

Longman Exam Guides

**ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE
INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATIONS**

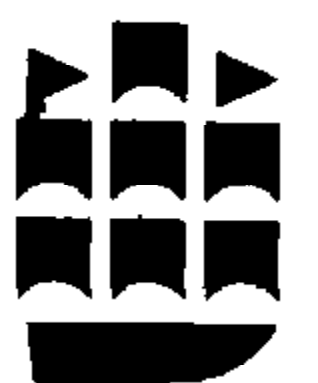
Felicity O'Dell



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Intermediate Examinations
Felicity O'Dell



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Longman Exam Guides
English as a Foreign Language
Intermediate Examinations

Longman Exam Guides

***Series Editors:* Stuart Wall and David Weigall**

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Editors' Preface

Much has been said in recent years about declining standards and disappointing examination results. Whilst this may be somewhat exaggerated, examiners are well aware that the performance of many candidates falls well short of their potential. Longman Exam Guides are written by experienced examiners and teachers, and aim to give you the best possible foundation for examination success. There is no attempt to cut corners. The books encourage thorough study and a full understanding of the concepts involved and should be seen as course companions and study guides to be used throughout the year. Examiners are in no doubt that a structured approach in preparing for and taking examinations can, together with hard work and diligent application, substantially improve performance.

The largely self-contained nature of each chapter gives the book a useful degree of flexibility. After starting with Chapters 1 and 2, all other chapters can be read selectively, in any order appropriate to the stage you have reached in your course. We believe that this book, and the series as a whole, will help you establish a solid platform of basic knowledge and examination technique on which to build.

Stuart Wall and David Weigall

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All the Examination Boards referred to in this book are thanked for their prompt and helpful replies to all my enquiries. I am particularly grateful to the following boards for giving me permission to reproduce previous questions:

ARELS Examination Trust
The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
The University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations
RSA Examinations Board
Institute of Linguists
Pitman Examinations Institute
Trinity College, London

I should like to thank the Cambridge Eurocentre for permission to reproduce a plan of the school and also to thank colleagues and students there who have helped me in many ways in the preparation of this book. I am particularly grateful to the Principal, Dr James Day.

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Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the following sources for permission to reproduce passages from previously published works.

B.T. Batsford Ltd for an extract from *British Woodland Trees* by H.L. Edin; Granada Publishing Ltd for an extract from *Word-Processing for Beginners* by Susan Curran, pub. Grafton Books; Hutchinson Publishing Group Ltd for an extract from *A Dictionary of British Folk Customs* by Christina Hole; Private Eye for an extract by Christopher Logue from *Bumper Book of True Stories*; Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd for an extract from *Small World* by David Lodge.

List of Abbreviations

ARELS	Association of Recognised English Language Schools: a professional organisation which links the qualified language schools in the United Kingdom. One of its functions is setting and marking the ARELS Exams which are described in this book.
CUEFL	Communicative Use of English as a Foreign Language. This term is used particularly about an exam produced by the RSA. It puts the emphasis on the student's ability to communicate rather than to use faultless grammar.
EFL	English as a Foreign Language. This abbreviation is used to describe English as a subject studied by non-native speakers.
ELTS	English Language Testing Service. This abbreviation refers to the English language tests produced by the British Council in collaboration with British universities.
ESB	English Speaking Board. This examinations board exists to promote a high standard of English speaking. It administers exams for native speakers as well as for foreign learners.
FCE	First Certificate in English. This is the name of the intermediate exam produced by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. It is the oldest and the most extensively used of the British EFL exams.
JMB	Joint Matriculation Board. This board produces examinations for pupils leaving British schools. Its EFL exam is aimed largely at the foreign student who wishes to enter higher education in Britain.

RSA

Royal Society of Arts. This organisation is involved in, among many other things, various aspects of EFL, notably teacher training. It has also pioneered the communicative type of language exam.

TOEFL

Test of English as a Foreign Language. This is the major US exam for foreign learners of English. It is very extensively taken by students wishing to attend educational institutions in the USA.

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This book is for you if you are a student of English as a foreign language at an intermediate level and if you are thinking of taking an examination in general English. Most schools will be able to arrange a number of different exams for you and it is also possible for you to make independent arrangements to take all of the exams discussed in this book. The book will help you to choose which of the many exams available is best for you. Then it will show you how to prepare for the exam in the best possible way and it will also help you to do as well as you can on the day of the examination.

This first chapter describes the different exams which you can choose from. They all have their own particular characteristics and it is a good idea to select the one which is most suitable for your needs. When you have chosen your exam, you need to know how to prepare for it. Chapter 2 will be useful whichever exam you choose because it gives general advice on how best to learn English as well as guidelines which will help you to take any exam successfully. Chapters 3–17 look at different types of exam question. Which of these chapters are important for you depends on which exam you are taking. Table 1.4 at the end of this chapter shows you which chapters are particularly helpful for each examination at intermediate level.

There are a lot of general English examinations you can choose from. The most important of these are shown in Table 1.1. This table gives an indication of the levels of the different examinations but it is a simplification – it is not possible to say, for example, that the Cambridge First Certificate in English is exactly the same level as the RSA CUEFL Intermediate exam. This book concentrates on those exams in the middle group, those marked with an asterisk in Table 1.1. If you pass one of these exams you can feel that you are ready to begin a really advanced English course.

Do you already know which exam or exams you are going to take? If you do, turn to the part of this chapter on your exam and

read it carefully, then look at Table 1.4 to see which of Chapters 3–17 are especially important for you. Study Chapter 2 and then work through those chapters indicated for you by Table 1.5.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Approximate Levels of General EFL Exams.

Elementary			Intermediate*			Advanced					
University of Cambridge											
PET			FCE*			CPE DIPLOMA					
Association of Recognised English Language Schools (ARELS)											
Prelim			Higher Certificate*			Diploma					
University of Oxford											
Prelim			Higher*								
Royal Society of Arts (RSA CUEFL)											
Basic			Intermediate*			Advanced					
Joint Matriculation Board						JMB test in* English					
TOEFL All levels*											
British Council English Language Testing Service											
						All levels*					
Institute of Linguists											
Prelim Cert		Grade I Cert		Grade II Cert*		Intermed Dipl.		Fin Diploma			
Pitman Examinations Institute											
Elementary		Intermediate		Higher Intern*		Advanced					
Trinity College (Spoken)											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7*	8*	9*	10	11	12
Trinity College (Written) Intermediate*											
English Speaking Board											
Foundation			Intermediate			Advanced			Cert in English as an Acquired Lang		
1	2	3	1*	2*	3*	1	2	3			
Associated Examining Board (AEB)								Test in English for Educational Purposes			

This table does not include specialist, professional exams organised by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the General Medical Council, City and Guilds of London Institute and Pitman Examinations Institute for which the book will also be useful. Nor does it include exams which are also taken by native speakers of English.

(For further information about these exams, see *The Pitman Guide to English Language Examinations* by Susan Davies & Richard West, Pitman, 1984).

If you have not already chosen your exam, stop for a moment and note down on a piece of paper your reasons for wanting to take an exam.

- Do you need an entrance qualification for a college or university?

- Do you need an exam to help you do well in your present or hoped-for job? If so, which language skills are necessary for that job – reading, writing, speaking and/or listening?
- Do you just want to take an exam to help you discipline yourself to work hard?
- Do you simply want to test whether your English has, or has not, reached a good intermediate level?
- Do you have any other reasons?

Keep your reasons in mind as you read and we shall return to them later. In the next few pages you can read about the twelve different exams which could test your knowledge of general English at this level. As you read try to complete Table 1.2 which will then be a summary for you of the basic information about each exam. As an example, the Oxford Higher Exam has been partly completed for you.

Table 1.2 Comparison of Intermediate EFL exams by length, content and availability.

	How long does it take?	Would it test my			Lstg	Where can I take it?	When can I take it?	Is there anything special about this exam?
		Rdg	Wtg	Skg				
FCE								
ARELS								
OXFORD	6hrs 10m	yes		no		UK and abroad		Can use Eng-Eng. dictionary
RSA								
JMB								
TOEFL								
BRITISH COUNCIL								
INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS								
PITMAN								
TRINITY COLLEGE	spoken written							
ESB								

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE FIRST CERTIFICATE IN ENGLISH (FCE)

The Cambridge English examinations are probably the oldest and the best known of the exams for foreign students of English. In 1984 the Cambridge exams were changed a little to meet modern needs but they are still a traditional type of exam with a strong emphasis on accuracy in grammar and vocabulary.

The FCE has five papers:

Paper One	is a Reading Comprehension Paper which lasts one hour. All the forty questions in this paper are multiple choice – you have to choose from a set of four alternatives. The first twenty-five questions ask you to choose which word fits a blank in a sentence. Next you have to read three texts and answer fifteen questions on them.
Paper Two	is a Composition Paper lasting one and a half hours. You have to write two compositions of 120–180 words each and you can select your subjects from a choice of five. You will probably have to choose from a letter, a speech, a story, a discussion and a composition on a set literary text. Each year there is a choice of three literary texts. These change yearly and you can find out the current possibilities from the address at the end of this section.
Paper Three	<p>lasts two hours and is called Use of English. It aims to test your knowledge of grammar. It has two sections:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Section A asks you to do such things as fill in blanks in a paragraph and individual sentences, to reword sentences and to form sentences from given words.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Section B asks you to do a piece of directed writing. You may have to read a text and then write a summary or you may have to reply to a given letter or advertisement.</p>
Paper Four	is a test of Listening Comprehension and it lasts approximately half an hour. You listen to a tape recording and have to fill in answers in your exam book. Usually there are three passages and they are spoken slowly and clearly although you may have to cope with local accents and some background noise. You hear each recording twice.
Paper Five	<p>is a speaking test and it is often called the Interview. It lasts about twenty minutes and has three sections:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In Section 1 you look at a picture and have a conversation with the examiner based on this picture. At first you may simply have to answer questions about what you can see but then the conversation will become more general – from a picture of children you may start discussing the education system in your country, for example.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In Section 2 you are given a few moments to read through a short text. You are then asked a few questions on the passage, such as ‘Where do you think the text comes from?’ You then have to read the text aloud.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In Section 3 you have to use your English to explain something or to show how you would respond to a particular social situation.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">There are certain possible variations to Paper Five which you or your centre can choose. If you have decided to study one of the set literary books for the Composition Paper you can ask, if you like, to discuss this with the oral examiner. It is also possible for either the whole of Paper Five, or its third section, to be taken by three candidates together at the same time. This means that more realistic role-play of social situations can be organised.</p>

With the FCE there are additional optional papers in Business, Science and Translation which you can choose to take if you wish. If you pass the basic FCE papers but not the options that you decided to take, you still get a certificate showing that you have passed the FCE. If you pass the options as well, your certificate will show that you have also passed additional papers in the relevant subjects.

You can take the Cambridge examinations in June or December and they can be taken all over the world. You must enrol very early. If you are going to take the exam in Britain, the enrolment dates are the same each year – 23 March for the June examination and 9 October for the December examination. The enrolment dates are even earlier if you are going to take the exam abroad. For further information contact:

The University of Cambridge
Local Examinations Syndicate
1 Hills Road
Cambridge CB1 2EU
United Kingdom
Tel. Cambridge (0223) 61111

ARELS HIGHER CERTIFICATE

This is an exam which you take in a language laboratory and it tests how good you are at listening and speaking. It is a partner to the Oxford Higher Examination which tests reading and writing at the same level. The ARELS exams are highly respected by teachers and employers as they really test the listening and speaking skills which are needed in everyday working and social situations.

The ARELS Higher Certificate exam lasts about forty minutes and it is divided into six sections:

1. *Free expression*: In this section you talk for two minutes on a subject such as, 'Too much television is bad for family life.' You choose your subject from a set of five, which you are given fifteen minutes before the exam begins. You have time to prepare your talk but you are not allowed to use notes.
2. *Social responses*: For example, what do you say when your friend tells you that he has just failed an important examination?
3. *Pronunciation*: You read aloud one part in a dialogue.
4. *Listening comprehension*: You have to answer questions on several listening passages which are often taken from the British radio. Your understanding of English intonation is also tested.
5. *Sustained speaking*: You are given a set of pictures and have to tell the story which the pictures illustrate.
6. *Oral accuracy*: Here you have to do a series of exercises which test your grammatical accuracy.

You can take this exam in March, May/June and November and must enrol twelve days before the examination date. If you wish, your local centre may be able to organise an exam for you at another date.

Most schools which enter students for an ARELS exam also give some free lessons in preparation for the exam. You can take the exam in Britain and at accredited centres abroad. For further information contact:

The ARELS Examinations Trust
113 Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 6JX
United Kingdom
Tel. Oxford (0865) 514272

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD HIGHER EXAMINATION

This examination is the partner of the ARELS Higher Certificate described above. It aims to test your ability to read and write English. Like the ARELS examinations, it aims to ask you to do only things which have a direct relevance to everyday life. You may use an English–English dictionary in the Oxford exams.

The exam has two papers:

Paper One (three hours) tests mainly writing and Paper Two (three hours plus ten minutes reading time) concentrates on reading. Each paper has five questions and you must do all the questions.

The kind of things you may be asked to write in **Paper One** include letters, reports, instructions, summaries and postcards. Often your writing is a response to a piece of reading – a reply to a letter or a comment on a newspaper article, for example. In your answers it will be necessary to show your understanding of register in English (i.e. the differences between writing to a close friend and writing to someone you have never met).

In **Paper Two** you have quite a lot of reading to do and you are expected to be able to read much more difficult things than you could write yourself. The passages you have to read are in everyday English and are neither too literary nor too technical. An important question in Paper Two is the dictionary question. This tests whether you can use an English–English dictionary.

You can take the Oxford Higher in May and November and must enrol three weeks before the date of the exam. It is possible to take the exam throughout Britain and at accredited centres abroad. For further information contact:

The University of Oxford
Delegacy of Local Examinations
Ewert Place
Summertown
Oxford OX2 7BZ
United Kingdom
Tel. Oxford (0865) 54291

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS “CUEFL” EXAMINATIONS

“CUEFL” stands for Communicative Use of English as a Foreign Language which means that these exams – like the ARELS and Oxford exams – want you to show that you can communicate satisfactorily in everyday situations rather than merely to show how good your knowledge of English grammar is.

There are four CUEFL papers: writing; reading; speaking; and listening. These four papers can be taken at each of three levels, Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. You can take all four papers at the same level if you want to, or you can vary the levels. If you feel that your reading level is much better than your speaking, for example, you can take the reading paper at Advanced level, the speaking exam at Basic and the writing and listening papers at Intermediate level. If you prefer you can just do one or two papers. There is no need to try all four. In other words, you are free to choose the profile that is best for you.

1. *The Writing Paper* lasts one and a half hours but you are also allowed ten minutes' reading time. Dictionaries may be used. You have six questions to answer and must try them all. The questions are realistic and typically include filling in a form, writing a postcard, writing two or three letters, composing an advertisement and giving instructions or directions.
2. *The Reading Paper* lasts one hour and again you are allowed both ten minutes reading time and the use of dictionaries. In this paper you have a lot to read, perhaps a small magazine or several pages from a newspaper. It is very important, then, to be able to skim, choosing to read in detail only what is necessary for the question. Often the material that you have to read is the same as that used in the Advanced exam; it is the questions which are matched to an Intermediate level. You don't have to write much in this paper. You have to mark statements true or false, give one-word answers to questions or choose the correct answer from a selection of four or five.
3. *The Listening Paper* lasts half an hour. You listen to a tape recording and write answers in an answer book. Again at least some of what you hear is the same as that for Advanced students but the questions asked are not quite so difficult. What you hear is often taken from BBC radio programmes and other authentic off-air recordings.
4. *The Oral Interaction Paper* is quite different from other exams. Its aim is to make you feel as comfortable as possible so that you can really show how good your English is. You will be in the exam room for about fifteen minutes but you will probably find that you have to wait some time between doing the different parts of the test.

You will find that there are three important English speakers involved in doing the oral exam with you. There is the *Assessor*, the person who decides what mark to give you. The Assessor is present in