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Introduction

These past papers from the First Certificate in English (FCE) examination are being published in response to requests from teachers and language teaching institutions who have asked for additional examination practice material.

FCE Practice Tests provides an opportunity to familiarise students with the examination papers and provides candidates with practice in examination technique. It is also possible to conduct five-paper 'mock' examinations if desired. However, it should be noted that the assessment of candidates' results in a public examination with many thousands of entries involves complex statistical procedures and for this reason no published texts can provide a fully comparable assessment.

FCE Practice Tests contains five past examinations, based on the FCE examinations of June 1976 to June 1978. Each paper is presented as far as possible exactly as set in the FCE examination, except that the order of the Reading Comprehension and Composition papers has been reversed to follow current practice.

This accompanying Teacher's Book contains marking instructions and answer keys. The Student's Book contains a sample answer sheet for Papers 1 and 4. For use in class the FCE/CPE Answer Pad, published by Cambridge University Press, is available.

Information about the performance of candidates may be found in the annual Survey of the Cambridge EFL Examinations available from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 17 Harvey Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. It is by agreement with the Syndicate that the past question papers from the 1976—8 examinations contained in this book are published.

The First Certificate Examination

Description

The examination has the following format:

	Time
Paper 1: Reading Comprehension	1¼ hours
Paper 2: Composition	2 hours
Paper 3: Use of English	2 hours
Paper 4: Listening Comprehension	approx. 30 minutes
Paper 5: Interview	approx. 10 minutes

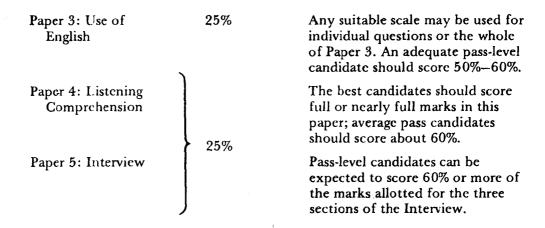
Papers 1 and 4 consist of multiple-choice questions and the answers are machine-scored. Papers 2 and 3 require written responses ranging from one word to a whole composition, and are examiner-marked. Papers 4 and 5 carry 25% of the total marks for the examination; the other three papers each carry 25%.

Assessment

The final assessment of any candidate is arrived at only on the basis of total performance in the five papers, in which marks have been carefully adjusted to establish correct weightings and grading levels.

These procedures are clearly impracticable for the teacher working alone; however, the following guide provides a 'profile' of marks which will enable teachers to assess candidates appropriately.

Name of Paper	Percentage of total marks	Assessment
Paper 1: Reading Comprehension	25%	The average mark for pass candidates is about 60% with good candidates scoring 70%-80% and very good candidates 80%-100%.
Paper 2: Composition	25%	Teachers may use any suitable total mark for the paper. Work of pass quality should be considered as gaining about 40%, good work 60% and very good 75%—80%.



Paper 1: Reading Comprehension

1.1 Practice notes

Paper 1 is in two sections, the first consisting of 40 multiple-choice items in the form of a sentence with a blank to be filled by one of five words or phrases, and the second consisting of 20 multiple-choice items based on two or more passages.

Care should be taken not to practise this test to excess, but merely to accustom candidates to the requirements and tempo of tests of this type. Their length and character are dictated by the needs of effective testing and do not directly reflect a comparable emphasis in class time which may be unproductive.

1.2 Marking

The answers to be taken as correct for Paper 1 are given in The First Certificate Practice Tests section of this book. These can readily be transferred to a transparent overlay (e.g. an overhead projector transparency) to ensure ease and accuracy of marking.

The average score for pass candidates on Paper 1 is in the region of 60%, with good candidates scoring 70%-80% and very good candidates 80%-100%. With a total of 60 for the paper, this means pass candidates should score about 36.

Paper 2: Composition

2.1 Practice notes

The range of topics set gives the opportunity for simple composition or discussion, descriptive writing or a mixture of description and narrative. There are five topics from which the candidate chooses three. Each composition must be between 120 and 180 words in length. Work in the classroom should provide practice in the writing of all these different types of composition, at the required length and within the time constraints of the examination, i.e. about

40 minutes should be allocated to each topic. Care should be taken to ensure that candidates master the different forms of language appropriate to each topic, realising, for example, that language appropriate to a dialogue may not be suitable for a descriptive composition. Candidates should also be made aware of appropriate layout in e.g. the letter exercise.

2.2 Marking

Marking is based on the quality of the language employed, so that attention should be directed towards the range and appropriateness of vocabulary, sentence and paragraph structure and the correctness of grammar, punctuation and spelling rather than towards subject-matter. Content is not the main concern at FCE level, although the inclusion of irrelevant material, especially that which seems to be included because it has been learnt 'parrot-fashion' is penalised.

As in the examination, a single impression mark is given for each composition, taking into account all the above factors of appropriateness of content and linguistic expression. This means that individual mistakes are not penalised, but count in the overall impression. Consistent decisions must be made on the layout of letters and dialogues, colloquialisms, under- or over-length compositions, and the appropriateness of the language chosen. The underlining of specific mistakes or dubious structures is recommended as an indication of the extent and character of errors in language.

Each composition should be assessed using the following scale, which is shown in percentage form although any suitable total mark may be used. The pass mark should be considered to be about 40%, a good pass to be 60% and a very good pass to be 75%—90%.

90-100	Excellent	Natural English with minimal errors and complete realisation of the task set.
75-90	Very good	More than a collection of simple sentences, and with good vocabulary and structures. Some non-basic errors.
60-75	Good	Simple but accurate realisation of the task set with sufficient naturalness of English and not many errors.
40-60	Pass	Reasonably correct but awkward and non- communicating OR fair and natural treatment of subject with some serious errors.
25-40	Weak	Original vocabulary and grammar both inadequate to the subject.
0-25	Very poor	Incoherent. Errors show lack of basic knowledge of English.

Paper 3: Use of English

3.1 Practice notes

This paper has two sections. The first contains exercises to test the candidate's active control of English usage and grammatical structure. The second is a directed writing exercise where the candidate has to extract information and present it in a coherent form.

Practice can consist of whole papers or individual question types, though it should be noted that the modified cloze test which forms question 1 in all papers is of more value as a testing device than as an exercise to increase language awareness, and should, like multiple-choice tests, not be overpractised. Section B of Paper 3 functions as a further composition test, and need not be practised at the same time as the more analytical material.

3.2 Marking

Detailed marking schemes are given in The First Certificate Practice Tests section of this book, isolating each marking point. For practice purposes, any suitable modification may be made as long as care is taken to adopt a consistent approach to errors.

For Section B an overall impression mark is given, normally for each paragraph, for isolating the appropriate information points and presenting them suitably. The scales shown in the Practice Tests section, or any other suitable total mark may be used. An adequate pass-level candidate should score 50%—60% of this.

Paper 4: Listening Comprehension

4.1 Practice notes

Like Paper 1, this test should not be over-practised, though it is important for students to become used to the conditions in which it is taken. The essential instructions to the person conducting the test may be summarised as follows:

- i) Candidates must be given a clear introduction to the test, and the procedure explained (two readings of each passage, answers on the sheet provided, and in pencil).
- ii) After a pause (about 1 minute) to look through the first group of questions, the first reading is announced.
- iii) Each first reading of a passage should take about 2½ minutes, ignoring the marked pauses.
- iv) Candidates are told that there will be a pause for selecting answers, and reminded that questions need not be answered in order and may be left until the second reading.
- v) Each second reading of a passage should contain a 5 second pause at each of the places marked, and be followed by a pause of about 1 minute.

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4.2 Marking

The answers to be taken as correct are given in The First Certificate Practice Tests section of this book. The candidates' answer sheets should be scored as explained for Paper 1. The best candidates should score full or nearly full marks in this paper, average pass candidates somewhere in the region of 60%.

Paper 5: Interview

5.1 Practice notes

Teachers will probably wish to give students experience of the whole Interview, conducted as in the examination and marked simultaneously. They should therefore familiarise themselves beforehand with the procedure and marking scales as given below. Each student should be given ten minutes to prepare the dialogue beforehand.

Section A: Conversation (about 5 minutes)

The examiner's version of each photograph has sets of suggested questions and follow-up topics.

The candidate should be given an opportunity to study the photograph for a few seconds. The specific questions should then be asked, followed by a lead into the general topics. Not all the questions or topics suggested need be used for each candidate, and modifications may be made as thought necessary.

The candidate should be encouraged to demonstrate his overall fluency and the examiner should aim to provide reasonable openings so that the candidate is encouraged to take the initiative and speak a number of connected sentences without interruption. It should be made clear to the candidates that factual knowledge and accurate interpretation of the picture are not being tested.

Section B: Dialogue (about 2 minutes)

After the Conversation section of the examination, the candidate should be given a few seconds to glance over his speech before being asked to read his part aloud. The examiner should assist the candidate by reading his own part with some freshness and conviction.

The candidate's reading should be assessed for quality of intonation, rhythm, stress and pronunciation, using the scale given below.

Assessment

Section C: Situations (about 3 minutes)

The candidate is required to respond to three situations chosen by the examiner from the list given. The examiner reads the situation aloud while the candidate follows on his own copy. This should be sufficient for the candidate to realise what is required, but a simple general explanation may be added at the examiner's discretion.

5.2 Marking

Each sub-test involves a separate impression mark for particular aspects of oral performance, with passing candidates gaining in the region of 50% of the available marks in each, as indicated in the marking scales below. To assist in forming an impression of the standards applied in the examination, sample recordings are available from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate at the address given on p. 1.

In the picture-based Conversation the following scale based on overall ability to communicate should be used:

Very weak	0-2	Cannot understand or produce simple vocabulary or structures.
Weak	3-6	Unlikely to sustain an everyday conversation.
Not quite adequate	7-9	Can communicate in a hit-and-miss fashion.
Adequate	10-13	Basic competence on straightforward topics.
Good	14-17	Fluent at this level, though noticeably foreign.
Excellent	18-20	Near-native fluency

In the Dialogue the following scale, based on pronunciation features, including intonation, rhythm and stress should be used:

Weak	0-1	Barely intelligible.
Inadequate	2-3	Strongly foreign pronunciation, only intermittently intelligible without sight of the passage.
Not quite adequate	4	Mispronunciation, poor rhythm and intonation make reading not fully intelligible.
Adequate	5-6	Most sounds correct, control of intonation and stress patterns.

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Good	7-8	Clearly foreign, but controlled and easily understood.
Excellent	9-10	Effective, near-native pronunciation.
The followi	ng scale	should be used for each of the three Situations:
0 Misses po	oint com	pletely, or gives very inadequate response.
1 Relevant	but inac	lequate, or badly expressed.
2 Good bu	t not ful	ly correct or natural.
3 Fully acc	eptable.	

The First Certificate Practice Tests

This section contains a marking key or list of answers for each paper as relevant, and the parts of the examination needed only by the teacher (e.g. listening comprehension passages for each Paper 4). The answers are laid out in exactly the same order as the Student's Book, paper by paper.

Practice Test 1 (based on June 1976 examination)

Paper 1: Reading Comprehension

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Paper 2: Composition

See p. 4.

Paper 3: Use of English

Section A

Question 1 (Mark for each correct single word.) 2. whose 3. were/expected/intended (not decided etc.) 5. spending/passing/enjoying 4. towards/to/into 6. been (not fallen) 7. (a)round/at/on/near/after/by **8.** of 9. towards 10. over/down/ flat/cold/out 11. fell/dropped/collapsed 12. only 13. near(by)/ 16. himself/ close/handy 14. his (not he) 15. otherwise/elsewhere them/Mary/her (not that) 17. ever 18. again 19. with 20. clouds/air

Question 2 (Mark for each correct added portion, or as indicated.)

- 1. ... far off/away/from here. (not far alone)
 - ... a long way off/away.
 - ... a great/big/long distance away.
- 2. ... what that notice means/says/indicates/conveys/is about.
 - ... the meaning of that notice.
- 3. ... been/come/arrived/turned up (so) late, we'd/we would/we could/ have gone . . .
- 4. ... he works (not in)/is employed.
- 5. ... like (to have)/care for ...?"
- 6. ... cleaning/to be cleaned/wiping/to be wiped/washing/to be washed.
- 7. ... as/so cold/chilly/cool as it was before/yesterday/used to be. (Mark each for correct as structure, and vocabulary, cold etc.)
- 8. ... being watched/viewed by ... when the ... /at the time of the ...
- 9. ... don't/can't play (the guitar) as well as he does/can.
- 10. ... (still) hasn't been done/completed/etc. (Mark each for correct order and verb forms.)

Question 3 (Half marks for each correct change made at points in italics. 0-3 bonus marks for register. Consistently wrong-headed sentences, e.g. 'I repeat the necessary information', 'I recommend this very strongly and a little impatiently' etc. may be penalised.)

Miss Smith: Now don't forget, everyone, that we are going on a country walk tomorrow morning. Is everyone sure of/Let's just check, etc., the time and place we are to meet? (Separate reply) Gwendolen: Please, Miss, I'm not. Miss S: As I feared/I thought it might be you, etc. Once again then, we are meeting at 9.30 at the Bus Station. One more thing (= also) before you dismiss/go, etc., don't forget (= remind) you'll need a hot drink and sandwiches and to wear warm clothes and thick boots. Gwendolen: Please, Miss, will/(has) the work we've been doing (have) to be finished this evening? Miss S: Of course it must, (Impatience. Really Gwendolen, etc.) There certainly won't be time before we go out. By the way, have you got a map, and can you understand it?

10

Practice Test 1

Gwendolen: Well, that's just what worries/is worrying me most, I'm sorry to say, etc. I can't even make out where the school is, let alone all the rivers and bridges we've been studying.

Question 4 (One mark each. Correct spelling necessary.)

- 1. generosity
- 6. attraction
- 2. impolitely
- 7. laughter
- 3. plentiful
- 8. admiration
- 4. bravery
- 9. bored
- 5. shortage
- 10. (un)fortunately

Section B

Question 5 (General impression mark for each paragraph according to the scale below.)

9-10	Very good	Natural English with minimal errors, effective and economical presentation of all information points.
7—8	Good	Well-constructed paragraph with sure choice of points logically linked, coherent even with errors.
5 –6	Pass	Task of isolating and presenting points understood and carried out sufficiently well.
3-4	Weak	Understanding of exercise shown, but answer badly marred by inability to link points or avoid serious errors OR well-written paragraph but ill-proportioned, leaning on text (or inventing) and failing to show understanding of the task set.
1-2	Poor	Uncomprehending fumbling with text, missing essential points, padding, gross structural inadequacy.

The information points may be summarised as listed below. Take care that any ticking of these for convenience in marking does not become numerically confused with the marking scale.

Paragraph 1	Pa	ra	gr	ab	h	1
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- Winter road conditions.
- Holiday traffic.
- Therefore slow even for a fast car.
- Side roads no better.
- Parking problems.

Paragraph 2

- Avoid all the trouble of driving
- Comfort
- Scenery
- Food good enough
- Avoid parking problems

The First Certificate Practice Tests

Paper 4: Listening Comprehension

Passage for Questions 1 to 5

The appearance in Glasgow of the largest yearly exhibition of children's books in Britain will give a wonderful opportunity for Scottish people to see and buy the latest books for children as well as old favourites, both hardback and paperback. The age-range covered will stretch from wordless picture books for the youngest to almost-adult novels./

In its early years, the Children's Book Show was intended for specialist visitors, mainly teachers and librarians. As it became more widely known and successful, however, family and school parties began to come in ever-increasing numbers, so that it grew into a real children's book show, and a show with a double purpose. For years it was held in various halls in London, outgrowing each of them in turn until, in answer to enthusiastic invitations to bring it to different parts of the country, the decision was taken to move outside the capital, despite the difficulties that would result. One year it was held in Leeds, then in Bristol as well as in London, and now it comes to Glasgow.

The great success of this move to bring the show to cities many miles from London, where of course most book publishers are, has been largely due to the support given to the organizing committee by local booksellers, librarians, teachers, parents and others./ This year's show will again interest both the general public and specialists. Admission will be free, but school parties must be booked for in advance. In a large room near the entrance there will be a self-service bookshop where every book on show will be for sale.

Passage for Questions 6 to 10

Hornblower awoke suddenly that night, wondering what it was that had awakened him. A moment later he knew, when the sound was repeated. It was the dull roar of a gun fired on the castle walls above his head. He jumped from his bed with his heart beating loudly, and before his feet reached the floor the whole castle was in confusion. Overhead there were guns firing. Somewhere else, outside the body of the castle, there were hundreds of guns firing; through the barred windows of his prison came a faint light as the flashes were reflected down from the sky. Immediately outside his door drums were beating as the soldiers were called to arms. The yard was full of the sounds of nailed boots crashing on the stones.

That great noise of gunfire which he could hear could mean only one thing. The ships must have sailed silently into the harbour in the darkness, and now he could hear the roaring of their guns as they attacked the enemy ships in the harbour. There was a great sea battle going on within half a mile of him, and he could see nothing of it. It was very annoying./ He tried to light his candle, but his trembling fingers could do nothing with the stone and steel. He threw them to the floor and, feeling his way in the darkness, he dragged on his coat and trousers and shoes and then beat upon the door madly with his hands./ The soldier outside was Italian, he knew, and he himself spoke no Italian — only good Spanish and bad French./

"Officer! Officer!" he shouted, and then he heard the soldier call for the officer of the guard, and the slow step of the officer as he came up. The noise of the guard marching with their weapons had already died away.

Passage for Questions 11 to 15

When Johnson called again, the managing director received him very politely. "That is a most remarkable oil you brought us, Mr. Johnson," he said. Johnson nodded his smooth, dark head. That was something he knew very well. "I have never seen anything quite like it," the managing director admitted. Johnson nodded again. "No?" he said politely. Then he added, "But I think you will, sir. A very great deal of it." He appeared to think for a moment. "I think you'll find it will be on sale seven, perhaps eight years from now." He smiled.

The managing director thought that was unlikely. He said "It is better than our fish oils. I admit that." "So I am told, sir," agreed Johnson./

"Have you any plans to manufacture it yourself, Mr. Johnson?" Johnson smiled again. "Would I be showing it to you if I had?"

"We might add some chemicals to one of our own fish oils," said the managing director thoughtfully. "It would be expensive to do that, even if you could," Johnson said gently. "Besides," he added, "I am told that this oil will be much cheaper than your best fish oils, anyway. Cheaper than any vegetable oil, in fact."

"Perhaps," said the managing director. "Well, I suppose you want to make an arrangement, Mr. Johnson. Shall we discuss possibilities?"

"By all means," said Johnson. "There are two ways of dealing with a situation of this sort. The usual one is to prevent it altogether or at least to delay it as long as possible. That is, of course, the best way." The managing director nodded. He knew plenty about all that. "But I am so sorry for you, because, you see, that is not possible this time." The managing director had his doubts, but all he said was an enquiring, "Oh?"

"The other way," continued Johnson, "is to produce the thing yourself before the trouble starts."

Answers

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Paper 5: Interview

See p. 6.

Section A: Conversation



Suggested range of questions and topics

- 1. What kind of place is this?
- 2. How do you know?
- 3. What piece of furniture can you see, and what is it for?
- 4. Why is the girl smiling?

Styles in shoes.

Sensible shopping.

Salesmanship.

Practice Test 1

Section B: Dialogue

The candidate will read the part of JOHN.

JOHN: Have you seen Robert lately?

Benny: He's on holiday.

JOHN: I'm glad to hear it. He wasn't looking very fit when I last saw him. In my opinion he was simply asking for a nervous breakdown.

Benny: Surely he wasn't as bad as that?

JOHN: Perhaps not. But a man who has seven clocks, and wants them all to tell exactly the same time, can't be well. What he'd done when I went round there was to collect clocks from every room in the house and put them all in the garage. It seems he was spending hours every evening adjusting them. Then it began to worry him that the striking clocks each took a different length of time to strike. His real trouble was the cuckoo-clock though. I don't believe he really understood it.

Benny: Did he get them right in the end?

JOHN: I don't know. But he had to put the kitchen clock back in the right place. His wife said he'd have to, if he wanted his meals at the proper times.

Section C: Situations

- 1. Someone is flying for the first time, and is a little worried. Say something encouraging.
- 2. At a station or airport you cannot understand an announcement that is made. Ask someone standing near.
- 3. A visitor asks you, in the main street of a town you know, where he can park his car.
- 4. In a crowded room you see one empty seat. What do you say to the people near it?
- 5. Apologise for being late, because of a transport delay.

Practice Test 2 (based on December 1976 examination)

Paper 1: Reading Comprehension

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Paper 2: Composition

See p. 4.