

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations

# Preliminary English Test

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## *Information for Candidates*



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE  
ESOL Examinations

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English for Speakers of Other Languages

# Information for candidates – PET

## Why take the Preliminary English Test (PET)?

If you can deal with everyday written and spoken communications (e.g. read simple books and articles, write simple personal letters, make notes during a meeting), then the Preliminary English Test (PET) from Cambridge ESOL is the exam for you.

PET is the second level Cambridge ESOL exam. It is an intermediate level exam, at Level B1 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. PET is a valuable qualification if you want to work or study abroad or to develop a career in international business.

Studying for PET is a popular way to improve your language skills and use them in a wide range of contexts. PET covers the four main language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, using material from real life situations. It develops practical skills, which will be of use in clerical, secretarial and managerial jobs, and in many industries, such as tourism, where contact with English speakers is required.

PET is available in two formats. You can take the paper and pencil test, or you can take a computer-based version called CB-PET instead. Please contact your nearest local centre for details.

## Why take a Cambridge ESOL exam?

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.

Quality you can trust

- Cambridge ESOL examinations are backed by extensive research and comprehensively trialled to make sure that you get the fairest, most accurate assessment of your ability and that they are most relevant to the range of uses for which you need English.

Worldwide recognition

- Universities and employers all over the world recognise Cambridge ESOL exams as a measure of your achievement in English. Whether you are hoping to study architecture in Australia or work in IT in Italy, a Cambridge ESOL examination is a valuable stamp in your passport to success.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) offers the world's leading range of qualifications for learners and teachers of English. Around 1.75 million people in 135 countries take Cambridge ESOL exams each year.

## What does PET involve?

This booklet is a brief introduction to PET. We show examples from each part of the test, 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 PET, you can download one from our website at:

**[www.CambridgeESOL.org](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org)**

The table below shows the different parts of PET and how long each paper takes. In PET, Reading and Writing are combined on one question paper.

<i>Name of paper</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Time allowed</i>	<i>Marks (% of total)</i>
Paper 1 Reading and Writing	Reading: 5 parts/35 questions Writing: 3 parts/7 questions	1 hour 30 minutes	Reading: 25% Writing: 25%
Paper 2 Listening	4 parts/25 questions	about 35 minutes (including 6 minutes' transfer time)	25%
Paper 3 Speaking	4 parts	10–12 minutes per pair of candidates (2:2 format*)	25%

\* 2 examiners, 2 candidates (2:3 format is used for the last group in a session where necessary)

## ■ Paper 1 Reading and Writing

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

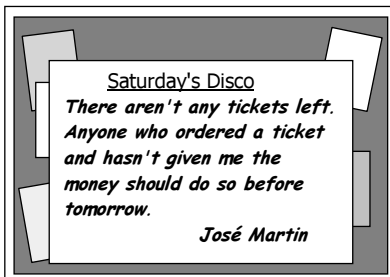
### Reading

#### Part 1 (Questions 1–5)

In the first part of the Reading paper you have to read and understand different kinds of short texts. These may be notices and signs, packaging information (for example instructions on a food package or a label on a medicine bottle) and communicative messages (notes, e-mails, cards and postcards).

In the example below you can see two typical examples of the type of question you will find in Part 1. Read the text and decide which is the best answer (A, B or C). In the exam there are three more questions like the ones below.

1



- A Tickets for the disco can be collected after tomorrow.
- B It is possible to reserve a disco ticket if you do so by tomorrow.
- C Reserved tickets for the disco must be paid for today.

2



- A Press the button after the doors close.
- B Press the button while the doors are closing.
- C Press the button to close the lift doors.

#### Part 2 (Questions 6–10)

In Part 2 you will find five descriptions of people. There are then eight short texts on a particular topic. This may be goods and services of some kind (for example, purchasing books, visiting museums, staying in hotels or choosing holidays). You have to match each person to one of the texts.

In the examples below you have some information about two people, Ali and Monica, and what they like to read. There are then five texts about different books. You have to decide which books (A–E) Monica and Ali would enjoy most. In the exam there is information about three more people and three more books for you.

6



Ali enjoys reading crime stories which are carefully written so that they hold his interest right to the end. He enjoys trying to guess who the criminal really is while he's reading.

7



Monica is a history teacher in London. She enjoys reading about the history of people in other parts of the world and how events changed their lives.

## Recommended New Books

### A **London Alive**

This author of many famous novels has now turned to writing short stories with great success. The stories tell of Londoners' daily lives and happen in eighteen different places – for example, one story takes place at a table in a café, another in the back of a taxi and another in a hospital.

### B **Burnham's Great Days**

Joseph Burnham is one of Britain's best-loved painters these days, but I was interested to read that during his lifetime it was not always so. Art historian Peter Harvey looks at how Burnham's work attracted interest at first but then became less popular.

### C **The Missing Photograph**

Another story about the well-known policeman, Inspector Manning. It is written in the same simple but successful way as the other Manning stories – I found it a bit disappointing as I guessed who the criminal was halfway through!

### D **Gone West**

A serious look at one of the least-known regions of the United States. The author describes the empty villages which thousands left when they were persuaded by the railway companies to go West in search of new lives. The author manages to provide many interesting details about their history.

### E **The Letter**

The murder of a television star appears to be the work of thieves who are quickly caught. But they escape from prison and a young lawyer says she knows who the real criminals are. Written with intelligence, this story is so fast-moving that it demands the reader's complete attention.

### Part 3 (Questions 11–20)

In Part 3 you have to read a longer, factual text and look for precise information. The texts may be brochure extracts, advertisements in magazines and website information. Before you read the text, there are ten questions which are single-sentence statements about the text. You have to decide whether each statement is correct or not correct.

In the example below you have five sentences (11–15) about a journey to the Arctic on board a ship. Read the text 'Exploring the Arctic' and then decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. In the exam, there are five more sentences like the ones below. You mark A on your answer sheet if the sentence is correct and B, if it is not correct.

- 11 This trip is for people who like peace and quiet.  
12 Many different activities are organised on board.  
13 The voyage begins in Scotland.

- 14 The ship follows a fixed route.  
15 There are different types of accommodation.

## Exploring the Arctic



The Arctic is one of the few places in the world untouched by pollution where you can see nature at its wildest and most beautiful. Join our ship the *Northern Star* from 2 to 18 July, for a 17-day voyage to the Arctic. During the voyage you are able to relax and get away from it all. There are no parties or film-shows to attend, quizzes to enter, or entertainers to watch. However, we do have specialists on board who are willing to answer any of your questions about the Arctic and who will talk about the animals and birds that you see on the trip.

After setting off from Scotland, we go north along the coast of Norway to Bear Island. Along the way you'll see thousands of seabirds and wonderful scenery, with rivers of ice and huge cliffs. You will have the chance to see reindeer, polar bears, and other Arctic animals. Although we have a timetable, experience has shown that we may have to change our direction a little, depending on the weather and on which animals appear.

The *Northern Star* is a very special ship and our past voyages have been very popular. Our cabins all have the same excellent facilities, which include a private bathroom and refrigerator. Our chefs are happy to prepare any food for people on special diets. Choose just what you want to eat from the wide variety available from the dining room buffet. There is a library, shop, clinic and plenty of space for relaxation. If you need some exercise, why not go jogging every morning around the decks, or do some swimming in the indoor pool.

Prices include economy class air travel and 16 nights on board the *Northern Star*, all meals and excursions and all lectures.

Day 1 Board the *Northern Star*.

Days 2–7 We sail slowly north along the coast of Norway, stopping at places of interest.

...

#### Part 4 (Questions 21–25)

In Part 4 the text you have to read expresses opinion or attitude. There are then five questions for you to answer. For each question we give you four possible answers (A, B, C or D) and you have to choose the right one.

The text below is about TV chef, Ainsley Harriott. Read the text and try to answer questions 21 and 22. In the exam, there are three more questions like the ones below.

#### Ainsley Harriott

I've always been a bit of an entertainer and played the funny man. I was a part-time comedian for years, so I learned how to stand in front of audiences. It made me sure of myself. I like being liked and I love making everyone smile.

I've lived in London all my life and have just moved to a larger house with my wife Clare and our two children, Jimmy and Madeleine. We spend a lot of time just singing and dancing around the house. I grew up with music because my dad is the pianist, Chester Harriott – who's still playing, by the way. My working day is divided between television and writing cook books, though TV takes most of my time. I spend about five days a fortnight working on the cooking programmes I appear in. I eat all sorts of things at home but I only buy quality food. When I'm cooking, I experiment with whatever is in the fridge – it's good practice for my TV series.

I'm a football fan and enjoy going to matches, but I'm a home-loving person really. I don't like going to the pub but we do go out to eat about twice a month. There's nothing better than a night at home playing with the children. I rarely go to bed before midnight. Late evening is when fresh thoughts on cooking usually come to me, so I often write or plan my programmes then. When I eventually get to bed, I have no trouble sleeping!

- 21 What is the writer's main purpose in writing the text?
- A to describe how he lives
  - B to say what makes him laugh
  - C to talk about his cooking ideas
  - D to explain how he started in TV
- 22 What would a reader learn about Ainsley from the text?
- A He is a very good musician.
  - B He likes to plan the family meals.
  - C He is nervous about performing on stage.
  - D He enjoys spending time with his family.

#### Part 5 (Questions 26–35)

In this part of the Reading paper, you have a short text with ten numbered spaces. You have to find the missing word for each space. The spaces are designed to test mainly vocabulary but also a grammatical point such as pronouns, modal verbs, connectives and prepositions. After the text, we give you four possible answers for each numbered space and you have to choose the right one.

Below is part of a text called 'Deep Sleep'. On the next page there are four possible answers for each of the first five numbered spaces (26–30). Read the answers and try to decide which is the right missing word (A, B, C or D). In the exam there are five more sets of answers like the ones below.

#### Deep Sleep

Deep sleep is important for everyone. The actual **(26)** ..... of sleep you need depends **(27)** ..... your age. A young child **(28)** ..... to sleep ten to twelve hours, and a teenager about nine hours. Adults differ a lot in their sleeping **(29)** ..... . For most of them, seven to eight hours a night is **(30)** ..... , but some sleep longer, while others manage with only four hours.  
...

26	A size	B number	C amount	D sum
27	A on	B to	C in	D of
28	A could	B ought	C must	D should
29	A ways	B habits	C manners	D actions
30	A few	B well	C less	D enough

**Writing**

*Part 1 (Questions 1–5)*

There are five questions to answer in Part 1 of the Writing paper. For each question, you have one sentence which is complete and a second sentence which has a missing word or words. You have to complete the second sentence with between one and three words so that it means the same as the first sentence. All five sentences share a common theme or topic.

In the example below, there are some sentences about playing tennis (1–3). For each question, read the first sentence and then try to find the missing words to complete the second sentence. Remember that the second sentence must have the same meaning as the first one. In the exam there are two more questions like the ones below.

1	It's too cold to play tennis.  <b>It isn't warm ..... to play tennis.</b>
2	There are only a few squash courts in this town.  <b>There aren't very ..... squash courts in this town.</b>
3	If you don't play every week, you won't improve your tennis.  <b>You won't improve your tennis unless ..... every week.</b>

*Part 2 (Question 6)*

For Part 2 you have to write a short, communicative message of between 35 and 45 words. The instructions in the question tell you who you are writing to and why you are writing. There are also three bullet points which tell you the content you must include in your answer. Remember to read the instructions carefully and plan your answer to cover everything.

In the example below you have to write a card to thank James for a party he gave.

#### Question 6

An English friend of yours called James gave a party yesterday, which you enjoyed.

Write a card to send to James. In your card, you should:

- thank him for the party
- say what you liked best
- suggest when you could both meet again.

Write **35–45 words** on your answer sheet.

### Part 3 (Question 7 or 8)

In Part 3 you can choose to write either an informal letter or a story. You should write about 100 words.

For the letter, you have to read an extract of a letter from a friend of yours and you then have to write a reply to your friend. The letter from your friend will tell you what to write about. For the story, we give you either a short title or the first sentence of the story.

In the two examples below, you have to write to your friend about your favourite TV programme. Make sure that you answer all your friend's questions in your reply.

#### Question 7

- This is part of a letter you receive from an English penfriend.

In your next letter, please tell me all about your favourite TV programme. Why do you like watching it? What's it about?

- Now write a letter, answering your penfriend's questions.
- Write your **letter** on your answer sheet.

#### Question 8

- Your English teacher has asked you to write a story.
- Your story must begin with this sentence:

*I felt nervous when the phone rang.*

- Write your **story** on your answer sheet.

## ■ Paper 2 Listening

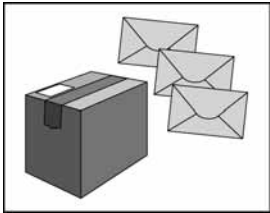
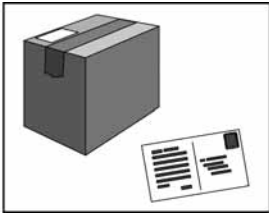
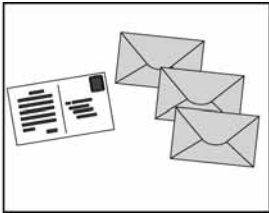
Time: approx. 35 minutes including 6 minutes' transfer time

### Part 1 (Questions 1–7)

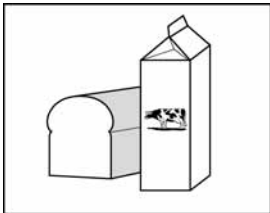
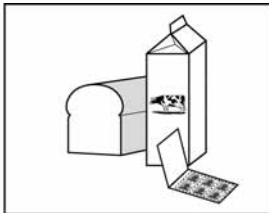
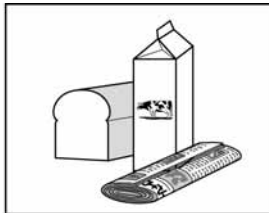
In this part of the test, there are seven short listening texts taken from daily life. These may be conversations at home or between friends, radio announcements, parts of talks, exchanges in shops, etc. For each text there is a question and three pictures. You have to listen to the recording and choose the picture which best answers the question.

Below we give you two examples of typical questions. Read each question and look at the pictures to get an idea of the kind of conversations which are on the recording and the information you will need to listen for. You have to choose the right answer (A, B or C). In the exam, there are five more questions like the ones below.

1 What does the man receive in the post?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

2 What did the man buy?

		
A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>

### Part 2 (Questions 8–13)

In Part 2 you have to listen to a longer recording which may be either a monologue, or an interview with questions from a radio presenter. You hear the recording twice. There are then six multiple-choice questions with three possible answers for each one.

In the example below, the recording is a review of tonight's television programmes. You have to listen and choose the right answer (A, B or C) for each question (8–10). In the exam, there are three more questions like the ones below.

8 The film about insects is	A badly photographed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B unsuitable for some people.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	C much too long.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Tonight's <i>Miller and Edwards</i> programme	A has fewer jokes than usual.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B is longer than usual.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	C is continued next week.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 <i>Policewatch</i> is not on television tonight because	A another programme has taken its place.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B Andy McKay is ill.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	C you can't see it on Thursdays any more.	<input type="checkbox"/>



### Part 3 (Questions 14–19)

The recording for Part 3 is also a longer text. This may be a radio announcement or a recorded message which gives information about places and events. Sometimes it is a talk or a radio programme, in which people are talking about courses, trips or holiday activities. You will hear the recording twice. On the question paper you will find a page of notes summarising the content of the text. Six pieces of information are missing from the notes and you have to listen to the recording, find the correct information and write it in the numbered gaps.

In the example below, the recording is of a tour guide talking to some guests at their hotel. There are six spaces (14–19) where information is missing. You have to listen to the recording and write down the correct information in each space.

## The Riverside Hotel

**Tour Guide**

The office is (14) ..... the reception desk.

**Meals**

Breakfast:            in the *Green Room* on the first floor beside the lifts.

Food for trips:      collect from the (15) ..... at 9.00 a.m.

Dinner:                hotel restaurant famous for its (16) ..... dishes.

**Riverboat Trip**

Day: (17) .....

Time: afternoon and evening

**Cost of Holiday**

Everything is included except (18) .....

**Facilities**

It's possible to swim from (19) ..... a.m. until 10.00 p.m.

### Part 4 (Questions 20–25)

In Part 4 you will hear a recording of two people talking. It's an informal conversation about everyday topics and the two people will talk about their opinions and agree or disagree on certain points. There are then six statements and you have to decide whether each statement is right or wrong.

In the example below Lucy and Edward are talking about pocket money. You have to read the statements (20–22) and decide whether each one is right (A) or wrong (B). In the exam, there are three more statements like the ones below.

	A	B
	YES	NO
20 At first, Edward thinks Lucy gets enough pocket money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 Lucy's friends get more pocket money than she does.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 Lucy is happy to pay for her own music.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At the end of the Listening test you have six minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

### ■ Paper 3 Speaking

Time: 10–12 minutes per pair of candidates

In the Speaking test, there are two oral examiners and you take the test in a pair with another candidate. At centres with an uneven number of candidates, the last pair will be examined in a group of three. The Speaking test is worth 25% of the total marks.

#### Part 1

The first part of the test is a general conversation. One of the examiners will talk to each of you in turn and will ask you for personal details, about your daily routines, likes and dislikes, etc. The examiner will ask you at some point to spell all or part of your name.

#### Part 2

In Part 2 you have to take part in a simulated situation with the other candidate. For example, you may have to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement with your partner.

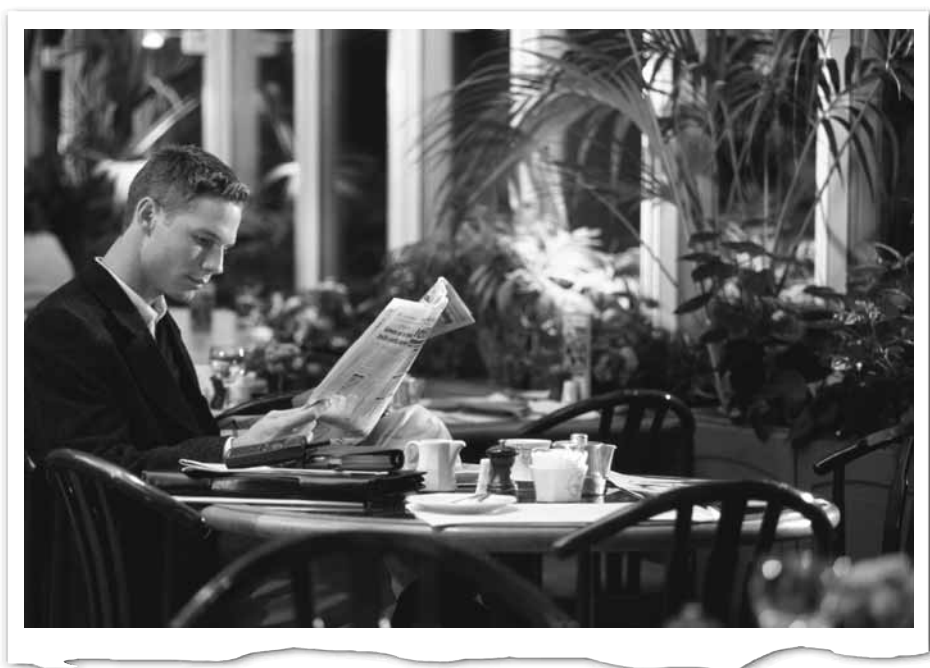
To help you with this part of the test, the examiner will give you a prompt sheet like the one below and give you some instructions. In this case, the examiner will tell you that a friend of yours is planning to spend six months in England to improve her English. You



have to talk together about the things she will need in England and discuss which are the most important things she should bring with her.

### Part 3

For Part 3 the examiner will give you a colour photograph like the one below. You have to describe what you can see in the photograph. The examiner then gives your partner a different colour photograph to describe.



### Part 4

In this last part of the test, you have to talk with your partner. The examiner will give you a subject which is related to the two photographs you described in Part 3. In this case, the subject is reading and writing. The examiner asks you to talk about the kinds of reading and writing you did when you were younger and what kinds of reading and writing you do now.

## Preparing for PET

If you would like more practice material to help you prepare for the PET exam, there are past paper packs available to buy which include an audio CD of the Listening test. You can find more information, prices and details of how to order on our website at:  
[www.CambridgeESOL.org/support/pastpapers.htm](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org/support/pastpapers.htm)

## Next steps

We wish you every success in taking PET and we hope that you will take other Cambridge ESOL exams in future. The First Certificate in English (FCE) is the next level of the Cambridge exams. You can find more information about FCE on our website at:  
[www.CambridgeESOL.org/exams/fce.htm](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org/exams/fce.htm)

## What some students have said about PET

*I decided to take the PET exam because I want to go to the USA when I'll have finished school. And I think it's good for my working career.*

**Daniel Butz, Germany**

*Each level (of the Cambridge exams) has given me more tools to improve my skills. ... Cambridge has really given me a head start in my future career.*

**Paola Marisela González, Mexico**

## Companies who recognise Cambridge ESOL exams

3M	Hertz
Adidas	Hewlett-Packard
Agfa-Gevaert	HSBC
AstraZeneca	IBM
AT&T	Johnson & Johnson
Barclays Bank	KPMG
BASF	Microsoft
Bayer	Mobil Oil
BP	Nestlé
British Airways	Nokia
Cable & Wireless	PepsiCo
Carrefour	Philips
Citibank	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Coca-Cola	Procter & Gamble
Colgate-Palmolive	Rank Xerox
Credit Suisse	Roche
DaimlerChrysler	Rolls-Royce
Dell	Shell
Deutsche Bank	Siemens
DHL	Sony
Disney	Sun Microsystems
DuPont	Texaco
Ericsson	Toyota
Estée Lauder	Unilever
General Motors	Vodafone
Gillette	World Bank
GlaxoSmithKline	World Health Organisation (WHO)
Goodyear	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

For a full list of companies and educational institutions who recognise PET, please visit our website at:

[www.CambridgeESOL.org/recognition/index.php](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org/recognition/index.php)

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