

Questions and Answers about the 2015 exam updates

Here are some questions teachers have asked about the 2015 exam updates.

You can see a video about the changes on [Cambridge English TV](#).

For more information please look on the [2015 exam updates site](#).

If you have a question, please email us at teacher.response@cambridgeenglish.org.

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General information

When will these changes be introduced?

The changes will be introduced from January 2015. Anyone taking the exam before that will take the current exam.

Why are these changes being made?

The changes to the exams are the result of a consultation process, involving teachers, exam centres, recognising bodies and other experts. The consultation told us:

- you wanted shorter exams,
- you preferred a four-paper format.

What exactly do you mean by 'the changes will make the exam more 'accessible' to the test taker'?

The aim was to make the content suitable for study purposes and work/career advancement as well as for general purposes.

About the exam

How are the exams going to be marked now?

The marking will not change.

Are there any changes in the speaking assessment criteria?

No, the speaking and writing assessment criteria will not change.

Could you confirm that the Part 1 task in the Writing paper is now an essay for both FCE and FCE (for Schools)?

Yes, the essay is the first part in both exams. It's the compulsory task.

Could we have a full list of all the writing tasks?

You can find all the information about the writing paper in the specifications – available on the [2015 exam updates site](#).

Why have the photos been removed from the speaking tests?

Some pictures were hard for students to interpret.

Will the student be penalized for writing more than 190 words?

Students are not penalized just for writing over the word limit, but this may mean that some of the answer is not relevant so they will get a lower band for content.

How are the Writing papers marked?

You can see more about this in the Writing assessment webinar on [Cambridge English TV](#).

For computer-based versions, is the speaking part also online?

For the computer-based exam, students still have a face-to-face speaking test.

Is 60% the pass mark in each part or as an overall mark?

To pass, candidates need 60% in total, for the whole exam, and not "per paper".

Preparing your students

When will free sample exam papers be available?

There are free sample papers in the specifications and on the [2015 exam updates site](#).

When will the Teacher Handbooks be published?

They will be ready in April 2014. They will appear on the [2015 exam updates site](#).

Where can I find an example of the new cross-text multiple matching task for CAE?

There is an example in the Specification and in the sample paper. The [Teaching tips booklet](#) also has information about this task.

Can I prepare my students with material for First to take the exam for First for Schools?

First and First for Schools test the same skills with the same task types, so you can use the same materials if it suits your students.

Books and resources

Before 2015 we can use all the previous exam preparation books, is that correct?

For all students taking the exam before the end of Dec 2014, you should use current preparation materials. The exam will not change until Jan 2015.

Do these changes mean we have to buy new support materials?

There are free sample papers and free materials on the 2015 exam updates microsite.

Have new books been published yet in preparation for these new exams, so we can start our students on them?

Preparation materials for the revised 2015 exams are being published from January onwards. Please visit www.cambridge.org/elt/exams for the latest information about titles and availability.

Is it possible to get specimen copies of the new course books?

Visit www.cambridge.org/elt/exams for information about our course books for the revised exams. Ebook samples may be ordered directly from the website or you can contact your local Cambridge English representative directly.

Which course book is best when preparing adults for Cambridge English: First? How are the courses different?

This depends on your situation and requirements.

Cambridge English offers three courses: *Objective First 4th edition*, *Complete First 2nd edition* and *Compact First 2nd edition* (available Aug 2014), all of which are officially validated preparation materials for the revised exams. Both *Objective* and *Complete* are full-length, comprehensive courses which develop language and exam skills. *Complete* offers integrated exam preparation in the units, while *Objective* separates exam preparation out into separate 'Folders'. This means that *Objective* may be more suitable for classes where there is also a high percentage of general English learners and *Complete* more suitable for exam-focussed classes. However both *Objective* and *Complete* may also be used successfully in either situation – [visit our website](#) and request a sample to decide which approach you prefer for your class. *Compact* is a concise 50-60 hour course which offers targeted training for all parts of the exam. It is therefore ideal to complement a general English course or to use on short exam courses.

Are new *Trainer* books coming out as well?

New *Trainer* books will be available from October 2014 (First for Schools) and December 2014 (First and Advanced).

Can *Objective First* be used for preparing for *First for Schools*?

Objective First 4th edition is not designed to prepare students for the Revised 2015 *Cambridge English: First (FCE) for Schools*. *Complete First for Schools*, available March 2014, offers preparation for the new syllabus and the content and topics are designed to appeal to younger learners, as with the exam.