

FIRST CERTIFICATE IN ENGLISH (FCE)

FCE is a general proficiency examination at Level B2 in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference. It is at Level 1 in the UK National Qualifications Framework.

Further details of FCE are given in the FCE Handbook, and at www.cambridgeesol.org

For FCE, there are three passing grades, A, B and C. Candidates who have achieved a Grade A have demonstrated ability at Council of Europe Level C1. Candidates who have not achieved a FCE passing grade (Council of Europe Level B2) but have demonstrated ability at the level below this, are awarded a certificate stating Council of Europe Level B1.

A † symbol next to the grade indicates that the candidate was exempt from satisfying the full range of assessment objectives in the examination.

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference covers six levels of language proficiency. Research carried out by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) shows what learners can typically do at each level. The table below gives examples of typical ability in each of the skill areas for Council of Europe Levels C1, B2 and B1.

Level C1	Listening and Speaking	Reading and Writing
Overall general ability	CAN contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	CAN read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, and CAN take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write a piece of work which shows an ability to communicate.
Level B2	Listening and Speaking	Reading and Writing
Overall general ability	CAN follow a talk on a familiar topic. CAN keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	CAN scan texts for relevant information. CAN make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests.
Social & Tourist	CAN ask for clarification and further explanation, and is likely to understand the answer. CAN keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	CAN read the media for information quickly and with good understanding. CAN express opinions and give reasons.
Work	CAN ask for factual information and understand the answer. CAN express her/his own opinion, and present arguments to a limited extent.	CAN understand the general meaning of non-routine letters and understand most of the content. CAN write a simple report of a factual nature and begin to evaluate, advise etc.
Study	CAN answer predictable or factual questions. CAN check that all instructions are understood.	CAN make simple notes that are of reasonable use for essay or revision purposes, capturing most important points. CAN present arguments, using a limited range of expression (vocabulary, grammatical structures).
Level B1	Listening and Speaking	Reading and Writing
Overall general ability	CAN understand straightforward instructions or public announcements. CAN express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area.	CAN understand routine information and articles. CAN write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.

Further information and examples of the ability statements can be found at www.alte.org

Any alteration to this certificate renders it invalid and use of an altered certificate could constitute a criminal offence.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations provides a results verification service to help organisations and agencies quickly and securely validate candidates' Cambridge ESOL examination results at <https://verification.cambridgeesolonline.org>