**B1 Business Preliminary, formerly known as Cambridge English:**

Business Preliminary (BEC Preliminary), is one of our [Cambridge English Qualifications](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/qualifications/index.aspx). It helps you to get the practical language skills you need to start doing business in English.

With a B1 Business Preliminary qualification, you show employers that you have a good knowledge of English for practical, everyday use in business.

There are three [Cambridge English Qualifications for business](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/qualifications/business/index.aspx). Each one is targeted at a different level and B1 Business Preliminary is the first of these exams. The content for each exam is based on everyday work and business tasks and is designed to develop your business English skills.

# Exam format

B1 Business Preliminary is made up of three papers developed to test your English skills. You can see exactly what is in each paper below.

| **Paper** | **Content** | **Marks (% of total)** | **Purpose** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading and Writing** (1 hour 30 minutes) [See sample paper](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/22100-business-preliminary-sample-papers-1.zip) | Reading: **7** parts  Writing: **2** parts | **50%** | Shows you can read and understand the main points from graphs or charts, messages and emails, and can use vocabulary and structure correctly. You are also required to be able to produce two short pieces of writing: an internal communication, such as a note or a message, and some business correspondence, such as an email or a letter. |
| **Listening** (about 40 minutes, including transfer time) [See sample paper](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/22100-business-preliminary-sample-papers-1.zip) | **4** parts | **25%** | Requires you to be able to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including interviews and discussions about everyday life. |
| **Speaking** (12 minutes per pair of candidates) [See sample paper](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/22100-business-preliminary-sample-papers-1.zip) | **3** parts | **25%** | Shows your spoken English as you take part in conversation, asking and answering questions, and talking freely about your opinions, for example, when discussing business-related topics. Your Speaking test will be face-to-face with one or two other candidates. This makes your test more realistic and more reliable. |

## openbook What’s in the Reading and Writing paper?

The B1 Business Preliminary Reading and Writing paper has seven parts for Reading and two parts for Writing. There are different types of texts and questions.

**Summary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time allowed:** | 1 hours 30 minutes |
| **Number of parts:** | Reading: 7 parts; Writing: 2 parts |
| **Number of questions:** | Reading: 45 questions; Writing: 2 tasks |
| **Marks:** | Reading: 25% of total; Writing: 25% total |

**Part 1 (Multiple choice)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 1?** | Five very short texts (they may be signs, messages, postcards, notes, emails, labels, etc.). You have to read them and choose which of the three sentences (A, B or C) is correct. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading notices and other short texts to understand the main message. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 5 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 2 (Matching)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 2?** | Five short descriptions, often of people’s requirements, and one text to read. You have to match each person to part of the text. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading to find specific information. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 5 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 3 (Matching)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 3?** | Eight graphs or charts (or one or more graphics with eight parts) and five questions. You need to match each question to a graph or part of a graph. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading and understanding visual information |
| **How many questions are there?** | 5 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 4 (Right/Wrong/Doesn't say)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 4?** | A text and seven questions. For each question, you have to decide if a statement is A 'Right' or B 'Wrong', according to the text, or if the information is not given in the text, you should choose C 'Doesn't say'. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading and finding detailed factual information. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 7 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 5 (Multiple choice)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 5?** | A text, often from a leaflet or from a newspaper or magazine article, with six multiple-choice questions. Each question has three options. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading for gist (the main ideas) and specific information. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 6 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 6 (Multiple-choice cloze)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 6?** | A text (newspaper or magazine article, advert, leaflet, etc.) with twelve numbered spaces. Each space represents a missing word and you have to choose the right answer (A, B, or C). |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading – understanding when grammar is correct and understanding the structure of a text. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 12 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 7 (Note completion)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 7?** | Two short texts (memos, emails, notices, adverts, etc.) and a form to complete. You have to read the texts and fill in the correct information (a word, a number or a phrase) in the empty spaces on the form. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Reading and transferring information. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 5 |
| **How many marks are there?** | One mark for each correct answer. |

**Part 8 (Writing Part 1)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 8? (Writing Part 1)** | An internal company communication. The instructions tell you who to write to and what you should write (e.g. a note, a message, a memo or an email). |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Writing short messages to colleagues. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 1 |
| **How much do I have to write?** | 30–40 words. |
| **How many marks are there?** | This question has a total of 10 marks. |

**Part 9 (Writing Part 2)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What's in Part 9? (Writing Part 2)** | A piece of business correspondence (letter or email) or a notice, an advert, etc., to read. The instructions tell you what to write and who to write to. |
| **What do I have to practise?** | Writing business letters to people outside your company. |
| **How many questions are there?** | 1 |
| **How much do I have to write?** | 60–80 words |
| **How many marks are there?** | This question has a total of 20 marks. |