

**SECOND
EDITION**

Lower Secondary
English

**REVISION
GUIDE**

FOR THE SECONDARY 1 TEST

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Preparing for the test

As you've almost certainly realised by now, English is different from nearly every other subject that you study at school. One of the main differences becomes apparent as soon as you start to think about examinations and preparing for them.

How do you go about revising for your Cambridge Checkpoint English test?

- The Cambridge Checkpoint test consists of two question papers.
- Each question paper lasts for 1 hour and 10 minutes.
- Both question papers test how well you read and understand passages that are printed on them.
- Both question papers ask you to plan and write something of your own that is in some way connected to the subject matter of the reading passage.
- The questions on the reading passages will not only test your understanding of what you have read, but will also test some of your knowledge of grammar, punctuation and how well you appreciate a writer's choice of words and control of structures.
- Your own writing will be assessed according to how well you adapt the content of what you write for the suggested audience, how well you structure your ideas by using paragraphs, the variety and range of your sentence structures, your use of vocabulary suited to your subject matter and the accuracy of your spelling and punctuation.
- It is a good idea to keep a list of interesting new words, and their meanings, that you can use in your own writing. There are reminders to add to this vocabulary list throughout this book.
- It is important to remember that Cambridge Checkpoint will test how well you apply what you have learnt in English during your time at school. It does not test your ability to remember and repeat facts that you have acquired in, for example, the way that a science test may ask you to write down the definition of photosynthesis.

This revision guide will, therefore, concentrate on helping you to prepare for the types of question that will be set in the Cambridge Checkpoint test papers and aim to help you to become fully familiar with the best ways in which to approach the different types of reading and writing on which you will be tested.

Usually, when people say that they don't like examinations and find them hard and scary, this is because they are worried about not being able to remember all the relevant details about a particular topic on a question paper. English is different from other subjects. English tests do not expect you to remember and repeat facts but instead, they expect you to demonstrate how well you can write down your own ideas and understand what someone else has written.

If you are well prepared for the approaching test there is no need to fear it; instead, all you need to do is enjoy the experience. It is hoped that this revision guide will help you to get the most enjoyment that you can from your English Cambridge Checkpoint tests!

Chapter 1 Mechanics of English

The English language is made up of many different components and this section will revise some of these. For example, in order to write clearly and effectively you will be using different types of sentence, made up of different clauses and of varying lengths, to create particular effects. In your sentences, you will use nouns, adjectives and adverbs to make your writing both precise and enjoyable to read.

Parts of speech

Try this

In the table below are a number of terms you will have met before. Complete the table by explaining the meaning of each term and giving an example of it.

Term	Meaning	Example
Noun		
Adjective		
Adverb		
Verb		
Preposition		
Proper noun		
Indefinite article		
Definite article		
Conjunction		
Connective		

Try this

It is often a good idea to think about extending your sentences by including adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. Look at the table below that contains different parts of speech.

Article	Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb	Preposition	Article	Noun
The	purple	walrus	edged	furtively	before	a	riverbed
A	miniature	spider	raced	slowly	through	the	beach
Each	rumbling	boy	bowed	hesitantly	down	that	hilltop
An	elegant	dancer	lumbered	lazily	beside	this	cottage
That	cunning	pixie	prowled	silently	past	another	shop
This	lively	fox	stalked	hopefully	above	a	school
The	intelligent	bear	dawdled	aggressively	behind	the	valley
The	smooth	runner	hid	loudly	beneath	a	trail

Make some sentences out of the words, choosing one from each column. Some of your sentences may not make much sense!

Write down three of your best sentences.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Change some of the words to make sure your sentences make sense. For example:

The intelligent fox stalked silently beside the riverbed.

The cunning pixie prowled furtively through the valley.

Write **five** more sentences, using some of the words above, but also your own ideas. Make sure you use all the parts of speech that appear in the table.

.....

.....

.....

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Sentence variety

Variety is important. If all your sentences begin in the same way, your writing will sound predictable and boring. Sentence variety is the key to becoming a successful writer.

There are many different ways in which you can begin a sentence.

For example, you could use some of the following:

- 1 Adverbs (describing a verb)
- 2 **Pronouns** (I, you, he, she, it, we, they)
- 3 Prepositions (on, behind, between, over, etc.)
- 4 **Participles** (-ing words)
- 5 Definite or indefinite articles (the, a, an)
- 6 Adjectives (describing words)
- 7 Connectives (linking words)
- 8 Verbs (action words)

pronoun a word used instead of a noun, such as *I, you, it*

participles -ing words

paragraph a group of sentences about the same idea or topic

Try this

The following **paragraph** uses all of the beginnings mentioned above. Add numbers (from the list above) to the paragraph to indicate how each sentence starts.

I screamed and ran. The window had been broken. Behind me I heard heavy breathing. Peering over my shoulder nervously, I felt the presence of someone nearby. Cold beads of sweat began to trickle down my forehead. Slowly, fear gripped my body. Although I knew I was being foolish, my hands began to tremble. To run was my only option.

opinion a view about something, which may not be based on fact

Improving your writing style

Look at the following article written by a student giving an **opinion** about footballers' wages.

I think it is unfair that footballers earn so much money. It is unjust and scandalous. I think there should be a law that puts a limit on how much money they can earn. I think, for example, that top footballers shouldn't be allowed to earn more than one million pounds a year. I believe that a limit like this would make the game more fair and competitive and it could stop unfair competition with clubs trying to lure players with higher wages. I think it will help teams in lower leagues attract better footballers and as a result they will have a better chance of winning matches against the top teams. I also think that by doing this we would bring football back into the real world as many ordinary people feel that players are out of touch with their fans. I believe it is wrong that we seem to be valuing footballers more than doctors and nurses by paying them so much money.

Try this

- What do you think the student could do to improve this piece of writing?
- Rewrite it, thinking about how you can vary the way you start each sentence.
- When you have done this, pick out your favourite sentence and explain your choice.
- Now, using the skills you have been practising, write the rest of the article.
- Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper.

fiction writing about imaginary events or people

Try this

Here is another piece of student writing. This time, it is **fiction**.

A crash! A clatter! The sound of someone trying to keep their voice low. Sounds of activity awoke me from my dark, silent dreams. With my eyes wide open, my ears nailed to the floor of my room, I listened patiently, waiting for a clue as to what was going on. I had no idea what had caused the noise.

- Does this paragraph sound boring and predictable? Explain your opinion.
- Does the writer vary the beginning of the sentences? Explain how the writer does this.
- Now continue with this story by adding another **four** paragraphs of your own, remembering what you have learnt so far.
- Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper.

Different types of sentence

In order to be a good writer and achieve high marks in tests and exams, you will need to show that you can write different types of sentence and sentences that are of different lengths.

Here are some different types of sentence.

simple sentence a sentence that has a subject and one verb
subject the part of the sentence that does the action

Simple sentences

These sentences are exactly what you think they are – simple! A **simple sentence** has a **subject** and one verb (an action word) and it gives one piece of information.

For example:

The girl chased the ball.

Make up **five** simple sentences of your own.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The girl chased the ball and she scored a great goal.

Make up **five** compound sentences of your own.

As the name suggests, these sentences are slightly more complicated – they are a bit longer and contain more details. Often, a **complex sentence** will have two (or more) verbs and contain two (or more) pieces of information. A complex sentence is different from a compound sentence because the second part of the sentence either depends on or refers back to the first part.

Until she scored a goal, the girl chased the ball.

- As
- Although
- After
- While
- When
- Unless
- Before
- Because
- If
- Since

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Fog everywhere.

[illegible]

Try this

1 What types of sentence are these?

a The little dog barked because it couldn't have any treats.

.....

b It sat by its bowl.

c It whined like a baby.

d When it finally stopped barking, its owner was relieved.

.....

e The owner took the dog outside and gave it its favourite treat.

.....

f Peace at last!

2 How did you decide what types of sentence they are?

.....

.....

.....

Using different types of sentence

Try this

Look at this piece of writing by a student.

Guilt. I never liked that feeling. The feeling that almost made you sick to the stomach. I knew I was wrong and shouldn't be doing it, but I couldn't face what was waiting for me. I just couldn't stay and let them do that to me. Although I had to run, I wondered what would happen when they found me.

How many different types of sentence can you find in the piece?

.....

Which sentence do you think has the greatest effect on the reader?

Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

Now continue the story using a range of different types of sentence.

Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper. Write about a page.

speech a piece of persuasive text delivered to an audience

You should also use different types of sentence for effect when writing on the non-fiction paper.

Here is an extract from a **speech** defending wolves.

I am here tonight to change your mind about one of the most misunderstood and maligned animals in the world. Like us, this animal lives in close families and loves playing and having fun. Any idea who this creature can be? Yes, the wolf.

Evil and vicious? Not so. The wolf is a clever and loving animal, nothing like the way it is presented in 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'The Three Little Pigs'. When we were little, we all enjoyed such stories. Now we have grown up and we can understand the truth behind the fiction.

TOP TIPS

Minor sentences can often be used to emphasise a point. Sometimes it is effective to use a very short sentence or a one-word 'sentence' after a longer one to create dramatic effect or to show contrast. For example:

I think not.

A series of short sentences can also add dramatic effect and create tension or suspense. For example:

I came. I saw. I conquered.

Try this

- How many different types of sentence can you find in this piece of persuasive writing?
- Now write another two or three paragraphs to continue the speech.
- Remember to include different types of sentence.
- Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper.

Check your understanding

- 1 Which of these is a complex sentence? Tick (✓) **one** box.

a Although he had a new phone, he was still unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
b He had a new phone.	<input type="checkbox"/>
c He was still unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
d How can you be unhappy with a new phone?	<input type="checkbox"/>
- 2 Select the correct word to complete this complex sentence.

Jack's parents bought him a new car he had passed his driving test.

- if
- because
- although
- however



main clause the part of a sentence that makes sense on its own

subordinate clause the part of a sentence that doesn't make sense on its own and depends on the main clause

TOP TIPS

Remember that a main clause can form a complete sentence standing alone. However, a subordinate clause cannot stand alone. It is often introduced by a **conjunction**, and is dependent on a main clause (for example, 'when it rang' in 'She answered the phone when it rang.').

conjunction a joining word (a type of connective), such as *however, because, and*

- 3 Identify the **main clause** in this sentence. Remember that a main clause is the part of the sentence that makes sense on its own.

Although the test was difficult, Haleema hoped she would achieve high marks.

- a the test was difficult
- b she would achieve high marks
- c Although the test was difficult
- d Haleema hoped she would achieve high marks

☐
☐
☐
☐

- 4 Identify the **subordinate clause** in this sentence. Remember that a subordinate clause is the part of the sentence that doesn't make sense on its own and depends on the main clause.

Yusuf was disappointed when he found out the train had already left.

- a when he found out the train had already left
- b Yusuf was disappointed
- c already left
- d the train had already left

☐
☐
☐
☐

- 5 Which of these is not a complex sentence?

- a My favourite subjects are maths and physics.
- b Although I am good at maths, I hate physics.
- c I enjoy maths because I am good at it.
- d Maths is my favourite subject, even though I don't always achieve high marks.

☐
☐
☐
☐

Chapter 2 Paragraphing, punctuation and sentence structures

Paragraphs

In order to communicate clearly and effectively, you will need to organise your writing and ideas into sections or **paragraphs**.

A paragraph is a series of sentences about the same topic, or which follow on from each other. You should use paragraphs to divide and organise your ideas. Paragraphs help your readers to follow your train of thought.

Try this

connective a linking word, used to join together words, phrases or clauses, or to show relationships between sentences, such as *and, but, then*

Practise organising your ideas into paragraphs by describing what you did at the weekend.

You may want to use some of these **connectives** (linking words) to help join your ideas together. Add some connectives of your own to the table.

also	too	however	anyway
besides	first of all	secondly	then
lastly	so	since	to begin with
next	in the end	to sum up	in a nutshell

Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper.

Try this

Read the extract from a travel brochure below and mark where each new paragraph should start. Explain why you would begin a new paragraph in each case.

Complete this answer on a separate piece of paper.

At first glance, Mauritius looks like it should be part of the Caribbean, with its immaculate, idyllic beaches and crystal blue sea. Tempted to take a plunge in these breathtaking, calm waters, home to groups of elegant dolphins swimming playfully around boats? Fancy a more active holiday? Then you'll have the opportunity to indulge your passion for water sports like snorkelling or, for the more adventurous, there is wind- and kite-surfing. Mauritius has a wealth of natural history.



TOP TIPS

Start a new paragraph when you:

- start a new point or topic
- write about a different time
- write about a different place.

Surrounded by high mountains and dense forest, the island is home to some of the most rare and exotic animals in the world. Mauritius was discovered more than 600 years ago and since then, it has absorbed the influence from so many different cultures. You can enjoy Creole cooking and Grand Gaube is considered to be the culinary hot spot of the island. Also dotted around the island you can enjoy the spectacle of architectural splendour in the form of chateaux built during the time of the French occupation of the island.

audience the people for whom a piece of writing is intended

purpose the reason why something is written

As you have read earlier, using connectives is a helpful way of joining your ideas together and connectives have many uses. Here are some connectives that may help you when you are writing for different **purposes** and **audiences**.

When you want to	Connectives
explain a point or idea	so, because, therefore, as a result of, consequently
add a point or idea	also, moreover, in addition to, furthermore
prove a point or idea	for example, for instance, such as
compare points or ideas	in the same way, likewise, similarly
show differences/contrast ideas	however, on the other hand, alternatively, whereas

Sequencing your ideas

Using paragraphs helps you to organise your thoughts when you are writing. This is important because, in order for your work to make sense, your ideas need to be in a logical order so that they flow clearly from one to the next.

Try this

Read the speech about the disadvantages of mobile phones on the opposite page. The paragraphs are well written but they are a bit jumbled, so the writer's argument doesn't sound well organised or fluent.

Decide the order in which the paragraphs should be written so that the ideas flow smoothly and make sense.

Are there any clues in the use of connectives to help you make your decisions?

Are there any paragraphs about similar topics that might be placed next to each other?



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