

Certificate of Proficiency  
in English

Practice Tests 1

*University of Cambridge  
Local Examinations Syndicate*

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## To the student

This book is for candidates preparing for the University of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English examination and provides practice in all the written and oral papers.

The examination consists of 5 papers, as follows:

Paper 1: Reading Comprehension (1¼ hours)

*Section A* consists of 40 multiple-choice items in the form of a sentence with a blank to be filled by one of five words or phrases below.

*Section B* consists of 20 multiple-choice items based on passages of between 250 and 600 words.

Paper 2: Composition (3 hours)

*Section A* You are asked to write two compositions out of a choice of four, of about 350 words each.

*Section B* consists of a passage followed by questions relating to the text.

Paper 3: Use of English (3 hours)

*Section A* contains exercises which test your control of English usage and grammatical structure.

*Section B* consists of a passage followed by questions which test your comprehension and skill in summarising.

*Section C* is a directed writing exercise where you have to present information in an appropriate form and style.

Paper 4: Listening Comprehension (20–30 minutes)

You answer 5 multiple-choice items on each of three passages.

Paper 5: Interview (approx. 12 minutes)

*Section A* You look at a photograph for a few minutes, and then you are asked some specific questions on it before leading on to general topics.

*Section B* You are asked to read part of a dialogue aloud.

*Section C* You select and make notes on a topic before being asked to talk about it for a short time.

*Section D* you are asked to respond to three situations.

For Papers 1 and 4 you will need an answer sheet similar to the ones at the back of this book. The *FCE/CPE Practice Tests Answer Pad*, published by Cambridge University Press, is available for this purpose.

# Practice Test 1

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE

## CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

### PAPER 1: READING COMPREHENSION

1½ hours

Answer all questions. Indicate your choice of answer in every case **on the separate answer sheet**. Follow carefully the instructions about how to record your answers.

#### Section A

In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence. **On your answer sheet**, indicate the letter A, B, C, D or E against the number of each item 1-40 for the word or phrase you choose. Give **one answer only** to each question.

- 1 He badly \_\_\_\_\_ his back digging in the garden last Sunday.  
A stretched B exerted C pulled D burst E strained
- 2 The escaped prisoner waited until \_\_\_\_\_ of night before leaving his hiding place.  
A dark B deep C depth D high E dead
- 3 The discussion quickly became a very \_\_\_\_\_ argument about increasing prices.  
A exploded B roaring C boiling D warmed E heated
- 4 When we shook hands I was conscious of his firm \_\_\_\_\_.  
A fist B handhold C crunch D grip E grapple
- 5 We forgave his bad temper because we knew that his son's illness had put him under great \_\_\_\_\_.  
A emotion B excitement C crisis D stress E nervousness
- 6 She bought a blue and yellow hat to \_\_\_\_\_ her new blue dress.  
A match B shade C combine D pair E marry
- 7 A car begins to \_\_\_\_\_ in value as soon as it is bought.  
A depress B deprecate C depreciate D deepen E descend
- 8 A completely new situation is likely to \_\_\_\_\_ when the school leaving age is raised to 16.  
A affect B rise C arise D raise E happen
- 9 He never \_\_\_\_\_ to read the news but turned at once to the crossword on the last page.  
A worried B noticed C pained D troubled E wearied
- 10 Since we can't hear you at the back of the hall, you'll have to \_\_\_\_\_ your voice.  
A lift B increase C open D speak up E raise
- 11 The door hinges had all been oiled to stop them \_\_\_\_\_.  
A squeaking B screeching C shrieking D hissing E squealing

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- 12 Only \_\_\_\_\_ journalists will be considered for the post of assistant editor.  
A habitual B reputed C settled D experimented E experienced
- 13 Good lighting in factories leads to greater comfort, higher \_\_\_\_\_ and productivity, fewer mistakes and accidents.  
A profusion B craft C efficiency D proficiency E technology
- 14 Keys should never be hidden around the house since thieves \_\_\_\_\_ know where to look.  
A virtually B variously C unavoidably D reliably E invariably
- 15 A competitor may submit any number of entries, \_\_\_\_\_ each one is accompanied by a packet top.  
A guaranteeing B insuring C allowing D providing E notwithstanding
- 16 The eight vehicles in the sale-room can all lay some \_\_\_\_\_ to being bargains.  
A right B claim C case D notion E foundation
- 17 A child will \_\_\_\_\_ half an hour of your complete attention.  
A delight B estimate C consider D compensate E appreciate
- 18 Enquiries \_\_\_\_\_ the condition of patients may be made personally or by telephone.  
A revealing B concerning C affecting D for E following
- 19 Tenants are \_\_\_\_\_ to beware of paying rent to unknown persons.  
A commanded B informed C notified D advised E suggested
- 20 The Department is also deeply \_\_\_\_\_ in various improvement schemes.  
A connected B included C entailed D implied E involved
- 21 The engineers have rejected the employers' proposals to end the strike and the other workers have come out in \_\_\_\_\_.  
A opposition B return C sympathy D readiness E collaboration
- 22 It is hoped that the prisoner will be released through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the president himself.  
A convention B prevention C intervention D interference E concession
- 23 The sound of the water gently \_\_\_\_\_ against the side of the boat was very pleasant.  
A creaking B rapping C surging D sucking E lapping
- 24 Occasionally we experience westerly gales, but the \_\_\_\_\_ winds are from the north-east.  
A existing B general C particular D special E prevailing
- 25 This book gives a brief \_\_\_\_\_ of the history of the castle and details of the art collection in the main hall.  
A outline B reference C article D outlook E research
- 26 It is not as difficult to store information as it is to \_\_\_\_\_ it quickly when it is wanted again.  
A restore B represent C retrieve D retain E refer
- 27 To be a good short story writer one needs, among other things, a very \_\_\_\_\_ imagination.  
A vivid B living C bright D nervous E coloured
- 28 The price they offered for my old car was so low that I \_\_\_\_\_ it down.  
A turned B brought C called D refused E shouted
- 29 I just managed to \_\_\_\_\_ a quick breath before I was sucked under the water by the passing boat.  
A load B gain C possess D grab E snatch

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- 30 This book is full of practical \_\_\_\_\_ on home decorating and repairs.  
A helps B tips C nods D clues E informs
- 31 He tries to \_\_\_\_\_ up his lessons by telling a few jokes.  
A raise B inspire C stimulate D snap E liven
- 32 The BBC tries to \_\_\_\_\_ for all tastes with its four national programmes.  
A suit B furnish C oblige D cater E regard
- 33 This \_\_\_\_\_ was conducted to find out how many people prefer butter.  
A examination B inspection C survey D opinion E analysis
- 34 I'm in no \_\_\_\_\_ this evening to listen to his silly jokes.  
A feeling B attitude C mood D opinion E tendency
- 35 The explosion blew the kitchen door off its \_\_\_\_\_.  
A joints B connections C boards D hinges E axles
- 36 There is a very widely \_\_\_\_\_ demand for this law to be changed.  
A based B joined C settled D united E proved
- 37 Many university courses are not really \_\_\_\_\_ to the needs of students or their future employers.  
A associated B relative C geared D sufficient E qualified
- 38 The police managed to \_\_\_\_\_ down the man in Glasgow.  
A trace B track C catch D search E pursue
- 39 The \_\_\_\_\_ of the book, with the text on the left and the notes on the right, makes it a pleasure to use.  
A layout B method C system D pattern E style
- 40 The noise of the traffic \_\_\_\_\_ Paul from his work.  
A prevented B annoyed C obstructed D upset E distracted

### Section B

In this section you will find after each of the passages a number of questions or unfinished statements about the passage, each with four suggested answers or ways of finishing. You must choose the one which you think fits best. **On your answer sheet**, indicate the letter A, B, C or D against the number of each item 41 to 60 for the answer you choose. Give **one answer only** to each question. Read each passage right through before choosing your answers.

#### First passage

We are told that the mass media are the greatest organs for enlightenment that the world has yet seen; that in Britain, for instance, several million people see each issue of the current affairs programme, Panorama. It is true that never in human history were so many people so often and so much exposed to so many intimations about societies, forms of life, attitudes other than those which obtain in their own local societies. 5 This kind of exposure may well be a point of departure for acquiring certain important intellectual and imaginative qualities; width of judgement, a sense of the variety of possible attitudes. Yet in itself such exposure does not bring intellectual or imaginative development. It is no more than the masses of stone which lie around in a quarry and which may, conceivably, go to the making of a cathedral. The mass media cannot build 10 the cathedral, and their way of showing the stones does not always prompt others to



build. For the stones are presented within a self-contained and self-sufficient world in which, it is implied, simply to look at them, to observe—fleetingly—individually interesting points of difference between them, is sufficient in itself.

Life is indeed full of problems on which we have to—or feel we should try to—make 15 decisions, as citizens or as private individuals. But neither the real difficulty of these decisions, nor their true and disturbing challenge to each individual, can often be communicated through the mass media. The disinclination to suggest real choice, individual decision, which is to be found in the mass media is not simply the product of 20 a commercial desire to keep the customers happy. It is within the grain of mass communications. The organs of the Establishment, however well-intentioned they may be and whatever their form (the State, the Church, voluntary societies, political parties), have a vested interest in ensuring that the public boat is not violently rocked, and will so affect those who work within the mass media that they will be led insensibly 25 towards forms of production which, though they go through the motions of dispute and enquiry, do not break through the skin to where such enquiries might really hurt. They will tend to move, when exposing problems, well within the accepted cliché-assumptions of democratic society and will tend neither radically to question these clichés nor to make a disturbing application of them to features of contemporary life. They will stress the ‘stimulation’ the programmes give, but this soon becomes an 30 agitation of problems for the sake of the interest of that agitation in itself; they will therefore, again, assist a form of acceptance of the status quo. There are exceptions to this tendency, but they are uncharacteristic.

The result can be seen in a hundred radio and television programmes as plainly as in 35 the normal treatment of public issues in the popular press. Different levels of background in the readers or viewers may be assumed, but what usually takes place is a substitute for the process of arriving at judgement. Programmes such as this are noteworthy less for the ‘stimulation’ they offer than for the fact that that stimulation (repeated at regular intervals) may become a substitute for, and so a hindrance 40 to, judgements carefully arrived at and tested in the mind and on the pulses. Mass communications, then, do not ignore intellectual matters; they tend to castrate them, to allow them to sit on the side of the fireplace, sleek and useless, a family plaything.

- 41 According to the passage, the mass media present us with  
A insufficient diversity of information  
B too restricted a view of life  
C a wide range of facts and opinions  
D a critical assessment of our society
- 42 What effect is it claimed the mass media can have on our intellectual and imaginative development (lines 8–9)?  
A They are likely to frustrate this development  
B They can form a basis for it  
C They can distort our judgement  
D They can stimulate too much mental activity
- 43 The author uses the comparison with building a cathedral to show that  
A worthwhile results do not depend on raw material only  
B the mediaeval world had different beliefs  
C great works of art require good foundations  
D close attention to detail is important
- 44 How are the mass media said to influence our ability to make decisions?  
A They disturb us by their prejudices  
B They make us doubt our own judgements  
C They make no contribution in this area  
D They make decisions appear too complicated
- 45 The main weakness of the mass media is identified by the author as  
A fear of losing the customer  
B the diverse views of the contributors  
C subservience to the profit motive  
D trying to cater for a vast range of audience

- 46 The author says that a natural concern of the Establishment (line 21) is to  
A perform a good service to society  
B arouse strong emotions in the public  
C maintain its position in society  
D change the form of public institutions
- 47 Radio, T.V., and the press are criticised here for  
A widening the gap between classes  
B assuming that everyone's tastes are the same  
C failing to reach any definite conclusions  
D setting too intellectual a standard.
- 48 Too frequent exposure to the kind of material discussed in the passage causes the viewer or reader to  
A form judgements which are too emotional  
B lose touch with the real world  
C cease to examine his own reaction to problems  
D attach too much importance to testing reactions
- 49 What is the author's final judgement on how mass communications deal with intellectual matters?  
A They regard them as unimportant  
B They see them as a domestic pastime  
C They consider them to be of only domestic interest  
D They rob them of their dramatic impact

**Second passage**

Language is, and should be, a living thing, constantly enriched with new words and forms of expression. But there is a vital distinction between good developments, which add to the language, enabling us to say things we could not say before, and bad developments, which subtract from the language by rendering it less precise. A vivacious, colourful use of words is not to be confused with mere slovenliness. The kind of slovenliness in which some professionals deliberately indulge is perhaps akin to the cult of the unfinished work, which has eroded most of the arts in our time. And the true answer to it is the same—that art is enhanced, not hindered, by discipline. You cannot carve satisfactorily in butter.

The corruption of written English has been accompanied by an even sharper decline in the standard of spoken English. We speak very much less well than was common among educated Englishmen a generation or two ago.

The modern theatre has played a baneful part in dimming our appreciation of language. Instead of the immensely articulate dialogue of, for example, Shaw (who was also very insistent on good pronunciation), audiences are now subjected to streams of barely literate trivia, often designed, only too well, to exhibit 'lack of communication', and larded with the obscenities and grammatical errors of the intellectually impoverished. Emily Post once advised her readers: 'The theatre is the best possible place to hear correctly-enunciated speech.' Alas, no more. One young actress was recently reported to be taking lessons in how to speak badly, so that she should fit in better.

But the BBC is the worst traitor. After years of very successfully helping to raise the general standard of spoken English, it suddenly went into reverse. As the head of the Pronunciation Unit coyly put it: 'In the 1960's the BBC opened the field to a much wider range of speakers'. To hear a BBC disc jockey talking to the latest ape-like pop idol is a truly shocking experience of verbal squalor. And the prospect seems to be of even worse to come. School teachers are actively encouraged to ignore little Johnny's incoherent grammar, atrocious spelling and haphazard punctuation, because worrying about such things might inhibit his creative genius.

- 50 The writer relates linguistic slovenliness to tendencies in the arts today, in that both  
A occasionally aim at a certain fluidity  
B from time to time show a regard for the finishing touch  
C appear to shun perfection  
D may make use of economical short cuts

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- 51 'Art is enhanced, not hindered, by discipline' (line 8) means  
A an artist's work will be finer if he observes certain aesthetic standards  
B an unfinished work is bound to be comparatively inferior  
C the skill of certain artists conceals their slovenliness  
D artistic expression is inhibited by too many rules
- 52 What is it claimed has happened to spoken English?  
A Writing problems are not reflected in poor oral expression  
B On the whole, people don't worry if they make mistakes  
C Educated Englishmen now are less communicative than they were in the past  
D Like written English, it has undergone a noticeable change for the better
- 53 What effect is the modern theatre said to have had on the language? It has  
A been an important reforming factor  
B made us more aware of subtleties of language  
C been a welcome and positive influence  
D had a ruinous effect
- 54 The author says that the dialogue in Shaw's plays is noted for  
A refined presentation of Shaw's ideas  
B remarkable outspokenness  
C being outstandingly well expressed  
D insistence on good pronunciation
- 55 Many modern plays, the author finds, frequently contain speech which  
A is incoherent and linguistically objectionable  
B is far too ungrammatical for most people to follow  
C unintentionally shocks the reader  
D deliberately tries to hide the author's intellectual inadequacies
- 56 A certain actress is said to have taken lessons because  
A she had been too accustomed to leading roles  
B her delivery was too refined for the parts she had to play  
C she could hardly make herself heard by the audience  
D her style of speech had been too vulgar for modern audiences
- 57 In the 1960's, the BBC began to  
A use broadcasters whose speech was notably more articulate  
B employ announcers whose speech was less conformist than hitherto  
C dismiss people who disregarded the earlier time-honoured speech standard  
D be more intolerant of poor speakers in their programmes
- 58 The writer was especially shocked by what he calls an "experience of verbal squalor" (line 26) because he  
A had never previously idolised pop stars  
B had rarely heard such incoherent rubbish before  
C was unused to hearing so much out-dated slang  
D might himself use this kind of language, but not publicly
- 59 Teachers are likely to overlook linguistic lapses in their pupils since  
A they find that children no longer respond to this kind of discipline nowadays  
B they fear the children may become less coherent  
C more importance is now attached to oral expression  
D the children may be discouraged from giving vent to their own ideas
- 60 What do you deduce of the writer's attitude to the developments in English? He thinks that  
A the English are more lax linguistically, and he strongly condemns this  
B the English are more relaxed, and he tends to be complacent about the changes  
C there is little to hope for, except in the attitude of school teachers  
D there is some cause for satisfaction, even in the attitudes of school teachers

PAPER 2: COMPOSITION

3 hours

*Write clearly, in ink, and arrange your work so that it can be easily read.*

Answer questions 1, 2 and 3. You should spend about the same amount of time on each.

**Section A**

1. Describe **either** (a) A real or imaginary journey to a place completely new to you.  
  
or (b) The neighbours' various impressions of the habits and appearance of a family which has just moved in.
  
2. Discuss **one** of the following.  
  
**Either** (a) "Aggression is a natural human instinct and should never be suppressed in children".  
  
or (b) Which you would rather be and why: a great artist; a great musician; a great doctor; a great inventor.

**Section B**

3. Read the following passage, and then answer the questions which follow.

That was not my only success following my apparent restoration to health. One evening Jack came home from school, and drew from his satchel a copy of the *Polytechnic Magazine*. He passed it across the tea-table to Mother, not saying a word. I saw her open it with mild interest. Suddenly her gaze concentrated, and the colour rose up her neck and over her cheeks. 5

"What's this?" she said to Jack, in a tone of alarm that instantly changed to confidence, as though she were witnessing the fulfilment of a long-promised guarantee.

"Show him", said Jack. 10

Mother ignored his instruction, and continued to stare at the magazine, open as Jack had handed it across the table. From it, she looked at me, and I felt that she was determined to see in my elusive features some determinant hitherto unsuspected.

I was not greatly impressed because I could not fully comprehend what had happened, or what the achievement signified. 15

"Is that mine?" I faltered.

"Looks like it", said Jack, in a tone that contained a warning.

The warning was not necessary, because I had changed so much during my absence from home that the self who had written the tale was no more than a discarded skin. Nevertheless, I looked at my name and saw it as something concrete to which I could anchor myself as ship to buoy, off the leeshore of life. 20

Jack then explained how he had taken my story to the English master at the Polytechnic Secondary School, a venture that ended in publication. What Mother thought about this I never learned. She might have said something at the time, had not Father appeared, with his usual hearty kiss for all three of us. Mother responded warmly, and poured out his tea into a moustache-cup, breaking a fresh egg into it. While he stirred this nourishing concoction, Mother exhibited the page bearing his younger son's name. 25

"Fine! Fine!" he said, glancing at the page and then squinting at the raised cup to make sure that the emulsion was complete, without solids of yolk or albumen. Little flecks of tea and egg, like gilding-fluid, stood on his moustache as he repeated, "Fine, my son. Stick to it! Stick to it!" and then changed the subject, to tell us about one of his colleagues and of some absorbing minor drama in the South-West District Post Office; a field of endless fascination to him. 30 40

The attitude taken by my family thus ensured that I should not fall into precocious self-congratulation over my first literary success. Whatever Jack may have believed, as the instigator, he would never have dreamed of congratulating me. Any praise from Mother I should have had to regard as partisan. Father's attitude conveyed no snub; it was merely a symptom of his complete unconsciousness of any such thing as an art of letters, or indeed any aesthetic realities. So his "Fine! Fine!" meant as much as he was capable of meaning. 45

RICHARD CHURCH

- (a) To judge from the mother's attitude as described up to and including line 14, what might she have actually said to herself at that point?
- (b) Up to Jack's explanation referred to in line 24, the passage does not make the situation really clear. What effect is gained by this?
- (c) Suggest what the warning referred to in lines 18 and 19 might have been if openly expressed.
- (d) Explain how the last paragraph sums up the attitude of each of the four members of the family to the publication of Richard's story.

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- (e) To what do the following words refer?
- (i) it (line 12)
  - (ii) him (line 10)
  - (iii) him (line 40)
  - (iv) this (line 26)
- (f) What special quality is there in the language of the sentence "Nevertheless . . . leeshore of life" (lines 21 to 23), and what appears to be the author's purpose in expressing himself in this way?
- (g) Comment on the author's way of portraying his father, with particular reference to
- (i) physical description
  - (ii) his father's language.

PAPER 3: USE OF ENGLISH

3 hours

Answer all the questions.

SECTION A

1. Fill each of the numbered blanks in the following passage with **one** suitable word.

From the beginning, water has furnished man with a source of food and a highway to travel upon. The first civilisations arose \_\_\_\_\_ (1) water was a dominant element in the environment, a challenge \_\_\_\_\_ (2) man's ingenuity. The Egyptians invented the 365 \_\_\_\_\_ (3) calendar in response \_\_\_\_\_ (4) the Nile's annual flooding. The Babylonians, who were among \_\_\_\_\_ (5) most famous law-makers \_\_\_\_\_ (6) antiquity, devised edicts regulating water usage. Water inspired the Chinese \_\_\_\_\_ (7) build a 1,000 mile canal, a complex system \_\_\_\_\_ (8), after nearly 2,500 years, \_\_\_\_\_ (9) still partly in use and still commands the awe of engineers. But the ancients never found complete solutions \_\_\_\_\_ (10) their water problems. The Hwang Ho, or Yellow River, is also known \_\_\_\_\_ (11) "China's Sorrow"; it is so erratic and dangerous \_\_\_\_\_ (12) in a single flood it has caused a million deaths. Floods harassed the great civilisation of the Indus River valley, and inadequate drainage ruined much \_\_\_\_\_ (13) its land. Today \_\_\_\_\_ (14) dominates man as it always has \_\_\_\_\_ (15). Its presence continues to govern the location of his homes and cities; its tempestuous variability can kill \_\_\_\_\_ (16) or his herds or his crops; its routes link him to \_\_\_\_\_ (17) fellows; its immense value may add \_\_\_\_\_ (18) already dangerous political conflicts. There are many examples \_\_\_\_\_ (19) this in our \_\_\_\_\_ (20) time.

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2. Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it means exactly the same as the sentence printed before it.

**Example:** I expect that he will get there by lunch-time.

**Answer:** I expect him *to get there by lunch-time*

1. "Come on! You can jump over that wall if you try!" Bill said to his friend.

Bill encouraged .....

2. Joe prefers sleeping to working.

Joe would .....

3. You did the right thing when you resigned.

You were right .....

4. He was tired and hungry, too.

Not only .....

5. The accident was caused by thoughtlessness, not speeding.

The cause .....

6. The detective went into the house and immediately switched on the lights.

The moment .....

7. The last time I was in London was in 1972.

I haven't .....

8. The director told the representative to finish his report by the weekend but he didn't complete it until Wednesday.

It was not until .....

9. "I'm afraid you must move your car", the policeman said to Willy.

The policeman insisted .....

10. The only condition on which she promised to work for us was that we paid her in advance.

..... as long as .....



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3. Fill each of the numbered blanks with a suitable word or phrase.

**Example:**

**Mary:** "How long is your holiday?"

**John:** "A fortnight. We're halfway through it."

**Mary:** "Oh, so you *'ve been staying* ..... here a week already

Alternative answers: *have been staying, have been, etc.*

1. I shouldn't have done that if ..... in your position.
2. .... John at the meeting, tell him I'll ring him tomorrow.
3. It's high time those children ..... in bed.
4. "I thought you were going to have your car repaired tomorrow."  
"I changed my mind. It's ..... today."
5. During his schooldays, the President is said ..... a lazy pupil.
6. Neither Willy nor his wife ..... coffee.
7. I wish you ..... here last night when we were discussing films.
8. .... as to open the door for me?
9. The doctor warned Willy that unless he ..... smoking he would be risking heart trouble.
10. Although I ..... "South Pacific" twice before, I think I'll enjoy seeing it again.