

# English Skills Test

General

## Reading test advice for the candidate

### Why take an adaptive test?

- Your adaptive test is **personalised**. Some questions might be easy, and some will be more difficult. Your questions are chosen based on your previous answers.
- An adaptive test will give you an **accurate result** and a **better test experience** because it is tailored to your level.
- Your Reading test usually takes approximately 20–45 minutes, depending on your level. However, it could be shorter or longer than this.
- Your results will be available **immediately after** you complete the test.

### What do I need to know about my test?

- Look at the [sample test](#) to become familiar with the tasks. The sample test is **not** adaptive. It shows you all the different types of tasks in the Cambridge EST test. When you take your real test, you will see some of these tasks, but **not all** of them. The tasks you see will depend on your level.
- If you are doing Business English, look at the [Business sample test](#).
- Before answering a question, read the task instructions and any information about the texts, as well as the text including the title. This will help your understanding.
- You can change your answer to any question on the same screen.
- Check all your answers carefully before you click on the arrow to move to the next screen. However, do not take too long to read through everything again, try to keep moving at a good, steady pace.
- When you click forward to the next screen, you will not be able to go back.

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Task type 1	<p><b>(Reading) One-Question Multiple Choice</b></p> <p>For this question, choose the correct answer.</p> <div> <div> <p><b>All residents</b></p> <p>Ahead of the next residents' committee meeting, recommendations for committee members to replace our retiring secretary should be posted in the building manager's mailbox by this Friday 12pm.</p> </div> <div> <p>What is the aim of this notice?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> to inform residents about a meeting</p> <p><input type="radio"/> to encourage residents to apply for an opening</p> <p><input type="radio"/> to ask residents to submit nominations</p> </div> </div>
No. of questions in task	1
Testing focus	Understanding the meaning of a short communicative text in the form of a notice, sign or message
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a short text (message or notice).</li> <li>• Read each option carefully.</li> <li>• Eliminate the options that are not correct.</li> <li>• Click on the correct option, making sure the answer matches with what the short text says.</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a variety of text types which may appear in the test, such as emails, signs, notices, messages.</li> <li>• Tip: Set up a chat group with your friends or family where you only communicate in English.</li> </ul>

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Task type 2	<p><b>(Reading) One-Question Multiple-choice gap fill</b></p> <p>For this question, choose the correct answer.</p> <p>Tim <b>2</b> <input type="text"/> to get to the end of the long-distance cycle ride without problems.</p> <p>succeeded managed achieved</p>
No. of questions in task	1
Testing focus	Understanding the grammar and vocabulary within a sentence
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the gapped sentence.</li> <li>• Look carefully at all the options.</li> <li>• Check the words before and after the gap to see if options could fit here.</li> <li>• Click on the gap then select the correct answer by clicking on it.</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review a variety of grammatical features (e.g. articles, infinitives, pronouns, -ing forms, quantifiers, modals, relative clauses, comparatives, prepositions and particles, verb tenses and forms, determiners), collocations, fixed phrases and phrasal verbs.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Cambridge English</a> has a variety of practice activities to help you.</li> <li>• Tip: Reading a variety of texts in English will help you become more aware of grammatical structures and vocabulary. If you see a word, phrase or structure you don't know, make a note of it. How is it used? What does it mean? Write down one or two example sentences.</li> </ul>

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Task type 3	<p><b>(Reading) Five-Question Open gap-fill</b></p> <p>For these questions, type the correct answer in each gap. Type only one word in each gap.</p> <p><b>Book Review: <i>The Island</i></b></p> <p><i>The Island</i> is a beautiful book, written by new author Sam Davies. It tells the true story of Sam's life as a child growing up on a small island, <b>3</b> he went to live with his parents when he was just five. It was a massive change for them all, but as the book explains, for Sam <b>4</b> particular, it meant a completely new way of life. Before moving to the island, he <b>5</b> not even left his home city for more than a week or two! Everything on the island therefore seemed very new and strange <b>6</b> first.</p> <p>It is a fascinating book to read, and Sam has included wonderful photos, which really help readers understand <b>7</b> special the island is.</p>
No. of questions in task	5
Testing focus	Knowledge of grammar in a text
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a text with 5 gaps.</li> <li>• Each gap is missing a grammar word.</li> <li>• Read the text carefully and consider its meaning before you fill in any gap.</li> <li>• Type ONE word only in each gap.</li> <li>• Check your answer has the right meaning and fits with the grammar of the sentence.</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review a variety of grammar - articles, infinitives, pronouns, quantifiers, modals, relative clauses, comparatives, prepositions and particles, verb tenses and forms, determiners.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Cambridge English</a> has a variety of practice activities.</li> <li>• Tip: Look at written work you have done in class and read your teacher's comments. What grammar errors do you often make? Find practice exercises online to help you improve.</li> </ul>

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Task type 4	<div> <div>(Reading) Five-question Multiple-choice gap-fill</div> <div>Click on each gap then choose the correct answer.</div> <div> <div>Shark cage diving</div> <div> Cage diving is a great way for scientists to study sharks, but it's also popular with tourists. As its name suggests, shark cage diving <b>8</b> <input type="text"/> a cage. However, it's the people, rather than the sharks, who are inside the cage, to keep them safe. The cage is <b>9</b> <input type="text"/> to a boat which sails in an area of the ocean where sharks are <b>10</b> <input type="text"/>. Four or five people are underwater in the cage, with breathing equipment. That way, when a shark <b>11</b> <input type="text"/> they are able to get some great photos. They can also get a close <b>12</b> <input type="text"/> at the creature and observe its behaviour. </div> <div> <div>applies</div> <div>deals</div> <div>involves</div> </div> </div> </div>
No. of questions in task	5
Testing focus	Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in a text
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read a text with 5 gaps.</li> <li>Each gap needs to be filled with a single word or phrasal verb.</li> <li>Read the text carefully and consider its meaning before you fill in any gap.</li> <li>Click on a gap and consider all the options before choosing the correct one.</li> <li>After completing all the gaps, read the whole text again and check your answers.</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review a variety of grammatical features (e.g. articles, infinitives, pronouns, -ing forms, quantifiers, modals, relative clauses, comparatives, prepositions and particles, verb tenses and forms, determiners), collocations, fixed phrases and phrasal verbs.</li> <li><a href="#">Cambridge English</a> has a variety of practice activities.</li> <li>Tip: Reading a variety of texts in English will help you become more aware of grammatical structures and vocabulary. If you see a word, phrase or structure you don't know, make a note of it. How is it used? What does it mean? Write down one or two example sentences.</li> </ul>

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Task type 5	<div><div>(Reading) Five-Question Multiple Choice</div><div>For this question, choose the correct answer.</div><div><div>Lucy Brooks - piano player</div><div><p>I've played the piano and violin since I was 3. Now I'm studying at music college, and some months ago I took part in a national piano competition. My teachers had kept suggesting I should enter, but I wasn't sure – I was worried I'd be too nervous. However, I was able to play plenty of complicated piano pieces, so I felt I'd probably be as good as some of the other competitors, and decided to give it a try. But no-one was more surprised than me when I eventually reached the final!</p><p>To be honest, I can't remember that day very clearly because I hadn't slept well the night before. I'd set my alarm so that I wouldn't arrive at the concert hall late. My sisters planned to listen to it on the radio at home, but my parents were there in the hall. Suddenly it was my turn! As usual, the moment I went on stage and began playing, all I thought about was the music, not who was watching. In fact, I hardly even noticed the full orchestra performing with me.</p><p>Then the results were announced – and I'd won! We were presented with our prizes, and I had to make a speech. I hadn't prepared anything, but I managed to say quite a lot, luckily. However, the real high point came when the conductor brought a woman over to say hello. I didn't recognise her initially, but when he said her name, I realized I'd seen her on TV playing in concerts all over the world. Anyway, it all felt like a huge achievement, and my teacher said I'd done brilliantly.</p><p>Life wasn't quite the same after the competition was over, though. Plenty of students at my college had won big competitions, so I wasn't considered particularly special there. But the competition made me think about where I was going next, and that if I was going to carry on playing the piano and being successful, as I hoped, then there would be plenty more studying ahead.</p><p>Anyway, I'm hoping something good will come from my win. For example, it's difficult for young people to get music lessons where I live, and I've met talented teenagers who can play any type of music from classical to jazz, but can't get proper training. So, it'd be great if publicity from the competition could help to change that. I've also written piano music especially for teenagers who are learning – that might encourage them to practise more!</p></div></div><div><div>13 Why wasn't Lucy keen to enter the piano competition initially?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> She didn't feel confident about her chances of winning.</div><div><input type="radio"/> She hadn't done enough preparation for it.</div><div><input type="radio"/> She thought it might be a stressful experience.</div><div><input type="radio"/> She wanted to avoid disappointing her teachers.</div></div><div><div>14 How did Lucy feel during her performance in the final?</div><div><div>15 After the results of the competition were announced, Lucy</div><div>16 What does Lucy say about her life after the competition?</div><div>17 Lucy now hopes that her success will</div></div></div></div></div>
No. of questions in task	5 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
Testing focus	Reading for gist and specific information such as opinion, purpose, main idea, implication, etc.
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read a long text with five multiple-choice questions.</li><li>• Read the text quickly for general understanding first.</li><li>• Read each of the questions and the options and look closely at the text to choose your answer.</li><li>• Click on the correct answer for each question.</li></ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read a variety of texts which may appear in the test - articles, opinion pieces, editorials.</li><li>• Tip: Set up a chat group with your friends or family where you only communicate in English.</li></ul>

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Task type 6	<div><div>(Reading) Two-Question Multiple Choice</div><div><div>For this question, choose the correct answer.</div><div><div><div>All about food</div><div>A TV critic reviews a new show about food for the under 5s.</div><div><p>All about food is a new TV show aimed at young children, featuring chef Sarah Holmes, who seems to have been a near-constant presence on TV lately. I found the fast pace rather excessive, with its constant switching between presenter, puppets and video clips. Having said that, I'm significantly older than the target audience, who have a shorter attention span and will no doubt find it entertaining. It's by no means the first show to teach young viewers about food, but its extensive budget means it has a different look from the others.</p><p>Each episode is centered on a single ingredient, such as salt or pickles – a rather odd choice. The one I watched was about tomatoes. Viewers saw tomatoes growing, and then some being tinned. They were then briefly informed of the advantages of whole, uncooked ones. Sarah made a tomato-based pasta sauce, sweetening it with sugar. I'm sure such an experienced chef knows other ways of doing this – ways that are less damaging to children's teeth. Nevertheless, her efforts will at least prove to them that you don't have to buy sauces ready-made.</p></div></div></div><div><div>18</div><div>The writer believes the show will be successful because</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> the presenter has considerable TV experience.</div><div><input type="radio"/> a lot of money has been spent on its production.</div><div><input type="radio"/> it uses techniques which appeal to children.</div><div><input type="radio"/> it focuses on a subject which is popular with children.</div></div></div><div><div>19</div><div>In the writer's opinion, what would improve the episode on tomatoes?</div></div></div></div>
No. of questions in task	2
Testing focus	Reading for gist and specific information such as opinion, purpose, main idea, implication, etc.
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read a long text with two multiple-choice questions.</li><li>• Read the text quickly for general understanding first.</li><li>• Read each of the questions and the options and look closely at the text to choose your answer.</li><li>• Click on the correct answer for each question.</li></ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read a variety of texts which may appear in the test - articles, opinion pieces, editorials.</li><li>• Tip: Find a text which interests you. What do you think of the writer's opinion/perspective? Do you share the same point of view? Read the comments below the article. What others think? Do you agree with them?</li></ul>

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Task type 8

### (Reading) Missing Paragraph Text Completion

Read the text.

Choose the correct paragraph A–F for each gap. You do not need to use one of the paragraphs.

### Building meaningful relationships

Psychologists have concluded that close relationships depend on a sense of "shared reality", a feeling that we experience the world in the same way as someone else. This has been demonstrated by an experiment in which participants were put in pairs to discuss a series of ambiguous film clips. They then rated their agreement with statements such as "we saw the world the same way" and "we anticipated our partner's comment". It was shown that the more these scores reflected a shared reality, the more they wanted to continue the discussion.

Unfortunately, though, a flawed understanding of certain aspects of our interactions can lead us to act in ways that prevent any of these forms of relationship from developing. We often make an erroneous assumption about how our body language will be interpreted by those we are conversing

This is because it's easy to fake body language while your mind is elsewhere, with the result that others don't necessarily trust it. Consequently, it is better to demonstrate your attention explicitly. Try paraphrasing what someone has just expressed – that's impossible to do if you haven't been listening. If you agree with them, be sure to express that verbally.

Nevertheless most people are reluctant to do this, as was found in a study that encouraged "self-disclosure". Pairs were given various discussion prompts designed to promote deeper connections, such as "what in your life do you feel most grateful for?" and "if a crystal ball could tell you about your future, what would you want to know?"

**A** Also, conversations should tackle the kind of subject matter that allows a shared reality to develop. We often stick to superficial topics, skimming over more important issues. Yet research shows that when we share more personal thoughts, this can put us on an accelerated path to stronger relationships.

B On the other hand, the mere awareness of these barriers to creating a sense of shared reality can put you on the path to correcting them. Research shows, however, that you need to make a conscious effort to change your behaviour.

C Multiple studies have replicated this finding. Whether we are forming connections with friends, romantic partners or passing acquaintances, the sense of shared reality predicts how close we will feel to someone.

**D** People similarly tend to hold back when it comes to telling others how much they appreciate them, fearing that compliments will sound ingratulating. This tendency represents our unwillingness to know how much we value their better qualities, which again undermines shared reality.

Beforehand, people worried the conversation would be awkward compared with standard safe small talk. They also believed their partner would have little interest in hearing their innermost feelings. In reality, the encounters weren't as uncomfortable as feared. Those involved found themselves caring more about the conversation and feeling closer to the other person than expected.

One common tendency, for example, is to nod or smile to show we've heard the speaker and agree with them. We imagine these communicative signals will be taken at face value but that may not happen.

No. of questions in task

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5

## Testing focus

Understanding of text structure, cohesion and coherence across paragraphs in a longer text


## Advice

- Read a long text with 5 gaps.
- Each gap is missing a paragraph. You will need to choose the correct paragraph for each gap from 6 options.
- There is 1 extra paragraph.
- Look before and after each gap for clues to decide which paragraph fits best.
- Drag and drop the correct paragraphs into each gap.
- Finally, reread the whole text with your chosen paragraphs to check your answers.

## Preparation

- Read a wide variety of texts in English.
- Tip: Reading more in English will also improve your writing.

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