answers in English. Write a short paragraph to summarise their answers. You can use these sentence stems to get you started:

Everyone...

Most people...

Some of us...

None of us...

¹ Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/lockdown>

Prepare 2: Reading and Vocabulary

1. Read this blog post entitled 'Life in Lockdown' quickly for the main ideas, so don't stop to look up unknown words. Write the answer to the following question in your notebook:

- a. Is Susan's situation similar or different to your own? How?



(A) Hi! I'm Susan and I've decided to start this blog to document my **Life in Lockdown**. We've been in 1) lockdown now for a week in the UK. That means we have to stay at home almost all of the time. We're allowed out once a day to exercise and we can go to the supermarket to buy essentials. You have to try and stay two metres away from other people when you go out. I'm starting to get used to the situation now but it still feels like a dream sometimes. It's pretty 2) surreal when I look outside and there's no one around.

(B) My mum is a nurse, so she is classed as a 3) key worker and is still going to work every day. The company where my dad works has had to close its stores and 4) furlough all of their employees – that means my dad is still employed but he is not allowed to go to work until his company say he can return.

(C) I went to school before and I was studying for exams, so my life has changed quite a lot. I found the situation a bit 5) overwhelming at first. The hardest part has been 6) social distancing. I really miss seeing my friends in person but we chat every day online. I also have to study a lot by myself now and I find that really challenging.

(D) My little brother sometimes 7) distracts me when I'm trying to study because he always wants to play. However, one of the positives of the lockdown has been spending more time with my family. I try to stick to a routine each day that also includes time for exercise, some online socialising and something fun or creative like playing a board game with my family. This is helping me 8) make the best of it! I'd love to know what you are doing to stay positive during the lockdown. Let me know in the comments!

1. Notice how the text is organised, each paragraph relates to a different topic. Match the following headings to paragraphs A to D.

- 1) How my life has changed.
- 2) Looking on the bright side.
- 3) Lockdown in the UK
- 4) How my parents' lives have changed.

Top tip! Guessing the meaning of new vocabulary

Being able to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context is a useful exam strategy because you aren't allowed to use a dictionary when you take your Cambridge English Qualification..

Try asking yourself the following questions about each of the underlined words and phrases to help you guess possible meanings.

- Is the word a noun, a verb, an adjective or something else?
- Is there a description, contrast, comparison or example in the sentences around the word?
- Do you recognise the root of the word? Have you seen a similar word before?
- Look for familiar prefixes or suffixes. What do you know about the prefix 'over' for example? Does this help you get an idea of what 'overwhelming' could mean?

2. Now use the strategies in the Top Tips box to help you match the underlined words in the text to the definitions below. The first one has been done for you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) a situation in which people are not allowed to leave or enter a building or area freely because of an emergency. lockdown | e. makes it difficult for someone to give their full attention to something |
| b) a rule put in place to reduce person-to-person contact during the COVID-19 pandemic | f. to allow or force someone to be temporarily absent from work |
| c) someone whose job is necessary to a particular situation | g. strange, not seeming real, like a dream |
| d) very great or very strong, too much to deal with | h. make a difficult situation as pleasant and positive as it can possibly be. |

Check your answers in the Answer Key at the end of the lesson.

Bonus activity! Looking for more vocabulary?

Hover over the titles of these two blog posts from the Cambridge Dictionary online:

- **Making the best of it** (dealing with life during the coronavirus pandemic)
- Quarantine, carriers and face masks: the language of the coronavirus

Now record the new vocabulary in your notebook or on vocabulary flashcards like the example below.

- Include enough information about the Meaning, Form and Use of each word. You can look this up in the **Cambridge Dictionary** online.
- Make each word more memorable by writing an example sentence about yourself or writing a question to ask your study partner.

Example:

lockdown	
Meaning	Definition: a situation in which people are not allowed to enter or leave a building or area freely because of an emergency. ²
Form	noun (countable) Spoken: main stress on 'lock' Phonemic transcription: /'lɒk.daʊn/
Use	Informal Common combinations with other words: to be placed on lockdown / to be in lockdown How has your life changed since being in lockdown?

Try to use some of the new words and phrases you learn in the practice tasks in this lesson. This will help you remember them.

Prepare 3: Research the topic

- 1) In her blog post, Susan mentions 'sticking to a routine' as a good strategy for making the best of things. Do you think this is a good idea? Why? Why not? Write your ideas in English in your notebook.
- 2) Do you have any other ideas about ways of coping with life in lockdown? Make a list in your notebook.
- 3) Choose one of the following articles/videos to help you with Exercises 4 and 5.
 - a. The Guardian newspaper: **The Experts' Guide to Lockdown living**
 - b. Ted.com: **I'm incredibly anxious about coronavirus. What can I do?**
 - c. BBC Newsround: **How to boss being stuck at home**
- 4) How many of your ideas from Exercise 2 are mentioned in the article/video you chose?
- 5) Add any new ideas to the list you made in Exercise 2.
- 6) What's your favourite idea? How would you summarise it in a comment on Susan's blog? Write your idea in your notebook.

² Source: **Cambridge Dictionary** online

Well done! Now take a break before you move on to the Practice stages.

Prepare to write, prepare for success

1. Which of the following have you written recently?

- an essay for school or university
- a report or proposal
- an online review
- an email or letter
- a text message

2. Would you approach each piece of writing in Exercise 1 in the same way? Tick the ones you think are more formal? Underline the ones that might need more planning and preparation. Now, check your answers in the answer key.

Top tip! Use the P.O.W.E.R. process to improve your writing

When you need to communicate more complex ideas in writing follow these useful steps to help you organise your ideas and check your work.

P = Prepare – do your research, narrow down your topic, brainstorm ideas

O = Organise – choose your best ideas, write a plan or outline of your essay, think about paragraphing

W = Write it!

E = Edit your work. Check carefully for errors or unnecessary repetition.

R = Review and Reflect - when you practise for the exam, have someone else check your work too and think about what you can improve on next time

3. Now let's look at how we can apply the P.O.W.E.R. process to our exam practice. Read the **Steps to Success** below and tick the ones you usually follow when you do Writing Paper exam practice tasks.

Steps to Success! Writing Part 2

1. **Read the question carefully** – underline the key words and make sure you include all of the information you are asked for. Who are you writing to? Should your style be formal or informal?
2. **Use the language and ideas from the lesson** – think about the vocabulary and ideas you researched in the preparation stages. What can you use to help you write your answer to the exam task? Susan organised her blog into paragraphs. Think about how you can do the same with your writing.
3. **Now start the clock** - use your phone, tablet or an online timer to time yourself doing the task.
 - B2 First for Schools candidates should write 140 to 190 words and spend about 40 minutes on the task.

- C1 Advanced candidates should write 220 to 260 words and spend about 45 minutes on the task.
4. **Make a plan** – make a list of the ideas you want to include in your writing in your notebook. Now organise your ideas into paragraphs. You should spend around 5 minutes planning your answer.
 5. **Write** – now write your answer to the task. Aim to leave at least 5 minutes at the end to check your work. Don't waste time counting the words (leave this until you finish the task or your time is up).
 6. **Check your work** – Common errors for most English learners include missing articles (a, an, the) and 3rd person –s. Check for these. It's a good idea to keep a list of your typical errors in your notebook then you can check for them too. See the writing checklist below for other ideas on what to look for.
 7. **Time's up!** Take a short break before you move on to Step 8. Go for a walk, make a drink and then come back.
 8. **Reflect** on your performance using the writing checklist below. Ask your study partner for feedback too – it's always helpful to get a second opinion on your writing. This will help you focus on the areas you need to work on.

Practice 1: Practice Task for Writing Part 2

1. Now follow the Steps to Success to complete this Practice Task. Good luck!

You have received an email from your English friend Susan.

I've started a blog about my life in lockdown and I'd like to include something about how people's lives have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in different countries. Can you tell me about the situation in your country? I'd like to hear about how your daily routine has changed and any advice you have for making the best of the situation.

Write your email in reply.

Reflect 1: Self-reflection and peer feedback using a writing checklist

1. Use the checklist below to reflect on how well you did the task.
2. Give yourself a grade between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest).
3. If you are working with a study partner, ask them to complete the checklist for you as well. Do your assessments match?
4. What did you do well?
5. What do you need to work on next time?

Writing checklist (based on assessment criteria ³)	Notes	Grade
Content – has all the important information been included in the piece of writing? Are there enough words?		
Communicative Achievement – is the writing in the style of an informal email?		
Organisation – are the ideas presented in a logical order and are they connected through the text across sentences and paragraphs?		
Language – vocabulary and grammar; is there a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and how accurately are they used?		

You can also submit your writing to the Cambridge **Write and Improve** website to get immediate feedback on your work.

Speaking – Time to Talk

Top tip! Find a study partner

Make your exam practice more useful by working with a friend who wants to practise speaking English. Ask a friend who is about the same level as you and who is also preparing for a Cambridge English Qualification.

- Record your speaking on a mobile phone or tablet
- Video conferencing tools, like Zoom are useful to record and review your speaking.
- Take turns in the roles of candidate and examiner
- Give each other constructive feedback

³ © UCLES 2020 - get more information about the Assessment Criteria for Writing here <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/286979-improve-your-english-checklist-c1.pdf>

Practice 2: Speaking Part 3

1) Read the Top Tips for Success below then use them with the Speaking Part 3 task on the next page.

Top tips for success! Speaking Part 3

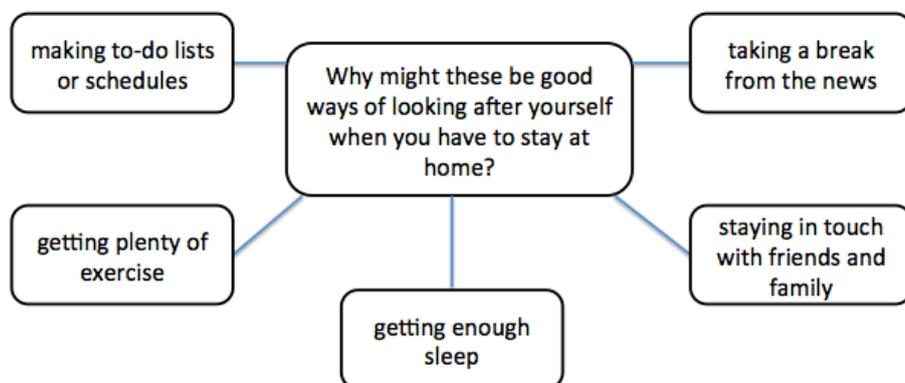
1. **Read the question and the prompts carefully** - make full use of the written prompts during the discussion.
2. **Interact with the other candidate** – ask for opinions and ideas from your partner and listen and respond to what they have to say.
3. **Use the useful language** you noted down from your previous research tasks. BUT don't write anything down – you won't be able to make notes in the exam.
4. **Time yourself** using your phone or an online timer.
5. **Record yourself** - this is exam *practice*, so if you are not satisfied with your first attempt you can and should **repeat the task**.
6. **Reflect** on your performance and ask your study partner for feedback. This will help you focus on the areas you need to work on.

Speaking Part 3 Exam Task

Examiner: I'd like you to imagine that a school wants to give advice to its students on ways to look after themselves and manage their studies while they are at home during lockdown. Here are some ideas they are thinking about and a question for you to discuss.

First you have some time to look at the task (15 seconds).

Now talk to each other about why these might be good ways of looking after yourself when you have to stay at home. (2 minutes)



Examiner: Thank you. Now you have a minute to decide which idea you think is the best.

Practice 3: Speaking Part 4

1. Read the Top Tips for Speaking Part 4 below. How is it different from Speaking Part 3?

Top tips for success! Speaking Part 4

1. **Listen carefully to the question** – if you are practising with a partner, one of you can take on the role of the examiner. You can ask the examiner to repeat the question if you need to.
2. **Listen to the other candidate** – in the exam, the examiner will ask you to comment on your partner's answers. When you are practising, the person in the role of examiner should also listen to the answers and could comment at the end on whether they agree or disagree with them.
3. **Use the useful language** you noted down from your previous research tasks. BUT don't write anything down – you won't be able to make notes in the exam.
4. **Time yourself** using your phone or an online timer. Part 4 lasts approximately 5 minutes.
5. **Record yourself** - this is exam *practice*, so if you are not satisfied with your first attempt you can and should **repeat the task**.
6. **Reflect** on your performance and ask your study partner for feedback. This will help you focus on the areas you need to work on.

2) Reflect on life in lockdown and use the Top Tips for Speaking Part 4 to help you with this practice task.

Speaking Part 4 Exam Task

- How important is it for people to spend time with friends rather than family? Why?
- Do you think it's better to show your feelings or to hide them?
- Some people say that laughter is a good form of therapy. What do you think?
- Do you think TV can be a good educational tool? Why? Why not?
- Some people say that you shouldn't trust the news you read on the internet. Do you agree?⁴

⁴ Adapted from Cambridge English Exam Booster for Advanced © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2018 and Cambridge English Exam Booster for B2 First and First for Schools © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2017

Reflect 2: Self-reflection and peer feedback using a speaking checklist

1. Use the checklist below to reflect on how well you did the task.
2. Give yourself a grade between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest).
3. If you are working with a study partner, ask them to complete the checklist for you as well. Do your assessments match?
4. What did you do well?
5. What do you need to work on next time?

Candidate checklist

Speaking Checklist (based on assessment criteria)	Notes	Grade
Lexical and Grammatical resource: Used a range of simple and complex vocabulary and grammar to talk about the topic. Used vocabulary and grammar accurately.		
Discourse Management: Talked for a minute. Spoke without much hesitation or repetition. Answered both questions. Gave a structured answer		
Pronunciation: Could be generally understood. Used intonation to enhance and convey meaning. Used word and sentence stress correctly. Mispronunciation of individual sounds did not cause confusion		
Interactive Communication: Listened when the other candidate spoke. Asked for opinions and ideas. Was able to react to what the other candidate had already said.		

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Answer Key

Prepare 2 Exercise 2

1) C 2) D 3) A 4) B

Prepare 2 Exercise 3

1) a 2) g 3) c 4) f 5) d 6) b 7) e 8) h

Prepare to write, prepare for success

- an essay for school or university – *usually formal /needs planning and preparation*
- a report or proposal – *usually formal / needs planning and preparation*
- an online review – *sometimes formal and may need planning and preparation*
- an email or letter – *can be formal or informal, often planned when formal*
- a text message – *usually informal and spontaneous*