

English Skills Test

Business

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	<div><div>(Reading) One-Question Multiple Choice</div><div>For this question, choose the correct answer.</div><div><div><div>All residents</div><div>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.</div></div><div><div>What is the aim of this notice?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> to inform residents about a meeting</div><div><input type="radio"/> to encourage residents to apply for an opening</div><div><input type="radio"/> to ask residents to submit nominations</div></div></div></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">• Read a short text (message or notice).• Read each option carefully.• Eliminate the options that are not correct.• Click on the correct option, making sure the answer matches with what the short text says.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read a variety of text types which may appear in the test, such as emails, signs, notices, messages.• Tip: Set up a chat group with your friends or family where you only communicate in English.

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Task type 2	<p>(Reading) One-Question Multiple-choice gap fill</p> <p>For this question, choose the correct answer.</p> <p>Tim 2 <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"> • Read the gapped sentence. • Look carefully at all the options. • Check the words before and after the gap to see if options could fit here. • Click on the gap then select the correct answer by clicking on it.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Cambridge English has a variety of practice activities to help you. • 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.

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Task type 3	<p>(Reading) Five-Question Open gap-fill</p> <p>For these questions, type the correct answer in each gap. Type only one word in each gap.</p> <p>Book Review: <i>The Island</i></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, 3 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 4 particular, it meant a completely new way of life. Before moving to the island, he 5 not even left his home city for more than a week or two! Everything on the island therefore seemed very new and strange 6 first.</p> <p>It is a fascinating book to read, and Sam has included wonderful photos, which really help readers understand 7 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"> • Read a text with 5 gaps. • Each gap is missing a grammar word. • Read the text carefully and consider its meaning before you fill in any gap. • Type ONE word only in each gap. • Check your answer has the right meaning and fits with the grammar of the sentence.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review a variety of grammar - articles, infinitives, pronouns, quantifiers, modals, relative clauses, comparatives, prepositions and particles, verb tenses and forms, determiners. • Cambridge English has a variety of practice activities. • 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.

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><p>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 8 <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 9 <input type="text"/> to a boat which sails in an area of the ocean where sharks are 10 <input type="text"/>. Four or five people are underwater in the cage, with breathing equipment. That way, when a shark 11 <input type="text"/> they are able to get some great photos. They can also get a close 12 <input type="text"/> at the creature and observe its behaviour.</p><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">• Read a text with 5 gaps.• Each gap needs to be filled with a single word or phrasal verb.• Read the text carefully and consider its meaning before you fill in any gap.• Click on a gap and consider all the options before choosing the correct one.• After completing all the gaps, read the whole text again and check your answers.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Cambridge English has a variety of practice activities.• 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.

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>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><div>15 After the results of the competition were announced, Lucy</div></div><div><div>16 What does Lucy say about her life after the competition?</div></div><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">Read a long text with five multiple-choice questions.Read the text quickly for general understanding first.Read each of the questions and the options and look closely at the text to choose your answer.Click on the correct answer for each question.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read a variety of texts which may appear in the test - articles, opinion pieces, editorials.Tip: Set up a chat group with your friends or family where you only communicate in English.

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>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></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">• Read a long text with two multiple-choice questions.• Read the text quickly for general understanding first.• Read each of the questions and the options and look closely at the text to choose your answer.• Click on the correct answer for each question.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read a variety of texts which may appear in the test - articles, opinion pieces, editorials.• 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?

(Reading) Missing Sentence Text Completion

Read the text.
Choose the correct sentence for each gap. You do not need to use three of the sentences.

How do you know if something is wet?

Do your hands feel wet when you're washing them under running water? It seems like a silly question. But in fact humans cannot sense water on their skin – at least not technically, because our bodies don't have sensors used for the sole purpose of detecting liquids. Rather, we rely on a combination of other sensors to inform us when something's wet.

In the human body, a network of specialised neurons (cells in the brain and nerves) processes everything we touch by sending information from the skin to the brain. **26** What humans lack, however, is 'hygroreceptors'. These are neurons used specifically to detect water or changes in moisture levels in an environment. Scientists have discovered that several animal species, including cockroaches and bees, have these on their antennae, the two long, hair-like 'feelers' on their heads. **27** These are based on sensory input from our immediate surroundings.

We certainly use sight and touch to identify wetness: we see flowing water and feel it hitting us during a shower, for example. But many biologists in this field think temperature is the most important cue we use to sense water through the skin. ²² One expert who has gathered much of it is Davide Ffeller, a British physiologist whose team is pioneering research in this area. To test our ability to detect wetness, his researchers covered the eyes of nine individuals, then touched their arms with dry probes chilled to a range of cold temperatures. Most participants perceived the probes as wet if they were around 0 degrees Celsius. ²³ We do indeed rely on temperature to detect whether something is moist.

Filinger provides a possible explanation for this merging of sensations. "If you've got some moisture on the skin, chances are that it's going to evaporate from the skin and it's going to cool you." **24** That is, people learnt to perceive coolness and wetness as the same sensation.

So the next time you're finding it difficult to tell if your laundry on the line outside is dry when it also feels cold, you'll know why.

This mistaken impression confirmed what the scientists had suspected

People, however, must develop informed guesses about whether water is present on any surface.

Even so, the brain cannot distinguish between an illusion of wetness and real wetness.

It is thought that their findings may be used in the creation of various types of new materials.

This allows us to recognize objects by feeling them, and to detect textures and temperatures.

Wet items were then tested at different temperatures

During our evolution, this process may have formed an automatic association in our brains.

There is now a growing mass of evidence to support their theory

No. of questions in task

5

Testing focus

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

Advice

- Read a long text with 5 gaps.
- Each gap is missing a sentence, and you will need choose the correct sentence for each gap from 8 options.
- There are 3 extra sentences.
- Read the text carefully and consider its meaning before you fill in any gap.
- For each gap study the ideas and the words that come before or after it; these will help you decide which option fits best.
- Drag and drop the correct sentences into each gap.
- Finally, re-read the whole text with your chosen sentences to check your answers.

Preparation

- Read a wide variety of texts in English. How does the writer connect each sentence together? How is each paragraph connected?
- Tip: Reading more in English will also improve your writing.

(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.

Gap 1

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 with.

Gap 2

This is because it’s easy to take 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.

Gap 3

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?”

Options:

- A** Also, conversations should tackle the kind of subject matter that allows a shared reality to develop. We often stick to superficial topics, skating 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 prevents our acquaintances from knowing how much we value their better qualities, which again undermines shared reality.
- E** Inevitably, people worried the conversation would be evaluated compared with standard safe small talk. They also believed that partners would have less interest in hearing their less-motivated 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.
- F** 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 they not happen.

5

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

- 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.

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

Task type 9	<div><div>(Reading) Multiple Text Matching</div><div>Read the four reviews. Choose the correct reviewer for each of the four questions. You can choose the same reviewer for more than one question.</div><div><div><div>Book club</div><div>Four members give feedback on The Readers' Circle, a book club they are all a part of.</div><div><div>A</div><div>Having been part of The Readers' Circle for six months now, I can say that, overall, I've really enjoyed the experience. We meet frequently – every week, in fact – so, instead of discussing whole books at a time, we discuss only a few chapters. It's a fairly small women-only club, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Everyone has a chance to talk, though some are more willing to contribute than others. I think we'd have a better basis for conversation if each member were required to bring a specific question to the meetings, or some points from the chapters to discuss. It would help if we read a bit more each week, too. I find myself reading ahead so as not to get bored. To decide what to read, we peruse the New York Times Bestsellers list and pick something from there, which has been a great way for me to discover some of the most talented novelists of our day.</div></div><div><div>B</div><div>What keeps me coming back to this book club is the relationships I've formed. Because it's an intimate group of women I've come to know well, I feel free to share my honest opinions on what we're reading. It would be nice if we could entice a few more ladies to join, though, you know what they say – the more the merrier! The amount we read as a weekly book allows for plenty of book-related chat, and some off-topic chat, too. That said, I've been contemplating leaving the club. Recently, some members have been pushing for more structured discussions, but I don't want our meetings to feel like an academic literature course. I also wouldn't mind reading something other than bestsellers. There's so much great fiction out there, books I've been recommended that I think other members would enjoy reading too, but they're not on the list.</div></div><div><div>C</div><div>Before joining The Readers' Circle, I'd try to talk with my husband about what I was reading, but he's more into classic literature while I like to keep up with what modern authors are putting out there. Fortunately, in the book club, we're working through the list of bestselling fiction, which is right up my alley. We read only a few chapters a week, giving us just enough to chat about at meetings, and allowing me time to simultaneously read other novels that interest me. At first, I didn't see the point of restricting membership to females, but I think it makes it easier to pick out books that we're all more or less interested in, and it helps that we're all around the same age, give or take five years. I've heard that a few more women will be joining our club, so I'm looking forward to seeing how the dynamic changes.</div></div><div><div>D</div><div>I've been a part of this book club for the better part of a year, and, frankly, I'm considering leaving. While I value the opportunity to discuss what I'm</div></div></div></div><div><div>Which member shares an opinion with Member A about the club's approach to selecting books?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> A</div><div><input type="radio"/> B</div><div><input type="radio"/> C</div><div><input type="radio"/> D</div></div><div><div>Which member feels the same as Member D about the pace at which the club reads books?</div><div><input checked="" type="radio"/> A</div><div><input type="radio"/> B</div><div><input type="radio"/> C</div><div><input type="radio"/> D</div></div><div><div>Which member expresses a different view from the other three members with regard to making club membership more inclusive?</div><div><input checked="" type="radio"/> A</div><div><input type="radio"/> B</div><div><input type="radio"/> C</div><div><input type="radio"/> D</div></div><div><div>Which member has a different opinion from Member B about how the gatherings are conducted?</div><div><input checked="" type="radio"/> A</div><div><input type="radio"/> B</div><div><input type="radio"/> C</div><div><input type="radio"/> D</div></div></div></div>
No. of questions in task	4
Testing focus	Reading multiple sources to compare, contrast and synthesise information and views
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read four texts on the same topic.• Read each question and check across the texts to find the correct answer.• Click on the button to select the correct text A, B, C or D.• Check your answers.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read a variety of texts on the same topic, e.g. reviews, news/sports reports, opinion pieces. What are the similarities and differences between the texts? Which words and phrases tell you this?• Tip: Find some reviews of a recent film. What does the reviewer think of the film? Is it similar to other reviews? Which words and phrases tell you their opinions are similar/different?