

FIRST CERTIFICATE ENGLISH

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5: INTERVIEW



An intermediate course for Cambridge First Certificate

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First Certificate English

Book 5 Interview

NELSON

The photographs in this book were taken by Robin Rycroft,
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Incentive English – an international course

Proficiency English Book 5

Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
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Nairobi Kenya

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© W.S. Fowler, John Pidcock and Robin Rycroft, 1978
First published 1978
Reprinted 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983
ISBN 0-17-555269-X
NCN 710-8652-5

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publishers.

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Phototypeset by Tradespools Ltd, Frome, Somerset
Printed in Hong Kong

Notes to Students

If you are preparing for the First Certificate examination, you should remember that the oral interview is not something to get nervous about. Remember that the examiner wants you to feel at your ease, and that he is there to help you, not to trick you. The better you make him feel, the more successful you will be. Learn some way of conversing with him without waiting for his questions; learn to say 'I'm sorry?' or 'Pardon?' if you don't understand something he says, and if you want a moment to think about an answer, say something like 'Well . . .' or 'Let me see . . .' or anything which makes you sound more natural.

Here are some more detailed suggestions to help you make the best of the different techniques required in the interview and practised in this book.

(a) **Reading Dialogues.** Remember that intonation is very important in English, so think about what each speaker means before you begin reading. For example, if a person is angry, make him *sound* angry. Think what you are reading. Make pauses where necessary; you should get used to recognising for yourself where a pause is required by the sense. And don't read too fast, or too slowly.

(b) **Photo Section.** The photo is there to help you to talk, not to test your memory or your powers of observation. In the exam interview you are allowed some time to look at it, and we think you should do this looking *methodically*, both to help you take in the details of the photo and to stop you being nervous. Look at it without rushing: first at the four corners, then at the top and bottom, then at the background, then the foreground, and finally at what is in the centre, that is, at what the photographer thought was most important. But you *must* do all this looking 'in English', thinking all the time about the words and ideas you are going to need to talk about it.

(c) **Situations.** You are not expected to say anything very imaginative. The most important thing is to say something which is both appropriate and *effective*, and to do that it is essential to read the situation carefully to make sure you understand exactly what it means. Ask yourself carefully what you would say – what you *do* say – in that situation, but THINK in ENGLISH. And remember: be *effective*. (For example: You fall into the sea and cannot swim; what do you say? The answer is 'Help!')

Lastly, we should like you to think of this book not only as a preparation for an examination, but also as a help towards making you think and speak in English in the real-life situations in which you may find yourself.

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1 Education

Reading dialogue

TED What are you doing then with all those books?

PAT Trying my best to revise things for the exam tomorrow.

TED The last-night rush, you mean? Come on, it never works. Why not relax? Come out to the cinema with me. I'll treat you. Look how generous I am!

PAT Very generous, maybe, but I can't. I simply can't leave all this. I've been preparing for this exam for months, and I'm not going to say yes to temptation now.

TED The trouble with you is you don't plan things properly. You leave everything till the last minute. You never learn anything that way.

PAT Actually, this time I didn't put things off. And that's why I'm not going to say yes now.

TED But if you had a break now, it would take your mind off the exam for a while. It'd do you a lot of good.

PAT No, Ted, thank you very much but no. The exam comes first.

TED All right, all right. Don't say I didn't try. . . . Do you know what's wrong with you? You're a slave to the examination machine. All work and no play makes Pat a dull girl. What good are exams anyway? Tell me that.

PAT Look, Ted, seriously, I've learnt a lot on this course, and I'd like to get a certificate, to have something to show for all the work I've done.

TED But it's only a piece of paper. All it shows is that you've managed to answer the silly questions that all examiners ask. It doesn't prove anything.

PAT Of course it wouldn't prove anything to you. But it'd satisfy me, and my parents'd be happy. Isn't that enough?

TED I still think it'd do you more good if you had a rest from your books, instead of all this last-minute worrying. There's a good film on.

PAT Look, Ted, be a dear, will you, and do me a favour?

TED All right. Name the favour, and it'll be done at once.

PAT Take this money, and go to the pub on the corner.

TED That's better! That's more sensible! Do you want me to go out and buy some beer then? I'll be back in two seconds.

PAT No. Just buy yourself a drink, and enjoy it. I'm treating you. But please, leave me alone with these books.



Questions on photo one

Do you think the school is starting or finishing for the day?

Do the children look happy to you?

Describe the clothes and expressions of those you can see clearly. Imagine what sort of characters they have.

Why do you think the adults were there outside the school?

If you were a teacher, which of the children in the picture would you like to have in your class? Give reasons.

What do you think the groups of children are talking about?

Questions on photo two

Why do you think these children are wearing uniform?

What do you think the group on the right is doing or talking about?

Do you think it is important for schools to have large spaces for children to play in?

Do you think children playing should be watched by a teacher?

Could you improve this playing-space in any way?

Does this photograph bring back happy or sad memories for you?



Contrasts

Are co-educational schools (mixed girls and boys) essential?

What importance should be given to play in schools?

How important is it for children at school to have a uniform?

How much influence do you think a school building has on a child?

How much part should parents take in the running of a school?

Should education be free? To what level? Should university students receive money from the government?

What good or bad memories do you have of your schooldays?

What is the most important thing in a school?

Did good or bad teaching have anything to do with your liking or disliking certain subjects?

What is learnt at school that cannot be learnt with private teachers at home?

Situations

- 1 You are studying languages at an evening school, and a friend asks you what the course is like. What do you reply?
- 2 A friend of yours has just passed a very difficult examination. Phone him/her to give your congratulations.
- 3 You and a friend are talking together about a teacher you both have. Your friend is finding fault with him; say something in his defence.
- 4 You have been ill for a few days, and want to catch up on the work you have missed. Ask one of your companions to tell you.
- 5 Your teacher has explained something, but you still don't understand it very well. Politely ask him/her if the explanation can be repeated.
- 6 You are a teacher, and you need someone from your class to help you to demonstrate something. Ask optimistically for a volunteer.
- 7 It is your first day in a new class, and you don't know where to sit. Ask one of the other students, politely, about the seating arrangements.
- 8 You sit near the window in the classroom. One hot day it is wide open, but there is a draught which is giving you earache. Politely but firmly ask the student sitting next to the window if he/she could close it a little.
- 9 Your parents ask you about an exam you have just done. What do you reply?
- 10 Your brother is very lazy and always wants you to help with his school homework. One day you decide you have had enough. What do you tell him?
- 11 Revising for an examination, you realise that you have lent a vital book to a friend. Phone him/her and ask if you can have it back.
- 12 Someone says television has no educational value. Disagree with him.
- 13 You want to revise your subject for an exam, but a friend wants you to go out with her, and she is very insistent. Try to put her off.
- 14 You are a teacher. One member of the class is always talking to the other students, and you decide to have a word with him after the class.
- 15 Someone asks you why you bother to go to classes to study English.

2 Holidays

Reading dialogue

ERIC Hello, Joy. Back from your holidays? Did you go abroad again this year?

JOY Yes, we did. We went camping. It was marvellous. We took the car across on the ferry to Spain, and stayed three weeks.

ERIC Not my sort of holiday, I'm afraid. I've never been one for camping. Too much like the army. Washing in cold water, and mosquito bites. No thank you.

JOY Oh Eric, it's not like that any more! At least, not if you go to a proper camp-site. Nowadays it's not very different from being in a hotel. And much freer.

ERIC I'm still not very keen. I'm the sort of man who likes to have his meals cooked for him, and to sleep in a bed. And if we went camping, it wouldn't be much of a rest for Marion, either. She likes comfort as much as I do.

JOY Yes, it can be hard for the wives. But it's all right if you plan it. You know, while one of you cooks, the others can do the washing up or tidy the tents.

ERIC But what I couldn't stand is you never get any peace on a camp-site. All those people going to bed at different times, and playing transistor radios. That's not for me.

JOY We never had any trouble sleeping. Well, only once, and that wasn't really trouble. There was a couple with a baby in the next tent, and they had to get up in the night to change his nappies.

ERIC Fancy that! Taking a baby camping! Now that is wrong.

JOY Oh no. The baby had a wonderful time, and so did the parents. And if they'd been in a hotel, they'd still have had to get up, wouldn't they?

ERIC But the mosquitoes! The only times I ever went camping, I got bitten to death. I was scratching myself for weeks.

JOY You wouldn't now, not with all the creams they sell. It's hot in Spain, but we didn't get bitten much.

ERIC No, Joy, you make it sound very nice, but no. There's one thing about camping that'll put me off it for ever.

JOY Oh yes? And what's that?

ERIC It reminds me of a sergeant I used to hate in the army.



Questions on photo one

What is this building and where is it?

Who built it and why? Say what you know about its history.

What is it used for now?

Why is there some scaffolding on the right?

Who are the people in the picture?

What are they doing there?

Why have they gone to see it?

What do you think it means to them?

What benefits and problems do these people bring to those who are responsible for the building?

Questions on photo two

What is this machine for?

How does it work? Can you explain some of the mechanisms in the picture?

Have you ever been in one? If anybody in the class has, ask him/her to explain what it was like.

Do you think it is either frightening or dangerous? Why?

Why do people use this form of transport?

Describe the people in the car. Why isn't it full?

Describe the scenery in the picture.

How many different ways are there of travelling to the cable-car terminus at the bottom of the valley?



Contrasts

Do you like visiting places on holiday? Why?

Do you prefer to travel alone or in a group?

Do people often use up a lot of energy on holiday? Why?

Which of these two scenes would you rather be in and why?

What do you imagine there is outside the picture in each case?

What, for you, would be the ideal holiday?

Find out in your group what people think of tourism and tourists.

How important do you think it is for foreign tourists to know something about the language and history of the country they are visiting?

Situations

- 1 At the airport, you want to check that your ticket is in order. What do you say at the airline office?
- 2 In the hotel, you want to extend your stay by two or three days. Say so to the receptionist, and explain why.
- 3 You are not very satisfied with your hotel room, and want to change it. Tell the receptionist, and explain why.
- 4 You have to leave for home early one morning. The night before, inform the receptionist, asking (a) to be woken up and (b) for breakfast to be brought to your room. Be as insistent as you can without being impolite.
- 5 You are a hotel receptionist. A guest asks you how he can rent a car. Offer politely to do it for him.
- 6 A tourist in your town asks you to recommend places to visit. Give him your advice, with reasons.
- 7 A tourist tells you he has just been robbed. What do you say (a) to calm him down and (b) to help him?
- 8 You and a friend are hitch-hiking. A car stops, and the driver asks where you are going. Politely explain.
- 9 A tourist asks you to recommend a special dish from your country or town. Give your recommendation, and explain briefly what it is (and how it is cooked).
- 10 You have been giving a lift to a hitch-hiker for the last two hundred miles. You think he should offer to pay something towards the petrol. Suggest it to him.
- 11 What do you say when you check in at your hotel?
- 12 You are flying on a large noisy jet. The passenger next to you appears to be frightened. Comfort him.
- 13 The hotel receptionist tells you they have no record of your booking and the hotel is full. Protest that you made the booking by letter.
- 14 As a hotel receptionist you have listened to more than enough from one very aggressive guest. You feel you have been insulted. Tell the manager.
- 15 The waiter in the restaurant doesn't seem to notice you. Make yourself known to him politely but forcefully.

3 Transport

Reading dialogue

MIKE I've been waiting twenty minutes for this bus. Do they always take so long to come?

RAY In the rush hours, yes, I'm afraid. Is this the first time you've taken it? I don't remember you from other mornings.

MIKE The first time, yes, and the last, I hope. My car broke down yesterday. If it weren't for that I wouldn't be here.

RAY I used to take my car into town, but I gave that up a long time ago. I could never find anywhere to park, and when I did, I'd come back and find I'd been given a ticket.

MIKE Well, I've got a Mini, and parking's not so bad with a small car. Without the car I don't know what I'd do. It's so much more convenient that I think it's worth paying the fine.

RAY That's what I used to say, but these days the traffic's getting worse and worse, isn't it? I used to spend hours in the traffic jams on my way home, and when I finally arrived I was worn out, too tired to do anything.

MIKE If there were more buses, I might change my mind. But the service is awful, and they always arrive full up.

RAY Yes. It's a vicious circle, isn't it? I suppose if there were more buses, more people would use them. But because not enough people use them, the company can't afford to buy more buses and pay the drivers.

MIKE The Government should do something. That's the answer.

RAY But people like you and me could do a bit too, you know.

MIKE That's what my wife always tells me. If I took the bus instead of using the car, there'd be one less car on the roads, and if a lot of people did the same, there'd be less traffic and the buses would arrive on time. The trouble is my boss can't wait for people to see that.

RAY If only we could persuade our bosses to take buses.

MIKE If mine did, you can be sure he'd get up an hour earlier, just to catch us arriving late. But you know what's really to blame, don't you?

RAY The life we lead? The Government? I wish I knew.

MIKE No. The clock. We should start by banning clocks.



Questions on photo one

Describe the people in this picture.

What are they wearing? What are they carrying?

Imagine where these people might be going.

Describe the parts of the bus that you can see, and explain their purpose.

Can you explain the advertisement on the back of the bus?

Are city buses comfortable in your country? Do you think they should be?

How important do you think the bus service is to (a) the white-haired lady and (b) the girls on the left?

Questions on photo two

Where are all these people going, do you think?

Why do they all go out at the same time?

Why aren't there any cars on the other side?

What do you think the people in the queue are talking and thinking about?

How many people are there in each car, and what does that suggest to you?

Who pays for the motorways in your country? Who should pay?

Why aren't these people travelling by train?

Can you think of any ways in which waiting in a traffic jam like this can be made interesting/amusing/bearable?



Contrasts

How could public transport be improved?

How could we reduce traffic jams?

Why don't more people use public transport?

Do you think the time has come to limit the use of the private car? If so, what kind of limitations?

Find out from the members of your group what their personal views on transport are. Have they got cars? Do they use buses or trains? etc.

Should petrol be rationed? Why? How?

In what circumstances do you think people would change their habits of travelling? How could they be persuaded?

What should be done about heavy lorries?

Situations

- 1 You have to catch a train but do not know what station it leaves from. Phone the railway company to find out.
- 2 You catch a taxi to go to a friend's house. Give as many directions as you think are necessary to the driver.
- 3 You are waiting for a bus but are not quite sure which number to catch. Ask somebody who is waiting with you, making sure that they really know.
- 4 You are travelling by plane and sitting next to a man who is behaving suspiciously. You get up to tell the hostess. What do you say?
- 5 You are in a crowded train and want to sit down, but the only seat you can see is filled with shopping bags. What do you say to their owner?
- 6 You are not sure where to get off a bus to get to a cinema. How do you ask the conductor, and make sure you won't miss the stop?
- 7 You catch a bus just as the doors are closing, and want the driver to wait for your mother, who is some way behind you. What do you say?
- 8 An old lady in your train compartment is trying to lift down a heavy suitcase from the rack. Offer to help her.
- 9 You are buying a ticket for a train, and the man in the ticket office doesn't appear to understand what you want. Be patient.
- 10 A visitor wants to go around in your town. He asks you whether the bus or the underground would be the better way of travelling.
- 11 You are queuing for a bus. The bus arrives, and someone pushes ahead of you in the queue. Comment about this to another person in the queue.
- 12 When the ticket collector asks you for your ticket, you can't find it. Explain the situation.
- 13 You are selling tickets at the air terminal. You don't understand what a particular customer wants. Find out what he wants, patiently.