

Let's take a REAL C1 English Test! 🧑 (CAE Use of English) [955]

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## Introduction

A few episodes ago - I did a C1 grammar test which I found online (episode 949).

Perhaps I didn't make this point clear enough during the episode - part of the reason I did it is because I wanted to show that the test was a scam, making the point that a lot of tests are useless, some websites are out to take your money, and testing your level of English accurately is a complicated business which gets to the heart of what it really means to be good at English.

The test which I did in the episode wasn't really appropriate for a C1 level (quite a lot of people made that point in the comments)

with questions that covered language points more suited to an intermediate level, not enough range of English usage in the test, and a multiple choice format that doesn't really test language level properly, but also the test was basically a scam - promising a certificate and detailed feedback on your results, but then surprising you with a \$10 charge when you completed the test.

Still, it did let me cover quite a few different grammar points, which was fine.

But in this episode today I want to do another test, which is much more reliable, challenging and subject to proper testing methodology.

In this episode (and we're going to start in a minute) I'm going to do some parts of the CAE exam - that's the Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English.

It's widely recognised by universities, employers, and immigration authorities around the world.

As its name suggests, it is a C1 level exam according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

This is a proper test, developed by a respected academic authority on language testing.

This episode does not count as proper CAE preparation (maybe I will do other episodes or a course about this later - I have taught a lot of CAE courses over the years). We are just going to look at a

sample of the test and it will be a chance to learn some English from it.

Proper CAE prep involves learning not just English but exam skills - strategies for taking each part of the test.

The CAE exam is long. It is in 4 sections - Listening, Reading & Use of English, Speaking, Writing. It tests a wide range of skills and subskills across those areas. It's not just about whether you know specific grammar points, but shows how you can apply your skills in a variety of ways - both productive and receptive, as well as being able to control and manipulate language effectively and accurately. It's the real deal basically.

The whole test takes around 4 hours and often is done over several days (with the speaking part often being done separately). It's very challenging.

In this episode I am going to just do half of one of the sections from the test. I'm going to dip into the Reading & Use of English section, and just do the 4 Use of English parts.

What is "Use of English"?

This is the closest that the test comes to being a grammar test, similar to the one I did before, but it's not just multiple choice. It includes different types of exercise that show how well you can control your grammar and vocabulary.

And it's supposed to take you about 40 minutes to do the whole thing, and it only accounts for about 15% of the whole test.

Each question in Parts 1, 2, 3 and 8 carries one mark.

Each question in Part 4 carries up to two marks.

I am going to use the sample test from the Cambridge English website for this. They have several tests which you can download and use, and there are digital versions too.

I'll go through each one, read out the task, let you consider the answers, and give my answers and comments, and we will see how many I get right.

Try to follow along with me and really think clearly about each question.

I will sum up the English that came up in the test at the end, and there will be loads of lovely chunks of very useful English that come out of this.

Let's go.

**Practice tests can be found here 📌**

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/advanced/preparation/>

**I did this digital sample test 📌**

<https://ceq.inspera.com/player/?assessmentRunId=160272499&context=exam#/section/8673155978802/question/160270339/scorableItem/1/skipScroll>

**Here are the answers to the test I took 📌**

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/697501-c1-advanced-reading-use-of-english-test-sample-1-answer-key.pdf>

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## Language to Learn from this Episode

Here is a list of “English chunks” that you can pick up from this episode.

### 1. To win someone's trust

**Definition:** To gain someone's confidence by proving reliability or honesty.

**Examples:**

- It took months to win the trust of the local community.
- A teacher must win the trust of their students.

**Comment:** Usually followed by an object: *win + someone's trust / confidence / support*.

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### 2. Contrary to popular belief

**Definition:** Used to introduce a statement that goes against what most people think.

**Examples:**

- Contrary to popular belief, bats are not blind.

- Contrary to popular belief, carrots don't improve your night vision.

**Comment:** Commonly used at the beginning of a sentence, followed by a comma.

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### 3. To dispute claims

**Definition:** To challenge or argue against statements made by others.

**Examples:**

- Scientists dispute claims that the drug has no side effects.
- The company disputed claims made in the press.

**Comment:** Pattern: *dispute + claims/charges/allegations + that...*

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### 4. To be misled by something

**Definition:** To be deceived or given a false impression.

**Examples:**

- Many voters were misled by fake news.
- Don't be misled by his calm appearance.

**Comment:** Passive structure is common: *be misled by + noun/into + -ing*.

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## 5. To be under no illusion about something

**Definition:** To be fully aware of a difficult or unpleasant reality.

**Examples:**

- She was under no illusion about the challenges ahead.
- I'm under no illusion that this will be easy.

**Comment:** Structure: *be under no illusion (about/that...)*.

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## 6. In such a way that...

**Definition:** Describes how something is done, leading to a result.

**Examples:**

- He explained it in such a way that everyone understood.
- The film ended in such a way that it left us speechless.

**Comment:** Structure: *in such a way that + clause of result*.

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## 7. In other words

**Definition:** Used to rephrase or clarify a point.

**Examples:**

- She's a polyglot. In other words, she speaks many languages.
- The plan failed. In other words, we need to start again.

**Comment:** Often used as a sentence connector, followed by a comma.

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## 8. Could well be

**Definition:** Suggests something is quite likely or possible.

**Examples:**

- This could well be the best decision you've ever made.
- It could well be true.

**Comment:** Modal structure: *could well* + verb (bare infinitive).

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## 9. Despite this

**Definition:** Even though something has been mentioned, the opposite is true.

**Examples:**

- The road was icy. Despite this, he drove quickly.
- It was raining heavily; despite this, they continued the match.

**Comment:** Linking phrase, often at the start of a clause.



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## 10. If nothing else

**Definition:** At least; used when something isn't great, but still has one positive aspect.

**Examples:**

- The film was, if nothing else, entertaining.
- If nothing else, you'll learn from the experience.

**Comment:** Set phrase, usually at the beginning or middle of a sentence.

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## 11. To be overcome

**Definition:** To be overwhelmed emotionally or physically.

**Examples:**

- She was overcome with emotion.
- The firefighters were overcome by smoke.

**Comment:** Structure: *be overcome (with/by + noun)*.

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## 12. Endurance

**Definition:** The ability to withstand hardship or continue despite difficulty.

**Examples:**

- Marathon running requires great endurance.
- His endurance during the climb impressed everyone.

**Comment:** Noun, often follows *show/have/display/require endurance*.

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### 13. Beneficial

**Definition:** Helpful or advantageous.

**Examples:**

- Regular exercise is beneficial to your health.
- A short break can be beneficial for concentration.

**Comment:** Adjective, commonly followed by *to + noun*.

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### 14. The severity of

**Definition:** The seriousness or intensity of something.

**Examples:**

- The severity of the storm shocked the residents.

- Doctors were worried about the severity of her injuries.

**Comment:** Noun phrase: *the severity of + noun*.

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## 15. Not nearly as much as

**Definition:** Far less than; emphasises a large difference.

**Examples:**

- He doesn't earn nearly as much as his brother.
- This car doesn't cost nearly as much as the other one.

**Comment:** Comparative structure: *not nearly as + adjective/adverb + as...*

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## 16. To be pulled down

**Definition:** To be demolished or removed.

**Examples:**

- The old theatre was pulled down last year.
- The authorities pulled down the unsafe building.

**Comment:** Passive and active forms both common: *pull down + object*.

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## 17. The highest it has ever been

**Definition:** A superlative expression describing a record level.

**Examples:**

- Inflation is the highest it has ever been.
- The temperature was the highest it had ever been.

**Comment:** Superlative + *it has/had ever been*. Often with statistics.

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## 18. In comparison with

**Definition:** When considering differences between two things.

**Examples:**

- In comparison with last year, sales are lower.
- His work looks poor in comparison with hers.

**Comment:** Prepositional phrase, followed by noun.

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## 19. In spite of a lack of

**Definition:** Despite not having something.

**Examples:**

- In spite of a lack of sleep, he finished the marathon.
- She succeeded in spite of a lack of resources.

**Comment:** Structure: *in spite of + noun phrase*.

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## 20. The dangers of doing something

**Definition:** The risks involved in a particular action.

**Examples:**

- They warned about the dangers of driving too fast.
- The dangers of smoking are well known.

**Comment:** Structure: *the dangers of + gerund/noun*