

剑桥商务英语证书  
(BEC)考试辅导丛书

《BEC考试辅导丛书》编委会 组编



● 剑桥商务英语证书 (BEC)



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BEC 

# 写作指南

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(BEC)  
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# BEC③写作指南



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## 剑桥商务英语 (BEC) 证书考试辅导丛书

### BEC3 写作指南

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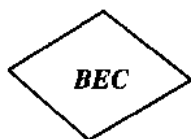
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## 前言

商务英语证书(Business English Certificate, 缩写为 BEC)考试是教育部考试中心与英国剑桥大学考试委员会合作, 为适应我国改革开放、经济建设的需要而设计、面向社会各行各业的英语能力水平测试。剑桥商务英语证书分为三级: BEC1、BEC2、BEC3。考生可根据自身的英语水平选择考试级别。自 1993 年秋季开考至今, 全国共有 12 万多考生参加了考试。考生通过学习、考试, 切实提高了自身的英语听、说、读、写能力, 以其获得的证书在社会上, 特别是在外企商社得到承认。剑桥商务英语证书已经成为获得者就业求职、职位升迁的最具权威的能力证明。

BEC 考试是一种目标参照性证书考试。剑桥大学考试委员会的命题过程是根据考试大纲征集试题、筛选和修改后进入题库, 由专家最后合成。试题的取材范围都是来自于英国的报刊、杂志中的文章。而我国现行的命题方法是: 先制定大纲, 根据大纲编写教材, 依据大纲、教材命题。由此导致考生的学习范围不同。我国的英语考试考生仅读一本教材即可通过考试。而剑桥大学考试委员会的这种命题方法, 保证了试题的广泛性和现代感。促使我们的考生不仅要学习教材, 而且要广泛阅读英美的报刊、杂志文章。也正因为如此, 考生学习目前指定的国外教材后考试, 总觉得教

材内容与考试内容相比不是浅了就是太深。

为弥补这一不足,使考生学习更有针对性。我们组织了部分参与考试的教师(他们都接受过剑桥大学考试委员会的培训,既有参与 BEC 口试的经验又有 BEC 教材的教学经验)编写了《剑桥商务英语证书(BEC)考试辅导丛书》。这套丛书按 BEC 考试的级别分三级,每级分阅读、写作、听说三册。每册按考试试题的顺序对试题加以详细讲解,并配备一定数量的试题供考生练习。各册书的作者依据自己的经验在编写上都下了一番功夫,在保持本套丛书体例一致的前提下,写出了体现单项考试内容的风格,为本套丛书增色不少。

此套丛书主要是针对已有一定英语水平的考生,帮助他们在考试前熟悉题型,理清思路,提高考试通过率。对于初学者,还是应该扎扎实实地学好指定的 BEC 教材,再学习本套辅导书。

编写本套丛书是一次全新的尝试,难免有许多不足之处,我们希望考生、BEC 的教学工作者、BEC 的考试工作者提出宝贵意见,使这套丛书不断提高、完善,为提高考生的英语水平贡献我们的一份力量。

《BEC 考试辅导丛书》编委会

执笔:陈可

2000 年 7 月于北京

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# 1 CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 Introduction to the BEC 3 examination

BEC 3 is the third in a series of Business Certificate in English tests, initially developed for specific use in the Far East. It has been available for candidates in the Peoples Republic of China since November 1996.

BEC 3 is the most difficult of all the Cambridge business-orientated examinations and is the second most difficult of ALL Cambridge international examinations.

The University of Cambridge international examinations are renowned for accurate and appropriate content and standard and the possession of the two highest level qualifications, the Certificate of Proficiency in English and the recognized as evidence that the holder is able to use and understand English at a very high level, only a little below that of an English native speaker.

*The most comprehensive range of EFL exams available*

**University of Cambridge**

**Local Examinations Syndicate      UCLES EFL**

**International Examinations**

If we look at the whole range of Cambridge examinations we can see clearly the status of BEC 3 and we can note that this examination will '...include task-based assessment of ability to use English in business-related'.



## CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATIONS, CERTIFICATES & DIPLOMAS

GENERAL ENGLISH

ENGLISH FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

CAMBRIDGE LEVEL	Certificates for overall language ability	English for business
5 Good User	—CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH	<div>[ BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE 3</div> <div>[ BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE 2</div> <div>[ BUSINESS ENGLISH CERTIFICATE 1</div>
4 Competent User	—CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED ENGLISH	
3 Independent User	—FIRST CERTIFICATE IN ENGLISH	
2 Threshold Level User	—PRELIMINARY ENGLISH TEST	
1 Waystage Level User	—KEY ENGLISH TEST	
Characteristics of the exams	Include tests of direct writing and speaking; reading and listening; grammar and usage.	Include task-based assessment of ability to use English in business related situations

### 1.2. Level of BEC 3

BEC 3 is a proficiency test of Business English at an advanced level and this level can be characterized in terms of the following

- what learners can do in the real world of work/study.
- what materials and types of tasks learners can handle.
- what topics learners can cope with.
- the grammatical and lexical areas learners can recognize and produce.

The 'business' aspect of BEC 3 affects the vocabulary, the type of texts and the situations in the tasks. Other aspects of linguistic competence, involving vocabulary and grammatical systems are tested at a high level, assuming that very few errors of structure will occur.

### 1.3 Target Candidate

Candidates for BEC 3 are expected to be young adults (between 17 and 30) and either in business-oriented work or intending to pursue a career in business. Certainly, candidates older than 30 are in no way dissuaded from taking the examination, but it is thought unlikely that candidates below 17 would usually be capable of tackling the various tasks successfully.

Experience in business is desirable but not essential. All tasks are accessible to those who have little experience in business as long as they have followed a BEC 3 course, either with a teacher or on their own with the course-materials of which this book is a part.

### 1.4 Examination Structure and Paper Format

BEC 3 has 4 components, covering 4 language skills of Reading and Writing (in one single paper), Listening (using a Cambridge tape made for a specific examination on a specific day) and Speaking (involving a paired assessment in 3 parts).

Component 1 (Reading) carries approximately 45% of the marks available for stage 1 (Reading, Writing and Listening). (Writing) carries approximately 27% of the marks, and Component 3 (Listening) carries approximately 27% of the marks.

At stage 1 candidates are graded on their aggregate across the 3 components, but the global pass mark is so high (usually around 70%) that candidates should do well in all 3 parts of stage 1.

The Speaking Component, stage 2, is compulsory for all candidates, and a separate grade records

the candidates performance in spoken English.

### 1.5. The importance of speed and time-management

The most important ability in all BEC examination components is that of being able to do all the tasks very quickly. Speed is of the essence and candidates must be able to read, plan, write and listen very quickly throughout stage 1. They must be able to understand spoken English without repetition, in stage 2, and to give spontaneous answers, as well as planning and delivering spoken deliveries in a very short time. Because of this vital speed factor, often very necessary in the fast-moving world of contemporary commerce candidates need to practice a lot, using past BEC 3 examination materials and, if they have time, authentic reading and listening materials in English. Constant practice of the kinds of tasks in the Writing component is required.

### 1.6 The Writing Component and This Book

This Training Course concerns itself only with Component 2, Writing and the following chapters will show the reader how to do well in this part of the examination, assuming that general proficiency in English is already of a very high standard. Reading, Listening and Speaking are dealt with in companion books to this one.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 2 CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1. Introduction to the Writing Component of BEC 3

The Writing component will be in the same paper as the Reading component and the whole paper will take 100 minutes. Candidates should spend no more than 50—60 minutes on Reading and 40—50 minutes on Writing, faster completion of one part giving 10 minutes or so extra for the other part.

The Writing component will always follow the pattern below.

#### Component 2 Writing

40—50 minutes (depending on whether 60 or 50 minutes are used for Component 1—Reading)

Overall output approx. 350 words

30 raw score points /27% of total

Part	Main Skill Focus	Task Type	Response	Number of points
1	Concise Writing	One business-related writing task, based on graphic input and rubric. Ability to present information concisely in one's own words	One limited piece of output 100w e. g. short letter, brief report, etc.	10 points
2	Extended Writing	One writing task with limited textual input (rubric) only. May be supplemented by graphic input. Ability to present /justify an opinion ; compare and contrast evidence or arguments; evaluate views and present conclusions.	One piece of extended output 200— 250w., e. g. formal letter, longer report etc.	20 points

### 2.2 Topic Areas

A BEC 3 candidate should already be able to write short notes and short and concise letters as well

as longer letters, reports and written proposals, using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures with almost no errors. The Writing component will assume this and, in addition, it will test the ability to read and understand a task quickly and then, also very quickly, plan and write a suitable piece of prose.

The most likely topic areas involved in Writing are as shown in the table below. The range of linguistic knowledge and degree of skill required is extensive.

Topic Areas for BEC 3 Writing Component		
General Topic	Linguistic Activity	Context of Use
Work-related services	Requesting Work-related services	Workplace (office, factory, etc.)
Correspondence	Composing letters, memos, etc. Understanding letters, memos, etc.	Office
Reports	Composing reports	Office
Instructions and guidelines	Understanding and writing instructions (e. g.: installation, operation and maintenance manuals)	Workplace (office, factory, etc.)
Information given in graphic form	Expressing the same information in words	Workplace (office, factory research centre, etc.)

### 2.3 What Writing Skills should a BEC 3-level learner have for the Writing Component?

#### 2.3.1. Work related Services in the workplace (office, factory, etc)

Dealing with all routine requests for goods or services and asking for goods or service. Being able to use a suitable tone for each letter or memo to be written (e.g. tact and delicacy in writing to a person of another rank).

#### 2.3.2. Correspondence in the workplace (office, factory, etc.)

Being able to write most letters (s)he is likely to be asked to write such as letters of inquiry, request, application, complaint, apology and letters, memos and simple reports giving advice and

asking for and giving information. A few errors of English usage will be acceptable as long as the full text of the message can be easily understood.

### 2.3.3. Reports in the workplace (office, factory, etc)

Understanding and being able to write reports. When writing reports, being able to write a report that communicates clearly the desired message. A few errors of English usage will be acceptable as long as these do not impede understanding of the text.

### 2.3.4. Instructions and Guidelines for the workplace (office, factory, etc)

Being able to write clear instructions such as those needed for installation, operation and maintenance manuals. Being able to draft a set of instructions, regulations, etc. Some errors acceptable if the issue is complex or sensitive.

### 2.3.5 Translating graphic and non-verbal information into prose (office, factory, college, university, research center, etc)

Being able to understand information presented in graphic form and to rewrite the information in clear written prose.

## 2.4. Text Types and Writing Tasks

Text types found throughout the whole BEC 3 examination are, in general terms, as set out below. Types marked with an asterisk \* are those which may, perhaps, be involved in the Writing component.

Letters of most types *	Articles from the press - business and general	Policy statements and proposals *
Memos, notes and messages *	News reports from the press	Business plans *
Notices, timetables	Guides, brochures and catalogues	Company reports (extracts)
Forms	Public information and announcements	Records of meetings
Adverts	Descriptions of people, * events, systems, products, etc.	Books on topics such as management
Office diaries		Diagrams, charts and tables *
Instructions and rules *		
Directories		

The writing tasks that candidates will be asked to do will always be those described in the chart on page. Candidates with experience of business in an international context may draw upon this, of

course, but candidates without it will not be disadvantaged. Similarly, specialized business knowledge beyond the text types with an asterisk \* above will not be needed for the Writing component. Arithmetical skills are not required and there is no need for familiarity with British culture or way of life, e.g. using a cheque card, having the milk delivered, British places and names, etc.

The two Writing tasks will be genuine tasks which occur often in business. In this examination, they must be done very quickly, a frequent situation in the authentic, dynamic, fast-moving world of today. It is this aspect of reading, thinking, planning and writing at great speed, which makes BEC 3 Writing difficult and demanding and candidates need to have much practice in time-management in order to do well.

## 2.5. Grammar and Vocabulary

As far as Grammar and Vocabulary are concerned, candidates at this level should be familiar with most structures. In terms of vocabulary, the Business English Supplement Wordlist in Appendix 1 of this book should be learned and used, when appropriate, for the Writing tasks. Work out how many weeks you have before the BEC 3 examination, divide the number of pages of the Wordlist by this number of weeks and learn a new division-unit every week. This will seem daunting at first, but you may be pleasantly surprised; it is very likely that you know most of the words already!! Experience with previous groups of BEC 3 candidates has confirmed this.

## 2.6. The Writing Tasks

The following chapters will concentrate on special strategies for tackling the BEC 3 Writing component, and will consider discretely the three linguistic tasks normally involved. The Writing component is always in two parts as described in the panel below.

### Part 1

This is a guided writing task, in which the candidate produces a brief 100-word text. The task provides a realistic situation in which it is necessary to analyze some graphic input and express the information it conveys in words, as letter or report. Graphs, bar charts and pie charts of the type frequently used in the business pages of newspapers, company reports and brochures may provide a starting point.

The graphic input is taken from an authentic source, but may be modified in the same way that a text may be edited. The rubric acts to amplify and clarify the situation, as well as making clear what the task involve. It is approximately 50—60 words long.

## Part 2

For this task the candidate has to produce an extended piece of writing, presented either as a letter or as a report. The task is supplied by the rubric, which provides an authentic reason for writing, and indicates how the piece of writing is being produced for. The input is therefore more detailed and specific than that of the traditional 'essay question' task type. It is up to 100 words in length.

The task is not prompted by graphic input, but graphics may be used if they contribute to the task.

The three linguistic tasks involved are thus: In Part 1, always translating information shown graphically into written form is required. In Part 2, either a letter or a report is required.

### 2.7. Some Golden Rules

Throughout this book, from now on, you will be constantly reminded of the importance of remembering four GOLDEN RULES.

2.7.1 Do, always, read the rubric, the words of the question itself, very carefully. Usually, the rubric not only tells you what to do and how to do it, but gives you the plan of your answer, step by step.

2.7.2. Do keep the number of words to the number asked for, give or take a few words. Being able to write concisely is one of the things you are being tested at.

2.7.3. Don't do anything you are not asked to do and, in Part 1, keep only to the facts as shown on the diagram.

2.7.4. Don't spend too long on the planning of your answer, though you must make a clear plan, on paper preferably. The rubric will usually have an outline plan in its structure and wording.

### 2.8. Some General Strategies

Before we move on to examine strategies for each of the two written tasks, we can benefit by looking at some general strategies as recommended by Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate and the author of this Training Course.



**General strategies**

- Read through both tasks before attempting to write them. This will give you time to arrange your thoughts.
- Write a very brief plan for yourself before you start writing in full. Take only a few minutes over this. (It can be useful to write brief plans for both parts of the writing before you start to attempt a task, but, if you feel happier completing one task before starting the other, do this. Through practice, find out which approach works best for you.)
- Write in pencil. This enables you to edit your work more carefully.
- Read the instructions carefully. Make sure that you write exactly what the question requires.
- Remember that, though you must be careful, you must also work quickly. You have only 40-50 minutes for the Writing component.

\* \* \* \* \*