Cambridge English Skills Test General

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: General. 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	**(Reading) One-Question Multiple Choice** For this question, choose the correct answer. **All residents** 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. What is the aim of this notice? ○ to inform residents about a meeting ○ to encourage residents to apply for an opening ○ to ask residents to submit nominations
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	• 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	• 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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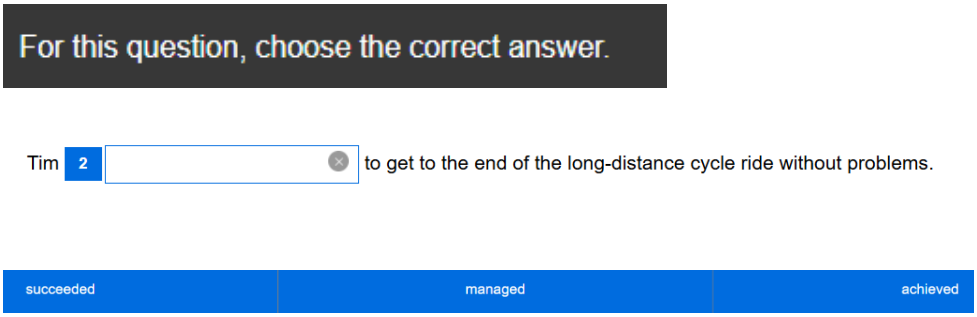
Task type 2	**(Reading) One-Question Multiple-choice gap fill** 
No. of questions in task	1 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
Testing focus	Understanding the grammar and vocabulary within a sentence
Advice	• Read the gapped sentence. • Look carefully at all the options. • Check the words before and after the gap to see if options could fit here. • Click on the gap then select the correct answer by clicking on it.
Preparation	• 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	**(Reading) Five-Question Open gap-fill** For these questions, type the correct answer in each gap. Type only one word in each gap. **Book Review: *The Island*** *The Island* 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. It is a fascinating book to read, and Sam has included wonderful photos, which really help readers understand 7 _____ special the island is.
No. of questions in task	5
Testing focus	Knowledge of grammar in a text
Advice	• 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	• 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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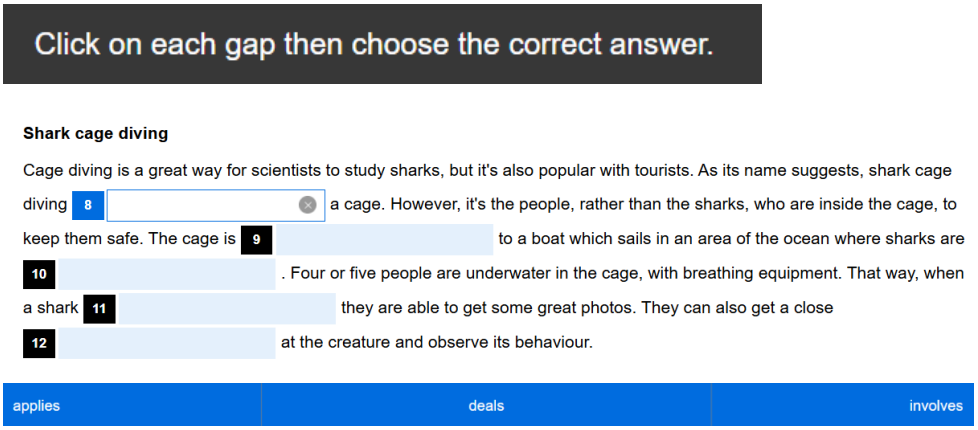
Task type 4	**(Reading) Five-question Multiple-choice gap-fill** 
No. of questions in task	5 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
Testing focus	Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in a text
Advice	• Read a text with 5 gaps. • Each gap needs to be filled with a single word or phrasal verb. • Read the 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	• 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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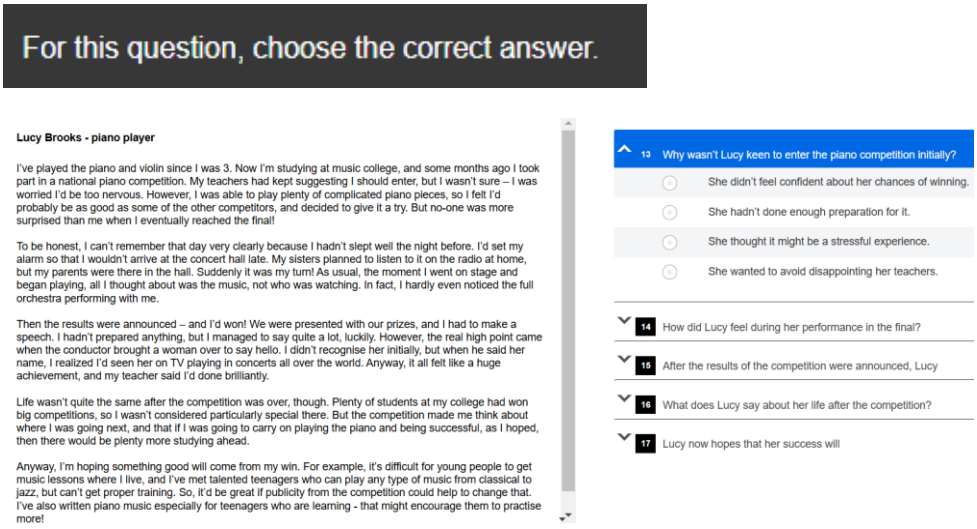
Task type 5	**(Reading) Five-Question Multiple Choice** 
No. of questions in task	5 (with 3 or 4 multiple choice options)
Testing focus	Reading for gist and specific information such as opinion, purpose, main idea, implication, etc.
Advice	• Read a long text with five multiple-choice questions. • Read 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	• 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	**(Reading) Two-Question Multiple Choice** For this question, choose the correct answer. **Memory techniques** Different cultures remember information in different ways. In Australia, for example, First Nations people have used 'songlines' – songs and stories for recording events, facts and locations – for over 40,000 years. Through their songlines, locations of rocks that make the best tools, waterholes, or details of plants are recorded. Each event or fact is associated with a song, story, dance or ceremony. A songline also functions as a map for a journey – the songlines of the Yanyuwa people from Australia's far north relate to distances of over 800 kilometres. Some cultures also include the position of stars in their songs to pass on knowledge of seasons and navigation skills. Often, only important elder members have complete knowledge of their people's songlines. By limiting who is allowed to learn everything, misunderstandings or misinterpretations are prevented, and accuracy maintained. It is the structure of the human brain that means memory methods such as songlines have been able to work so effectively across human societies. But dependence on writing in modern societies has contributed to people losing the ability to construct memories using processes like those employed in songlines. As the ancient techniques can be more effective than some newer techniques, perhaps they should be used alongside current educational methods. For example, schoolchildren could be taught to sing their science; or could learn mathematics through poems. In this way, memory techniques from ancient cultures can be adapted to contemporary life. 18 What does the writer explain in the first paragraph? ○ how a culture developed its use of songlines ○ why one very extensive songline was created ○ why access to some songlines might be restricted ○ which actions help recall particular events in songlines 19 What opinion does the writer express in the second paragraph?
No. of questions in task	2
Testing focus	Reading for gist and specific information such as opinion, purpose, main idea, implication, etc.
Advice	• 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	• 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?

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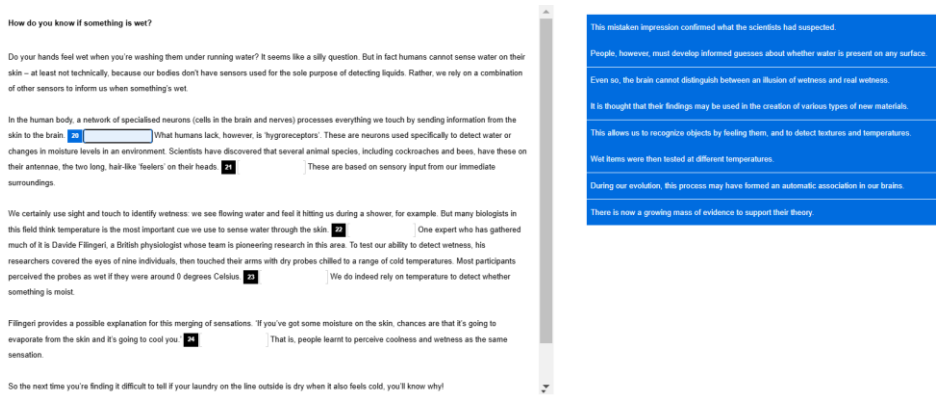
Task type 7	**(Reading) Missing Sentence Text Completion** Read the text. Choose the correct sentence for each gap. You do not need to use three of the sentences.  How do you know if something is wet? Do your hands feel wet when you're washing them under running water? It seems like a silly question. 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. 20 [ ] 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. 21 [ ] 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 Filingeri, 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. Filingeri 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.

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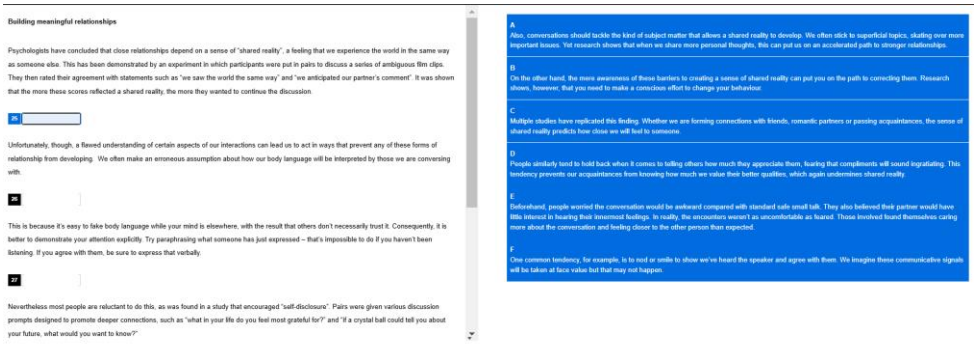
Task type 8	**(Reading) Missing Paragraph Text Completion** Read the text. Choose the correct paragraph A–F for each gap. You do not need to use one of the paragraphs.  **Building meaningful relationships** Psychologists have concluded that close relationships depend on a sense of "shared reality", a 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. 25 [ ] 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. 26 [ ] 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. 27 [ ] 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, 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 more 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 ingratiating. This tendency prevents our acquaintances from knowing how much we value their better qualities, which again undermines shared reality. E 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. 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 may not happen.
No. of questions in task	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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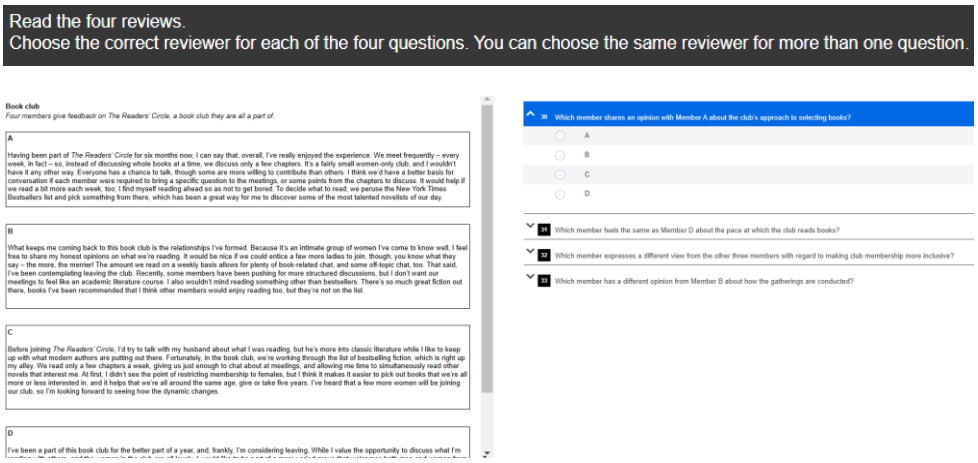
Task type 9	**(Reading) Multiple Text Matching** 
No. of questions in task	4
Testing focus	Reading multiple sources to compare, contrast and synthesise information and views
Advice	• Read four texts on the same topic. • Read each question and check across the texts to find the correct answer. • Click on the button to select the correct text A, B, C or D. • Check your answers.
Preparation	• 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?

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