



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

Experts in Language Assessment

BULATS

Business Language Testing Service

Information for Candidates



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What is BULATS?

The Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) is designed to evaluate the level of language skills of candidates who need to use a foreign language (English, French, German or Spanish) in their work.

It is also suitable for students and employees on language courses or on professional/business courses where foreign language ability is an important part of the course.

BULATS is designed and delivered by Cambridge ESOL in collaboration with leading experts in the assessment of French, German and Spanish:

- Alliance Française (French)
- Goethe-Institut (German)
- Universidad de Salamanca (Spanish).

■ What level is BULATS?

BULATS provides tests at all levels for learners. There is no 'pass' mark. Instead, your BULATS score will tell you and your employer, which of six levels you have reached. The table below explains the different levels. They are expressed as ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) levels, which are linked to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

ALTE levels	Council of Europe (CEFR) levels	BULATS scores	Level description	Cambridge ESOL certificated examinations at these levels
Level 5	C2	90–100	Upper advanced	CPE
Level 4	C1	75–89	Advanced	CAE/BEC Higher
Level 3	B2	60–74	Upper-intermediate	FCE/BEC Vantage
Level 2	B1	40–59	Intermediate	PET/BEC Preliminary
Level 1	A2	20–39	Elementary	KET
Level 0	A1	10–19	Beginner	—

■ Who is BULATS suitable for?

BULATS is carefully designed to be suitable for a wide range of people at work or students studying business courses. It does not require any previous business experience.

Why take a Cambridge ESOL exam?

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) offers the world's leading range of qualifications for learners and teachers of English. Its exams are taken by more than 3 million people in 130 countries each year.

■ Develop effective communication skills

The Cambridge ESOL examinations cover all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. They include a range of tasks which assess your ability to use English, so that you develop the full range of skills you need to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

■ Worldwide recognition

Universities and employers all over the world recognise Cambridge ESOL exams, so a Cambridge ESOL examination is a valuable qualification.

■ Quality you can trust

We do extensive research and trialling to make sure that you get the fairest, most accurate assessment of your ability and that our exams are most relevant to the range of uses for which you need English.

■ BULATS educational mission

BULATS forms an integral part of Cambridge ESOL's educational mission, supporting effective language learning for and in business contexts as a key tool for economic, social and personal development.

To support this ethos, Cambridge ESOL provides extensive support to help learners to prepare for the BULATS tests, and participates in numerous international projects where BULATS is used as a tool for benchmarking and monitoring language skills in the commercial, educational and public sectors. This provides a basis for programmes designed to raise standards of language and communication skills.

Through its link to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language: learning, teaching and assessment*, BULATS also provides support for the Council of Europe's work in implementing consistent levels for language learning.

For more information please visit: www.BULATS.org

How to use this booklet

The BULATS *Information for Candidates* booklet helps your examination preparation by giving you examples of the type of questions you will encounter when you take the BULATS test. There is also an overview of the test sections covering Listening, Reading and Language Knowledge, Speaking and Writing.

BULATS tests are offered in both paper-based (Standard test) and computer-based (Online or CD-ROM) formats. There are separate sections for both these formats detailing examples of the Listening test and the Reading and Language Knowledge test.

The Writing and Speaking tests are delivered as Online and Paper-based versions. Information on these tests can be found in their own sections on pages 20 and 22.

■ Glossary of BULATS task types

Multiple choice – You read a text or listen to a recording and then answer questions. Each question has three or four options, only one of which is correct.

Cloze – You are given a text with gaps, where words or phrases are missing. There are two types of 'cloze'; multiple-choice cloze, where you choose from the four options given and open cloze, where you have to think of the right word for the gap.

Gapped sentences – You are given individual sentences each with one word missing. You choose the correct word to fill the gap from the four options given.

The BULATS Standard test

What does the BULATS Standard test involve?

This section is a brief introduction to the BULATS Standard test. We show examples from each part of the exam, but in some cases we do not show the full text or all the questions. If you would like to see a full sample paper for BULATS you can download one, together with mp3 files of the listening material, from our website at: www.bulats.org

The BULATS Standard test lasts 110 minutes: 50 minutes for Listening and 60 minutes for Reading and Language Knowledge. It tests listening and reading skills, and knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

The Reading and Language Knowledge paper is divided into two parts. Part 1 contains four sections. Part 2 consists of six sections and the tasks are at a higher level than in Part 1.

Listening

Content	Type of task	Number of questions
Part 1	Understanding short conversations or monologues.	10
Part 2	Taking down phone messages orders, notes, etc.	12
Part 3	Listening for gist, identifying topic, context or function. Short monologues/dialogues.	10
Part 4	Listening to extend speech for detail and inference. Monologue/dialogue.	18

Reading and Language Knowledge

Part 1

Content	Type of task	Number of questions
Section 1	Understanding notices, messages, timetables, adverts, leaflets, graphs, etc. Multiple-choice task.	7
Section 2	Grammar and vocabulary. Gapped sentences with multiple-choice task.	6
Section 3	Newspaper or magazine article, advert, leaflet, etc. Long text with multiple-choice task.	6
Section 4	Grammar. Medium-length text, open cloze.	5

Part 2

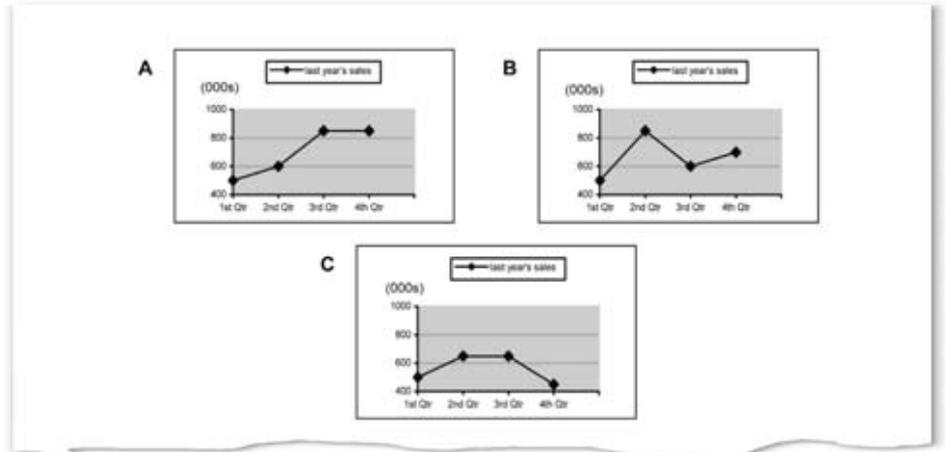
Content	Type of task	Number of questions
Section 1	Reading for specific information. Four short texts with matching text.	7
Section 2	Grammar and vocabulary. Medium-length text with multiple-choice cloze.	5
Section 3	Grammar. Medium-length text, open-cloze.	5
Section 4	Grammar and vocabulary. Gapped sentence with multiple-choice task.	6
Section 5	Reading for gist and specific information. Newspaper or magazine article, report, etc. Long text with multiple-choice task.	6
Section 6	Error correction task. Medium-length text.	7

Listening

Part 1: Understanding short extracts (10 questions)

You listen to 10 short recordings (each about 20 seconds long) and try to understand what the people are talking about, or who is talking or what they are trying to say in each one. You have to choose the correct answer from three options (A, B or C). For the first five questions the three options are pictures. You will hear the recordings twice.

In the example below, you have to listen and decide which graph the speaker is talking about.



Part 2: Taking down messages, notes, etc. (12 questions)

In Part 2 you listen to three recordings. For each one, you have a form, a note or notes to complete, using the information you hear. You need to listen carefully, as you will hear each recording only once.

In the example below, you hear a man telephoning to place an order. You have to listen for the name of the customer, his account number, the address for the delivery and the title of the book. In the real test, there will be two more tasks like this one.

**Intertech Publications
Order Form**

Date: June 21 **Order Taken by:** Gina

Customer Name: (11) Mr

Intertech account number: (12)

Company name: Brandmart Inc.

Address: (13) The, Hopeville, Ohio

Publication Title: (14)

Quantity: 12

Price per item: \$18.99

Part 3: Understanding short extracts (10 questions)

Part 3 consists of two recordings and there are five questions in each one. Each question is about 20 seconds long. The whole recording is 2 minutes long. You have to listen and try to understand what the people are talking about, or who is talking or what they are trying to say in each one.

In the example below, you hear five people talking about a recent situation they were involved in at work. There are nine different options to choose from (A-I). You have to listen to each person talking and decide which situation they were involved in. You need to listen carefully as you will hear the five pieces once only. In the real test, there is a second task like this one.

Example: I	A not leading a team
23 Person 1	B lack of promotion prospects
24 Person 2	C loss of status
25 Person 3	D lack of training opportunities
26 Person 4	E financial insecurity
27 Person 5	F lack of IT support
	G judging which job offers to turn down
	H no informal input from colleagues
	I lack of administrative support

Part 4: Understanding a longer recording (18 questions)

Part 4 consists of three sections. In each one, you listen to a longer conversation or presentation and you have to answer detailed questions about what the people are saying. There are six questions for each recording, and for each question you choose from three options (A, B or C). You hear the recordings for Part 4 twice.

In the example below, a web designer called Paul Doherty is giving advice about creating a website to a group of people who own a small business. Here are the first three questions for this recording. Remember that there will be three more questions to answer for this section and two more recordings to listen to, each with six questions which you have to answer.

33	Paul Doherty advises getting ideas from websites which	A have been set up by local competitors.
		B are offering a range of different goods.
		C are based abroad.
34	According to Paul Doherty, what is the advantage of using a website designer?	A It may be cheaper than doing it yourself.
		B It is likely to be quicker than doing it yourself.
		C It will be more professional than doing it yourself.
35	Paul Doherty says that when producing your own web pages you should	A make the pages bright and colourful.
		B use the same typeface throughout.
		C put your logo on every page.

Reading and Language Knowledge

Part 1

Section 1: Understanding notices and short extracts (7 questions)

You read some common notices or extracts from letters, forms, adverts, leaflets, etc. You answer one question about each one.

In the example below, you have to match the correct explanation (A, B or C) to the sentence.

51

Management Writing Competition

For excellence in management writing

There are six prizes to be won in two sections:

Best Management Book and Best Management Article.

Participants in the competition

- A may enter in different categories of management writing.
- B will receive top quality publications on management if they win.
- C must have published several books or articles on management.

Section 2: Sentences with a gap (6 questions)

You have to complete each sentence using only one of the four choices (A, B, C or D).

In the examples below, you have to choose the word which best completes each sentence.

58 Management training being developed for the new system.

- A were
- B has
- C is
- D have

59 Please particular care when selecting email addresses from the Global Address List.

- A bring
- B take
- C have
- D make

Section 3: Longer text with multiple-choice questions (6 questions)

In this part of the test, you have to read a longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. The questions test your general understanding of the text and your ability to find specific information.

The example below is about 'Financing Business Start-ups'. Read the text and see if you can answer the two questions. In the real test the text will be longer and you will have four more questions to answer.

FINANCING BUSINESS START-UPS

Three venture capitalists, Michael Flowers, Reg Greenham and Lee Wang, were asked about financing business start-ups. According to Michael Flowers, when starting a new business, it is important to accept professional management, and hire an effective CEO. Entrepreneurs should, even before they begin to raise money, ask how they can use the least financing possible. They should purchase goods and services at discounts, and require customers to settle accounts promptly.

When Greenham is considering whether to finance a new venture, his biggest concern is price. 'I am always looking for great ideas and market opportunities with strong leadership, at reasonable prices.' He also looks for entrepreneurs who are able to articulate the corporate vision, and he tries to be open-minded about financing first-time entrepreneurs. He acknowledges that many investors are unwilling to back a younger person's first business.

- 64** Flowers says that entrepreneurs should
- A** obtain funds from a range of sources.
 - B** try to get reduced prices from suppliers.
 - C** take full control of management of the business.
- 65** In the second paragraph, Greenham says that he
- A** is willing to pay more for special opportunities.
 - B** is not prepared to offer support to first-time entrepreneurs.
 - C** likes entrepreneurs who can describe their aims clearly.

Section 4: Filling gaps in a text (5 questions)

In this section, you have to read a text in which there are some missing words (gaps). For each gap, you have to write the correct word to complete the sentence. You must write only one word in each space. This section tests your grammatical knowledge of English. You have to decide what part of speech is needed and in which form to complete the text.

In the example below, the text is about a company which can provide mobile and broadband services to companies.

Business Worldwide: connections on the move

We can give you back the time you currently spend dealing with communications invoices. It's what every business person needs. Ask yourself **(70)** often you have a chance to think your decisions over in peace. You'll almost certainly find **(71)** are precious few quiet moments in your day. That's **(72)** we've created Business Worldwide, leaving you time to get **(73)** with other things. Sign up with us, and with one bill and one supplier for all your company's mobile and broadband needs, you'll soon find yourself with even **(74)** space to think.

Call us on 8000 44 37 43 for all the information you need.

Part 2

Section 1: Finding information in short texts (7 questions)

You read four short texts, such as adverts, product descriptions, etc. Then you match different sentences with each of those texts. There are seven sentences and four texts (A, B, C or D), so you may have to use each text more than once.

In the example below, you have to read the sentences and match each one to one of the texts. In the real exam, there will be two more texts and four more sentences.

75 This company's latest sales figures were more positive than recent indications suggested.

76 There has been a resignation from this company due to its latest sales figures.

77 This company's most recent sales figures have not risen as rapidly as in the previous period.

A

Fashion chain Cloud Nine has posted half-year results that are a new record for the company, after pre-tax profits leapt 19% on a year earlier to £21 million. The group has been further encouraged by trading over the holiday period, which saw like-for-like sales improve 2% in the five weeks to January 3. This improvement was slower than the 6% increase reported in the preceding months – but comes during challenging times.

B

Mobile phone retailer PhoneKing has said third-quarter trading was stronger than anticipated, and upgraded its full-year profit expectations. The retailer said revenues in its retail and distribution operations grew 27.7% on a like-for-like basis. It also said that subscription connections have grown by 30.1% to 690,000, and are now outperforming other areas. Founder Julia Whitehead must be a happy woman.

Section 2: Filling gaps in a text (5 questions)

This section tests your knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. You have to read a text with five words missing. There is a choice of four words (A, B, C or D) for each gap and you have to choose the best one.

The example below is part of an extract giving details about a marketing course and three of the five questions. Choose the best word to fill each space from the four choices given for each gap.

ALL-ROUND MARKETING

'All-round Marketing' is a course which you can take in many different parts of the country. It **(82)** of interactive workshops designed to improve the way in which existing businesses market themselves, their products and their services.

The course's range of practical guidance covers areas that are becoming **(83)** important as businesses become more competitive. Some of the topics dealt with are:

- attracting and **(84)** customers
- seeing your business through customers' eyes
- learning how to satisfy customers' needs more effectively.

82 A consists B involves C contains D includes

83 A gradually B progressively C regularly D increasingly

84 A saving B holding C retaining D preserving

Section 3: Filling gaps in a text (5 questions)

Sections 3 and 4 are similar task types to Part 1, Sections 2 and 4 but at a higher level.

You have to read a text in which five words are missing and think of a word to fill each gap.

The example below shows you a text about the future needs of companies. Read the text and try to think of the right word to fill each of the gaps.

THE FUTURE NEEDS OF COMPANIES

Executives who responded to a recent survey believe that failure to innovate is one of the greatest risks facing businesses in the next few years. In addition, advances in technology were cited by almost 60 per cent of the executives **(87)** being the single most critical force changing the global marketplace. **(88)** executives, for the most part, remain optimistic about global business prospects, they realise that there will be difficult times ahead. They recognise that, **(89)** they are to survive in the highly competitive market conditions of the coming years, driving innovation and harnessing advances in technology will be of vital importance. The IT industry is certain to play **(90)** ever more important role in managing the complex operations of today's companies. Indeed, the fastest growing businesses today are those that have placed IT **(91)** the core of their management strategy.

Section 4: Sentences with a gap (6 questions)

In this section, you have to choose the right word or phrase to fill a gap in a sentence. There are four choices (A, B, C or D) for each question.

Have a look at the two questions below and see if you can decide which word you need to complete each sentence. In the real exam, there will be four more questions like these for you to answer.

92 The contractors were commended for completing the new sports stadium on time and budget.

- A** within
- B** underneath
- C** through
- D** during

93 The Middleham Film Festival, held in July, significantly the town's tourist industry.

- A** pushed
- B** inflated
- C** heightened
- D** boosted

Section 5: Understanding a longer text (6 questions)

You read a longer text, such as part of a business report, a newspaper article, etc. Then you answer some detailed questions on it. You have to choose from four options (A, B, C or D) for each question.

The example below shows you part of an article about mergers and two of the six questions. Remember that there will be four more questions like these in the real exam.

MERGERS CAN BE SUCCESSFUL

Mergers are always headline news. Some financial commentators even regard them as an indicator of the economic health of a nation. Which is strange when you consider that most mergers and acquisitions fail. The deals themselves go through, and regardless of the high costs, the bankers get paid. But then the expected economies of scale prove elusive and there are clashes of corporate cultures. Employees become nervous and less efficient as they worry about losing their jobs. Depending on whose research you believe, 50 to 80 per cent of acquisitions fail to fulfil the strategic objective for which they were designed. Given all this, it is interesting to see a merger which is successful. And that is what seems to have happened when Promo and Truck Ads merged.

Eva Lendel started Promo in 1991, the same year Paul Watson founded Truck Ads. Both companies did the same thing: they ran poster campaigns on trucks for major advertisers. It was a new medium and both companies expanded quickly. It looked so easy and profitable that lots of small operators came into the business – which worried both of them because they felt that these new companies did not really know what they were doing. This, they felt, could have a negative effect on all companies in this sector. So Lendel and Watson formed a trade association to protect the reputation of their businesses. 'Out of all these companies that mushroomed up,' says Watson, 'almost none have survived. They just didn't offer a professional service.'

98 According to the first paragraph, what is one reason why mergers and acquisitions often fail?

- A** The costs involved are too high.
- B** The companies involved have different attitudes to business.
- C** The merger or acquisition is not given a clear goal.
- D** Staff leave because they feel their jobs are not secure.

99 Lendel and Watson thought that many of the smaller operators in the industry

- A** lacked professional standards.
- B** had expanded too quickly.
- C** wanted to set up a trade association.
- D** were making excessive profits.

Section 6: Correcting errors in a text (7 questions)

In this section, you have to read a text which is at least seven lines long. Some lines have errors in them. If the line is correct, you put a tick (✓) on your answer sheet. If there is a wrong word in the line, you write the correct word on your answer sheet.

The example below shows you the first part of a job advertisement which you have to check for a colleague. See if you can find any errors in lines 104–106. Remember that there will be four more lines to check in the real exam.

	We are looking for a Senior Employment Adviser to be based in our Oxford office.
104	Senior Employment Advisers support staff members on a various of complex
105	issues concerned with conditions of service. Applicants must been educated to
106	degree level else equivalent. They need up-to-date knowledge of employment law

The BULATS Computer- based test

What does the BULATS Computer-based test involve?

This section is a brief introduction to the BULATS Computer-based test (available Online and on CD-ROM).

The test that the candidate sees is the same for both Online and CD-ROM but delivered in different ways. We show examples from each of the exercise types in the test, but in some cases we do not show the full text or all the questions. If you would like to try the full demo for BULATS Computer-based, please visit the BULATS website at: www.bulats.org

Reading and Language Knowledge

Read and select
Gapped sentences
Multiple-choice gap-fill
Open gap-fill
Extended reading

Listening

Listen and select
Listen and select (Graphic)
Extended listening

There is a short demo at the beginning of the test to explain what you should do. If you start a new type of exercise and you don't understand what you have to do on a particular screen, click on the question mark button at the top of the screen to get help.

Questions appear on a screen and you answer them by clicking on a particular answer or by typing in words or phrases. There are eight different types of question and they assess listening, reading and grammar/vocabulary skills.

The BULATS Computer-based test is an adaptive test: depending on your answer to each question, the software decides whether to offer you a more difficult question of the same type or to give you a different type of question. It does this until it has enough data to decide which level you have reached. Alternatively, your employer will set a time limit and you work through the different questions until the time is up. As the test is adaptive the length of the test will depend on the candidate's level of ability but it is usually approximately 60 minutes long.

Reading and Language Knowledge

Read and select

In this type of question, you have to read a notice, diagram, label, memo or letter containing a short text. You then choose from three possible answers, the sentence or phrase which most closely matches the meaning of the text.

In the example below, the text is part of a letter from a furniture company to a customer. Read the letter and decide which of the three sentences has the same meaning.

Choose an Answer

Look at the picture and click on the best answer.

LAKELAND FURNITURE
Dear Mr Royston
Order No. 13448
We thank you for your recent order dated 10 September and confirm that we can supply your requirements.

- Mr Royston's order will be sent on 10th September.
- Lakeland Furniture is accepting Mr Royston's order.
- Mr Royston will supply the order on 10th September.

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Gapped sentences

You have to read a sentence in which there is a gap (missing word) and choose the correct word from a choice of four to fill it.

Choose an Answer

Read the question then click on the best answer.

I've applied for the job but I don't really _____ to get it.

- expect
- think
- believe
- suppose

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Multiple-choice gap-fill

You have to read a text in which there are some gaps. There are four choices for each gap and you have to choose the right one.

In the example below, Jim Blakeney is writing to a customer (Mr Maddox) to apologise about the difficulties Mr Maddox has been having in contacting him.

Fill the Gap

Click in each gap. A choice of words will appear. Click on the word you think completes the phrase or sentence.

A Communication Problem

Dear Mr Maddox

I am writing in [] to your telephone conversation with my assistant about our new product lines, and to explain my failure to answer your enquiries.

I believe your difficulty in [] me, and in getting information on our new lines, arose because of our recent [] of premises. I sincerely regret any trouble you have had. As my assistant promised, I have attached the new product details which you requested.

I hope I have [] to explain the reason for problems you have had in contacting me recently, and that we can look [] to continuing business with you.

Yours sincerely
Jim Blakeney

[]

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Open gap-fill

You have to read a short text in which there are some gaps and fill in the missing word for each gap.

In the example below, you have to read a short text about Eurocheques and find the correct missing word for each gap.

Write in the Gap

Click in each gap, then type the word you think completes the phrase or sentence.

Eurocheques

Eurocheques can be used for obtaining cash at over 250,000 bank branches, helping you to cut [] cost of changing cash from one currency to []. Your Eurocheque card will guarantee Eurocheques for between £100 and £150, the exact amount depending [] which country you are in. With your personal number and card you [] obtain cash from over 56,000 cash dispensers in 16 countries, so [] won't be any need to queue in banks or show your passport.

[]

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Extended reading

In this part of the test, you have to read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it. The questions are in the same order as the information in the text.

The text below is about the work of a translator. Read this part of the text and try to decide which of the four options for completing the sentence ('The source language should be ...') is the correct one. There are three more questions for this text and you scroll down the screen to read the rest of the text.

Read the Passage

Click on the numbers to see ALL the questions. Find the answers by reading the passage using the scrollbar.

Question 1 of 4

The source language should be

- the translator's native language.
- the translator's language of habitual use.
- a language the translator speaks as well as his mother tongue.
- a language the translator is proficient in.

The translator must have an excellent, up-to-date knowledge of his source languages, full facility in the handling of his target language, which will be his mother tongue or language of habitual use, and a knowledge and understanding of the latest subject-matter in his fields of specialization. This is, as it were, his professional equipment.

In addition to this, it is desirable that he should have an enquiring mind, wide interests, a good memory and the ability to grasp quickly the basic principles of new developments. He should be willing to work on his own, often at high speeds, but should be humble enough to consult others should his own knowledge not always prove adequate to the task in hand. He should be able to type fairly quickly and accurately and, if he is working mainly for

BULATS

Listening

Listen and select

You have to listen to a short recording and answer a multiple-choice question. You choose the correct answer from three options.

In this example, you are waiting to see Mrs Browning about a job. Unfortunately Mrs Browning can't see you now and her assistant comes to explain why. In the test you listen to the recording of Mrs Browning's assistant talking to you and decide which, of the three options is the correct reason why Mrs Browning can't see you now.

The screenshot shows a software interface for a listening task. At the top, it says "Choose an Answer". Below that, there are audio control icons (play, stop, volume, and a question mark). The main area contains the following text:

Click on an audio button to hear the short passage. Then choose the best answer.

You are waiting to see Mrs Browning about a job when her assistant comes to speak to you.

Why can't she see you now?

On the right side, there are three radio button options:

- She is checking some equipment.
- She has a visitor from abroad.
- She has left the building.

At the bottom left of the interface, the logo "BULATS" is visible.

Listen and select (Graphic)

In this type of listening task you choose the correct answer from a choice of three pictures or images.

In the example below, the recording is about a man who is choosing a watch. In the test you listen to the recording and decide which watch he chooses to buy.

The screenshot shows a software interface for a listening task. At the top, it says "Choose an Answer". Below that, there are audio control icons (play, stop, volume, and a question mark). The main area contains the following text:

Click on an audio button to hear the short passage. Then choose the best answer.

How much is the watch that the man chooses?

Below the question, there are three options labeled A, B, and C, each with a picture of a price tag:

- A: \$30
- B: \$40
- C: \$50

At the bottom left of the interface, the logo "BULATS" is visible.

Extended listening

For this part of the test, you have to listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it. The questions are in the same order as the information you hear in the recording.

The screenshot shows a digital interface for a listening test. At the top, the title "Listen and Choose the Answers" is displayed. Below the title, there is a set of instructions: "Read ALL the questions. Click on the audio button to hear the long passage. Click on each question. Then choose the best answer." To the right of the instructions are several icons: a speaker icon, a volume icon, a play button, a plus sign, and a question mark. Below the instructions, the interface is divided into two main sections. The left section is titled "Question 1 of 6" and contains a heading "The Conference" followed by the text "The conference will take place on a". Below this text are three radio button options: "Monday.", "Wednesday.", and "Friday.". The right section is a vertical list of questions, each with a heading and a question stem. The visible questions are: "Question 2: It will be held at the", "Question 3: At the conference centre used last year there were problems with", "Question 4: One of the afternoon talks has been", "Question 5: The day will end with", and "Question 6: Lunch will be in". A vertical scrollbar is located on the right side of this list. At the bottom left of the interface, the word "BULATS" is written in a blue, bold font.

The BULATS Writing test

What does the BULATS Writing test involve?

You may decide to assess your writing using the BULATS Writing test. The table below shows you what the Writing test involves:

Content	Writing	Time
Part 1	Short message/fax/letter/email (50–60 words)	15 minutes
Part 2	Report or letter (180–200 words)	30 minutes

The Writing test lasts for 45 minutes. It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes on Part 1 and 30 minutes on Part 2.

Part 1

In Part 1 of the test you have to write a short message, fax, letter or email using the information given. It is important to cover all the points given in the instructions. You should write 50–60 words for your answer.

In the Part 1 example below, you have received a letter from a local business college. In the test you have to write a reply to Sam Williams.

As part of our Careers Week, we are inviting business people to talk to our students. Could you come on 21st November at 10.30 am to give advice to our students? Please let me know what you will talk about - any topic helpful to students in their future careers. Do you need any special equipment for the talk?

Yours sincerely

Sam Williams

Write a **reply** to Sam Williams:

- agree to give the talk;
- suggest a suitable subject to talk about;
- tell Mr Williams what equipment you need.

Part 2

A letter or a report format may be required for either task. Again, you need to cover all the points given in the instructions, but this time the answer should be longer (180–200 words) and needs to be written in an appropriate style.

Have a look at the two tasks below and think about the answers you could write.

Task A

Your company has asked you to write an informal and helpful letter as a guide to new employees.

Write the **letter** to new employees.

Write about:

- hours of work;
 - work clothes and behaviour;
 - training and promotion opportunities
- and any other points which you think are important.

or

Task B

Your company is deciding whether it needs new office equipment. Your line manager has asked you to write a report on the office equipment in your department and suggest any changes that need to be made.

Write a **report** for your line manager describing the office equipment in your department.

Write about:

- how important those types of equipment are;
 - how well they work now;
 - what changes you would like to see
- and any other points which you think are important.

The BULATS Online Writing test

What does the BULATS Online Writing test involve?

BULATS Online Writing is a computer-based test. Writing tasks are presented to you on the computer screen. You type your answers on-screen and the computer saves your answers.

There is a tutorial which you can watch before you take the Online Writing test. The tutorial gives you instructions of how to do the test.

The content of the Online Writing test is similar to the paper-based Writing test.

Content	Online Writing	Time
Part 1	Short message/fax/letter/email (50–60 words)	15 minutes
Part 2	Report or letter (180–200 words)	30 minutes

The Online Writing test lasts for 45 minutes. It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes on Part 1 and 30 minutes on Part 2.

The Online Writing test is available in English only.

The BULATS Speaking test

What does the BULATS Speaking test involve?

You may also decide to assess your speaking using the BULATS Speaking test. The table below shows you what the Speaking test involves:

Content	Speaking	Time
Part 1	Interview	about 4 minutes
Part 2	Presentation	about 4 minutes
Part 3	Information Exchange and Discussion	about 4 minutes

Part 1

For Part 1, you need to be able to talk about your background, education, job, studies, career plans and personal interests.

Part 2

In Part 2, you have to give a short presentation about a work-related topic. You have to choose one of three topics which the examiner will give you and talk for 1 minute. You have 1 minute to read the three topics, choose one and make some notes about what you want to say. The examiner will ask you a question after you have finished speaking.

Below are some examples of the kind of topics you might get in Part 2.

Task A

Describe an important **business meeting** you attended.

You should say:

- where it was;
- what it was about;
- why it was important.

What were the most interesting moments?

Task B

Describe **someone** you particularly enjoy working with.

You should say:

- what this person does;
- what sort of work you do with this person;
- why you like working with this person?

Would you change anything about this person? Why? / Why not?

Topic C

Describe how your company chooses its **suppliers**.

You should say:

- who chooses your company's suppliers;
- what your company expects from its suppliers;
- what happens if a supplier's service is unsatisfactory.

How satisfied is your company with its suppliers?

Part 3

In Part 3, you have to role-play a situation with the examiner and then participate in a discussion on a similar topic. The examiner will give you some instructions about the task and you have 1 minute to read them. If you don't know so much about the topic, you should remember that the important thing is to demonstrate your English ability in Part 3.

Look at the example of a Part 3 task below and think about how you would ask the Conference Organiser for the information you need.

Information Exchange

You are making the arrangements for a one-day conference at a local hotel. The Examiner is the Conference Organiser for the hotel and is visiting you to discuss the conference.

Find out this information:

- i. the size of the largest conference room
- ii. the cost for that room
- iii. equipment available.

You will then be asked to give your opinion on this information.

Discussion

Now discuss this topic with the Examiner:
What makes a successful conference?

The BULATS Online Speaking test

What does the BULATS Online Speaking test involve?

You may decide to assess your speaking using the BULATS Online Speaking test. The test is computer based and all questions are presented to you or heard by you through the computer or computer screen. You wear a headset for the test and the microphone records your answers to the questions. There is a timer on screen which shows how long you have to give your answers.

There is a tutorial which you can watch before you do the Online Speaking test. The tutorial gives you instructions of how to do the test.

The table below shows you what the Online Speaking test involves:

Content	Online Speaking
Part 1	Interview
Part 2	Reading Aloud
Part 3	Presentation
Part 4	Presentation with Graphics
Part 5	Communication Activity

The Online Speaking Test is available in English only.

Part 1

In Part 1, you need to be able to answer questions about your background, education, job, studies, career plans and personal interests.

Part 2

In Part 2, you have to read aloud eight sentences or questions which appear on the screen. Below is an example of Part 2.

Question 1	This is the latest version of the plan.
Question 2	These are the minutes of the last committee meeting.
Question 3	Sales have risen faster than expected over the last quarter.
Question 4	I will give you a summary of the figures at the end of my talk.
Question 5	Mr Bond apologises for not being able to attend the reception.
Question 6	Permission to develop the land must be gained in advance.
Question 7	Dr Clark would like you to phone her back before 3 o'clock.
Question 8	The design should follow the guidelines set out in the tender specifications.

Part 3

In Part 3, you have to give a short presentation about a work-related topic which appears on screen. There is no choice of topic. You have 40 seconds to read the topic and think about what you are going to say. You then have one minute to speak about the topic. Below is an example of Part 3.

Talk about your idea of the perfect office to work in. You should say:

- where this office should be
- what the office should look like
- what facilities this office should have.

Part 4

In Part 4, you have to talk about some visual information which appears on screen. You have one minute to look at the visual and think about what you are going to say. You then have one minute to speak about the visual. Below is an example of Part 4.

Part Four Presentation with Graphics 00:54 X

You will have 1 minute to talk about some visual information.
First you have 1 minute to look at the task and prepare what you are going to say.
You will then be given 1 minute to speak.

These charts show the breakdown of the total exports of a company called Pepco to three countries during 2005 – 2007.
Look at the information and talk about the changes that took place between 2005 and 2007.

Pepco Exports

Year	Brazil (%)	Japan (%)	Canada (%)
2005	55	25	20
2006	45	35	20
2007	35	45	20

BULATS

Part 5

In Part 5, you read information on screen about a situation. You have 40 seconds to think about what is described. You then hear five questions about the situation on which you have to give your opinion.

Below is an example of Part 5.

The screenshot shows a software interface for a 'Part Five - Communication Activity'. At the top right, there is a timer set to 00:12. Below the title bar, instructions state: 'You will imagine you are in this situation. You have 40 seconds to read the task.' The main content area is divided into two sections. The left section contains the following text: 'The speaker is planning a business conference and she wants to find out your opinion of what is important when making arrangements for a successful conference. She will ask you questions about:' followed by a bulleted list: 'location', 'equipment', 'catering facilities', 'conference speakers', and 'length of conference'. The right section contains two icons: a pair of headphones and a microphone. At the bottom of the interface, the word 'BULATS' is displayed in a blue box, and a standard Windows taskbar is visible at the very bottom.

Preparing for BULATS

BULATS tests reading, listening, speaking and writing skills that are required for most purposes – not only in business. So exam preparation is valuable, even for someone not taking the exam, as it will help you to improve the English you need to use at work.

If you are following a general English course or preparing on your own to take BULATS, have a look at the following list of topics and situations which could be covered. Try to read or listen to material on these topics, as this will help you to prepare more effectively, so that you can feel confident when you take the test.

■ What topics and situations are covered?

Personal information

- Asking for and giving personal details (name, occupation, etc.)
- Asking about and describing jobs and responsibilities
- Asking about and describing a company and its organisation

The office, general business environment and routine

- Arranging appointments/meetings
- Planning future events and tasks
- Asking for and giving permission
- Giving and receiving instructions
- Predicting and describing future possibilities
- Asking for and giving opinions
- Agreeing and disagreeing
- Making, accepting and rejecting suggestions
- Expressing needs and wants
- Discussing problems
- Making recommendations
- Justifying decisions and past actions

Entertainment of clients, free time, relationships with colleagues and clients

- Discussing interests and leisure activities
- Inviting, accepting and refusing offers and invitations
- Thanking and expressing appreciation
- Apologising and accepting apologies

Travel

- Making enquiries, reservations, requests and complaints

Health

- Health and safety rules in the workplace
- Leisure activities, interests and sports

Buying and selling

- Understanding and discussing prices and delivery dates, offers and agreements

Products and services

- Asking for and giving information about a product or service
- Making comparisons, expressing opinions, preferences, etc.
- Making and receiving complaints

Results and achievements

- Descriptions and explanations of company performance and results, trends, events and changes

Other topic areas

- A number of other topics in areas of general interest, such as food and drink, education (training, courses), consumer goods, shopping and prices, etc. may be included.

Next steps

We wish you every success in taking BULATS and we hope that you will take other Cambridge ESOL exams in future.

Companies who use BULATS

More than ever, a good knowledge of English is needed to succeed in international business and commerce. If you can show you have relevant language skills, you'll have a great advantage in the jobs market and much greater flexibility if you want to work or study abroad.

Recognition of BULATS is increasing rapidly as a growing number of companies are using the examination as a focus for in-company training courses.

Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)	IBM
Adidas	Italia Lavoro
Alcatel	Johnson & Johnson
BP	Kodak
British American Tobacco	KPMG
Cadbury	L'Oréal
China Personnel Testing Authority	Lloyds Bank
Citibank	Motorola
Colgate-Palmolive	Nestlé
Compaq	Nokia
Deloitte & Touche	Pfizer
DHL	Philips
Disney	PricewaterhouseCoopers
Dow AgroSciences	Procter & Gamble
EADS/Airbus	RASCO Ras Lanuf Oil and Gas
Emirates Group	Renault
Esso	Reuters
General Electric	Roche
General Motors	Shanghai Professional Testing Authority
GlaxoSmithKline	Shell
Guinness	Vodafone
Heinz	Volvo
HSBC	Wrigley
	Wyeth

You can find a full list of companies that use the BULATS examinations for a variety of purposes including recruitment at: www.bulats.org

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