



school of english

CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English)

CPE is the highest level Cambridge ESOL exam, at level C2 of the Council of Europe's **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages**. If you are able to function effectively in almost any English-speaking context and are approaching a standard of English similar to that of an educated native speaker, then this is the exam for you. Success at this level represents a significant personal achievement.

Why take CPE?

CPE is ideal if you want to work or study abroad, or to develop a career which requires language skills (e.g. business, medicine, engineering). On passing the exam, you'll receive a certificate awarded by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations. Your CPE certificate is **recognised by thousands of universities and employers** throughout the world.

You will also receive a statement of results, showing how you performed in each paper. While studying for CPE you will be improving your language skills and learning to use them in a wide range of contexts. Because many aspects of the exams are based on realistic tasks, a CPE certificate shows that you have progressed beyond a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and can actually use the language in real contexts.

What does the exam involve?

CPE has five papers:

Reading

Writing

Use of English

Listening

Speaking

The written papers are returned to Cambridge for marking and assessment. The Speaking Test is conducted by two locally based examiners who examine candidates face-to-face. All examiners are accredited by Cambridge ESOL.

Reading (Paper 1), 1 hour 30 minutes

The Reading paper assesses your ability to read and understand texts taken from a wide range of sources, including fiction and non-fiction books, journals, newspapers and magazines. You are expected to understand the meaning of written English at word, phrase,

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sentence, paragraph and whole text level. It includes understanding of text content, organisation and structure, and the development of ideas, opinions and attitudes.

Writing (Paper 2), 2 hours

The Writing paper assesses your ability to write non-specialised text types such as letters, articles, reports and reviews for a given purpose and target reader, covering a wide range of topics. The paper also includes questions on set texts. Responses are of 300-350 words in length.

Use of English (Paper 3), 1 hour 30 minutes

In the Use of English paper, you are expected to demonstrate your knowledge and control of the language system by completing various tasks at word, sentence and text level. These include gap-filling and word formation exercises, comprehension questions and a summary writing task.

Listening (Paper 4), 40 minutes (approx.)

The Listening paper assesses the ability to listen to and understand texts taken from a variety of text types including interviews, discussions, lectures and conversations. It tests the ability to understand the meaning of spoken English, to extract information from a spoken text and to understand speakers' attitudes and opinions.

Speaking (Paper 5), 19 minutes

The Speaking Test assesses your ability to interact in conversational English in a range of contexts. The paper contains three parts, which take the form of an interview section, a collaborative task and individual long turns with follow-up discussion. You are provided with picture and written stimulus and you normally take the Speaking Test in pairs.

CPE Information for Candidates, a brief introduction to the exam written specially for candidates, is now available from the CPE Downloads page.