

Cambridge Proficiency

Examination Practice 3

Teacher's Book

University of Cambridge
Local Examinations Syndicate

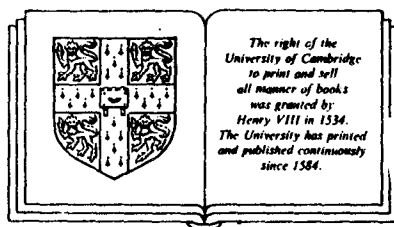
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Introduction

The tests in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3* are designed to familiarise students with the style and format of the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) examination papers and to provide them with practice in examination techniques. The tests can be used in class for pre-examination practice and discussion, as 'mock examinations', or by students working alone using the Teacher's Book as a key. The tests are reproduced exactly as they appear in the examination.

A suggested mark scheme for each of the tests is provided in the Teacher's Book, but it must be emphasised that no fully authoritative assessment of students can be based on this. In the CPE examination itself a series of complex statistical procedures is carried out to correlate a candidate's performance in all five papers, and such procedures cannot be accurately reproduced by the teacher working alone.

The current CPE examination syllabus was introduced in 1975 and modified in 1984. Broadly speaking, there are four different ideas underlying the syllabus:

- a) the now universal acceptance of communicative approaches in the EFL classroom, which is reflected in and, indeed, encouraged by the CPE examination;
- b) the increased prominence of listening and speaking skills in classrooms, reflected in greater weighting in the examination;
- c) the view that reading and listening texts should be taken from authentic sources within a candidate's range of experience, and not be specially written, abridged or over-literary;
- d) the need to avoid culture bias in the examination, confirming the status of English as an international language.

The ways in which these ideas are embodied in the examination itself are outlined on pages 2 to 14 and can be seen in the practice tests in the Student's Book.

The Teacher's Book contains:

- a suggested mark scheme and answer key for each paper;
- complete transcripts of the recorded Listening Comprehension tests;
- instructions on the handling of the Interview tests.

The two accompanying cassettes contain the recordings for the Listening Comprehension tests. The tests cannot be used without the appropriate cassette.

The Certificate of Proficiency Examination

The chart below gives an outline of how each paper of the CPE examination is assessed. In the examination the final assessment of any candidate is reached only on the basis of total performance in all five papers and after the marks have been carefully correlated and adjusted to establish correct weightings and grading levels. Adjustments are also made to offset the effect of random guessing in multiple-choice and true/false questions. Such procedures are clearly impracticable for the teacher working alone. However, the information in the chart below and throughout this book can be used as a guide to an approximate assessment of a candidate's likely level of performance.

The complete examination carries a total of 180 marks.

<i>Name of paper</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Total marks</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
<i>Paper 1</i> Reading Comprehension	1 hour	40	A mark contributing to a pass grading in the whole examination is normally about 60% of the possible score for this paper.
<i>Paper 2</i> Composition	2 hours	40	An impression mark is given, following a grading scale for each composition. On average, pass candidates score about 40% of the paper total and very good candidates 75–90%.
<i>Paper 3</i> Use of English	2 hours	40	This paper is marked according to a detailed mark scheme. On average, pass candidates score 50–60% of the paper total.
<i>Paper 4</i> Listening Comprehension	about 30 minutes	20	This paper is marked according to a detailed mark scheme with varied weighting for items. On average, pass candidates score about 60% of the paper total.
<i>Paper 5</i> Interview	15 to 20 minutes	40	An impression mark is given on six grading scales. On average, pass candidates score about 60% of the paper total.

Paper 1: Reading Comprehension (1 hour)

Paper 1 is in two sections: Section A with 25 multiple-choice questions, each consisting of a sentence with a blank to be filled by one of four words or phrases, and Section B with 15 multiple-choice questions on two or more reading passages.

Section A tests candidates' knowledge of English vocabulary (including synonyms, antonyms, collocations and phrasal verbs) as well as their knowledge of grammatical rules and constraints.

Section B tests candidates' general understanding of the gist of passages as well as their understanding of specific information given. Some questions also test appreciation of stylistic effects, nuance and register. The passages vary in length, character and density and are drawn from a variety of authentic sources, including fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines, brochures, leaflets and advertisements.

Marking

Section A carries a total possible mark of 25; the 15 questions in Section B count **double**. An incorrect answer gains no mark, but no marks are specifically deducted for wrong answers. The final 'raw' total of 55 is scaled down to a maximum of 40.

Exam preparation

It is important not to practise this type of test to excess, but merely to accustom students to its requirements and tempo. Multiple-choice questions have more value as a testing device than as a teaching method and excessive practice in doing this type of test is unlikely to improve students' ability to read English more efficiently. Time should be devoted in class, therefore, to improving students' reading skills and not just their ability to answer reading comprehension questions.

Students should be given experience of reading authentic texts of the kind shown in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3* and given help in learning how to understand them. Such help may include teaching students how to understand the gist of a passage and how to extract the main points of information from it without necessarily understanding every single word they read.

Paper 2: Composition (2 hours)

Two compositions, of the varying word length specified, are to be written in the two hours allotted. The choice of topics includes (at the full 350-word length) a descriptive, a discursive and a narrative topic, a shorter more specific topic or an exercise based on a specific task (250–300 words) and a topic (of 350 words) based on optional reading as specified in the examination Regulations for each year. The advantage for candidates of choosing to read one of the three texts selected for the exam is that it may offer them an enjoyable and worthwhile reading experience, with an opportunity to develop the ability to handle ideas and literary themes in English, as well as a wider range of topics to choose from in Paper 2. Candidates may also have the chance to discuss their reading in the Interview (see page 12).

Marking

An impression mark out of 20 is given for each composition, using the scale shown below. This mark is based on an overall impression of the language used, including the range and appropriateness of vocabulary, sentence and paragraph structure and correctness of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Individual mistakes are not penalised. The language used should be, for a pass grade and above, at a level of fluency, accuracy and resource appropriate to the Proficiency examination, reflected also in the relevance and organisation of each composition as a whole and in terms of individual preparation.

Language rather than content is the main concern in the marking, since a candidate's general command of the language shows in the attempt to communicate some personal interest in the topic. Marks are not taken off for unorthodox opinions, illogical arguments or lack of special creativity in selecting and developing descriptive detail.

The task-directed exercise is intended to reveal sensitivity to features of style appropriate to the English used for various special purposes, and ability to reproduce these features appropriately.

The topics on the three books are also task-directed, in the sense that they require ability to recall and marshal facts and themes from the text studied in the framework of the question set. Detailed factual recall is not a crucial factor in the marking, nor is training in the technique of literary analysis, the emphasis being, as with the other topics, on the quality of language used in response to the given stimulus.

For all topics, the inclusion of irrelevant material which seems to have been learnt by heart does lose marks. Over-short compositions will lose marks, as may over-long ones because they often contain more mistakes or are badly structured.

	<i>Language</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Background Texts</i>
16-20	Ambitious in concept and approach, with high quality language use. Occasional native-speaker-type lapses.		13-20 Interpretative in approach. Credit given for breadth, development and relevance of argument, appropriateness of illustration and quotation.
11-15	Natural and appropriate in style with only occasional errors. Some sophistication of language use.	Well-developed realisation of the task.	8-12 Limited to a straightforward narrative treatment. Credit given for clarity, organisation, and appropriate selection of material.
8-10	Structure and usage communicated in a clear but limited manner.	Task reasonably attempted.	1-7 Irrelevant, undirected and fails to demonstrate knowledge or understanding of the text.
5-7	Lack of control/numerous errors.	Topic area neither extended nor explored.	
1-4	Errors and narrowness of vocabulary prevent communication.	Gross irrelevance and/or too short for judgement to be formed.	

The following sample compositions taken from the Syndicate's reports illustrate the quality of language which typifies candidates in all but the lowest of the categories indicated above.

17 MARKS

Describe someone who has greatly influenced your life and explore the reasons for this influence.

Before anything else I think I have to describe the circumstances of my life. My parents are divorced and I have never lived together with my real father because when the divorce happened I was about one year old. At my age of ten my mother had a boyfriend. The better she knew him the more he spent the time with us. So the things developed and now we are living together. For me he is like my father. He is the person who has influenced my life and to a certain extent my character.

My father or let's call him Peter has a strong character. He knows exactly what he wants and I assume therefore he is very successful in business. He owns a company which sell fire engines and vehicles. Through his profession he became very decisive and strict. But he is also very kind and warm-hearted. If I have a problem I know I can go to him and he'll find time to listen to me. That gives me somehow a good and sound feeling. My father has dark hair and is very tall which gives you the impression of a respectful person. What I like mostly are his eyes. They seem to me like little laughing bowls.

There are a lot of reasons for his influence on me. At the beginning it wasn't easy for him and me to accept each other. The greatest problem for me was the fact that suddenly I have to share my mother with somebody else. But exactly this difficulty changed my character. I learnt to accept another person in our house and through that I wasn't always the centre of my mother's attention. Peter gave me in a way some of my independence. In addition to that change Peter showed me a lot in his company. Last but not least he did and does influence me sometimes by discussions we have. I see his point of view which is quite interesting and sometimes different from mine.

In conclusion I would like to mention that Peter helped me a lot as far as my personal development concerns. I think I learnt and I will learn a lot of him. I am really grateful to have met him and to know such a wonderful person.

Examiner's comments:

This is a very well-developed essay which flows naturally to a satisfactory conclusion. A few mistakes or infelicities of expression prevent the composition falling into the upper half of this category.

14 MARKS

Write a story which begins or ends: "Home at last!"

"Home at last" sighed George, as the cab turned round the final corner before his house. Jenny, his wife, was asleep, and his little son Gregory wasn't paying any attention. After a disastrous week in France, however, 'home at last' was all George had been wanting to say for days.

The ferry trip over to Calais was uneventful. As soon as they had settled into the hotel however, things had started to go from bad to worse. The snails they had eaten on their first day had played havoc with all of their stomachs. In fact they hadn't left their hotel room for three days.

On the fourth day, their hopes of going to the beach were shattered by the weather. For the next three days it seemed as little as a summer holiday as it possibly could, but six days inside a hotel room were nothing compared to what happened on their trip home.

The ferry back to Dover was delayed by five hours. In eventually setting foot on English soil again, Jenny swore she would never go to France again. Gregory had become very pale on the ferry-trip back, but was now back to normal. They had decided to leave the car at a special parking lot in Dover, from where they now picked it up. On the motorway, with little other cars around, and especially not a garage to be seen, the car had promptly broken down.

The Automobile Association had said it would take about a week to repair their car. The damage was very serious, they had said. The family then took the bus which would have taken them quite near their house. However, six-year-old Gregory's stomach finally couldn't take it any longer, and he was sick in the bus just half an hour later.

Eventually, being very near their house, they took a cab in which Jenny fell asleep. As they neared their street George sighed "Home at last!" Jenny mumbled something that sounded like "All we need now is to have been broken into." But George wasn't listening. He was looking at their half-opened front door.

Examiner's comments:

This is a well-organised story, free from basic errors; a story line is developed, with quite effective expression.

The Certificate of Proficiency

13 MARKS

Basing your answer on your reading of the prescribed text concerned, answer the following:

Anita Brookner: Hotel du Lac

Edith Hope's relationships with men are the most important aspects of the novel. Discuss.

David Simmonds is a married man and, according to Edith's theory of a Tortoise and a hare he would probably be the latter – successful in his work, as well as in social life, he had nothing for Edith to offer. He was her lover and she was his 'last resort'. Edith loved him dearly – she used to cook him meals and pretended they were a family whenever they were together. David wasn't a demanding partner and that provided enough space for Edith's vivid imagination. David became a symbol of what Edith expected from 'her man' – she imagined he was her friend and wrote him many letters from Hotel du Lac, without sending them, of course.

Geoffrey Long was friendly, a calm person who lacked self confidence after his mother had died and expected to have a proper, settled marriage. Edith let him down and made him "look like a laughing stock" – the worst insult couldn't have been made to him. He was hurt and therefore didn't understand Edith's reaction. He was just as ordinary as anybody else among her 'so-called' friends. That certainly couldn't suit Edith's character.

In my opinion, Philip Neville was the most interesting male character in the book. He was very elegant, refined, good-humoured, intelligent and he wasn't married. He had offered a marriage which sounded like a business deal and did fit Edith's general idea of independency but was unacceptable in terms of love and feelings. Edith didn't want to marry a man who would treat her like a piece of antique expensive furniture.

Neville seems as if he embodies David and Geoffrey at the same time – David, because he's attractive, he's successful, with a strong will and a friendly approach to her intellect. On the other hand, Neville would marry Edith for the same reason as Geoffrey wanted – to settle down, to help his 'ego' feel better, to gain a normal (and orthodox) social position and to fulfil the emptiness made by another woman (a mother in Geoffrey's case and a wife in Mr Nevill's).

Neville as such, was the last temptation as well as the last chance for Edith. By rejecting it, Edith has decided to be herself.

Examiner's comments:

The language is slightly below the range of the 11–13 category but the answer is imaginative, shows assurance and handles the theme very effectively.

12 MARKS

Your friends have accepted an invitation to come and stay in your house while you and your family are away. Write a letter giving them all the information necessary to make their visit enjoyable and trouble-free.

1333 Bolton Road
Pelham, Manor, N.Y.
10803
(USA)

Mary Anne Jones
30–14 42nd Street
Astoria, Queens, 1
11103
USA

Dear Mary,

Hi! Hope my letter finds you all healthy and well. As you can see summer is here and my trip to France is just a few days away. My family and I will leave on the 14th so you can 'move in' for the summer on the 15th.

I really hope your stay at my house will be enjoyable, trouble-free and worthwhile.

Well, as you know the house has 4 double bedrooms and a master bedroom. You could use any of the four but I'd prefer not having mum's room used. There is plenty of space for your clothes in the closets and you can put your luggage under the bed. Sheets, covers, nightgowns, are clean and in the

wardrobe. Oh, by the way. John can use my brother's room and Mike, Dan's (since they are boys).

You can use my stereo, my video and of course the television to have fun at night. My records are in the lower, left cupboard and the videocassettes are on the right shelf.

If you want to read, help yourself to the books which are in the library.

The refrigerator is full of food. If you need any more you can shop at the supermarket.

The mixer is near the fridge and all the pots and pans in the cupboard next to the stove.

Plates, knives, glasses are in the dishwasher and in the cupboard above the sink.

Towels, soap, sponges are in the bamboo basket in the bathroom.

Help yourselves to anything available in the house. Have lots of fun. Hope to see you soon.

Love

Ellie

P.S. The keys are in the mailbox.

We'll be back on August 15.

Examiner's comments:

Plenty of sensible information is given; the language is simple, but chatty and appropriate in style.

10 MARKS

There is a saying: 'Money can't buy happiness, but it can help!' Do you agree?

In a swirling gray world my brother felt compelled to make a decision. It was as if there was light and communion on one side, darkness and quietness on the other. He chose the light. And life. He was in the hospital after a car accident. The doctors gently suggested to my parents that John – my brother – would have to live in a wheelchair as his back was broken. . . . I have always thought that there was a protective shield around my family. My parents were supportive, my grandfather always there to rely on.

Grandfather was a very rich man and some day my brother and I would succeed to the property.

Although I have never thought that money is of any real value, I was aware of the fact that wealthy people are better off. At the age of 18 I had my own car, a popular and expensive model, I was exorbitantly extravagant and I have travelled a lot.

But now, under those circumstances, money counted for little. No matter how rich my family was, my brother would spend all his life sitting in a wheelchair. Could money compensate a young man for his paralysed body? Would money be of any real help when John would have to struggle to live as a paraplegic?

I do not suggest that money doesn't make your life easier. What I suggest is that when confronted with illness and death only God can help you. Of course you may argue: "rich people can afford being treated at expensive clinics. Others not." Although rich can lead a much easier life, I have a feeling that fate always has some blows in store for them.

On the other hand, money ensures a better education for you, if that's what you want. Someone else is doing the cleaning and cooking and ironing for you. You can afford travelling abroad, expensive hotels, nice restaurants.

But I know dozens of people who went through life and met their goals without being rich and more important, without the underlying aim of becoming rich. They had only confidence in their ability to cope with difficulties. They did acknowledge that money can help. Nevertheless, they were aware of so many other things that can help anyone to lead an interesting and fulfilling life. Is it any wonder that these people are the happiest?

Examiner's comments:

This is quite a well-organised essay; the ideas are expressed reasonably well and the level of accuracy is just acceptable for Proficiency level.

9 MARKS

Describe someone who has greatly influenced your life and explore the reasons for this influence.

My grandparents have greatly influenced my life for many reasons. I think they have brought a lot to my personality and my conception of life.

My grandparents brought me up. When I was a child, as both my father and my mother worked, my

grandparents used to mind me. I have quite good memories of that period. I remember that, as a child, it was fun to live in the countryside and to play with the cats, the chickens or the rabbits my grandparents had. It was fun to play in the little stream near the house or to go for walks in the woods or in the fields and make bunches of flowers. Apart from the happiness and the care they provided me with, my grandparents also taught me certain fundamental values. The values that are so vivid in the countryside, where people know each others and talk to each others.

Personally, I believe that a lot of my personality is connected with my early years spent with my grandparents. They have influenced my life, that is my way of life. They led a very simple life, one of those lives that is described as 'close to nature'. They respected nature and their neighbours and they had this sense of shareness that nowadays, in our advanced societies, does not mean anything any longer. They still believed in Mankind and in God. Their faith in God was a very strong one and, at home, we used to celebrate Christmas, Eastern . . . Every Sunday morning, we used to go to church and there was no work allowed on Sundays!

I believe my grandparents have influenced me the way any grandparents influence any little girl or boy. However, the fact that they lived in the countryside is very important and accounts for a lot of their beliefs and for my feelings when I remember those days.

All in all, I must acknowledge that they have greatly influenced my life because of the values, the ideas, the love for nature, the faith in a religion they have brought me up with.

Examiner's comments:

The ideas are communicated clearly and there are few errors, but the style is elementary.

7 MARKS

'A sense of humour is the most important of all human qualities.' Do you agree?

I should say that a sense of humour is really important in every person, even essential sometimes but not the most important quality of a person.

First of all, it's common knowledge that nowadays people tend to be very worried and distressed due to the many difficulties they have to face in the actual everyday life and everybody knows as well that the more worried people become more difficult will be to find the solutions to their problems and that a sense of humour is essential in this kind of experience. But which also has to be considered is that is not so easy to a person who is facing any kind of problem which is disturbing his life, to have a sense of humour and besides that they need someone who helps them in this part of their lives, some good advices, someone to talk freely about their problems and not a person who has a great sense of humour and is joking all the time because if it happens, the person who has the problem will think that the other is not taking him serious.

So, if a person has an easy sense of humour and can cope with her problems with no difficulties it's very nice but that's not what happens with the great majority. There's a great mixture of feelings in a human being and sometimes is difficult to balance them and it varies from person to person, while a person thinks that his sense of humour will always help them to face his life, another person thinks that it is important, but not always and sometimes it can even turn things more difficult.

Many things have to be considered when dealing with people's feelings and as I mentioned before a sense of humour is important to make life sometimes easier and happier but it is not the most important quality of a person. What is worthy when someone has a great sense of humour but is unable to help another person who needs his help in another way. It would work fine if easier to be found and if suited everybody.

Examiner's comments:

Several statements are unclear but the candidate does have some ideas. There is an acceptable shape to the argument but it falls apart because of lack of language control. The language is *not* Proficiency level.

5 MARKS

You have recently received a number of comments from local residents, some of which are printed below. As representative of the local committee of residents, write a letter to the authorities outlining people's concerns and suggesting what should be done.

"They throw bottles into my garden and tear up my plants!"

"Teenagers roam in gangs and I get frightened!"

"The streets are dirty and full of litter!"

"The walls are covered with graffiti!"

"The public telephone's always broken!"

"Young hooligans race on motor bikes round the square!"

56 Hartington Grove
Cambridge

14 June 1989

Public Authorities Government
119 Mill Road
Cambridge

Dear Sir,

First of all, I am writing this letter to say something as a representative of local committee of residents. I hope you will consider about it.

Secondly I am telling you about some residents claim. To tell you the truth, I was surprised that I received so many comments from local residents. And their comments are both private matters and public matters. As for private matters, one of them was destroyed her garden by someone throwing bottles. Nowadays gardening is a very popular hobby and people love their plants very much. I can understand her mind. Another comment was that she was frightened of teenager because they were roaming in gangs. I know the problem of children's delinquency is very difficult. But you must find out the solution because you are responsible for it. And one more comment concerned with private matters was that young people were doing hooligans race on motor bikes round the square. This is also concerned with children's delinquency. But in my opinion they don't realise how dangerous that game is until someone injure seriously

Next, as for public matters, their comments were about litter in the streets and graffiti on the walls and the public telephone which were always broken.

Thirdly, I would like to suggest what you should do to solve our problems. I know it is very difficult to solve these kind of things. Some people are still unemployment and it follows that every person doesn't have enough money to make a living. In my opinion level of people's living should be improved more and more. And I would like you to make great efforts for it.

Finally, I hope you will consider our problems and I am glad you will pay attention to my suggestion.

Faithfully yours,

Examiner's comments:

This candidate has very poor control of the language and only just communicates.

Exam preparation

Students should be given practice in writing compositions on all the different types of topics at the required length and within the time available (about one hour). They should be trained to develop the skill of using language appropriate to different types of writing. This training should include exercises based on specific tasks. In the case of candidates intending to choose in the actual exam one of the topics based on optional reading, suitable practice questions should be devised for them to discuss and write about, based on the current syllabus (published in the Regulations each year). Questions of this type are included in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3* for practice by students who may have worked on those books in class.

Paper 3: Use of English (2 hours)

This paper has two sections: Section A contains exercises to test the candidate's active control of English usage and grammatical structure, while Section B consists of a number of questions testing comprehension and skill in summarising, based on a passage. The range of these exercises is illustrated in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3*.

Marking

Detailed mark schemes, based on a maximum mark of 80, with Section A carrying about 45 marks and Section B about 35, are given in this book for each of the five Use of English papers. (The 'raw' maximum of 80 is scaled down to a weighted total of 40.)

Exam preparation

It should be noted that many of the exercises in Section A have more value as testing devices than as classroom exercises. Too much emphasis on such exercises in class may not increase students' language awareness or communicative skills. In particular, the modified cloze test (Question 1) should not be over-practised in class.

In preparing for Section B, students should be given practice in reading a wide range of texts from different sources and in answering questions on information given or implied and the language used. They should also practise summarising the information presented in texts, using their own words as far as possible and avoiding direct quotation.

Paper 4: Listening Comprehension (about 30 minutes)

A cassette recording is played to candidates while they complete an answer sheet. Candidates listen to three or four authentic or simulated authentic texts, complete with all necessary spoken instructions; each text is normally heard twice on the cassette.

The texts include broadcasts, conversations, discussions, announcements and telephone calls, with speakers using both standard and non-standard speech styles. The questions include reordering or matching information, labelling and blank-filling, as well as multiple-choice and true/false questions. The questions test candidates' ability to extract information from the texts, to interpret the speakers' attitudes or intentions and to recognise the implications of stress and intonation patterns.

Marking

The final total of 20 marks (which involves the adjustment of raw scores to allow for appropriate weighting parity between test versions and to offset the guessing factor in multiple-choice or true/false questions) gives, together with Paper 5, one third of the total marks in the examination. A complete mark scheme is given in this book for each of the five Listening Comprehension papers.

Exam preparation

Students should become accustomed to the form and tempo of the recordings used in the examination. In particular, they should be exposed to recordings of speakers using

unsimplified English, spoken at a natural speed. They should realise that understanding spoken English involves extracting the main points of information from a text and does not necessarily depend on understanding every word that is spoken. Classroom practice using task-based exercises is recommended.

Many of the recordings used in these practice tests and in the examination itself are taken from BBC World Service broadcasts. Wherever possible, students should be encouraged to listen to BBC World Service broadcasts in English. (Details can be obtained from the BBC, Bush House, London WC2B 4PH, or from any British Council office.)

This Teacher's Book contains transcripts of the recordings used in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3*. These are included only to help teachers handle the tests confidently and see what each piece is about and how long it lasts. The transcripts should *not* be used to help students to 'spot the answers' to the questions. Many questions depend on interpreting what is heard on the cassette, including the stress and intonation of the speakers which cannot be shown in a transcript.

Note: The recordings of the two cassettes that accompany *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3* follow the format of the exam exactly. Each text is heard twice with 15 seconds of silence before and after each hearing, during which students can read through the questions or task and write down their answers. There are also full spoken instructions on the cassettes.

Paper 5: Interview (15 to 20 minutes)

The Interview consists of a theme-based conversation between the candidate and the examiner, or in the case of group interviews, among the candidates with occasional intervention by the examiner. Prompt material consisting of photographs, short passages, authentic texts and problem-solving activities are used to stimulate and guide the discussion. This form of syllabus incorporates developments made over a long period, notably the changes of 1984 which included increased weighting for the Interview, a change of format and an increased time allowance.

Candidates are assessed on overall performance in the tasks set by marking scales related to six specific performance areas (see marking section on pages 12–14).

Provision is made for centres to opt for the Interview to be taken *either* in the usual candidate/examiner form or in groups of two or three candidates with an examiner. The added realism of a group Interview is strongly recommended, though this is treated as an option: arrangements in line with local preferences and administrative resources are made by individual examination centres. (Instructions will be issued by each centre accordingly.) The increased amount of 'candidate talking time' generated and reduction in 'examiner talking time' mean that group interviews can be accomplished relatively quickly and do not need to take proportionately longer than an examiner/candidate Interview. The examiner is thus also able to concentrate more on assessing the candidates and less on guiding (or leading) the conversation. In both the group and one-to-one format two examiners, one to act as assessor and one as interlocutor, may sometimes be used.

Procedure

The examiner's material consists of a number of 'packages' or theme-based sets of photographs and other prompts from which the complete Interview is conducted. The photographs have sets of suggested questions and follow-up topics, not all of which need be used. The conversation should move from specific commentary on the situation shown in the picture to associated themes, with the candidate encouraged to speak freely. Emphasis on

the factual aspects of the photograph and questions based on identification of objects and vocabulary are avoided. It should be remembered that it is the candidate's language skills that are being tested, not their personality, intelligence or knowledge of the world.

The candidate is then given a few moments to look through a passage before being asked to discuss its probable source and intention and its relation to the general theme of discussion. Full reading aloud of the passage is not normally required, but candidates may quote from it where this is appropriate to the discussion.

The interview is completed either by a discussion of a piece of authentic material, for example, a leaflet, advertisement, extract from a newspaper or magazine, *and/or* a communicative activity using a variety of visual and verbal stimuli. The range of activities includes participation in a role-playing exercise, finding out information, giving and exchanging opinions, and problem-solving discussion. There is often an 'information gap' between the participants, leading to a realistic exchange of information and ideas between candidates (where the test is taken as a group) or between candidate and examiner.

The material includes some related to the optional background reading (see *Paper 2: Composition*). Provision is also being made in the Syndicate's current development work on oral testing for candidates to present project work as a basis for discussion during the interview.

Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3 contains five sample 'packages' of oral examiner's material (and one optional reading-based 'package'), which demonstrate the variety of passages and activity prompts used in the examination. Teachers may wish to prepare additional material (photographs, passages, realia) from other sources within the theme of each package to provide students with actual rather than copied material.

Marking

Candidates are marked by impression on different aspects of their spoken English throughout the interview, as shown in the scales given below. The 'raw' maximum of 30 is scaled to a final total of 40. An adequate mark may be thought of as about 60% of the total available.

Similar marking scales are used in assessing both FCE and CPE candidates in the interview. The main difference is that CPE candidates are expected to demonstrate that they are capable of producing longer stretches of clear, coherent speech and of performing well in more complex or more serious discussions. The material that is used is designed to give candidates the opportunity of demonstrating this ability.

It will be noticed that some of the activities in *Cambridge Proficiency Examination Practice 3* are based on fairly serious 'weighty' topics, such as famine or art, while others are based on more straightforward 'mundane' topics. Candidates at CPE level are expected to be able to discuss a wide variety of topics and to come closer to native-speaker competence than FCE candidates.

1 Fluency

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Virtually native-speaker speed and rhythm in everyday contexts. |
| 4 | Minimal hesitation in all contexts. |
| 3 | Minimal hesitation in everyday contexts. Hesitation when discussing more abstract topics does not demand unreasonable patience of the listener. |
| 2 | Though hesitations not unreasonable in everyday contexts, would be trying the listener's patience with more abstract topics. |
| 1 | Hesitation frequent even in everyday contexts. |
| 0 | Not capable of connected speech. |

2 Grammatical accuracy

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Virtually native-speaker accuracy over a wide range of structures and in all contexts. Few if any errors of any kind. |
| 4 | Few errors even in complex structures when discussing abstract topics. No basic errors. |
| 3 | Structures adequately controlled and varied in most contexts. Few if any basic errors. |
| 2 | Structures adequate in everyday contexts but limited in range and with basic errors not infrequent. |
| 1 | Frequent basic errors. |
| 0 | No awareness of basic grammatical functions. |

3 Pronunciation: Sentences

- | | |
|---|--|
| 5 | Virtually native-speaker stress-timing, rhythm, and placing of stress, intonation patterns and range of pitch within sentence; natural linking of phrases. |
| 4 | Stress-timing, rhythm, placing of stress, intonation etc. sufficiently native-like as to make comprehension easy and listening pleasurable. |
| 3 | Stress-timing, rhythm, placing of stress, intonation etc. sufficiently controlled. |
| 2 | Foreign speech patterns make the candidate occasionally difficult to understand. |
| 1 | Foreign speech patterns severely impede comprehension. |
| 0 | Not intelligible, through faulty stress and intonation. |