

Cambridge

English Skills Test

Business

Reading

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 English Skills Test: Business. 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.
- 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><p>(Reading) One-Question Multiple Choice</p><div><p>For this question, choose the correct answer.</p></div><div><div><div>1</div><div><div>From: Manager</div><div>To: Sales team</div><div>Subject: New printers</div></div><div><p>Our new line of printers will be on display in the Blue Room from 9am tomorrow – a chance to familiarise yourselves with the products before pitching them to potential clients.</p></div></div></div><div><p>What does the manager want his team to do?</p><div><div><input type="radio"/></div>meet to practice pitching the new products</div><div><div><input type="radio"/></div>get to know a new product range ahead of promoting it</div><div><div><input type="radio"/></div>decide which customers to promote new products to</div></div></div>
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Task type 2	<p>(Reading) One-Question Multiple-choice gap fill</p> <p>Click on the gap then choose the correct answer.</p> <p>I've applied for the job but I don't really 2 <input type="text"/> to get it.</p> <p>expect think believe suppose</p>
No. of questions in task	1 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
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> <div><p>For these questions, type the correct answer in each gap. Type only one word in each gap.</p></div> <p>Do you want extra work?</p> <p>We are looking for people 3 can work extra hours next week. There will 4 a lot of work to do. This is because 5 two large new orders. We need people to work from 5 p.m. 6 8 p.m. every day.</p> <p>Please contact your manager 7 you are interested in this work.</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.



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Task type 4	<p>(Reading) Five-question Multiple-choice gap-fill</p> <p>Click on each gap then choose the correct answer.</p> <p>A new appointment</p> <p>The law firm Staley and Graham has appointed James Bramhall as its new human resources manager.</p> <p>Bramhall has over seven years 8 of working in human resources in the legal and retail sectors. He 9 the firm from Haston Lawyers where he spent two and a half years as HR manager. He has 10 in law and personnel management.</p> <p>The firm currently employs 110 staff. Bramhall and his 11 will be responsible for the firm's plans to 12 at least 30 new members of staff in the next six months.</p> <p>practice involvement experience</p>
No. of questions in task	5 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
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.



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Task type 5	<div><div>(Reading) Five-Question Multiple Choice</div><div>For these questions, choose the correct answer.</div><div><div><div>Effective team working</div><div>Teamwork is changing. Instead of being one connected group working face-to-face, with a fixed set of members, modern teams are often spread out geographically with varying membership. Consequently, members often create subgroups of people in the team that they work most closely with. Then, each subgroup views themselves more positively than the others, which can lead to tension across the wider team. When teams are forced to interact remotely, there's also the potential for mixed messages: walking into a face-to-face team meeting we immediately sense the mood of everyone in the room, but on video calls these non-verbal clues are lost.</div><div>For effective teamwork, establishing a team with the right mix and number of members and balance of skills is vital. It's not essential for every individual to possess superior technical and social skills, but overall, the team needs a healthy dose of both. Diversity in knowledge, views, age, gender and race can help increase creativity. Adding members is one way to achieve this, but increased size brings the risk of poor communication, limiting contributions. Teams should be made up of the minimum number of people possible and team leaders should ask themselves what unique value each person brings to the group.</div><div>Meetings are a vital part of teamwork and the first 10 minutes can be key to their success. Even with a packed agenda, team leaders should consider leaving this time free, to give participants opportunities to discuss matters not directly related to roles and responsibilities in the current project, rather than encouraging them to arrive at their leisure. This helps everyone develop a more complete picture of new or distant colleagues for a more positive working environment. Any awkward moments can be avoided by sticking to 'safer' topics of conversation, like work and travel, rather than family life, particularly when new members join the team.</div><div>Teamwork can be used across a range of business activities, including both long- and short-term projects. It's unlikely that every project will be equally creative or inspiring, and giving the whole team responsibility for the task from beginning to end is one way of ensuring the smooth running of the project. Another way of achieving this is for team leaders to state up front what actions and attitudes are, and are not, acceptable, which is particularly important when teams operate across different cultures or membership changes over time.</div><div>It goes without saying that a team must have shared goals. Teams cannot be inspired to work well without first knowing what they're working towards. Modest goals don't provide sufficient motivation. They need to be challenging, without being so hard to attain that the team becomes discouraged. They may have to be adapted to suit the changing needs of the project, a decision for the team leader, drawing on their past experience. However, reaching the goals should have rewards, either professional or personal, so that everyone cares about achieving them.</div></div><div><div><div>In the first paragraph, what point does the writer make about modern teams?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> The frequency of meetings has increased.</div><div><input type="radio"/> It's difficult for the entire team to maintain a feeling of unity.</div><div><input type="radio"/> Co-operation has become a high priority.</div><div><input type="radio"/> People are more likely to prefer working with others from similar backgrounds.</div></div></div><div><div>In the second paragraph, what does the writer say about team members?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> The writer suggests using the first ten minutes of any team meeting to</div></div></div><div><div>In the fourth paragraph, the writer says teams may struggle to work effectively unless</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> The writer says that team goals should be</div></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.



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Task type 6	<div><div>(Reading) Two-Question Multiple Choice</div><div>For these questions, choose the correct answer.</div><div><div>1</div><div><div>Staff motivation</div><p>Motivating staff is essential to the success of any firm. Motivated employees contribute more ideas and work harder to achieve business objectives. And good workplace morale also reduces costly staff turnover. Survey after survey shows that while pay rises and bonuses may provide short-term motivation boosts, praise from immediate managers, attention from top managers, and opportunities for responsibility influence people's behaviour just as effectively, yet cost little or nothing. So why do so few business leaders focus on such forms of motivation? Clearly an unhealthy number of those in charge still believe in financial motivators and because of this ignore motivation during tough economic times – exactly when it's most needed.</p><p>Small businesses, such as online business services company Cloud Viva, couldn't offer the same financial benefits as large companies if they wanted to, so they have found other ways to motivate staff. At Cloud Viva, its core values – respect for the individual, opportunities for personal growth, and a positive working environment – were developed by the whole workforce. In addition, everyone has share options, and they enjoy regular lunches in local restaurants and weekends away. But it's staff development that's at the heart of their approach. The company spends thousands of pounds a year per person on training and also supports staff in gaining work-related qualifications or to develop their own creative projects that might benefit the business. Their philosophy has paid off. They were recently voted 'Best small business to work for'.</p></div><div><div>13</div><div>In the first paragraph, what does the writer suggest about motivation?</div><div><div><input type="radio"/> The results of research into it may be confusing.</div><div><input type="radio"/> Too many managers disregard key evidence relating to it.</div><div><input type="radio"/> Companies are only interested in it when they are in difficulties.</div><div><input type="radio"/> Mixing monetary and non-monetary measures is the best way to achieve it.</div></div></div><div><div>14</div><div>The writer uses the company Cloud Viva to illustrate</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?



Task type 7	<div><div>(Reading) Missing Sentence Text Completion</div><div>Read the text. Choose the correct sentence for each gap. You do not need to use three of the sentences.</div><div><div><p>Working for global businesses</p><p>The business environment today can most definitely be described as one that's global and interconnected. This is why the majority of medium-to-large companies often look to expand their operations to other countries. One clear benefit of doing so is the ability to extend their customer reach. Businesses will find this difficult, however, if their employees don't have international experience to bring to the table. 1 Such individuals add value to businesses and provide a competitive advantage in the global marketplace.</p><p>It's not only businesses that benefit from being global and having an internationally minded workforce. Employees benefit from having contact with clients or colleagues from all around the world. 2 The resulting interpersonal skills are useful in all business contexts, both at home and abroad. It therefore pays to develop a workforce that is truly a melting pot of cultures. The company that I work for deliberately aims for an even, 50/50 split between local and international employees for this very reason.</p><p>In order for a business to operate successfully as a global enterprise, it needs to allow for cultural variations in workplace settings. 3 For instance, there may be a culture of flexible working in one country that is quite alien to the culture of a business that is headquartered elsewhere. If this is the case, the business would be advised to adjust the way it operates in the foreign country. Leave allowances are another common area for negotiation, as there is quite a lot of variation globally in the number of days employees are given annually. 4 This is when business operations might have to cease in some countries.</p><p>Most global businesses I know have little trouble recruiting staff to work for their various international branches. This is because a significant proportion of staff at some point in their lives consider moving overseas for work. Being able to work in a new environment and exploring unfamiliar countries – and being paid to do so – are understandably attractive propositions for many people. 5 Whatever the reason, spending a period of time overseas will always boost employability by enriching a CV and providing a wider perspective on things that would be difficult, if not impossible, to acquire otherwise.</p></div><div><p>These employees may not necessarily have skills that are hard to find in the business's home country.</p><p>That is to say, they need staff who are culturally sensitive, used to working in diverse contexts, and may even have worked abroad.</p><p>Doing so would nevertheless enable businesses to move people around to different locations around the world as and when needed.</p><p>Sometimes, these differences mean that a business's stated values and principles have to be adapted.</p><p>There might also be other personal motivations for individuals to take up a foreign assignment, such as being closer to family.</p><p>It needs to be said, however, that this kind of activity can't guarantee that a business will be successful in a new, unfamiliar overseas market.</p><p>For example, these encounters can help them develop the ability to build effective professional relationships despite differences in language and outlook.</p><p>Compulsory closure periods during major holiday seasons must also be taken into account.</p></div></div></div>
No. of questions in task	5
Testing focus	Understanding of text structure, cohesion and coherence within paragraphs in a longer text
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

The benefits of employee training

All types of organisations, whether bricks-and-mortar or online, face constant challenges. Leaders and managers need to think on their feet, and find ways of dealing with all sorts of issues. Some can seriously impact their ability to operate as usual, which will have a detrimental effect on profits.

Cultivating and encouraging a positive working environment is, however, one acknowledged way of nurturing employees. When it comes to employee motivation, offering training greatly improves self-worth among staff. The training will most naturally be targeted to the skills directly related to a specific role, but will often also be of value in wider contexts. This will inspire engagement, and is also essential in terms of retention.

It is equally important that employees should be actively encouraged to see this investment in their talent as one that is mutually beneficial. A company's offer to supply training, and staff members accepting of it, can be seen as something of a partnership.

Empowering employees with the opportunity and knowledge to foster their growth will therefore benefit your business overall. It's a simple conversion – happier employees make for happier customers, well-trained employees deal with customers with another level of confidence and accuracy, providing a better experience. And customers can tell when they're communicating with well-engaged and informed personnel – which obviously reflects well on the business.

A Employees who take opportunities to develop existing skills, and gain new ones, are likely to discover the process offers them a clear pathway. Vitality, with regard to staff turnover, it inspires them to picture a future within the business, rather than looking for progression elsewhere.

B A reluctance to accept the idea of offsetting such factors can have clear consequences. Increases in recruitment fees, and loss of productivity are highly likely albeit temporary issues to be taken into account. After all, even the 'best fit' new employees will need to get up to speed in a role.

C Such positive attitudes are not just beneficial for clients however, they have a wider impact, in that they help forge stronger work teams. The more valued and equipped employees feel in their job, the more positive any interactions between colleagues will be. For improving morale and generating loyalty, these exchanges can therefore be just as essential as those conducted with customers.

D For this reason, it is unrealistic to assume any training can guarantee success even with careful planning. Unless staff are fully on board, they will be unwilling to incorporate what they have learned into their daily work patterns.

While the employer does indeed gain a more skilled workforce staff members – ones in a position to contribute more to the company in various ways – the employee comes away with a range of benefits too. These could include increased motivation, more confidence and better long-term prospects.

One example would be staff shortages, and this is particularly evident in the hospitality industry. In the UK, a significant proportion of vacancies are unfilled, with businesses often expressing uncertainty over how best to address the situation.

(Reading) Multiple Text Matching

Read the four texts.
Choose the correct text A–D for each question. You can choose each text more than once.

Mentoring

Four people comment on their initial experience as mentors

Mentor A

To be honest, I didn't have high hopes of achieving much as a mentor because my own experience as a mentee hadn't amounted to much. Not knowing where to start, I turned to the internet for some inspiration on how to approach the process. And after watching a couple of tutorials, it dawned on me that I shouldn't do much prior to our initial session together as the conversation really had to be driven by the mentee, not by me. Only after hearing them out could I offer them the advice that they were seeking from a mentor with relevant business experience. Although this led to some sessions lasting longer than anticipated, the experience was rewarding because it broadened my view of the company. My mentee gave me an insight into the diversity that exists within our organisation and also an appreciation for the roles that others play.

Mentor B

I've always believed that setting clear and realistic personal goals is essential at work, so I decided to make that the focus of the sessions. For this reason, I didn't try to gather any information on my mentee beforehand as I wanted her to tell her own story. Although we worked in different roles, our discussions proved that mentoring has the potential to foster collaboration between departments and strengthen the business as a whole. At first I was hesitant to put my hand up when the call went out for potential mentors. But once I understood that I wasn't supposed to be an expert or give direct advice, but to be more of a guide helping someone make sense of their own situation, I realised that it wouldn't take up as much of my schedule as I'd imagined.

Mentor C

I became a mentor as part of a community-based organisation that teamed up out-of-work adults with retirees from a range of fields. I'd run my own business for 40 years and I was keen to mentor others by sharing my knowledge and experience with them. I wanted to make sure I was ready for the first session, so I contacted an ex-colleague who'd mentored junior staff in the past. She suggested getting hold of the mentee's CV before the meeting to keep the conversation on track. It was sound advice and we bonded quickly as he shared his thoughts. Listening to someone else open up made me look back on my own career and consider how it shaped me. Who'd have thought that my experience of mentoring would lead me on such a journey of self-reflection? I'd recommend mentoring but only if you have enough time to do it properly.

Mentor D

I'd always imagined that I would take on a mentoring role at some stage of my career as my first mentor had played such an influential role in kick-starting my career. It wasn't that she taught me how to succeed, but more that she enabled me to understand what I wanted to achieve, and I was hoping I could do the same as a mentor. I consciously avoided trying to find out much about my mentee. I was actually surprised when we met and discovered we worked in the same department. Although it's hard finding time in my schedule to meet, I always come away with some insight from our discussions, and sometimes it's about myself. For example, as she described her frustration with the workload her position demanded, it prompted me to reassess my own role within my team. It led me to question the role I play in how it functions.

26. Which mentor shares an opinion with Mentor D regarding their expectations of what a mentor should do?

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☒ C
- ☐ D

24 Which mentor expresses a different view from the other three mentors about the need to do research on the mentor's background?

27 Which mentor has a different view to Mentor A regarding the time commitment required of mentors?

28 Which mentor shares an opinion with Mentor C regarding what they learned from being a mentor?