



BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Contents

Reading

Reading Part One

Reading Part Two

Reading Part Three

Reading Part Four

Reading Part Five

Writing

Writing Part One

Writing Part Two

Listening

Listening Part One

Listening Part Two

Listening Part Three

Transfer Time

Speaking

Speaking Part One

Speaking Part Two

Speaking Part Three

General Resources

B2 Business Vantage Resources

Article – A Brief Guide to the BEC Exam Guide.

Article – Speaking Part One Questions

Article – Speaking Part Two Questions

Article – Saying Numbers

Article - Grammarly

Extra Article – How to manage your time in the Reading Exam

Extra Article – How to write successfully in

Writing Part 2

Extra Article – Essential Grammar in the

Speaking Exam

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Reading

5 parts, 45 questions, one point for each question.

1 hour. 25% of the exam.

Introduction

You have to use different techniques for each part of the paper. Sometimes you don't need to read everything or even to start with the reading text. This isn't a book, an email or a report, which you read from beginning to end. It is a test with questions you need to answer. In fact, you don't need to do the test in the normal order, parts 1-7, you can learn more about this here

Reading Part One. 7 points

The Task

There are four short texts and seven statements. The task is to decide which text each statement refers to. There are no wrong statements.

Procedure

- Read the context of the short text first. This is in the first line of task description under the words Questions 1-7.
- Read the first short text A. Read one or two sentences, then go back and highlight the keywords, then repeat the process until you have finished the text.
- Read statement 1 and decide if it has any connection to text A. If you are sure it relates to text A then write A next to the sentence. If you are not sure write A and a question mark "?". If you are sure it has no connection, do not write anything.
- Repeat the process with statements 2-7.
- Then read text B, highlighting the keywords and then read the statements again, repeating the process above.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART ONE
Questions 1 – 7

- Look at the statements below and the comments given on the opposite page by mobile phone retailers.
- Which section (A, B, C or D) does each statement 1 – 7 refer to?
- For each statement 1 – 7, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- You will need to use some of these letters more than once.

Example:

2 the extent to which mobile phones have changed in size

A
 B
 C
 D

- the need for retail staff to stay informed about the mobile phones they are selling
- the belief that the market will not sustain the present number of mobile phone retailers
- the use of mobile phones no longer being restricted to a specific group of people
- the relationship between charges and the number of mobile phone users
- a negative view of competing mobile phone retailers
- a comparison between change in the mobile phone industry and that in a different sector
- those services available at mobile phone outlets that are not provided by other retailers

1^A

Market awareness of the mobile telephone has exploded and the retailer who specialises in mobile phones is seeing growth like never before. Admittedly, some customers buy their first mobile phone in the supermarket, but for advice, add-ons and particular services they turn to the specialist. There are a large number of mobile phone retailers and I can't help but feel the market only has room for four players. Undoubtedly, customer service is the factor that differentiates operators and I think this year we will probably see rationalisation in the sector.

B

When I first started in the industry, mobile phones were retailing at a thousand pounds and were as large as box files. Now, prices are constantly being driven down and handsets are considerably more compact. There is intense competition between the network providers, and every time they lower their tariffs, more people come into the market. This will continue, and while retail dealers' profits will be affected dramatically, network providers will have to generate more revenues by offering internet provision and data services to the mobile user.

C

Over a few years, prices have dropped sharply and technological advances have meant products have changed – and are changing. Successful retailers must try to keep on top of these developments and invest in the training of employees so they are able to offer impartial advice to customers. E-commerce is taking off but this won't necessarily replace traditional retail outlets. In order to stand out, you need innovative ideas on customer service. We don't believe in criticising other retailers, but there's nothing particularly exciting out there at present.

D

The mobile phone business is behaving like the internet industry in take-up and the pace of innovation, and it's important not to be left behind. We must continue to innovate in delivering the product to the customer. In terms of service provision, you can draw comparisons between us and our closest rival, but clearly all the main mobile phone retailers have succeeded in taking the industry forward. Growth has accelerated rapidly and the mobile telephone has changed from simply being a business tool, to being a means of communication for everyone.

- Repeat the process with text C & D. You will often find that when you read text C & D you will recognise the statements which are connected with each text.
- Review your answers. Check that you do not have more than two sentences 1-7 for each short text A-D. For one text there will only be one sentence connected to it.
- Repeat the process with statements 2-7.
- Then read text B, highlighting the keywords and then read the statements again, repeating the process above.
- Repeat the process with text C & D. You will often find that when you read text C & D you will recognise the statements which are connected with each text.
- Review your answers. Check that you do not have more than two sentences 1-7 for each short text A-D. For one text there will only be one sentence connected to it.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Reading Part Two - 5 points

The Task

There is a long text/article and seven sentences. There are six sentences missing from the text. The task is to place five sentences into the correct place in the text. The first missing sentence is given to you as an example. There is one sentence you do not need.

Procedure

- The first thing you should do is put a line through the text G because this is the example, it is already in the correct place in the text and you do not need to read it. I have often had students who not only read this sentence but also try to put it as an answer. Put a line through it first so you do not make this mistake.
- Read the context. This is given in the first line of the task description.
- Find the number 8 and read the sentence before and after it only. Highlight keywords. For this task, the keywords are both vocabulary AND reference words. These are words which refer to something already mentioned, they are words you know like, he/she/it/they/ or this/ these, his/her/their. It is useful to highlight words like this because they refer to something.

PART TWO
Questions 8 – 12

- Read the article below about a survey of businesswomen staying in hotels.
- Choose the best sentence from the opposite page to fill each of the gaps.
- For each gap 8 – 12, mark one letter (A – G) on your Answer Sheet.
- Do not use any letter more than once.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

Hotels Failing Businesswomen

Hoteliers should take note because they are facing serious criticism! Women account for more than half of all business travellers, but hotels are not doing enough for them. (0) ... These show that the number of complaints made about the way women guests are treated is increasing.

The Bartonfield Hotel in London also conducted a recent survey of UK businesswomen, which reveals that 70% feel they receive an inferior service. (1) ... The attitude of hotel staff made them feel out of place in public areas; for example, 62% chose to eat in their rooms because they were made to feel uncomfortable by staff when dining alone. (2) ... Four years ago, for example, a similar survey had revealed that a significant number of women travelling alone and wishing to use the hotel restaurant were actually turned away.

Many of the suggestions for improved services put forward by the Business Travel Association are relatively simple. (10) ... Placing tables in restaurants in a way that allows the head waiter to introduce guests to one another, so they can

choose to sit together over a meal, was a far suggestion. Guests in the dining room would have the opportunity to meet up with others; might, for example, be attending the same conference, or have the same business interest.

Wendy Manning, executive manager of Bartonfield Hotel, agreed with the Business Travel Association that hotel star ratings should be influenced by the level of service they offer female business guests. (11) ... Our survey highlighted the unwillingness of many women to air their views if they are treated badly," Wendy Manning pointed out.

A group of influential businesswomen recently to discuss the results of the Business Travel Association questionnaire. They suggested businesswomen should not hesitate to mail clear if they have a problem. (12) ... Clients have gone. It is all too easy for the less be ignored by hotel managers, and it will also forgotten by the overworked business executives themselves.

Example:

0	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=

- 2
- A The hotel staff assumed they should be booked into the same room.
 - B But there is clear evidence that things are slowly improving.
 - C This would enable women to make an informed choice about a hotel, and they would not be placed in the uncomfortable position of having to complain about poor service.
 - D It is advisable for them to do this during their stay rather than waiting until they check out.
 - E Making sure that facilities in guest bedrooms cater equally for the needs of male and female guests is one such idea.
 - F Most of the women, when questioned further, thought that the reason for this was that they were female and travelling alone.
 - G This is evident from the results of a questionnaire distributed to hotel guests by the Business Travel Association.

- Quickly read the six sentences looking for any words similar to your vocabulary keywords. For example, if you highlighted employees, then words like staff and workforce are similar. Highlight any sentences containing similar words. Hopefully, there will only be one or two.
- Highlight the reference words in the possible answer sentences,
- Then check if the sentence fits in the text, do the reference words match? Check for singular and plurals, for example, they and companies. You could also check if your sentence(s) are positive or negative. This can help you decide if the sentence fits.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Then read sentences before and after 9 and repeat the process and so on with 10-12.
- The advantage of this procedure is that you are using two techniques to help you find the right answer, vocabulary and reference words. You also read the answer sentences several times which helps you to understand them better, and you avoid reading the long text in too much detail.

Reading Part Three. Six points

The Task

There is a long text to read and six questions/sentences with four A B C D answers/end of sentences . The task is to choose the correct answer. There is only one correct answer.

Guide to the Task

This is a standard "old fashioned" style reading comprehension where you read the text and then choose the correct answer! No, you don't. You are modern and you don't have to be standard either. I can read fast in English, it is my language and usually, when I read I can absorb the information quickly because I know about the subject in advance. Also because I don't have to answer questions about the text after I finish reading and I don't have a time limit. This is not the case for you so it is not necessary or useful to read the text first.

Procedure

- Read the context. The context sentence is given as part of the task instructions.
- Read the question sentences only. Don't read the A B C D options at the moment (remember, three of them are wrong!)
- Highlight the keywords. These are words which explain the topic of the sentence and will help you find the answer in the text. They are also the words which help you decide on the answer. This is easy and quick to do.

For example, if the sentence says,

The writer says that a good sales strategy is mainly about

Then the keywords are *good sales strategy, mainly*.

It can also be useful to change the sentence into a question. Sometimes the exam will do this for you.

With the sentence above...

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

What is a good sales strategy about?
Or just write What?

PART THREE
Questions 13 – 18

- Read the article below about **product life cycles** and the questions on the opposite page.
- For each question 13 – 18, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet for the answer you choose.

Product Life Cycles and Sales Strategy

One of the most important concepts in sales management and marketing is that of the product life cycle. This is a historical record of the life of a product, showing the stage in its life the product has reached at a particular time. By identifying the stage that a product is in or may be heading towards, companies can formulate better marketing plans. All products have 'lives' in as much as they are created, sell with varying profitability over a period of time, and then become obsolete and are replaced or simply no longer produced. A product's sales position and profitability can be expected to fluctuate over time and so, at each successive stage in the product's cycle, it is necessary to adopt different tactics.

The two main features of the product life cycle are unit sales and unit profit. The unit sales figures usually jump on introduction, as a response to heavy advertising and promotion, as customers buy the product experimentally. This is generally followed by a levelling off while it is evaluated – the length of this period depending on the use to which the product is put. Then, unit sales rise steadily through the growth phase to the maturity phase, when the product is widely accepted, and so on to saturation level. By this time, competitors will have entered the market with their own version and, from this point, the sales team will have to work even harder to win all additional sales. Eventually, the product's sales decline as better versions enter the market and competition becomes too strong.

In retrospect, most firms know what happened to their products from launch to withdrawal. They can compile this information from the records of unit sales.

Unfortunately, unit sales are not the complete story as it is unit profit that is the decisive factor, although this is not always recorded accurately. It is this figure that sales management has to monitor, though, to ensure an effective marketing strategy and to produce effective profits.

At launch, the product is costed accurately on the basis of production costs plus selling costs. Initially these remain fairly stable, but, when the product is proving successful, competitors will bring out their own 'copy-cat' products. With a competitor in the field, the original firm has to respond in order to maintain its market position. It can run special sales promotions, improve deliveries, make more frequent sales calls and so on. Often the extra expenditure is not accurately charged to the product and the result is that, long before unit sales are noticeably falling, the unit profit has already fallen.

The product life cycle, then, presents a picture of what happened in the product's 'lifetime', so how can this be used as an ongoing aid to management decision-making? Every sales manager has a chart on which the progress of sales is plotted and this can be used as a guide to the stage of development each product is currently in. An essential management skill is being able to interpret sales results and draw in the stages as they occur. Deciding where each stage begins and ends can be a random exercise, though usually the stages are based on where the rate of sales growth or decline becomes pronounced.

What?

13 According to the text, **the end of a product's life cycle is marked by**

- A a sharp rise in production costs.
- B the product becoming outdated.
- C an increase in customer complaints.
- D less support from sales management.

14 What does the writer say about sales management in the first paragraph?

- A Companies should spend more time on their sales planning.
- B There are many managers who need to improve their sales performance.
- C Most sales managers fail to recognise which stage a product has reached.
- D The sales approach should change with each phase of the product life cycle.

15 According to the text, **a greater sales effort is required for a product when**

- A it is particularly innovative.
- B the advertising budget has been cut.
- C rival companies start to produce something similar.
- D consumer interest switches to a new product category.

16 According to the text, **a good marketing strategy must primarily be concerned with**

- A sales statistics.
- B product details.
- C consumer data.
- D profit information.

17 According to the text, **profit levels may fail to correspond to the volume of sales because**

- A the full selling costs have not been taken into account.
- B the production costs were not estimated correctly.
- C there are unforeseen problems with distribution.
- D there has been a lack of economic stability.

18 What does the writer say about the charts that show sales progress?

- A It is a matter of judgement where one sales phase finishes and another begins.
- B Managers should review policy when a sharp fall in sales is indicated.
- C It is difficult to see how sales charts can provide sufficient guidance to managers.
- D Managers should get confirmation of the data they plot on the sales charts.

- Find the part of the text that talks about the same thing and read it. Then read the ABCD options and choose the one that is closest to the information in the text. It doesn't always have to be exactly the same.
- Repeat this process with the next questions. The good news here is that the questions are in the same order as the answers in the text. The answer to question 1 is at the beginning of the text (usually in the first or second paragraph), the answer to question 2 is after the answer to question 1 (usually in the next paragraph). This can help you in two ways, it makes looking for the answers easier because you can follow the order but also if you have found the paragraph with the answer for question 4 for example but you can't decide if A or B is correct, then you can confidently go on to question 5 and come back to 4 later.

Reading Part Four 15 points.

The Task

There is a text with 16 missing words. There are 15 questions each with four answers marked A B C D. The task is to choose the correct word for the sentence in the text. The first missing word is given to you as an example.

Procedure

- Read the text first. However, don't just read and forget the missing words. When you read, predict and write in the word you think is missing.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Think of an easy word you know which fits in the sentence.
- The words are usually grammar words like verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, linkers, and pronouns. It is usually better to read the complete sentence before you predict the missing word because the words that come later are significant.
- Read one paragraph then read the three options for each space - is your answer there? If it is then you may be right, but check the other words too.
- If your answer is not there, do two things look for one or two words which have a similar meaning and eliminate two words which you are confident are not correct.
- Now, look at the difference between the two words that are left. Do you know any difference in meaning? Look back in the text, is there a preposition immediately after, close to the space. If so which of the vocabulary words left are used with it. For example, the sentence might be

Management is responsible for choosing which market to into

You might have written go or enter when predicting.

The 4 options are

A come B enter C move D open

go and *come* are similar but are movements in different directions so *come* can be eliminated, ***open*** into does not work so eliminate ***open*** too. The choice is now between ***enter*** and ***move***, if you wrote ***enter*** then you may be tempted to choose it but look at the preposition ***into*** and think about the meaning of ***enter***. ***Enter*** means ***go into***, so if you choose ***enter*** the sentence would say "which market to enter into and it would mean "which market to go into into"! ***Move into*** works together as a verb and preposition of movement and is, therefore, the correct answer.

- Repeat this procedure with all the spaces.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART FOUR
Questions 19 – 33

- Read the advice below about the use of technology in presentations.
- Choose the best word to fill each gap from A, B, C or D on the opposite page.
- For each question 19 – 33, mark one letter (A, B, C or D) on your Answer Sheet.
- There is an example at the beginning, (0).

Guidelines for giving Presentations

Most presentations today (0) ...B... on the use of some sort of technology, such as a laptop *show, make, present* computer linked to a projector. While this technology can help to (19) presentations better, it also has a (20) of getting in the way. As a general (21), it is better to (22) on the content of a presentation as a means of (23) ... your audience's attention, rather than relying on sophisticated equipment.

Bear in mind that when an organisation invites (24) for a contract, they may (25) four or five presentations from different companies on the same day. Each of these companies will probably be using the same computer graphics (26) and the same equipment. The chances are the presentations will be similar too.

That's why the content and (27) of what you say are important. Think about what you want to say and how to say it as clearly as possible. As a first step, you need to (28) the main points you want to get across. Audiences are easily bored and (29) to remember only the most entertaining, exciting or unusual ideas.

Next create your materials, choosing the images for your presentation carefully. Remember you do not want to stop your audience from listening to you, nor do you want to (30) them.

Finally, make all the necessary (31) for the equipment you need. If technology is to be an important (32) of your presentation, make sure you know how to use it (33) and test it out beforehand.

Example:

A calculate B depend C determine D lean

0 A B C D

- | | | | | |
|----|----------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 19 | A produce | B make | C construct | D build |
| 20 | A behaviour | B habit | C practice | D routine |
| 21 | A method | B law | C rule | D course |
| 22 | A focus | B define | C target | D direct |
| 23 | A gaining | B acquiring | C collecting | D taking |
| 24 | A requests | B calls | C bids | D commands |
| 25 | A appoint | B programme | C schedule | D catalogue |
| 26 | A parcels | B packets | C bundles | D packages |
| 27 | A formation | B design | C structure | D system |
| 28 | A catalogue | B label | C mark | D identify |
| 29 | A point | B tend | C lead | D move |
| 30 | A disorder | B mistake | C confuse | D complicate |
| 31 | A appointments | B procedures | C arrangements | D organisations |
| 32 | A share | B role | C function | D element |
| 33 | A precisely | B suitably | C properly | D accurately |

Reading Part Five 12 points.

The Task

You are given a text. The task is to read the text and decide if each line of the text contains an extra word. You must write the extra word in your Answer sheet, or write CORRECT if the line does not contain an extra word.

Guide to the Task

Unfortunately, there is no time-saving technique with this task. This task is grammar and vocabulary related and takes time and effort. The extra words are grammar words like auxiliary verbs past participles, prepositions, articles, pronouns (like *it*), conjunctions (like *and, or, but*) short adverbs (like *so* and *yet*) and negatives. You can get 12 points here so it a good idea to concentrate hard and do it well.

This task is difficult because you have to check for words that are unnecessary in the sentence. You are not looking for wrong words or mistakes with the form of the word - that would be too easy!

For example, if the sentence was

The meeting lasted twenty minutes longer than planned so we was all late for lunch.

Most people would find it easy to see that *we was* is a mistake and it should say *we were*.

However, if the sentence was

The meeting lasted from twenty minutes longer than planned so we were all late for lunch.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Some people would not notice the "extra" word from. It is short, it is a preposition and it is often used with time, for example, the meeting lasted from 9 am to 11 pm. Cambridge is really testing both your proofreading skills and your grammar and vocabulary here.

Techniques.

You need to look for extra words in each line but also read to the end of the sentence which may continue to the next line because it might change the meaning.

You need to read carefully and in clause chunks - read pieces of the sentence which contain a subject verb and object to help you notice if there is an extra word. Just to check that you understand these grammar words.

A new manager joined the department.

Subject = a new manager

Verb = joined

Object = the department.

For example with the short text below, it is better to read and check in chunks.

The hard-working businesswoman was been working on the train || when she noticed that || she no longer had her umbrella. || She put down her laptop in her bag || and stood up to look for it. || She bent down to check under the seat || but could not see it. || She carefully looked for everywhere || but it was nowhere to be found.

Were you able to find any extra words? Remember to check for past participles, prepositions, articles etc.

Let's do this together.

The hard-working businesswoman was been working on the train.

The subject part is fine, there are three verbs so that looks strange, the preposition *on* looks wrong - it is in the train surely (no, actually *on* is correct!) but remember that we are not looking for incorrect words. Look at the three verbs, *working* is the main verb, and *was* and *been* are the same verb, to be, so the problem is probably here. Which one is wrong? You don't have to be a grammar expert here, just read the sentence in your head without one of the words. So *the woman been working or was working*. It is *was working* so *been* is the extra word.

when she noticed that

Now you need to check the next chunk. You can be confident that this is correct because you have already found an extra word but check anyway. *That* is not essential in the sentence but it is still correct.

she no longer had her umbrella.

Now you need to check the next chunk, not the next line, the whole chunk starting with the subject *she*. Well, there are no prepositions so perhaps it is correct. *No longer* might be new to you and might seem strange between the subject and the verb but the chunk looks correct.

She put down her laptop in her bag.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

This chunk has three propositions, so concentrate on them. It is useful here to check the easy part first, *in her bag*. Yes, it is correct. Then check the verb-object part, *put down her laptop*. What does that mean? The simple answer is if, in the exam, if you don't know what it means your best option is to say the wrong word is either down or in and read the sentence without each of the words.

She put down her laptop her bag
She put her laptop in her bag,

You should notice that the first one sounds strange without *in*. So *down* is the extra word.
and stood up to look for it.

Check this chunk too. And *stood up* is okay, you might think that the sentence should say *stood up and looked for it*, but that would be changing the grammar. So think about the meaning of *to look*, it explains why she stood up. *To look for* something, yes that is right. So *down* must be the extra word.

She bent down to check under the seat.

Down could be extra here, but it corresponds with *under the seat*. To explain why she bent down and *under* isn't extra because she is looking under the seat, not on the seat.

but could not see it.

But and *not* correspond here so there is no extra negative and it is necessary because it refers to the umbrella.

She carefully looked for everywhere

Carefully is fine here and although it is not necessary for the sentence it is not extra. We have the verb *look for* again, and then *everywhere*. Wait a minute, there is no *it* after *looked for*, *it* should be there, like in the earlier part of the sentence. However, the exercise is to find extra words not missing words. So perhaps *for* is the extra word, *she looked everywhere* then. Yes, that works, the verb *look* often comes with a preposition but not always.

but it was nowhere to be found.

The first part looks fine, but what about *to be found*. The *to* is connected with *be* and it can't be the word *be* either because *found* is not in the infinitive form, and without the verb *find* the sentence doesn't work so the sentence is correct.

This may seem a very long, time-consuming process but it is necessary and with practice becomes quite quick and natural. You will need to several practice tests to become good at this.

Procedure.

- Read the title so you understand the context of the text.
- Read the first two lines of the text quickly. They are the examples and are called line 0 and line 00 so you do not have to look for extra words here but they can help you follow the logic of the text.
- If you are a quick reader, read the complete text so that you understand what the whole text is about, if you are not, then read the first two or three sentences only at risk.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Find the beginning of the first sentence you need to check. This usually does not begin in line 34 but in line 00.
- Read the first sentence breaking it into chunks. Check each chunk for extra words as explained above.

PART FIVE

Questions 34 – 45

- Read the article below about a training company.
- In most of the lines 34 – 45 there is one extra word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the meaning of the text. Some lines, however, are correct.
- If a line is correct, write **CORRECT** on your Answer Sheet.
- If there is an extra word in the line, write **the extra word** in CAPITAL LETTERS on your Answer Sheet.
- The exercise begins with two examples, (0) and (00).

Examples

0	S	O							
00	C	O	R	R	E	C	T		

Training Provision

0 There is little doubt that training has become so ^X an accepted part of business but it is
00 equally true that companies take a much less scientific approach than they should. A
34 recent study suggested us ^X that, while UK organisations spend nearly £10bn a year on
35 training, 37% of them have never evaluated that expenditure in strict terms of business
36 impact. Yet if training activities that are run along the same lines as other business
37 operations, in ways that maximise with opportunities, it becomes easier for training
38 organisations to help companies meet strategic goals. One organisation showing an
39 awareness of what this principle is CT Solutions, a training business that has its own
40 premises in South London. The need for more training has combined it with cutbacks in
41 office accommodation to create plenty of business for those hiring out space, particularly
42 upper-end hotels. But while CT Solutions detected that many organisations were not
43 satisfied with hotels because they do not always provide a good service. CT Solutions is
44 totally dedicated to providing of space for business, mostly for training, but also for
45 conferences and AGMs. Clearly, since the business has been grown in size, it is an
approach that works.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Writing

45 minutes. Two tasks. 25% of the exam.

Introduction

Nobody likes writing in another language. It takes more time than speaking because you have to think more, it is easy to make mistakes because you often translate more directly from your own language, and when it is written and sent (because most of the time you write emails don't you?) then it is final, too late to change or to add anything. Thanks to this guide, it won't take you a long time, you won't translate and you won't make mistakes. You can also find some useful resources to help with your writing skills at the bottom of the General Resources page here.

Writing Part One

The Task

You have to write a memo or email. You are given a context explaining who you are and who you writing to and why. You are given three points to include in your message. You must write 40-50 words.

Guide to the Task

This is not a complicated task and is probably similar to emails you have already written in your professional life. You will be able to do this quickly with practice and by following this guide of course. I would recommend that you spend no more than ten minutes on this part.

Common mistakes (which you will avoid making thanks to this guide!)

There are three common mistakes made in Part One.

1) Students write in the wrong style or "register". This means they use the vocabulary or type of words which are not correct or appropriate for the context. For example, if you write an email to a close colleague, someone you work with regularly either face to face or by email then the style of the email is relaxed, friendly and a little informal. You can start with Hi or Hello, you don't need to start with Dear Mr/Mrs or Dear John/Jane. If you are writing to someone more senior than you, you generally need to be more professional and polite. So you need to remember who you are writing to.

2) Students do not include all of the three things. It is essential to talk about them all or you cannot complete the task correctly. This is the same in your professional life if your job requires you to do three things and you only do two, then you are not working correctly.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

3) Students copy the exact words from the three things which need to be included in the email. Your job is to give the information, to transmit and communicate it, not to copy it. For example, if the task asks you to write to someone...

Apologising for the faulty product
Explaining the origins of the fault.
Saying the new product will be sent.

Here you cannot write.

I apologise for the faulty product, the origins of the fault are... the new product will be sent next week.

This seems obvious, but I have seen numerous students write one or more of the three things in the exam question. This is perhaps because writing is stressful and it is easier to use the words given, but it is a mistake and it means you will lose points in the exam. Below you will find what you need to do.

Procedure

- Read the three things you need to say. They always start with a verb (in the ing form) and then details. Common examples of the verbs are, explaining, saying, telling, apologising, describing, asking.
- Start the email with an appropriate opening. Use Hello + name for your assistant. Use Dear + Mr/Mrs + first name + surname if it is a superior or the name is not given, for example, you are asked to write to the Marketing Manager.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART ONE

- You are a regional sales manager for an international company. You have been asked to go to a meeting at your company's head office. You cannot go, so somebody else will go in your place.
- Write an e-mail to Erica Young, who is organising the meeting:
 - apologising for not being able to go to the meeting
 - explaining why you cannot go - *Invent*
 - saying who will go. - *Invent*
- Write 40 – 50 words.
- Write on the opposite page.



- Then do the three actions requested in the task. Focus on the verbs, the majority require you to write a normal positive sentence. If the verb is asking for example then you need to be sure that you ask a question, if the verb is apologising then you need to say, I am sorry that...or even better if you are writing to a superior, Please accept my apologies....(you have changed the verb into a noun which is impressive for the examiners)
- Change the nouns. Try not to repeat the nouns used in the three sentences. Use synonyms or express the same thing in different words. If the sentences use the word "away" say absent or out of the office, if the sentences talk about equipment then give examples.
- Use the same grammar. The only thing you can "copy" is the grammar, you usually need to write your sentences in the same grammar. If you need to describe the difficulties you are having, then use the present continuous, e.g. The printer is not working. If you need to explain the reason for the extra meeting you had last week, use the past simple. If you need to talk about when you will be away, use will or if you explain more about your arrangements use the present continuous, e.g. I am flying to Shanghai on Monday 21st March.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Put two of the three things in one longer sentence and connect the sentence with a conjunction, (because, so and but). Often the first two things can naturally be put into a long sentence.
- Divide your email into short paragraphs or one long sentence per paragraph. The word limit is 50 words so keep it concise and separate the information so it is easy to read.
- Finish your email with a short polite closing. Best regards is very common and correct, so use it!

Writing Part Two

The Task

You must write either a business letter, a report or a proposal. You are given the context and the type of document you must write. You are also given a word limit of 120-140 words. There is a text for you to read and five handwritten notes added to the text. You must write your document and use all of the five notes on your document. I recommend that you spend 35 minutes on this task because it includes reading, planning and writing.

Common mistakes (which you will avoid making thanks to this guide!)

It is a classic exam mistake to forget to include one or more of the points made in the handwritten notes. If you do not talk about all of them in your written document, you are not completing the task so you cannot get the maximum amount of points.

Another regular mistake, unfortunately, is writing the document as a block of text with little or no spaces. This is a mistake for a letter because it needs a paragraph and even more serious for reports or proposals because they require a specific structure with paragraphs with headings.

Including irrelevant or incorrect material is also a common error. In most writing exam tasks there is a small amount of imagination necessary to give examples or add content. However, it is not necessary to invent or talk about things out of the context given in the exam task. Doing this will lose you points.

Writing too much or not enough can be a problem too. If you do not write enough, this probably means you have not included all the points in the notes. If you go over the word limit by too much the examiner will not read the extra words. It also means you have probably included irrelevant material. The word limit is useful because it is actually the

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

correct number of words you need to complete the task correctly. Cambridge English is very experienced at preparing exams, so it is a good idea to trust them and follow their guidelines.

General Procedure.

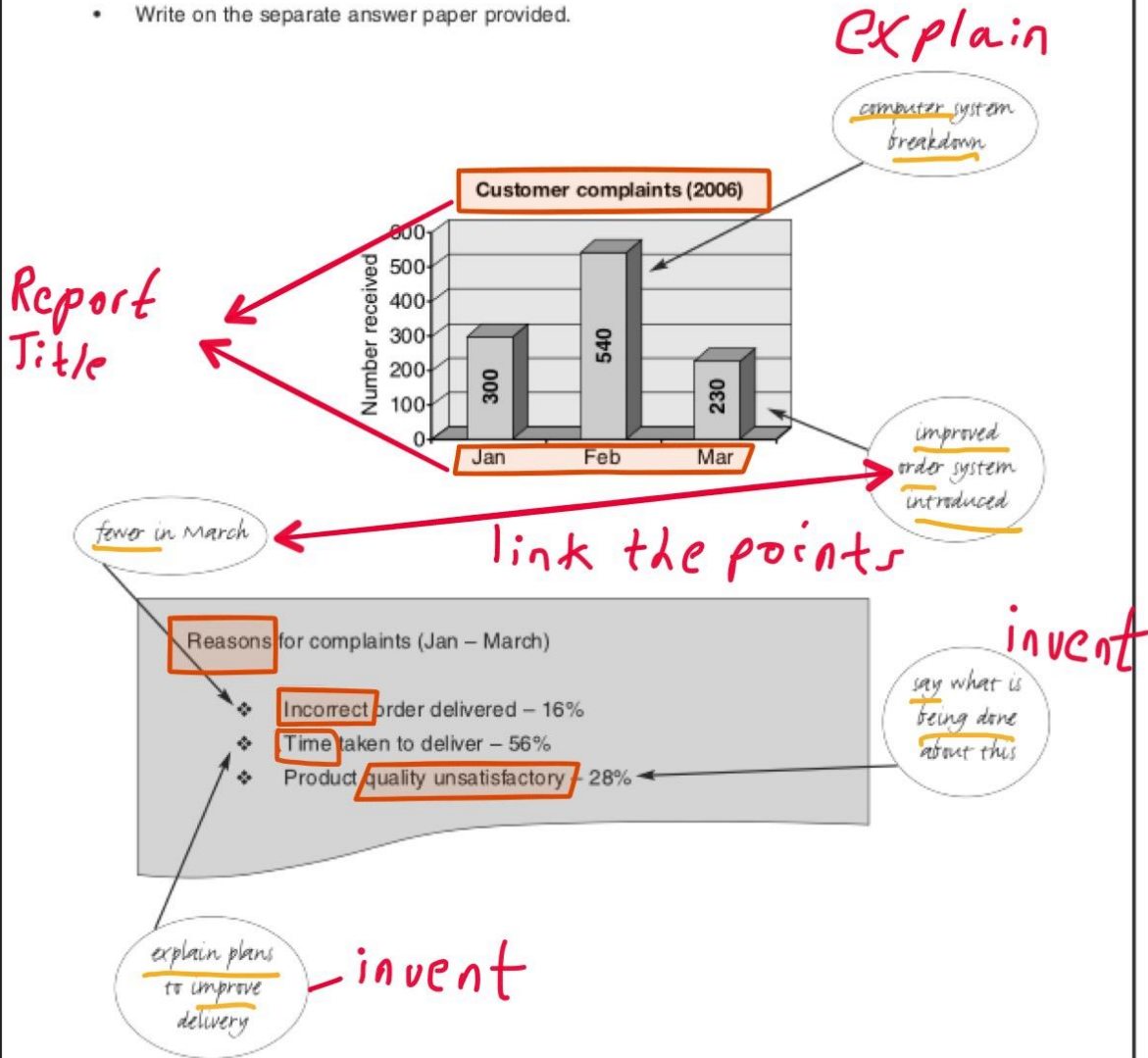
- Read the context given in the first line. This tells you the context of who you are, what type of document you need to write, and who it is for/to. You do not need to read the other information because you know this already (it is explained in this guide above).
- Read the text in the material provided quickly. It is not advisable to read the handwritten notes yet, because sometimes they refer to a part of the text you have not read yet.
- If the material provided is mainly graphs and tables take a little more time than with text to make sure that you understand the information shown in the graph or table.
- Read the handwritten notes in detail. Be sure that you are comfortable with what they mean and how they related to the material provided.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART TWO

- You work in the Customer Services Department of a mail-order company. You have been asked to prepare a short report for your line manager about complaints.
- Look at the information below, on which you have already made some handwritten notes.
- Then, using **all** your handwritten notes, write your **report**.
- **Write 120 – 140 words.**
- Write on the separate answer paper provided.



- Plan! Use the handwritten notes to give structure to your document. With a letter, you can often use them in the same order as they are given on the exam paper. With reports and proposals, you can use them or what they refer to go provide headings to your paragraphs. For example, if a note talks about or refers to orders, then this can be the paragraph heading. With all three types of document, you can often combine two of the notes in the same paragraph.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Decide and make notes on the subject of each paragraph. It is important here to remember that you need to develop and the handwritten notes and also interpret the information in them. It is also a mistake to reproduce the notes using the same words.
- Write your document.

You can find a detailed article about writing successfully in Writing Part 2, which focuses on writing a report [here](#).

Styles for each type of document.

Letter

- A letter should be formal. You will be writing to someone you do not know so your style should be polite and professional. You should start with an appropriate opening, use Dear + Mr/Mrs + first name + surname if there is a name given, or Dear Sir/Madam if there is no name given - do not use any variation of Dear Sir/Madam. Try to begin the content of the letter with a sentence explaining why you are writing, simply I am writing to...
- Use at least two paragraphs in the letter combining points in the handwritten notes where possible.
- After your paragraphs, write I am looking forward to hearing from you. (This is almost always the most appropriate form, do not try to vary the grammar).
- Close the letter with, yours sincerely if you used a name in the opening, or yours faithfully if you used Dear Sir/Madam.

Report

- A report should be formal and impersonal. It is not usually necessary to use I, using the passive is more appropriate.
- A report needs a title, (use Report on....) and must start with an introduction and finish with a conclusion. These paragraphs must be introduced with a heading. The introduction should explain the purpose of the report with a sentence like, this report shows/outlines...
- There should also be two or three paragraphs containing information and these must also have a heading. Ideally, you should use a heading which shows what the subject of the paragraph is, such as orders, prices, new markets. You can take the headings from the notes or the graphs/tables. If it is difficult to find an appropriate heading quickly, don't panic, you can also write Findings as a heading in a report because this gives a general idea of the topic. Only use this if you can't think of anything else though.
- The paragraphs should explain data in the graph/tables.
- The conclusion should summarise the content of the report including positive and negative information. It might be necessary to mention action required to improve any negative points.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Proposal

- A proposal should also be formal and impersonal. It is possible to use I, but using the passive is more appropriate, ***It is recommended*** is more professional than ***I recommend***.
- Visually a proposal and a report look quite similar. A proposal also needs a title (use A proposal to/for..) an introduction, a conclusion and paragraph headings.
- However, the perspective is quite different, a proposal talks about the present and future, making recommendations for changes and improvements. A report explains information from the past and might make suggest changes.

Listening

30 questions, 1 point per question.

30 minutes plus 10 minutes to transfer answers to an Answer Sheet. 25% of the exam.

Introduction

Listening and understanding in English are not always easy but this is the easiest skill to practice. You can watch TV, listen to the radio or use the resources recommended here. You can prepare for this exam paper by understanding the tasks. Students usually feel that listening tests are difficult because there is nothing concrete, nothing physical to help you. Well, I disagree, let me show you what I mean.

Guide to the Listening part of the exam - The answer is in the question!

The single most important thing you can do to improve your score in this test is to read as well as listen. I always tell my students if you read the question you can hear the answer better, At first they think I am mad and tell me they don't have enough time. However, after I make them practice the test three or four times, they "find" the extra time. Why? How? I'll explain.

The first time I do a practice test, my hardworking serious students listen carefully to the instructions, the rest stare out of the window or write a "to do" list for after the lesson. The second time, only one or two listen, the rest are not even looking at the question paper anymore and are possibly thinking about lunch. By the third practice test and especially when they have had bad results in the first two tests, students know the task and they do not listen and they read, they read and analyse the questions instead.

The test recordings explain the task, they actually do an example question and they also pause to give you some reading time before each question. That gives you plenty of time

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

to read before the listening starts. My students learn to use this valuable time and they have a real advantage.

For the four parts of the test, I will recommend what and how to read but it is essential that you use the introduction time to read, highlight, predict, and to make notes. The procedures I will share with you are based on you already knowing the task required.

Be careful. This test is well designed. You will probably hear all or most of the information shown in the pictures, graphs or sentences. The examiners are trying to distract you away from the right answer here. You need to listen carefully for negatives, for tenses and the specific information.

Listening Part One - Twelve points.

The Task

You have three notes/forms with missing information. You listen to three telephone conversations or messages. The task is to complete the three forms with the information from the listening. You will hear each conversation or message twice before you hear the next question.

Introduction Length - Almost one minute.

Preparation

- You need to know how we say letters, numbers, and dates in part one. This is not the only information you will need to write, but it is the part you can really prepare for.
- Check you know how we say 111, 1111, 11 1111, 111 111, 1 111 111 in English. You do not have to write the words for these but you need to be able to hear and understand them. Use the guide in the article section of this website to help you., here
- Check you know the pronunciation of letters. This will be useful for the spelling of names or for reference numbers. Are there any letters which are pronounced differently to English in your language G & J, for example?
- Check you know how to write dates, I mean in words of course. The rules are fairly easy, 1st 2nd 3rd then 4th onwards until 21st 22nd 23rd 24th and so on until 31st.

Procedure

- Read the context. This is usually in line two for each conversation. In this task, it is important to understand the context of what you will hear.
- Scan the notes/form. For each question try to understand what you are listening for; a reference number, a surname, a date, a day, a telephone number, an amount, an object, a place, a name, a department.
- Highlight the keywords. The keywords will be names, adjectives or prepositions which will either show you what you are listening for, for example, Please call Mrs

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Smith on means you need to write a date or which will help you find the answer in the listening, for example, He said the old.....needs to be replaced. Old is the keyword which describes the answer in the listening.

- During the first listening, listen for the keywords or synonyms of the keywords and write down any information you hear related to them. Remember that the answer might come before you hear the keyword.
- During the first listen, make an attempt to write something for each space. When the conversation moves to the next question, you should too. Write what you hear, if it isn't exactly right or looks strange don't worry. If you don't understand anything for one part and can't write anything, don't panic, try to remember "where" it was in the listening and concentrate on the next question.
- During the second listen you have an advantage, you now know more or less where the answers are. Your job is to confirm or to correct your first answer. Did they say thirteen or thirty? Was the surname Benet or Bennet? If you missed an answer completely during the first listen, be ready for it this time, and write what you hear. You should try to reduce the information you have to the specific one or two words which make the answer.
- You can use part of the ten minutes allowed at the end of the test to help you with this reducing the words in part one, it is more important to write what you hear.

Listening Part Two. Ten points.

The Task

There are two sections. In each section, you listen to 5 short recordings. You have one general question, for example, decide what the speaker's profession is or decide what difficulty the speaker is having. There are 8 possible answers. The task is to listen and chose the answer that is related to each listening. You will hear each section twice.

Introduction length for Task and Section one - 1 minute 5 seconds.
Introduction Length Section Two - 50 Seconds.

Guide to the Task

I won't lie to you. This is definitely the most difficult part of the test. It is short and quick. The task looks like you have to read and listen and make decisions all at the same time, and once it is finished you have to do it all again. Plus you have to avoid choosing one of the three answers which are completely wrong.

The (only) good news is that each section is introduced separately so you have some "extra" reading time and will be able to read each section individually.

Procedure

- • Read the context and the task.
- Read the A-H options.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Write any vocabulary you think is related to the option. If you only write one word that is actually good. This could be a synonym of a word in option or a verb/nouns often used in this context.
- Identify any answers which look similar and think about the difference between them. For example, English teacher and Language trainer look very similar but an English teacher could work in a secondary school and a language trainer could work for companies and might not even teach English.
- If you don't understand vocabulary in one of the options, then don't panic. Focus on the words you know.
- You should be able to read all of the different options before the listening starts. It might be difficult to do this the first couple of times but with practice it is possible.
- When you listen don't read. Listen to try and understand the context and listen for the words you wrote. When the short monologue is finished there is a pause of about 5 seconds before the next one starts. Use the pause to choose one or two of the A-H options. It is better to keep an open mind and choose two options because the next monologue comes immediately.
- During the second listen, confirm which of your two choices are correct.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Listening Part Three. Eight points.

The Task

In this part of the exam you will hear an interview or a conversation. You will have to answer 8 multiple choice questions. You will receive one point for each correct answer. There are 3 possible answers shown but only one is correct. The answers are in the same order as the questions.

Introduction Length – 1 minute 15 seconds.

Procedure one - For people who are comfortable and confident at listening.

- Read the questions first and try NOT to read the three possible answers. This is because reading the questions is the priority. Also, two of the three options are wrong and you might get distracted.
- Highlight the question word, this will help you focus on what you are listening for. If there is no question word and the "question" is a sentence, then make a question word. If the sentence includes because, the question word is "why", if it talks about objects, the question word is "what", if it mentions places then the question word is "when".

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30

- You will hear a radio interview with José Martínez, the Director of Pizza Rapida, a pizza delivery chain in Spain.
- For each question 23 – 30, mark one letter (A, B or C) for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 José Martínez became successful by

How did he become successful?

- A taking over a well-known competitor.
- B establishing an innovative retail business.
- C gaining a reputation for high quality.

24 Before José Martínez set up his pizza delivery service, he

What did he do before setting up?

- A tested samples on potential clients.
- B handed out product questionnaires.
- C assessed demand in different areas.

25 According to José Martínez, the Spanish fast food business

What does he say about?

- A is different from that of the U.S.
- B has slowed slightly in its rate of growth.
- C employs an increasing number of women.

26 José Martínez wants his trainee managers to

What does he want them to do?

- A develop a competitive attitude.
- B try out some of the shop-floor jobs.
- C spend some time working abroad.

- Highlight the keywords. These can be extra words which can change or modify the meaning if the sentence, for example, normally, mainly or main, the best. It is important to highlight these words because the listening will usually mention two or all of the three options but is only one that is the specific answer and relates directly to the questions.
- During the first listen, LISTEN, and respond. Do not read the A B C options. Listen and try to hear and understand the answer. When you hear the answer, write it in your own words.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- During the second listen, you know what is important and where the answer is. Read the A B C options, choose the option which corresponds with your answers and when you hear the answer part use it to confirm your answer.

Procedure two , For people who are less confident at listening.

- Read the questions AND the three possible answers.
 - Highlight the question word, this will help you focus on what you are listening for. If there is no question word and the "question" is a sentence, then make a question word. If the sentence includes because, the question word is "why", if it talks about objects, the questions is "what", if it mentions places then the question word is "when".

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART THREE

Questions 23 – 30

- You will hear a radio interview with José Martínez, the Director of Pizza Rapida, a pizza delivery chain in Spain.
- For each question 23 – 30, mark one letter (A, B or C) for the correct answer.
- You will hear the recording twice.

23 José Martínez became successful by

— How did he become successful?

- A taking over a well-known competitor.
- B establishing an innovative retail business.
- C gaining a reputation for high quality.

24 Before José Martínez set up his pizza delivery service, he

— What did he do before setting up?

- A tested samples on potential clients.
- B handed out product questionnaires.
- C assessed demand in different areas.

What does he say about?

25 According to José Martínez, the Spanish fast food business

- A is different from that of the U.S.
- B has slowed slightly in its rate of growth.
- C employs an increasing number of women.

— What does he want them to do?

26 José Martínez wants his trainee managers to

- A develop a competitive attitude.
- B try out some of the shop-floor jobs.
- C spend some time working abroad.

- Highlight the keyword in the questions AND the answers.
- When you read the three A B C options focus on the differences between each one. These can be extra words which can change or modify the meaning if the sentence, for example, normally, mainly or main, the best. It is important to highlight these words because the listening will usually mention two or all of the three options but is only one that is the specific answer and relates directly to the questions.
- During the first listening, listen for the part which discusses each question and try to choose one possible answer. If it is difficult to choose then try to eliminate one option which you are confident is not correct.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- During the second listen, be ready and focus on the specific information related to the questions and make a decision about which A B C option to choose.

Transfer time

You are finished, the listening is over.

But in fact, you still have some work to do. Working well in this part can give you extra points.

When Part Three finishes you have a whole wonderful ten minutes given to you to “transfer” your answers to the official answer sheet.

This extra time is very valuable, but you need to be careful and use it.

Part One

Here you need to change your notes into the ONE or TWO words required for the answer. In the procedure, I advised you to write what you hear so you may have written more than one or two words. If this is the case, decide on which words are the exact answer to the question. Check carefully for spellings that are difficult, long numbers, or reference numbers with a combination of letters and numbers. There is no point hearing it correctly and then writing it incorrectly. Believe me, people can LOSE points here just when writing.

Part Two

There is no special technique here, add the answers you decided were correct during the listening.

Part Three

If you find Part Three difficult you can transfer these answers first because you have just finished listening to part four. Here it can be used to review your notes but also the logic of your answers. I feel that student can often forget to use logic and their own professional knowledge. So here check that the answer you chose during the stress of the listening is logical.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Speaking

12 Minutes. Three tasks. 25% of the exam.

A guide to help you understand each speaking task and what you need to say.

Introduction

This can be the hardest part of the exam for some people. Students are not sure what they have to do, they worry about making mistakes and don't think they can prepare. Speaking can be stressful but you do it a lot already don't you?

There are two examiners during the speaking test, one will speak, the other will listen.

There are usually two candidates (sometimes three). Two of the tasks are individual, in the final task, you will have to speak to the other candidate.

THE GOOD NEWS.

- You don't have to speak perfect English or speak with an English accent.
- The test is 12 minutes long but you don't speak all the time.
- If you don't understand a question that is okay. Ask the examiner to repeat the question. Say:

Could you repeat that please?

Please could you say that again?

Speaking Part One - The Interview

This part is for about three minutes, you answer questions about yourself, and give your opinion about a general business topic.

The examiner will also ask your partner questions so in fact, this part is only really 90 seconds long for you.

General advice.

- Listen carefully to the question so that you can answer it!
- Give a short answer to the question and add one extra detail.

For example.

Q: What is your profession?

A: I'm an English teacher. I teach the English language to adults.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Q: Where do you work?

A: In a language school. We teach English and French and most of the students are adults.

- Copy the grammar in the question

For example...

Q: Do you prefer working in a team or alone?

A: I prefer working...

You can prepare for questions about yourself! Read the article here which has 65 common speaking test questions. Check that you know the correct vocabulary to answer them and talk about your job, your daily tasks and your company.

You can also check that you know the correct grammar.

Which one is correct?

I am working in a bank

I work in a bank.

It is the second sentence. Use the present simple to describe facts or routines in your normal life.

Read the article here about essential grammar for the speaking test.

You can also make sure you know the correct prepositions for the correct situations. If you don't know, check online.

To work for a company or organisation

To work in place

To be responsible for

To be in charge of

To work in a team.

You also have to give an opinion about a business topic. This topic is not usually too complicated or serious. Example topics are...

job satisfaction

staff training

technology at work

Speaking: Part Two - The mini presentation

The Task

In this part, you have to talk for one minute about a business topic.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

The examiner gives you three possible subjects for you to present, you have one minute to choose and to prepare your answer.

You have one minute to prepare.

Preparation procedure

- Read the subject of the questions quickly. Do not read the examples topics now.
- Choose the subject that you have professional or personal experience of. If you do not have experience of any of the three then choose the most general subject.
- Now read the example topics. Try to think of one example of each point.

A: What is important when...?
Entertaining clients

- Types of activities
- Cost of activities
-
-

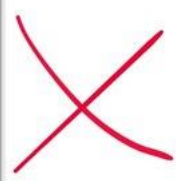


B: What is important when...?
Renting retail premises

- Location *close to customers*
not too close to competitors
- Length of contract *not too long / short - flexible?*
- *Monthly cost*
- *'extra charges*
'parking!

C: What is important when...?
Deciding on packaging for products

- Image
- Production process
-
-



Speaking task procedure.

- Do not ask the question. The examiner will do that.
- Use the same order as the examples. You don't have to talk about all the examples. If you want to talk about one or two then you can. You can also think of your own examples
- Use a structure and use presentation vocabulary. One minute is actually very short so if you follow this formula giving some detail you will find that you speak for about a minute. You can use different adjectives, important necessary and useful are examples.

Firstly + example topic is important because + give your own example with detail
Secondly + example topic is necessary too because + give your own example with detail

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Finally + example topic is also useful + give your own example with detail

This formula should take about one minute if you speak at a normal speed. However, if you have more time (the examiner will ask you to stop at the end of the minute) then I recommend returning to the example topic which you think is the most important, and finishing with something like this; Overall example topic is the most important because...

Be professional

It is vital to give professional examples. You can talk about yourself but always try to use a professional context. If you have to choose a topic you have only experienced as a customer try to keep the examples general but use the perspective of the company not of the customer.

I have often had students who want to speak from a personal perspective. With some questions, this is a very natural mistake but you MUST avoid it.

For example, with this question

What is important when applying for a new job?

- Salary
- Career development

It is easy to fall into the trap of saying something like this:

Firstly the salary is important because I want an increase in my annual salary if I change jobs. When I changed to this job, there was a significant difference so it was a worthwhile move.

Secondly, career development opportunities are necessary too. I would not change companies unless I was moving to a higher position, nor would I decide to change if I could not see any future chance of promotion.

Finally, the location of the new company is a factor too. I have to commute for over an hour to my office, so if I could find a new job which was closer to home I would definitely consider the reduction in travel time in my decision.

What is wrong with that? you might think. The English is good and the points made are logical.

I agree that the English is good and there is logic in the answers. However, does it answer the question, what is important when applying for a new job? No, it is an excellent answer to the question, what is important for you when you apply for a new job? It is vital in the exam that you answer the specific questions asked (this is true for all parts of the speaking text and the writing test).

Fortunately, if you adjust the perspective in the above answer, you can have an excellent answer.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Firstly the salary of a possible new job is important to consider because you should have an increase in annual salary when changing jobs. Most people would feel that a significant difference in salary makes changing companies a worthwhile move.

Secondly, career development opportunities are necessary too. Generally, people do not change companies unless they move to a higher position, or if they cannot see any future chance of promotion.

Finally, the location of the new company is a factor too. Many people have to commute for over an hour to their offices, so they would definitely consider the reduction in travel time in their decision. It might even be as important as the previous two points.

So, by using you, people and they instead of I, the answer becomes more professional and less personal. More importantly, the answer gets a positive result for this part of the test.

Ways to practice.

Use past exam papers, some are available online, or you can buy a book with past exam papers of all parts of the exam.

If it is difficult to think of spontaneous examples, try the exercise with more every day topics:

For example

What is important when you go to the supermarket?

A list

Bags

Money

You should be able to produce something like this.

Firstly it is important to write a shopping list because you can plan what you need and your shopping trip will be quicker. Make sure you don't forget your list.

Secondly, bags are useful because now you often have to pay for bags. If you take your own bags you can save money and help the environment.

Finally, money is essential because without it you can't pay for your shopping. Overall money is the most important because it is what you really need, you can forget the other two.

The Presentation - Part 2. The Question.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

It is important to remember that the other candidate has a role here too. When the minute is finished, the examiner will stop you. The examiner will then ask your partner to ask you a question. Students often forget that this is coming but you need to be prepared.

Your partner needs to ask you a question about your presentation so it will not be difficult to answer. He or she will relate the question to one of your points. You need to give a short clear reply, similar in length to the questions in the interview in Part 1.

It isn't over yet though. Now you must listen to your partner's presentation and ask a question about it.

Procedure

Listen to the introduction and the first point of your partner's presentation. If you understand it, then start thinking of your question.

Start your question with "Do you think" "What in your opinion is..." Which of the things you mention is the most or the least important?".

Speaking Part 3 - The Meeting about 5 minutes

The Task

In this part you talk to your partner, (finally!) The examiner describes a situation and you have to discuss it with your partner and decide about something. The examiner will describe the situation twice.

The key to part 3 is interaction. But what does this mean? It means that you have a conversation, you have to talk about the situation but also listen and respond to your partner. This is not always natural especially when you are stressed, but you interact with people every day don't you?

Procedure - play tennis!

- Try to start. This way you will feel more relaxed because you are speaking.
- Give an opinion about one part of the situation and ask your partner if he/she agrees?
- Remember to say Do you agree not are you agree? If you are worried about making a mistake, with agree, just ask What do you think?
- Listen to your partner and respond to what they say.
- Introduce another point and ask your partner to respond.
- Keep going. (see you are playing tennis, back and forth back and forth).

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Decide time! Usually, if the discussion works well and you have agreed and disagreed about the same things, then the decision part is easy because it is "obvious" what you have decided.

General Resources

The BEC Exam Guide has compiled a variety of useful (and mainly FREE!) resources for you. They will help you develop and practice your listening, writing and reading skills – skills you need to help you do your best in your exam.

Listening Resources - Tune your ear for the listening exam with free resources.

Audiobooks - to practice your listening in a relaxed way for an extended period.

Audiobooks are definitely a useful and relaxing way to improve your listening skills. The best idea is to start by listening to a story you know and then continue from there. As you will hear the same voice and accent for the whole story, you will tune your ear well.

Amazon Audible is your best option for audiobooks because of the enormous choice of titles. You get a FREE trial for thirty days which gives you one FREE book and two Audible originals to keep (forever) even if you cancel. There is a FREE app for you to download to your device.

This link is for Amazon.co.uk because there is bigger choice of audiobooks in English. You can use your normal Amazon account login.

Podcasts - to practice listening and improve vocabulary regularly and for short periods.

British Council Professional Podcasts.

The British Council provides you with a great opportunity to practice your Business English listening skills and prepare for your exam. The website gives you a good choice of business topics to listen to. The podcasts are similar in length to the listening questions and there is, of course, a variety of accents. The listenings are for B2 level, so they are perfect for people preparing for the B2 Vantage exam. However, if you are preparing for either the B1 Preliminary exam or the C1 Higher exam they are also useful.

That is not all, they also offer you up to three tasks to do for each podcast. The tasks vary for each podcast. Some though are general listening comprehension questions similar to **Part 4 in the B1 Preliminary Exam** and to the **B2 Vantage Part 3** and **C1 Higher Part 3**, there are gap-fill exercises similar to the note-taking tasks in all three of the BEC exams and there is even a task which resembles **Part 2** in the B2 Vantage exam.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

A word of warning though, there is a lot of excellent material in other parts of the website but the Professional Podcasts are the most relevant to your exam preparation so don't get distracted.

Down to Business English - improve your listening skills and business vocabulary.

The podcasts are long, usually around twenty minutes but this includes an informal introduction, the discussion topic AND explanations of some of the key vocabulary used in the discussion. What I like about this is that everything is done through the podcast so you are listening all the time! There is a free audio script to download for each podcast, although you have to complete a form with some personal details to access it.

It has been producing free Business English podcasts since 2010. It is run by three English language teachers. Two of them have North American accents and one of them has a British accent. The format is that two of them discuss topical business subjects. They speak a little slower than normal speech so the podcasts are useful for all levels.

English In Ten Minutes - improve your listening skills and your vocabulary.

You can download the podcasts to listen to on the move and you can also download worksheets for each episode. A worksheet includes:

- A summary of the episode.
- A full transcript of the conversation, with footnotes explaining the best language.
- Comprehension questions (similar to Part 4 in the B1 Preliminary Exam and to the B2 Vantage Part 3 and C1 Higher Part 3).
- Exercises with the highlighted language.
- Discussion Questions.

It is made by an English Language Teacher and has 125 episodes. The podcast discusses general English topics not professional ones but it is useful practice for your listening especially because you will hear several accents. The teacher who runs it is Australian, his wife is American and they often have a guest on the podcast. They do a lot of travelling so you can also learn a lot about the world as you listen.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Writing Resources

Cambridge Write & Improve - Improve your writing fast. It's free.

- 1) Practise writing English
- 2) Get your grade in seconds
- 3) Look at the feedback and make changes
- 4) Keep improving!

Write & Improve is a free tool for learners of English that marks writing in seconds. It is provided in association with Cambridge English.

Grammarly - to develop your writing skills and your style while improving your vocabulary and spelling.

Grammarly is a fantastic free tool which will help you develop your writing because it works like an English teacher (except it is free!) The BEC Exam Guide has been so impressed with this tool, that there is now an article about it here.

British Council Learn English Website - to help you write specific types of documents.

This website has writing resources for B1, B2 and C1 level with examples and tasks to help you write a variety of documents, including emails, reports and proposals.

Reading Resources

British Council Learn English Website - to practise your reading skills, improve your understanding of the language and build your vocabulary.

This website has reading resources for B1, B2 and C1 level, texts include reviews, articles, reports and summaries.

Kindle Unlimited - This is the first thing you should get if you want to practice and improve your reading skills.

It gives you free access to over 1 million books and allows you to download 10 books at a time to your device. It is available as a free trial for thirty days. You can use your normal Amazon account and login.

You can use it with a Kindle device and/or you can use the Kindle App on a smartphone or tablet or on a PC/Mac. You can download a free English dictionary too so, if necessary, you can check new vocabulary quickly and without translating.

Thousands of the books have free Audible narration, so you can also practice your listening skills.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

English Short Stories for Intermediate Learners

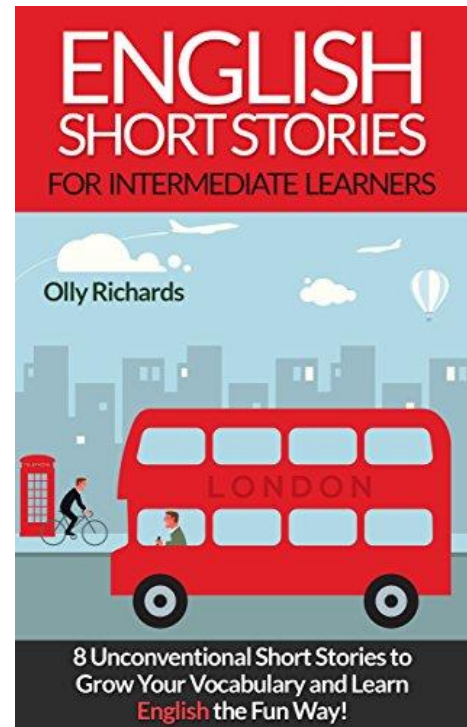
This collection of stories has been well-designed to improve your confidence in reading.

The author gives you advice on how to read in English, and a “six-step plan” about how to use the book. I think this is very useful because it makes reading an active process.

There are 8 stories each with 3 chapters. At the end of each chapter there is a short summary so you can check you have understood the general idea AND 5 multiple choice questions (similar to B1 Preliminary Part 5, B2 Vantage Part 3 C1 Higher Part 3). This helps you check your understanding without stopping during the chapter.

There are thrillers, crime, history and science fiction stories. I enjoyed My Friend, The Supercomputer and A List of Lies.

The stories have been designed for B1-B2 level English language learners. I think that B2 level might find them a little simple. However, if your objective is to practice and to enjoy reading without stopping then this book will work well. If you read these stories using a Kindle or Kindle App you can use a free English dictionary too so, if necessary, you can check new vocabulary quickly and without translating. This book is available for FREE with Kindle Unlimited and Amazon Audible (see above for details).



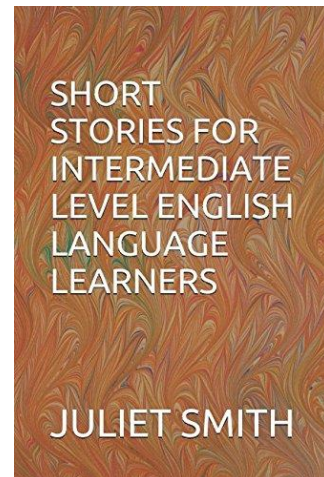
BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Short Stories for Intermediate Level

Develop your reading skills with these 31 short stories (700-2500 words) written for Intermediate English Language learners (B1) with grammar and vocabulary appropriate for level. There are general comprehension questions and useful vocabulary at the end of each story.

This book is available for FREE with Kindle Unlimited (see above for details).

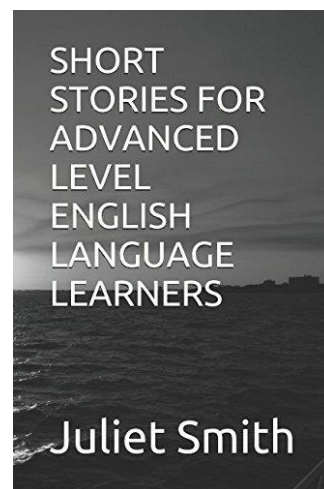


the

Short Stories for Advanced Level

Develop your reading skills with these 10 short stories written for Advanced (C1) English Language learners with grammar and vocabulary appropriate for the level. There are general comprehension questions, vocabulary explanations and answers at the end of each story.

This book is available for FREE with Kindle Unlimited (see above for details).



The Economist Magazine

This needs no introduction, nor an explanation of how it could be to help you with your exam! It is possible to do a trial for 28 days of the Kindle edition. The magazine is published every week so it is good value...normally the expression ends with for money but this is even better it is free!)



useful
free

for

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Resources

This will give you information, advice and links to resources that will help you to practice and develop your skills.

BUSINESS BENCHMARK UPPER-INTERMEDIATE

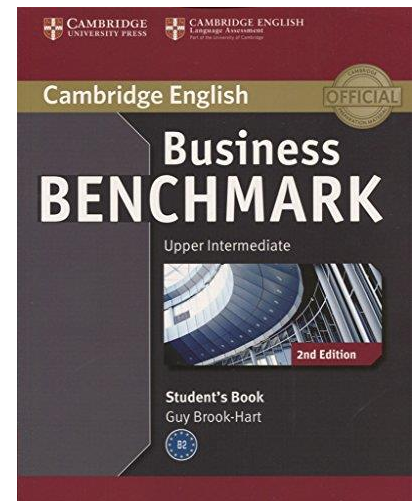
Be Prepared - To pass the exam you need to prepare for it.

This book will help you pass the exam because it is written by Cambridge English the people who design your exam. It provides exam candidates with the skills, vocabulary and grammar they need to succeed in the exam.

The main units are devoted to Business English topics, and all practice exercises are similar to the tasks in the exam. It includes separate grammar and writing sections as well as section which analyses at each part of the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking Exam with useful vocabulary and practice exercises.

Unfortunately, the CDs for the listening exercises are sold separately. They are an important part of the course book but at an extra cost here,

Available with the Book Depository [here](#).



BEC Exam Guide B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

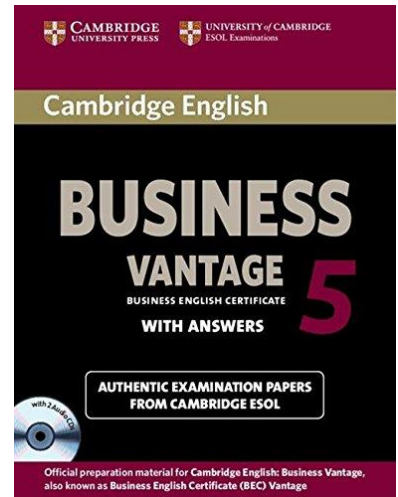
BUSINESS VANTAGE 5 SELF STUDY PACK

Practice Make Perfect - To pass the exam you need to practice it.

If you want to improve your score and use this website's guide well, I, then you will need to practice and practice and practice. With this book, you can use the procedures in the BEC Exam Guide to improve your techniques and your score.

This is an official book from Cambridge with four past exam papers with all the 4 parts of the exam including the CD for the listening parts. It has answers too so you can check how well you have done. If you made any mistakes you can also use the answers to understand why your answer is incorrect.

Available with the Book Depository here.

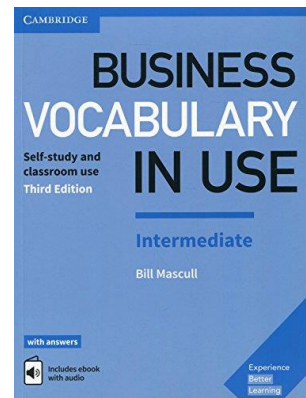


Business Vocabulary in Use - Intermediate

This is a Cambridge University Press book full of vocabulary that will help you to feel confident going into the exam. I have used it successfully as for homework exercises and it is an excellent self-study book.

It is topic based so you can select the areas you need to improve first and then work on revising the vocabulary you are familiar with. It provides explanations, practices and answers to ensure you boost your vocabulary.

Available with the Book Depository here.



BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

A brief Guide to the BEC Exam Guide

Last week a student sent me a message asking how to use the website.

I wanna know how use the BEC Exam guide website. Is good and I like very much but I no sure how use it right.

I wrote back asking for some specific questions. This is what he asked.

What I need for use the website?

Is important to start with reading or can I start with listening...?

When can I read the articles?

How use the General Resources?

Here is my reply to him (which I hope will be useful for you too!)

The idea of the BEC Exam guide is to help students/exam candidates understand what the exam is and how they need to prepare in order to pass it and to pass with a good grade.

What do I need before I start using the website?

1. The website and E-book has been designed for people who have the correct level of grammar and vocabulary knowledge for the exam they want to take. This means it is useful if you have either a B1, B2 or C1 level BEFORE you start using the website and E-book because the focus is on the exam.

If you do not have exactly the “perfect” level for your exam, it is possible to use the website, and work on improving your grammar and vocabulary at the same time, using the books recommended for your exam (Business Benchmark and Business Vocabulary in Use)

2. You should have some experience of all the four skills, reading writing listening and speaking in English. Each of the three Cambridge English business exams tests the four skills so it is important that you have already used them. If you do not have a lot of experience in reading writing or listening, then it is vital to visit the General Resource page.
3. Access to practice tests, a lot of practice tests! The logic of the BEC Exam Guide website is that you prepare for the exam by following the procedures with practice

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

tests. There is a practice test available for each part of each exam on the website. I would recommend printing it so you can read the procedures from The BEC Exam Guide, and work directly on the printed pages to highlight keywords, make notes and have a physical record of your work.

How should I use the website or e-book?

The best place to start for most people is with the Reading part of your exam. This is the easiest part to practice because you have written material to use. It will also help you see the style, vocabulary and the level of the exam you have chosen and to understand the style and logic of the website/e-book as well.

If you have never done a practice test before or if you have not had any lessons connected with the exam, then it is not necessary or useful to do a complete test without stopping.

Take your time and start with the easier parts of the reading exam (For B1 Business Preliminary Part 1 and Part 5, for B2 Business Vantage and C1 Business Higher, Part 1 and Part 3). Print a copy of the example provided, then read the procedure and look at the image connected with it, then do the same procedure using your printed copy. Do not give yourself a time limit until you have used the procedure several times.

When you have finished and have complete answers (or as many as possible) check your answers using the answer key provided. If some of your answers are not correct, try to understand why. "Find" the correct answers in the text and work "backwards" to connect the answer to the questions.

After you have worked on reading, then I actually recommend either writing or listening because you can use the free practice test provided and follow the procedures.

When should I read the Articles?

The articles page provides some useful extra material and information to help you with your preparation. After you have done some practising then you will know more about what extra help you need.

How should I use the General Resources page?

It has two functions

1. It can help you practise and improve the skills which you are weakest at.

There are a lot of practices related to listening, writing and reading which you can use to develop these skills.

2. It can help you make English part of your normal daily life (not just your professional life).

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

There are different resources you can use which are not for “practising English”. They can be used to increase your exposure to and your enjoyment of the language, for example 10 minute English (it is good and useful even without the worksheets), Kindle Unlimited and Audible. I have received really positive feedback about these three from my students.

65 Common Cambridge English Business Exam (BEC) Speaking Part One Questions

The BEC Exam Guide has made you a list of 65 common questions which examiners ask in Part One of the Speaking Test. They come from official past exam papers, course books, and Cambridge English Exam Preparation material. The questions are in different categories to help you prepare and to practice but the examiners do not need to follow this order.

The questions are not organised by level, however, usually, the C1 Business Higher questions are at the end and are usually longer.

Opening Questions

Could I just check your name, please?

Where are you from?

What is your nationality?

What part of your country do you come from? Can you describe the area to me?

How do you spell your family name?

Your Job

Do you work?

What work do you do?

What do you do?

What do you do for a living?

What kind of business are you involved in?

What do you like most about your job?

Do you like working in a team?

Could you tell me something about a typical day at your work?

How long do you think you will stay in your present job?

Would you like to work from home?

How important is it to follow the news in order to do your job well?

Have you ever been on a training course for your work?

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Your studies

Are you a student?

What are you studying?

Tell me about the course you are doing/ your studies?

What do you enjoy most about your studies?

Why did you choose to study X?

Why did you choose this course? / What training course would you most like to do in the future?

What job would you like to do later?

Do you think you would ever want to work abroad?

What job would you like to do in the future?

What kind of business are you planning to be involved in?

Would you like to do a job where you often travelled abroad on business?

You

Tell me something about your home town.

What kind of jobs do people do in your home town?

Tell me a bit about (name of city/region). What's it like?

What are the traditional industries of the city/region?

How do people normally travel to work in your city/region?

What kind of jobs have you done in the past?

Do you plan to do more studying?

What ambitions do you have for the future?

Where would you prefer to live and work?

In what ways do you expect your career to differ from your father's / mother's?

Is it easy to find interesting jobs in your country?

Is there anything that you'd like to change about your home town? (Why?)

What are you planning to do in the next year?

What do you like doing best in your spare time?

Which leisure activities are most popular with young people in your country?

What area of business interests you most? (Why?)

Why are you learning English?

Would you like to learn English in the UK/USA, etc.?

How useful do you think it is to speak English?

If you could study anywhere in the world, where would you choose?

Do you expect international travel to be a necessary part of your career? Would you welcome that?

Your Opinions

Do you think it is better to live in the countryside or a big city?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in an open space office?

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Which do you prefer, speaking to people on the phone or sending emails?
Do you think it is important for companies to help employees improve their English level?
What hours do most office staff work in your country?
What qualities does a good business person have?
Do you think it's important for business people to relax in their free time?
Should companies provide facilities such as sports clubs for their staff?
Do you think there are advantages in meeting clients socially?
Do you think new technology makes our working lives easier or more difficult?
At what age do you think people should retire from work?
Is the opportunity for an annual pay increase important to you?
What skills do you think employers look for in young people nowadays?
Do you think companies should spend money on newspaper advertisements?
Do advertisements make consumers buy a product?

16 Speaking Part Two Questions for B2 Business Vantage Exam (BEC Vantage)

The BEC Exam Guide has made you a list of questions which are asked in Part Two of the Speaking Exam to help you prepare and practice. They come from official past exam papers.

What is important when...

1. Interviewing a candidate for a job.
 - Deciding what questions to ask
 - Deciding what qualifications are required

2. Deciding where to relocate your company.
 - Checking access to transport infrastructure
 - Finding potential employees

3. Arranging a meeting
 - Deciding who needs to attend the meeting
 - Sending out important documents.

4. Running your own business from home
 - Keeping accounts up to date

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Keeping home life and work separate

5. Setting up a new website for your company

- Getting expert help
- Choosing who will manage the site

6. Carrying out an employee review

- Training needs
- Strengths and weaknesses

7. Choosing a meeting venue

- Room size
- Convenience

8. Promoting a new product

- Potential customers
- Unique selling features

9. Organising business trips

- Checking dates and times carefully
- Cost-effectiveness

10. Giving a presentation

- Preparing materials well
- Using technology

11. Changing working hours

- Consulting staff
- Discussing effects the changes may have

12. Dealing with a complaint from a customer

- Collecting information
- Interview people involved.

13. Attending a business conference

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

- Listening to a presentation
- Giving your own opinions

14. Working with a new boss

- Making a good impression
- Creating a friendly professional relationship

15. Aiming to become a manager

- Working hard
- Leadership

16. Choosing a hotel for a client

- Location of the hotel
- Hotel facilities

Phrases to introduce your opinion in Speaking Part Two

In my opinion, it's very important to find

It could save you

I think you have to decide

If you don't do this, then you may find

You may find you are

Another important thing to do is to

As well as this I would say it's

I also think

It's also a good idea to make sure

You must check that you have

In addition, I would always recommend/advise/suggest/find out

Phrases to introduce a question in Speaking Part Two

What do you think is more important...?

Would you like to...?

Do you think you need to

Are you good at...?

How would you find out if...?

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

How would you avoid?

Do you think it's essential to

What did you mean when you said...?

Can you say a bit more about what you said about...?

What sort of information is useful to..?

Do you think having... is important in business?

Would you consider...?

What do you think is the biggest advantage/disadvantage of?

What is the first thing you would do if...

What is good about..?

Why do you think it's important to...?

Do you thinkare useful?

What can go wrong when...?

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

A Guide to Saying Numbers in English (and hearing them too).

Numbers from Zero to One Hundred

We say the specific individual numbers between zero and twenty. Then, use the tens (twenty, thirty, etc.) and the numbers one to nine:

0 – zero or “oh”

8 – eight

18 - eighteen

38 - thirty-eight

58 – fifty-eight

Numbers from One Hundred to One Thousand

We begin with numbers one to nine with the word “hundred” then we say the last two numbers as above.

118 – one hundred and eighteen

238 – two hundred and thirty-eight

688 – six hundred and eighty-eight

808 – eight hundred and eight

NOTE: British English uses "and" after "hundred" as above. American English does not use "and:"

118 = one hundred eighteen

Numbers in the Thousands

We say a number from 1-999 with the word "thousand", then we say the hundreds as above.

11 111 - eleven thousand one hundred and eleven

28 838 – twenty eight thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight

338 452 – three hundred and thirty-eight thousand four hundred and fifty-two

918 747 – nine hundred and eighteen seven hundred and forty-seven

Numbers in the Millions

We say a number up to 999 followed by "million", then we say the thousands and the hundreds as above.

3 550 000 – three million five hundred and fifty thousand

48 956 781 – forty eight million nine hundred and fifty six thousand seven hundred and eight one

709 652 710 - seven hundred and nine million six hundred and fifty two thousand seven hundred and ten.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

For even larger numbers, first, use billions and then trillions in a similar manner to millions:

We do not say "s" after the word million and we do not usually use an "s" when talking about numbers. If we want to talk numbers without giving a precise figure we do use "s".

There were hundreds and hundreds of people

Thousands of animals were killed.

With large numbers say them in groups of hundreds. This is the order: billion, million, thousand, hundred.

Numbers with Decimals

We say the number, the word point and then the individual numbers

1.11 – one point one one

15.29 – fifteen point two nine

11.2589 – eleven point two five eight nine

Numbers with Percentages

We say the number then the word "percent".

18% - eighteen percent

67% - sixty seven percent

92% - ninety two percent

Numbers with Fractions

We say the top number as normal and the bottom number as an ordinal number (with an "s" if the top number is higher than one)

$2/5$ – two-fifths

$5/6$ – five-sixths

$5/8$ – five eighths

With the more common fractions, we say them differently.

$1/4$, $3/4$ – one/a -quarter, three quarters

$1/2$ – (one/a) half

$1/3$, $2/3$ – one/a third, two-thirds

With numbers with fractions, we say the number first then "and" then the fraction

$6 \frac{7}{8}$ – six and seven-eighths

$33 \frac{1}{3}$ – thirty three and one/a third.

$8 \frac{1}{2}$ – eight and one/a half.

Money

We say the number first then the currency:

£50 – Fifty pounds

£3.50 – Three pounds Fifty pence

£99.99 – Ninety- Nine pounds Ninety-nine pence

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

We often only say the numbers or only say the main currency word

£9.50 – Nine fifty or Nine pounds fifty

€11.45 Eleven forty-five or Eleven Euro(s) forty-five.

With the Euro currency is acceptable NOT to use the S

With large amounts of money we follow the same formula and do NOT use “of”

£15 000 000 – Fifteen million pounds.

Ordinal Numbers

We use Ordinal numbers to talk about the day of the month or a position in a group. Most numbers end in 'th', except "first", "second", and "third" of every ten numbers:

1st first

2nd second

3rd third

5th fifth

8th eighth

17th seventeenth

21st twenty-first

46th forty-sixth

100th one-hundredth

1000th one thousandth

18.07.2019 The Eighteenth of July Two thousand (and) Nineteen

Other ways we use and say numbers

Telephone numbers: We say the individual numbers

020 7242 9788 – zero two zero seven two four two nine seven double eight (or eight eight)

Speed: We say speeds as numbers

70 mph – Seventy miles per hour

130 kph One hundred and thirty kilometres per hour

Weight: We say the number and then the unit

38 kgs – thirty-eight kilograms

83 lbs – eighty-three pounds

Temperature: We say the number + degrees then the unit if necessary

32°C - thirty-two degrees (Celsius)

Grammarly - A sensational tool. Like your own personal English language teacher (for free!)

What is Grammarly?

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Grammarly promotes itself as a spelling and grammar correction tool but I can tell you that it does even more than that. It works like an English language teacher guiding you to understand your mistakes and improve your written English.

For many years now there have been tools that English language learners or non-native English speakers working as professionals, could adapt to help them improve their writing skills. MS Word's spelling and grammar checker was once something I recommended students used to help them identify and understand their mistakes. However, not only did this require effort and self-discipline from the student, but it was also time-consuming and went against the logic of the tool itself. The autocorrect and suggestions on Smartphones and tablets were also useful to improve students accuracy because the corrections and suggestions are usually correct. No need to decide if the correct preposition after responsible is *of*/*for* because the suggestion tells you. However, once again this was useful but not the function of the tool and didn't actually involve learning and improving. To learn from it you had to do extra work.

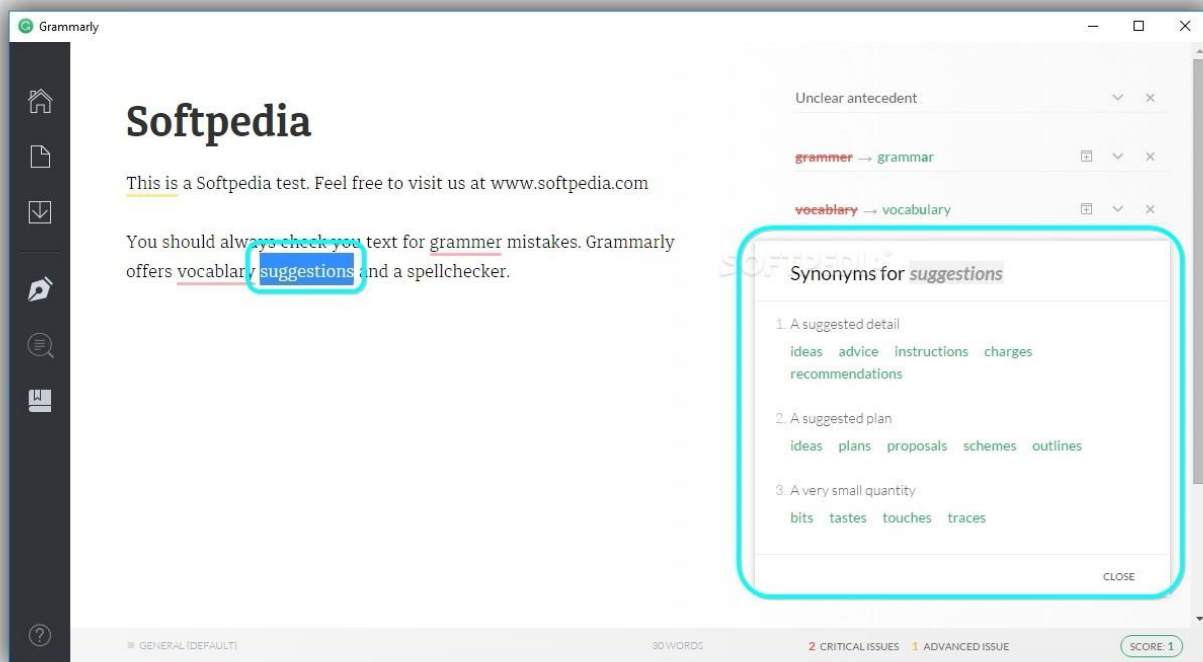
This is why Grammarly is so different and effective! Grammarly is designed to improve your writing skills, you do not need to adapt the tool to your needs or to force yourself to use it as a learning tool.

How it works

Grammarly finds and highlights a whole range of problems (250!) in a text, not only spelling. These include grammar errors, punctuation, hyphens, and even vocabulary. It simply identifies problems and highlights them with a red line. When you click on the problem you do not see a simple "change" option, you are offered a suggestion and a reason why Grammarly thinks your word is not correct. By clicking on the "more" option you are shown the reason your choice is probably not correct and examples of the correct use.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)



This is a massive improvement from standard spelling and grammar checkers. So Grammarly gives you three things here:

- It helps you to see a mistake.
- It helps you understand why it is a mistake.
- It helps you avoid it next time you write.

Why is it useful to prepare for the Cambridge Business Exams?

Because Grammarly checks so much and so quickly you will be able to see your regular "silly" mistakes, the ones that frustrate your boss/teacher/yourself. The missing s with he/she/it or with a plural, subject verb agreement (He have or They was), or incorrect or missing articles. By seeing your regular mistakes marked incorrect, when you next write you are more aware of them and less likely to make the same error.

It will also help you with mistakes you did not even know you were making. It corrects incorrect prepositions, misused vocabulary, and spelling mistakes. Thanks to the suggestions and explanations, if Grammarly shows you an error you will quickly understand it and be able to avoid it next time you write. You can also learn vocabulary

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

because Grammarly gives you synonyms if it thinks your word is not correct. It helps a lot with punctuation too, especially the use of commas and hyphens. Nowadays, people are never sure when to use or not to use commas - even teachers can find this complex to teach and to use. Grammarly is excellent at this.

It is easy to set up and use too. You register and you can use Grammarly in three different ways (you should use them ALL) –

- a Grammarly application on your desktop
- a Chrome extension
- as part of MS Word

The application is very useful when preparing for an exam. You write your text in a separate document without any instant corrections then copy and paste your text into the Grammarly app. In seconds any problems are highlighted with all of the features mentioned above to help you learn - this is much quicker (and definitely much cheaper) than giving it or sending it to a teacher. If you are also working in English then installing it on MS Word makes sense because your work is checked and corrected immediately, improving your professional writing.

Grammarly does not stop there. It works with you, not only does it try to get to know you it also listens to you. You can select the type of English- choose British English to help you prepare for the exam, and style options – choose Formal to help you write in the correct formal style for the Writing Papers.

In short, Grammarly is like having your personal English language teacher available 24/7. Grammarly is the one tool you need to improve your writing on your own.

**It is so good that even native English speakers use it, and it is free!
So don't hesitate and download Grammarly now.**

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

How to Manage your time effectively in the Reading Exam

Reading B2 Vantage. 1 Hour – 45 points.

In the Reading exam, managing your time in order to read quickly and accurately and get the maximum points is an essential part of ensuring success in the exam. The BEC Exam guide procedures are designed to help you not only find the correct answers but also do so in the most efficient way, by avoiding reading too much or too slowly.

However, it is also useful to decide on an order to answer each part of the exam because it is not necessary to start with Part one and continue on to Part Two, then Part Three etc. To do this well, you will need to consider three things.

1. How many points are possible with each part.
2. How difficult each part is.
3. How long you should spend on each part.

One extra element could also be your objective for the reading paper. The Reading exam is 25% of the exam and the final result of the Vantage exam is an average of the four parts, so you should be realistic about which part of the exam (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking) you are strong at. If you are strong at reading then you should target 80-90% in the reading exam to boost your average score, if for example, you are weaker at writing. Here are some percentages related to the number of points which can help you with this, they are all a pass: 27 points = 60% 32= 71% 38= 80% 41=90%.

The BEC Exam Guide would like to recommend two different reading orders for you, depending on your confidence and experience. The two possible orders and timings are based on my experience working with numerous students. Naturally, as you do more and more practice tests, you might want and need to adjust the order to suit you.

Let's review the different parts and how many points you can get from each one.

Part One – 7 Points. This is a matching exercise. It can be done quite quickly by following the BEC Exam Guide procedure. It is not considered difficult.

Part Two – 5 points. This a paragraph matching exercise. It is the most difficult task in the reading exam. If you make the wrong choice, it could lose you points.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Part Three – 6 points. This is a multiple-choice reading comprehension. It is normally fairly easy. It can be done quickly with the BEC Exam Guide procedure.

Part Four – 15 points. This is mainly a test of your vocabulary knowledge. It can be difficult, but it is important to spend time on this because of the number of points. It is one-third of the Reading exam in terms of points.

Part Five - 12 points. This is mainly a grammar and vocabulary test therefore it is not easy. With the chunking method, it can be done efficiently and effectively quickly. It is important because it is a quarter of the Reading exam in terms of points.

So there are three parts which involve reading skills, with a total of 18 points, one that focuses on vocabulary with a grammar element (15 points) and one that needs some grammar knowledge some vocabulary knowledge and precise reading skills (12 Points). **This means that 60% of the exam is NOT only testing your reading skills.**

Students also need to leave some time to transfer their answers to an official answer sheet which Cambridge English use to mark your answers. It looks like this:

Order for students who are experienced at reading and have good grammar and vocabulary knowledge, with approximate times.

1. Part 4 – 15 minutes
2. Part 5 - 13 minutes
3. Part 2 – 10 minutes

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

4. Part 1 – 7 minutes
5. Part 3 – 10 minutes.
6. Review and transfer to answer sheet – 6 minutes

*The BEC Exam Guide's logic is that you start with the questions with the most points and that test vocabulary and grammar as well as reading. Then you move on to the most difficult question, give it a good try, then finish with the easier reading questions. **It is not essential to follow the times exactly.***

Order for students who are less experienced and read slowly and have moderate grammar and vocabulary knowledge, with approximate times.

1. Part 1 – 8 minutes
2. Part 3 – 11 minutes
3. Part 4 – 17 minutes
4. Part 5 – 13 minutes
5. Part 2 – 6 minutes
6. Review and transfer to answer sheet – 5 minutes

*The BEC Exam Guide's logic is that you start with the easier reading questions, then move on to the questions with the most points and that test vocabulary and grammar as well as reading. You then finish with the most difficult question which is only worth 5 points (11% of the exam). **It is not essential to follow the times exactly.***

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

How to write successfully in Writing Part 2

The aim of this article is to provide you with a procedure to write successfully in Part 2. This procedure will help you generate ideas of what to write as well as showing you how to write in a way that corresponds with and satisfies the Cambridge English marking system. Both of these will greatly increase your chances of passing the Writing exam (with a higher grade as well).

This article will explain the Cambridge Marking system and will use an exam task (writing a report) for Writing Part 2 with three answers as well as detailed breakdown of the marks given by Cambridge English.

Let's look at a report first. In the B2 Vantage exam, a report is one of three possible tasks. You are given one task which Cambridge English chooses. It is very often a report, but could also be a letter or a proposal.

The Good News

Writing a report is a clear task which is not complicated. Also, the exam question gives you a great deal of useful information which makes writing easier. Your job is to read it, interpret it and reorganise it into a report.

It is also important to remember that the exam task does not in fact require you to write a perfect report which could be used in the professional world. Cambridge English have specific criterion, with which they analyse and mark your report.

What is a report?

A report usually analyses the past and or current situation and presents information about it.

Who is it for?

The context for a report in the B2 Vantage exam is usually that you have to write a report for your boss/manager. This means that the language needs to be formal and impersonal.

What structure do you need?

A report should have a title, topic headings and a conclusion. You can use the information in the question to help you choose the right title and topic headings.

How much do you need to write?

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

In the B2 Vantage exam you need to write 120-140 words.

What is the Cambridge English Mark Scheme?

Cambridge English examiners use the four different criterion below to analyse and give marks for writing.

- **Content** focuses on how well the candidate has fulfilled the task, in other words if they have done what they were asked to do.
- **Communicative Achievement** focuses on how appropriate the writing is for the task and whether the candidate has used the appropriate register.
- **Organisation** focuses on the way the candidate puts together the piece of writing, in other words if it is logical and ordered.
- **Language** focuses on vocabulary and grammar. This includes the range of language as well as how accurate it is.

Responses are marked on each subscale from 0 to 5.

1) Content.

They decide if the writer has completed the task. This means they check if the writer has included all the four points correctly. This category does not check the English. This is the same as a boss or manager, checking an employee's work.

They also check if the information is relevant and if the "target reader" would be informed. In fact this imagines that this was a real task and asks if person reading the document would get the information they wanted from it.

2) Communicative Achievement

They analyse the style of the writing and if it is correct for the task. This means they check if the writer has produced the correct type of document and if they have used the correct type of words. This category does not check if the English is correct, only if it is correct for the task.

3) Organisation.

They analyse if the writing has an order and is logical. This means they check if the writing is easy to read because it is clear, well organised and that each part is connected using

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

English linking and reference words. This category does not check if the English is correct or perfect.

4) Language.

This category checks the grammar and the vocabulary. It analyses if they are correct, but you do not lose marks if it is not perfect, only if it is difficult to understand. It also considers if the writer has used a variety of grammar and vocabulary or not.

To summarise the above information, you need to:

- talk about all points and add relevant detail which a reader would understand and be informed by.
- write the appropriate type of document in the corresponding style.
- structure your document with the correct headings and link your points using English words.
- use a variety of grammar and appropriate vocabulary.

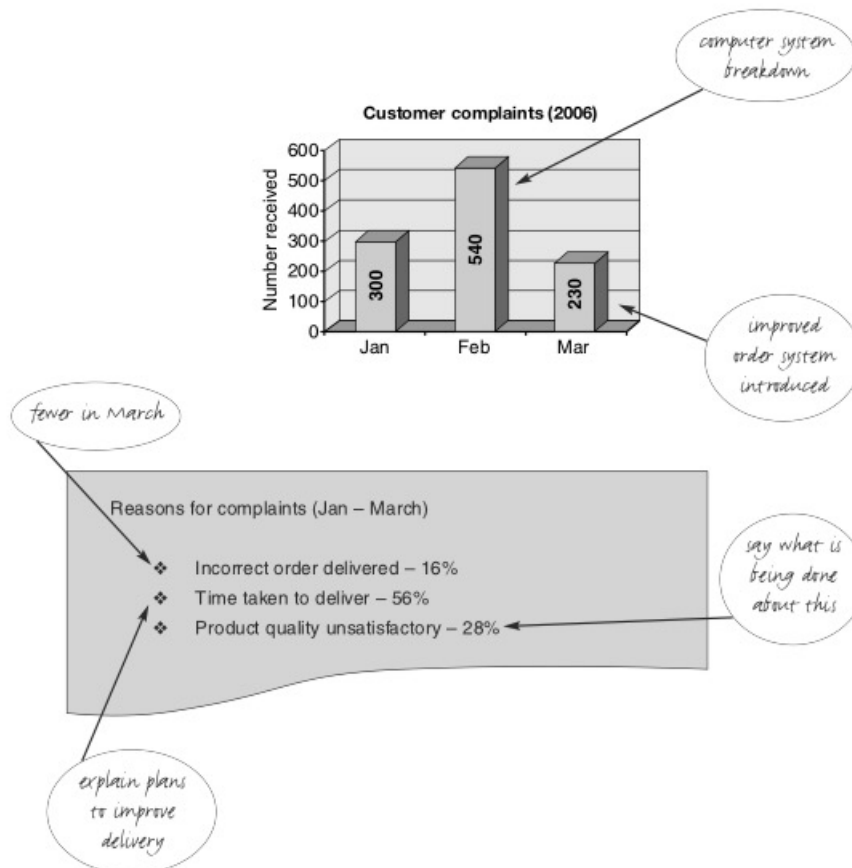
Now let's look at three different answers that Cambridge English have provided as examples. There are examples of the answers and the marks that the examiners gave the answers to the report below, which is used in the BEC Exam Guide Writing Part 2. This is really useful because you can make sure that when you write, you write in the way that Cambridge English wants, in order to achieve the best mark/score. You might be surprised by some of the ways they evaluate writing answers but mainly in a good way.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

PART TWO

- You work in the Customer Services Department of a mail-order company. You have been asked to prepare a short report for your line manager about complaints.
- Look at the information below, on which you have already made some handwritten notes.
- Then, using **all** your handwritten notes, write your **report**.
- **Write 120 – 140 words.**
- Write on the separate answer paper provided.



Question 2

Candidate F

REPORT

TO: RITA PATEL, MANAGER,

FROM:

DATE: 21 NOVEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS FOR PRODUCTS

There are some problem about the mail-order supply over the period Jan-Mar 2006. Customers complaint that there was a computer system breakdown in the month of February 2006. The number received was 540. But hopefully the improved order. Although, the number received was much less compared to the breakdown i.e., 230.

The reason for complaints have been put forward. In March 2006 16% of the products delivered were incorrect. Again the time taken for delivery was also a long term. Moreover the quality of the products being delivered are also not up to the mark i.e. 28%.

Lastly, to come across this vital problems products should be delivered on time and the quality of product needs to be good.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

BEC Exam Guide Analysis

This is not a pass.

We can immediately see that the writer has written the text in the form of an email and not a report. The writer has also made a mistake by not writing correctly about the computer problem. This is a common mistake. He/she has probably misunderstood and therefore writes information that is not useful to the reader. He/she has also take information directly from the task and added it to the text. The way it used does not have a sense, so it suggests that the writer does not fully understand the task or the vocabulary. The last point is not clear and is not really explained.

There are paragraphs but no headings, although there is some linking language and connection between the points. The report ends with no attempt at a conclusion.

Cambridge English Analysis.

Examiner comments

Subscale	Mark	Examiner comments
Content	1	Some of the task has been misinterpreted (see first paragraph), leading to considerable irrelevance. The target reader would be minimally informed.
Communicative Achievement	2	Uses the conventions of the report to communicate straightforward ideas in generally appropriate ways (<i>There are some problem about the mail-order supply</i>). However, at times the reader's attention is not held due to unclear expression of ideas (<i>But hopefully the improved order</i>).
Organisation	2	The text is connected and there are attempts, not always successful, to employ a variety of cohesive devices and other organisational features (<i>Again; Moreover; Lastly</i>).
Language	2	Uses appropriate everyday lexis and generally simple grammatical forms. There are some attempts at more complex language (<i>The number received; the time taken for delivery</i>). There are some noticeable errors although meaning can still be determined (<i>the time taken for delivery was also a long term; to come across this vital problems products should be delivered on time</i>).

Content 1

This means that because the writer started writing incorrect information about the computer breakdown the whole paragraph is in fact irrelevant and would not inform the reader well at all.

By reading carefully and following the procedure in the BEC Exam Guide Writing Part 2 and below in this article, especially making notes, you can avoid writing irrelevant information. If you write correctly about all points, then you will be able to get a least 3 marks here.

Communicative Achievement 2

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Cambridge English consider that this is written as a report despite the email headings and the lack of a headings and a conclusion. However, it loses marks for the expression of the points.

If you write with headings and follow the procedures to explain your points you can expect a 3 in the pass and increase your chances of a higher mark. However, even if you do not, Cambridge English will look at the style of the report, which is positive and useful to know in case you have problems with this on the day of your exam.

Organisation 2

The writer is given some marks because the text has paragraphs which follow a logical order and because he/she uses some correct linking words.

Language 2

Cambridge English look for positives here and notice that some grammar and vocabulary is correctly used. The examiner is also positive about the mistakes in the English because it considers if the meaning can be understood and also rewards the writer for trying to use more complex vocabulary structures.

This is the second example.

Candidate E

Report on 2006 first quarter's customer complaints

Introduction

The aim of this report is to give an explanation to the customer complaints.

Findings

It clearly shows that we had a peak of complaints in February (540) due to the breakdown of our computer system. Fortunately, with the introduction, in March, of an improved order system, the number came again in the average (230). The first reason for complaints (56%) is the time of delivery. In order to improve that, we decided to change our delivery company.

Furthermore, 28% of complaints results of dissatisfaction with the quality of the product, which will be resolved with the purchase of a new machine.

Finally, 16% are due to the delivery of an incorrect order. However, we pointed out fewer in March.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with all the improvements we made, the situation will be better in the futur.

BEC Exam Guide Analysis

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Visually this looks better immediately. There is a title, introduction and conclusion paragraph, plus a Findings paragraph heading with separate paragraphs. This visual aspect is important because, without reading the content, this report looks like it could pass.

The writer talks about all points with some relevant information except for the last one which is not clear or correctly developed which means the reader would get almost all of the information they need.

The text flows well, moving from the title to the introduction to the findings which are separated but linked with a short introduction to the paragraph and then finished with a basic but appropriate conclusion.

Examiner comments

Subscale	Mark	Examiner comments
Content	4	Content is generally relevant to the task and the target reader would be informed. However, due to the wording of the content element related to time of delivery, the reader is not fully informed on this point.
Communicative Achievement	4	Uses the conventions of the task, such as headings (<i>Findings; Conclusion</i>) to hold the target reader's attention effectively and to communicate both straightforward and complex ideas (<i>which will be resolved with the purchase of a new machine</i>), although occasionally a straightforward idea is not communicated effectively (<i>the number came again in the average (230)</i>).
Organisation	5	The text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to good effect. For example, headings, referencing (<i>It clearly shows; In order to improve that</i>) and linking words (<i>In order to; Furthermore; Finally; However; In conclusion</i>).
Language	3	Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary, including less common lexis (<i>peak; breakdown; resolved</i>). There is a range of simple and some more complex grammatical structures (<i>Fortunately, with the introduction, in March, of an improved order system</i>). However, some precision of meaning is lost (<i>time of delivery</i> instead of 'time taken for delivery'). Although errors are present (<i>came again in the average; 28% of complaints results of dissatisfaction</i>), they do not impede communication.

Cambridge English Analysis. 16/20 = 80%

Content 4

The writer automatically gets a 3 because all points are mentioned and relevant, and would have got a 5 if the final point had been correct.

By reading carefully and following the procedure in the BEC Exam Guide Writing Part 2 and above, especially making notes, you can ensure you include all points and by practising you will increase your chances of getting a 5.

Communicative Achievement 4

Cambridge English automatically give this at least a 3 because the headings clearly make it a report which is appropriate and actually make the document easy to read and to follow. He/She gets 4 because the points are well explained in long sentence but does not get the maximum score because Cambridge English consider that "easy" idea is explained badly.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

This confirms that you should use headings in your report because it immediately will ensure you pass and because it give the document a professional feel.

Organisation 5

Maximum score here because the writer has used exactly what Cambridge English are looking for, the headings again as well as the linking and reference language used.

Language 3

This score is the lowest but it is still a pass. The examiner is positive about most aspects of the grammar and vocabulary, but feels that some parts are not completely clear and that there are errors.

This means that if you make mistakes in the English you can still pass this part if they are only small mistakes.

This is the final example.

Candidate D

This report deals with the number of customer's complaints between January 2006 and March 2006 as well as with reasons for those complaints.

Complaints in January stood at 300, but in February the number rocketed to 540 because of a computer system breakdown. Finally, after introducing some improvement in the order system the number of complaints fell back to 230.

We can point out 3 main reasons for these complaints. Firstly, 10% of them were due to incorrect deliveries. In particular, March saw fewer complaints.

Secondly, an excessive time for delivery led to 56% of complaints. The whole delivery system will be reviewed in order to solve the problem.

Finally, 28% of complaints were due to a lack of quality in our products. This will be solved by setting up a new quality section in our process.

BEC Exam Guide Analysis

At first, this report does not look like a definite pass because there are no headings. However, it has short clear paragraphs and once we start reading we can see it has an excellent clear introduction and that the each paragraph has structure and that the paragraphs are connected to each other. The writer talks about all points with appropriate information for the reader and he/she adds simple clear detail to the two points we had to invent.

There is no separate conclusion, but this is not necessary because he/she each paragraph more or less has one already.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Examiner comments

Subscale	Mark	Examiner comments
Content	4	All content is relevant to the task and the target reader is informed. There is one slip present (10% of them were due to incorrect deliveries).
Communicative Achievement	5	The conventions of the communicative task have been fully exploited to hold the target reader's attention. The candidate communicates straightforward and more complex ideas effectively (The whole delivery system will be reviewed in order to solve the problem).
Organisation	5	The report is well organised and coherent, with effective use of organisational features throughout. Cohesive devices are used appropriately (as well as; in order to; Firstly; Finally). Good use is also made of referencing (For <u>these</u> complaints; of <u>them</u> ; <u>this</u> will be solved).
Language	5	Uses a range of vocabulary including less common lexis (rocketed to; fell back to; excessive time; lack of; setting up). Both simple and complex grammatical forms are used with control and flexibility (after introducing; will be reviewed; will be solved by).

Cambridge English Analysis. 19/20 = 95%

Content 4

All points are mentioned and dealt with well, but because of the mistake in the information 10% not 16%, then the writer only gets 5.

Communicative Achievement 5

Despite the lack of headings, the writer gets full marks. This is because he/she has taken the information from the task, written a short introduction and then he/she has successfully explained the information in the graph, then discussed each of the reasons, developing each one and including the points from the task. By writing this in short paragraphs he/she has in fact written an excellent report, just without the headings.

Organisation 5

The introduction, the paragraph structure, the linking language and the referencing language used all result in full marks here.

Language 5

Full marks for language! Here is variety of language used which impresses the examiner, are number of phrasal verbs are used accurately as well as formal linking language. The grammar is also used well. The examiner mentioned the passive form of will, (which is not very difficult) but it is used correctly and accurately.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

So now let's look at a procedure to ensure that you are able to write a report which

PART TWO

- You work in the **Customer Services Department** of a **mail-order company**. You have been asked to prepare a short **report** for your **line manager** about **complaints**.
- Look at the information below, on which you have already made some handwritten notes.
- Then, using **all** your handwritten notes, write your **report**.
- Write 120 – 140 words.**
- Write on the separate answer paper provided.

Month	Number received
Jan	300
Feb	540
Mar	230

Reasons for complaints (Jan – March)

- ❖ **Incorrect order delivered** – 16%
- ❖ **Time taken to deliver** – 56%
- ❖ **Product quality unsatisfactory** – 28%

Handwritten notes include 'explain plans to improve delivery' pointing to the reasons, 'invent' pointing to the reasons, and 'say what is being done about this' pointing to the reasons.

matches well with the Cambridge Marking Scheme. We can use the same report and the image which includes the added notes.

Procedure

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

1. Read the first line of the context which confirms that the Report is for your manager and gives the extra information that the report will be connected with the problem of complaints. This gives you some context for your introduction.
2. Read the graph, which gives you more context. This information can be taken and used as the Report Title - *Customer Complaints January to March 2006*. As we saw earlier this is a positive in the Cambridge English Markings Scheme.
3. Read the "Reason for complaints". This gives details of the 3 different problems and statistics related to them. This gives you information you must include in your report. It is vital you find this information because, as we saw above it is essential to include all points.
4. It also gives you an Introduction – *The aim of this report is to analyse the reasons for customer complaints*. Another positive for Cambridge English
5. You could use these three reasons as topic headings. If it is difficult to interpret the task information into topic headings, you could also use the general heading "Findings", both formats are considered acceptable by Cambridge English.
6. Read the handwritten notes which are also there to help you prepare. They give you a lot of detail which you can use when you write. There is one explanation for complaints you need to explain (computer system breakdown), one positive aspect (improved order system) and its result (few complaints in March) which you link and explain in your report and two things you need to invent and add to the report.
7. Check how many things you need to write about, 5 in this case.
8. Plan your writing by making notes using these 5 points.
9. The report is only 120 -140 words so it is quite short so the exam task gives you more or less all the information you need.

Title - Report on Customer Complaints January to March 2006.

1st Paragraph Incorrect orders- computer problem (1), solution new system (2). Result 310 less complaints in March (3)

2nd Paragraph)Time - Solution, use different provider.(4)

3rd Paragraph) Quality Issues – use different supplier.(5)

- After making your notes, you are ready to write your report.

Conclusion

This article has shown that it is vital to understand and consider the Cambridge English marking system in the Writing Part 2 and that all students should write in order to correspond with that the examiners want to see. It also demonstrates that using the BEC Exam

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Guide procedure and recommended resources you will gain a significant advantage in your exam preparation.

Essential Grammar for the Speaking test.

This is a guide to the most appropriate and useful way to use the three present tenses and other grammar in the Cambridge English Business Exam speaking test.

Firstly, what are the three or present three tenses?

Present simple - The BEC Exam guide helps students prepare....

Present continuous - to be + verb-ing, for example, you are reading this article.

Present perfect - to have + past participle, for example, you have found this website.

Speaking Part One.

In Part One you answer questions about yourself - the general rule is to use the same grammar as the examiner uses in the question.

For example

Examiner: Do you live in a city?

You: Yes, I live in the capital city.

However, it is not always easy to remember this.

Here are some reasons to use the three different present tenses,

Use the **present simple** to talk about your routine and facts about yourself. Usually, if you explain how often you do something then you need the present simple only. With adverbs like, *sometimes, never, always, occasionally* or when you use *a/every day, week*, etc.

I work in a bank,

I live in an apartment.

I travel to work by train.

I receive 250 emails a day.

I reply to forty emails a week.

I make ten phone calls a day

I attend too many meetings.

I never travel for work.

I sometimes take a real lunch break.

I occasionally finish work at 8 pm.

Use the **present continuous** to talk about things that are happening in your life at the moment or things that are temporary.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

I am preparing for the Cambridge Business exams now.
I am working on three different projects at the moment.
I am taking an online course and am learning about the importance of data protection.
I am working in the Accounts department until April.
I am doing some work on a short-term contract
I am travelling to Europe a lot at the moment because I am replacing a colleague who is in maternity leave

Use the **present perfect** to talk about your experience. You can use it to talk about the past, without using the past simple grammar.

I have worked in Marketing for ten years.
I have had four different jobs.
I have designed websites for several local companies.
I have travelled to South East Asia regularly during my career.
I haven't had a promotion in four years.

It is also possible that there are some questions about the future.

For example.

What are you planning to do in the next year?

How long do you think you will stay in your present job?

Do you expect international travel to be a necessary part of your career?

Use **will + infinitive without to** when you make a prediction about the future.

For example:

The Cambridge Business exam qualification will help my career.

Use **be going to** when you make a prediction with some information in the present connected with your prediction. For example:

There's a big black cloud, it is going to be a storm.
I have missed my bus, I am going to be late for work.
The BEC exam guide website is really useful, it is going to help me pass my exam.

To answer the example questions above, you could say.

Next year I think I will start a new I.T. course.
I'll probably stay in my company for 4 or 5 years.
Europe is going to be the main area where I travel for my job, I already go to France quite regularly.

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

Speaking Part Two

The mini presentation and question.

Present Simple

In your presentation, the present simple is the most logical tense to use because you are answering the question "What is important when..." which is in the present simple.

This means that you are talking generally about a subject and are therefore explaining what someone or something does. Make sure that you remember to use the S if you use he/she/it, often with the stress of the presentation and the time limit., people forget to use it.

In the C1 Higher Speaking Test Part Two it is an option to link your points using the complex grammar structure *having done*

For example.

Having identified, having chosen having considered, having selected.

Present continuous.

This tense could be used to refer to any changes taking place at the moment. You could only use it in one sentence, but it would add some variety to your presentation and if used correctly with the word currently, it sounds very professional.

For example

Training courses are currently using a blended learning system, combining face to face teaching and online practices.

Present perfect.

It is perhaps unnecessary to use the present perfect in the presentation but it could be useful when you have to ask a question your partner's presentation.

Have you ever experienced/seen/noticed/been involved in.....

Other possible forms are the modal auxiliary verbs **would could**

Would can be used to make a recommendation or to imagine a situation.

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

It would be useful to...

An unreliable supplier would create a lot of problems for the whole company.

Could can be used to talk about possible outcomes.

It could have a positive result.

The recruitment process could be changed completely...

Speaking Part 3. ***The meeting***

It is a good policy to be guided by the information you receive in part 3. Often the task context is in the present tense and the task is either in the present simple or uses a conditional modal verb like would or could. Your answers can use the same grammar.

Present simple

Use this tense when talking generally.

A company needs to have...

This is a good idea because it can

New technology makes life easier.

Use this tense when asking for your partner's opinion, or giving your opinion or asking questions. Most of the grammar used in the Cheat Sheet of Essential Vocabulary for Speaking Part 3 document is in the present simple.

When you are discussing different options you can use the conditional modal verbs - **could would**

Use **could** to talk about the possible results of choosing or implementing an option.

This could be useful because...

This could cause problems because...

This could have the added benefit of...

Use **would** to talk about the results you are sure about.

This would be a good idea because...

This would not work because...

This would result in...

This is something I would choose because...

Should can be used to introduce a strong positive or negative recommendation and to give advice.

The company should definitely...

[To Contents](#)

BEC Exam Guide

B2 Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)

A company should never...

This should be adopted as soon as possible...

Managers shouldn't be allowed to...

Present perfect. It is also possible to use the present perfect in part three if you talk about something that has happened recently or about changes.

This has become more/less popular in the last XX years.

The attitude towards...has changed in recent years.

The importance of...has increased/decreased since...