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**Cambridge English: Advanced**

**New exam specification for 2015**

**At a glance – what’s new?**

The exam is about 45 minutes shorter. But it still covers all the same language skills and tests at the same level as the current version. The exam has four papers, not five.

**General Changes**

The headline change is the combination of the Reading and Use of English papers into one single, shorter paper that looks at language knowledge and reading skills. There are some new tasks and tests in the Reading and Use of English, Writing and Speaking papers. In fact, the exam is somewhat condensed in general with many of the tasks throughout being shortened and the overall time being reduced from 4 hours and 40 minutes to 3 hours and 55 minutes. In total, there are 18, rather than the previous 19 parts, and the overall question count is reducing from 114 to 86.

**Reading & Use of English**

**Part 1: Multiple Choice Cloze**

**Part 2: Open Cloze**

**Part 3: Word Formation**

**Part 4: Key Word Transformation**

**Part 5: Multiple Choice**

**Part 6: Cross Text Multiple Matching**

**Part 7: Gapped Text**

**Part 8: Multiple Matching**

Time: 90 minutes (reduced from a total of 135 minutes for the two old papers)

There are to be a total of 8 parts and 56 questions.

Part 1 from the current Reading paper (the 3 short texts with 2 comprehension questions each) is to be dropped.

Part 4 from the current Use of English paper (the gapped texts where you choose a single word that fits 3 sentences) is also to be omitted.

There is a new cross-text multiple matching task where you have to select a text to which a given statement applied. It is similar in format to the final part of the PET reading test but obviously more complex.

Finally, Use of English tasks come before Reading tasks so that there is a clear progression from a focus at word and sentence level to a focus on whole text content and structure, a step of logic that should help teachers and learners alike in their mental approach to the tasks.

The content is of a more academic nature, largely due to the omission of the short texts and gapped sentences as mentioned previously, which tended to be more of a mixed register.

**Writing**

**Part 1** remains compulsory and is always an essay, but the input takes the form of notes made during a seminar, lecture or panel discussion. Notably, the input materials seem to closely resemble the input cards for the individual long turn in the CPE exam, but with some accompanying suggested opinions to help you along.

**Part 2** remains largely the same but there will no longer be the possible options of an article or an information sheet. There will no longer be set text questions (currently number 5)

**Listening**

All current listening tasks remain unchanged in length and format

However, in **Part 3** (the multiple choice section), the questions are to focus more on interaction between the 2 speakers whereas in the old exam, they tend to focus on the ideas expressed by a sole interviewee.

**Speaking**

In **Part 1**, Phase 2 is shortened to a single topic-question for each candidate (a maximum of 2).

Part 1 timing is reduced by one minute. This essentially means that the students need to seize the opportunity to give a full answer to the question and not expect a follow-up.

In Part 3, visuals are replaced with written prompts, perhaps in the form of a spidergram. This makes the task clearer as some of the photos in the existing exam are often criticised for ambiguity. The task is also now split into two with the examiner clearly introducing a discussion phase and a decision-making phase. Part 4 timing is extended by one minute.

In general, efforts have been made to create tasks with more of a study or work related theme.