



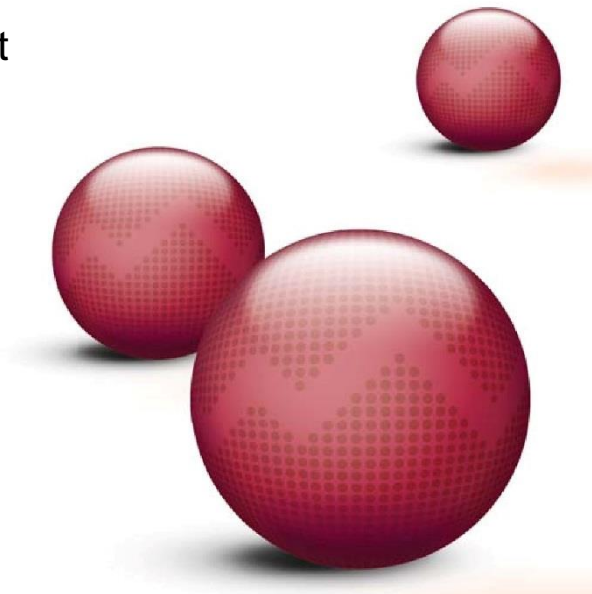
CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge

Cambridge Business Exams (BEC) Writing Assessment B2-C1

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Cambridge English Language Assessment

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BESIG
Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg,
Skt. Augustin



Agenda

Assessment

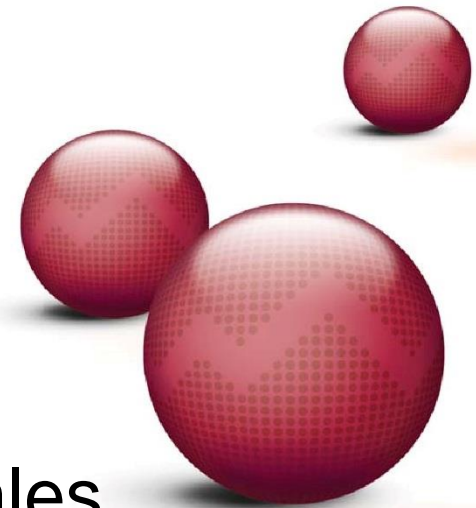
- Levels
- Assessment Scales

The Exams

- Formats
- Task Types and Questions
- Applying the Scales

Preparation

- Language
- Conventions/Formats
- Structuring
- Supporting Skills



Support Materials

Handouts:

- Excerpts from *Cambridge English Business Certificates: Handbook for Teachers*
- Classroom Activities

Further Information:

www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/business-english-certificates-handbook-for-teachers.pdf>



Why Cambridge exams?

Tradition of language assessment since
1913

Over 4 m candidates in 130 countries per
year

Extensive range of materials and support

Test all 4 language skills

Widely recognized in business and by over
4000 academic institutions



What do we need to think about when we assess?

How important is grammar?

What other aspects might be important?



How do we assess?

1. What was the question?
2. What level are we assessing?
3. What assessment criteria do we use?



Writing Exam Formats

	Vantage	Higher
Timing	45 mins	1 hr 10 mins
Part 1 <i>Weighting 1/3</i>	Internal communication • Rubrik as input	Report • based on graphic input material
Length	40-50 words	120-140 words
Part 2 <i>Weighting 1/3</i>	Business correspondence/ report/proposal • Based on input material	Business correspondence/ report/proposal • Choice of 3 questions
Length	120-140 words	200-250 words

NO dictionaries allowed!!





What can a B2 student do?

Candidates at B2 level

Reading and Writing

CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters.

CAN understand the general meaning of a report even if the topic isn't predictable.

CAN write a simple report of a factual nature and begin to evaluate, advise, etc.

CAN write a non-routine letter where this is restricted to matters of fact.

Listening and Speaking

CAN ask for factual information and understand the answer.

CAN take and pass on most messages during a normal working day.

CAN express own opinion, and present arguments to a limited extent.

CAN give a simple, prepared presentation on a familiar topic.



What can a C1 student do?

Candidates at C1 level

Reading and Writing

CAN understand correspondence expressed in non-standard language.

CAN deal with all routine requests for goods and services.

CAN write most letters they are likely to be asked to.

CAN, within a reasonably short time, understand most reports that they are likely to come across.

Listening and Speaking

CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work and argue for or against a case.

CAN follow discussion with only occasional need for clarification.

CAN engage in an extended conversation with visitors on matters within her/his authority/competence.



Language

B2

- Everyday vocabulary
- Range of simple, some complex grammatical forms

C1

- Range of vocabulary, including less common lexis
- Simple and complex grammatical forms





Assessment Criteria: B2 Writing

B2	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is, on the whole, informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well-organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		





Assessment Criteria: C1 Writing

CI	Content	Communicative Achievement	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		



Language – B2

Useful grammatical structures:

- reporting language
- linking words: cause and effect, contrasting, subordinating
- comparatives
- Conditionals
- relative clauses



Language – C1

Useful grammatical structures:

- emphatic language
- conditionals (range of structures)
- reporting verbs & gerund/infinitive structures
- passives
- expressing possibility (modals etc)
- participle clauses etc.



Language – Useful Functions

- Awareness/Control of Register
- Phrases for opening/closing letters & reports
- Describing problems, complaining
- Giving bad news
- Giving advice, making recommendations
- Apologising, reassuring
- Paraphrasing, reformulating
- Being concise



How to prepare students

Conventions/Formats

- Regular writing to set formula – using task conventions
- Learning appropriate phrases (e.g. letters, reports)
- Formal vs. informal language (e.g. in letters)



How to prepare students

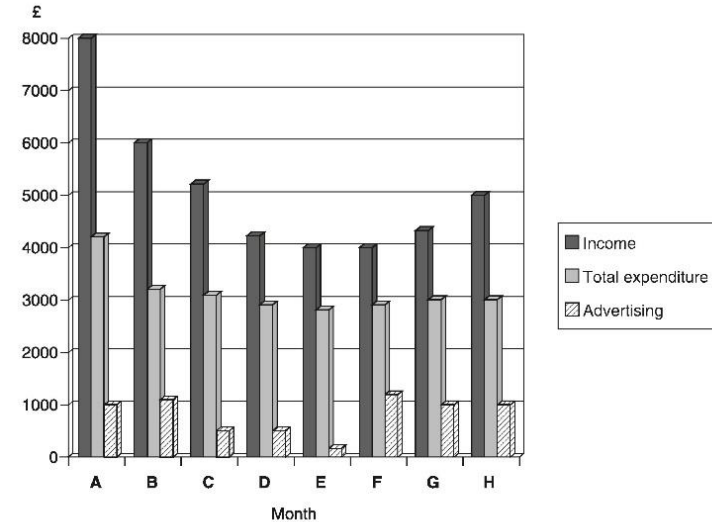
Structuring & Strategy

- Skeleton structure – logical organisation
- Brainstorming – finding suitable arguments for given questions
- Practising cohesive devices, joining ideas together
- Planning and writing under time pressure
- Editing checklist



Skills: Dealing with Graphs

- Language of trends
- Comparison/contrast
- Giving reasons
- Drawing conclusions
- Making recommendations





Skills: Reformulating

- 1 the need for retail staff to stay informed about the mobile phones they are selling
- 2 the belief that the market will not sustain the present number of mobile phone retailers
- 3 the use of mobile phones no longer being restricted to a specific group of people
- 4 the relationship between charges and the number of mobile phone users
- 5 a negative view of competing mobile phone retailers
- 6 a comparison between change in the mobile phone industry and that in a different sector
- 7 those services available at mobile phone outlets that are not provided by other retailers

Market awareness of the mobile telephone has exploded and the retailer who specialises in mobile phones is seeing growth like never before. Admittedly, some customers buy their first mobile phone in the supermarket, but for advice, add-ons and particular services they turn to the specialist. There are a large number of mobile phone retailers and I can't help but feel the market only has room for four players. Undoubtedly, customer service is the factor that differentiates operators and I think this year we will probably see rationalisation in the sector.

When I first started in the industry, mobile phones were retailing at a thousand pounds and were as large as box files. Now, prices are constantly being driven down and handsets are considerably more compact. There is intense competition between the network providers, and every time they lower their tariffs, more people come into the market. This will continue, and while retail dealers' profits will be affected dramatically, network providers will have to generate more revenue by offering internet provision and data services to the mobile user.

- Listening and reading exams as source of paraphrasing techniques



Skills: Planning

Timed brainstorming, creating structure

Question 2

- Your manager is keen to introduce new practices into your company. He has asked you to write a report which includes details of two practices from another company which you would suggest adopting in your own company.
- Write the **report** for your manager, including the following information:
 - what you admire about the other company
 - which two of its practices you would adopt
 - why your company would benefit from them.



Skills: Editing

- Editing checklist
- Regular practice
- Error correction activities

DON'T GET "FILED IN THE BIN"

0 When you're applying for a job, what can you do to ensure that your
00 covering letter doesn't just get 'filed' in the rubbish bin? Firstly, you
41 always remember that the purpose of a covering letter is there to
42 complement for your CV. This means it should flesh out and explain
43 clearly through any points that the CV alone doesn't deal with and that
44 therefore might otherwise be missed out by prospective employers.
45 For example, if you're looking to change in industries, then your letter
46 ought to explain them why you want to make the move, what your
47 motivation is, and what you hope to achieve. If your CV shows that you
48 don't hold a relevant qualification that the job ad has specified it (say,
49 a university degree or a vocational diploma), so you'll need to explain
50 why you should still be considered. It's not easy, and often writing the
51 letter can take twice as long as writing your CV. But because to some
52 extent that is how it should be: a CV is a formal, with structured document
that simply imparts information, whereas a letter is your chance to make an
impression.





Organisation

- Linking words
- Cohesive devices
- Logical “thread”
- Argumentation, development of ideas



Content

- Answer the question!
- “target reader is fully informed” –
development of ideas, description &
explanation
- Must remain on topic & within word count
(no irrelevancies)
- Must include all points in the question



Communicative Achievement

1. Holds the reader's attention – is meaningful and can be read with ease (does not confuse the reader)
2. Conventions of the task/genre
 - Appropriate phrases
 - Structure/format
 - Register
3. Will it achieve the desired result?





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Questions/Comments





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Thank you for your time

