

# FCE content and overview

Part/timing	Content	Test focus
<b>1</b> <b>READING</b> 1 hour 15 mins	<b>Part 1</b> A text preceded by multiple-matching questions. <b>Part 2</b> A text followed by four-option multiple-choice questions. <b>Part 3</b> A text from which paragraphs or sentences have been removed and placed in jumbled order after the text. <b>Part 4</b> A text preceded by multiple-matching questions.	Candidates are expected to be able to read semi-authentic texts of various kinds (informative and general interest) and to show understanding of gist, detail and text structure, and deduce meaning.
<b>2</b> <b>WRITING</b> 1 hour 30 mins	<b>Part 1</b> One compulsory question. <b>Part 2</b> Candidates answer one question from a choice of four questions (including the set book option).	Candidates are expected to be able to write non-specialised text types such as letter, articles, reports and compositions for a given purpose and target reader, covering a range of topics.
<b>3</b> <b>USE OF ENGLISH</b> 1 hour 15 mins	<b>Part 1</b> A modified cloze text containing 15 gaps. <b>Part 2</b> A modified open cloze text containing 15 gaps. <b>Part 3</b> Discrete items with a lead-in sentence and a gapped response to complete using a given word. <b>Part 4</b> A text where some of the lines are correct and others contain an extra, incorrect word which must be identified. <b>Part 5</b> A text containing 10 gaps. Each gap corresponds to a word that must be formed from a given 'stem' word.	Candidates are expected to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and control of the language system by completing a number of tasks, some of which are based on specially written texts.
<b>4</b> <b>LISTENING</b> 40 mins (approx)	<b>Part 1</b> A series of short unrelated extracts from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers, followed by three-option multiple-choice questions. <b>Part 2</b> Note taking, blank filling or sentence completion following a monologue or exchanges between interacting speakers. <b>Part 3</b> A series of short related extracts from monologues, followed by multiple-matching questions. <b>Part 4</b> A monologue or text involving interacting speakers, followed by different answer types, e.g. true/false; yes/no; three-option multiple choice; which speaker said what etc.	Candidates are provided with short extracts and longer monologues, announcements, extracts from radio programmes, news features, etc., at an intermediate level. They are expected to be able to show understanding of detail and gist, and to deduce meaning.
<b>5</b> <b>SPEAKING</b> 14 mins	<b>Part 1</b> The interlocutor asks candidates a series of questions about themselves. <b>Part 2</b> Each candidate is given a one minute 'long turn' in which they compare and contrast two photographs. <b>Part 3</b> The candidates talk together, working towards a negotiated completion of the task. <b>Part 4</b> The interlocutor leads a discussion with the two candidates.	Candidates are expected to be able to respond to questions and to interact in conversational English.

# FCE Glossary

**ANCHOR TEST:** a test with known measurement characteristics, which is administered in association with another test. Performance on the anchor test provides information about the other test and about the candidates who have taken both of them.

**ASSESSOR:** the Speaking test examiner who assigns a score to a candidate's performance, using subjective judgement to do so.

**BASE WORD:** the word at the end of each line in FCE Paper 3 Part 5, which is the basis for the word that has to be formed.

**CLOSURE TECHNIQUES:** techniques used to draw a conversation to a close, e.g. 'That's all'.

**CLOZE TEST:** a type of gap-filling task in which whole words have been removed from a text and which candidates must replace.

**COHERENCE:** language which is coherent is well planned and clear, and all the parts or ideas fit well so that they form a united whole.

**COLLABORATIVE TASK:** the opportunity in the Speaking test for the candidates to engage in a discussion and work together towards a negotiated outcome of the task set.

**CONTENT POINTS:** the points contained in the notes on the text in the FCE Paper 2 Part 1 compulsory question, which must be included in the candidate's letter.

**CONVERSATIONAL FILLERS:** a word or sound filling a pause in an utterance or conversation, e.g. 'er', 'you know'.

**DISCLOSURE:** written or spoken communication.

**DISTRACTOR:** each incorrect option in a multiple-choice item.

**GAP-FILLING ITEM:** any type of item which requires the candidate to insert some written material – letters, numbers, single words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs – into spaces in the text. The response may be supplied by the candidate or selected from a set of options.

**GIST:** the central theme or meaning of the text.

**IMPEDING ERROR:** an error which prevents the reader from understanding the word or phrase.

**INPUT MATERIAL:** the text and notes, sometimes supported by illustrations or diagrams, which candidates have to base their answers on in the FCE Paper 2 Part 1 compulsory question.

**INTERLOCUTOR:** the Speaking test examiner who conducts the test and makes a global assessment of each candidate's performance.

**KEY:** the correct answer to an item.

**KEY WORD:** the word which must be used in the answer to an item in FCE Paper 3 Part 3.

**LONG TURN:** the opportunity in the Speaking test for a candidate to talk uninterrupted for a period of time, enabling them to produce an extended piece of discourse.

**LOZENGE:** the space on the mark sheet which candidates must fill in to indicate their answer to a multiple-choice question.

**MULTIPLE-CHOICE:** a task where candidates are given a set of several possible answers of which only one is correct.

**MULTIPLE MATCHING TASK:** a task in which a number of questions or sentence completion items, generally based on a reading text, are set. The responses are provided in the form of a bank of words or phrases, each of which can be used an unlimited number of times.

**NEUTRAL STYLE:** a writing style, at FCE level appropriate for compositions, with no specific features of formality or informality.

**OBJECTIVE TEST:** a test which can be scored by applying a mark scheme, without the need to bring expert opinion or subjective judgement to the task.

**OPENING AND CLOSING FORMULAE:** the expressions, either formal or informal, that are usually used to open and close letters, e.g. 'Dear Maria ... With best wishes from ...', or 'Dear Mr Dakari ... Yours sincerely ...'.

**OPTIONS:** the individual words in the set of possible answers for a multiple-choice item.

**PARAPHRASE:** to give the meaning of something using different words.

**PHRASAL VERB:** a verb which takes on a new meaning when followed by a certain preposition or adverb (e.g. 'get away', 'take up').

**PRETESTING:** a stage in the development of test materials at which items are tried out with representative samples from the target population in order to determine their difficulty.

**PRODUCTIVE TASK:** a task which provides candidates with a stimulus to which the response is a piece of written or spoken language. As well as the Writing and Speaking tasks, productive tasks are found in FCE Paper 3, Parts 2, 3 and 5, and Paper 4, Part 2.

**PROMPT SENTENCE:** the complete sentence given as the opening or closing line of a story in FCE Paper 2 Part 2.

**REGISTER:** the tone of a piece of writing. The register should be appropriate for the task and target reader, e.g. a letter of application is written in formal register.

**REPORT LAYOUT:** the way in which a report should be presented. At FCE level a report in Paper 2 Part 2 should be clearly organised into paragraphs/sections and may include headings.

**RUBRICS:** the instructions to an examination question which tell the candidate what to do when answering the question.

**TARGET READER:** the intended recipient of a piece of writing. It is important to ensure that the effect of a written task on a target reader is a positive one.

**TASK FULFILMENT:** completing all elements of an FCE Paper 2 task using a range of appropriate and accurate language.

**TRANSACTIONAL LETTER:** a letter written in response to a request for action or to initiate action, i.e. the letter will trigger some outcome or result, usually in the form of further communication. A letter of complaint is transactional, a letter giving advice is not.

**TRIALING:** a stage in the development of test materials at which tasks for the Writing or Speaking papers are tried out with representative samples of students to determine their suitability as test materials and whether they work as expected.

## Acronyms

**ALTE:** The Association of Language Testers in Europe.  
**CEF:** Common European Framework.  
**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.  
**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages.  
**UCLES:** University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.