

The updated *Cambridge English: First for Schools* exam (for exam sessions from January 2015) is made up of four papers developed to test students' English language skills. You can see exactly what's in each paper below.

Paper	Content	Purpose
Reading and Use of English (1 hour 15 minutes)	7 parts/52 questions	Students need to be able to understand a range of texts, including how they are organised and the opinions and attitudes expressed in them. The texts will be from sources familiar to school-aged learners, such as magazines, articles, fiction and advertisements, but targeted at the interests of students. Students' use of English will be tested by tasks which show how well they can control their grammar and vocabulary.
Writing (1 hour 20 minutes)	2 parts	Students are required to produce two pieces of writing. The first piece is compulsory and will be an essay of 140–190 words. For the second, they can choose from an article, email/letter, essay, review or story of 140–190 words.
Listening (about 40 minutes)	4 parts/30 questions	Requires being able to follow and understand a range of familiar spoken materials, such as news programmes, public announcements and other sources, but targeted at the interests of school-aged learners.
Speaking (14 minutes per pair of candidates)	4 parts	A face-to-face test taken with one or two other candidates and an examiner. Students have to show how well they can produce spontaneous spoken language, talking with either the examiner, the other candidate, or by themselves.

Your overall performance is calculated by averaging the scores you achieve in Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Use of English. The weighting of each of the four skills and Use of English is equal.

The exam is available as a:

- paper-based test
- computer-based test

What's in the Reading and Use of English paper?

The *Cambridge English: First for Schools* Reading and Use of English paper is in seven parts and has a mix of text types and questions.

For Parts 1 to 4, students read a range of texts and do grammar and vocabulary tasks.

For Parts 5 to 7, students read a series of texts and answer questions that test reading ability and show that they can deal with a variety of different types of texts.

Summary

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Number of parts: 7

Number of questions: 52

Lengths of texts: 2,200–2,500 words to read in total.

Texts may be from: Newspaper and magazine articles, reports, fiction, advertisements, letters, messages, informational material (e.g. brochures, guides, manuals, etc.).

Reading Parts 1–7

Part 1 (Multiple-choice cloze)

What's in Part 1?	A text in which there are some missing words or phrases (gaps). After the text there are four possible answers for each gap and students have to choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).
What do students have to practise?	Vocabulary – words with similar meanings, collocations, linking phrases, phrasal verbs, etc.
How many questions are there?	8
How many marks are there?	1 mark for each correct answer.

Part 2 (Open Cloze)

What's in Part 2?	There are some missing words (gaps). Students have to think of the correct word for each gap.
What do students have to practise?	Grammar and vocabulary.
How many questions are there?	8
How many marks are there?	1 mark for each correct answer.

Part 3 (Word formation)

What's in Part 3?	A text containing eight gaps. Each gap represents a word. At the end of the line is a 'prompt' word which the student has to change in some way to make the correct missing word and complete the sentence correctly.
What do students have to practise?	Vocabulary – word-building: the different words which the student can make from a 'base' word, e.g. 'compete' becomes 'competition', 'competitor', 'competitive', 'competitively' or 'uncompetitive'.
How many questions are there?	8
How many marks are there?	1 mark for each correct answer.

Part 4 (Key word transformation)

What's in Part 4?	A sentence followed by a key word and a second sentence which has a gap in it. Students have to use the key word to complete the second sentence so that it is similar in meaning to the first sentence.
What do students have to practise?	Grammar and vocabulary – rewriting sentences with different words so that they mean the same thing.
How many questions are there?	6
How many marks are there?	Up to 2 marks for each correct answer.

Part 5 (Multiple choice)

What's in Part 5?	A text with some multiple-choice questions. Each question has four options (A, B, C or D), and students have to decide which is the correct answer.
What do students have to practise?	How to understand the details of a text, including opinions and attitudes.
How many questions are there?	6
How many marks are there?	2 marks for each correct answer.

Part 6 (Gapped text)

What's in Part 6?	A text with some empty spaces (gaps). After the text there are some sentences taken from the text. Students have to choose the correct sentence for each gap.
What do students have to practise?	How to understand the structure and follow the development of a text.
How many questions are there?	6
How many marks are there?	2 marks for each correct answer.

Part 7 (Multiple matching)

What's in Part 7?	A series of questions and a long text or several short texts to read. For each question, students have to decide which text or part of the text mentions this.
What do students have to practise?	How to find specific information in a text or texts.
How many questions are there?	10
How many marks are there?	1 mark for each correct answer.

What's in the Writing paper?

In the two parts of the *Cambridge English: First for Schools* Writing paper, the student has to show that they can write different types of text in English.

Summary

Time allowed: 1 hour 20 minutes

Number of parts: 2

Number of questions: Part 1: one compulsory question
Part 2: one question from a choice of four, including one set text question

Types of task: Article, email, essay, letter, report, review, story.

Set texts

- Set text for January 2015 – December 2016: Rosemary Sutcliff: *The Eagle of the Ninth* (Oxford bookworms edition)

Note: From 2015 onwards, the revised *Cambridge English: First for Schools* exam will have only one set text and one set text question on the paper, rather than the two texts and two questions that are in the current exam.

Students should not attempt the optional set text question in Part 2 unless they have the necessary understanding of the text to answer the task set. Teachers are best placed to judge if the set texts and/or film version may be appropriate and stimulating for a given teaching situation. The suggested edition is a graded reader which has been adapted to the level and is suitable for *Cambridge English: First for Schools* candidates. Other editions of this book may be available. Teachers and students should be aware that the language level in other editions may be less accessible

Writing Parts 1–2

Part 1

What's in Part 1?	Students are given an essay title and two ideas. They write an essay giving their opinion about the title, using the ideas given and adding an idea of their own. The title will be a subject of general interest – students won't need any specialised knowledge.
What do students have to practise?	Giving an opinion and providing reasons for that opinion.
How many questions are there?	One compulsory question.
How much do students have to write?	140–190 words

Part 2

What's in Part 2?	A choice of four questions. The answer students have to write will be one of the following: article, email/letter, essay, review, story.
What do students have to practise?	Writing different types of text: articles, essays, letters/emails, reviews. Depending on the question, students will have to advise, compare, describe, explain, express opinions, justify and/or recommend something.
How many questions are there?	Students choose one question from a choice of four, including one set text question.
How much do students have to write?	140–190 words

What's in the Speaking paper?

The Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking test has four parts and the student takes it together with another candidate.

There are two examiners. One of the examiners conducts the test (asks questions, gives the student a booklet with things to talk about, and so on). The other examiner listens to what the student says.

Summary

Time allowed:	14 minutes per pair of candidates
Number of parts:	4
The student has to talk:	with the examiner with the other candidate on their own

Speaking Parts 1–4

Part 1 (Interview)

What's in Part 1?	Conversation with the examiner. The examiner asks questions and students may have to give information about themselves, talk about past experiences, present circumstances and future plans.
What do students have to practise?	Giving information about themselves and expressing opinions about various topics.
How long does each student have to speak?	2 minutes

Part 2 (Long turn)

What's in Part 2?	The examiner gives the student a pair of photographs to talk about and they have to speak for 1 minute without interruption. The questions about the photographs
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	are written at the top of the page to remind the student what they should talk about. When they have finished speaking, the student's partner then has to answer a short question from the examiner about their photographs.
What do students have to practise?	Talking on their own about something: comparing, describing, expressing opinions.
How long does each student have to speak?	1 minute per candidate, plus a 30-second response

Part 3 (Collaborative task)

What's in Part 3?	Conversation with the other candidate. The examiner gives the students a question and some written prompts. The students discuss these together for two minutes. The examiner will then ask them to make a decision together about the topic they have been discussing.
What do students have to practise?	Exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.
How long does each student have to speak?	A 2-minute discussion followed by a 1-minute decision-making task.

Part 4 (Discussion)

What's in Part 4?	Further discussion with the other candidate, guided by questions from the examiner, about the same topic as the task in Part 3.
What do students have to practise?	Expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing.
How long does each student have to speak?	The discussion should last 4 minutes

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