

# General Overview of the Cambridge First (FCE) Test Prep Course

## General Course Overview:

The ASB English Language Center's Cambridge First test prep course is designed to prepare students ages 13-17 to acquire a **B2 level** of English. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a **B2 Level** corresponds to a language learner who can:

- Understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization.
- Communicate and express opinions and present arguments with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without strain for either party.
- Write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain an opinion on a topic or current event giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Texts include letters, essays, opinion pieces, stories, etc.

## Instructional Skills:

In this course, students will aim to master the following skills:

- Language Development, which involves grammar and extensive vocabulary learning and practice.
- Writing Skills with a specific focus on essay writing in schools.
- Reading, which involves analysis of age-appropriate texts of current relevance.
- Listening, which includes comprehension of general and detailed information.
- Communication Skills, which cover a range of everyday conversations and presentations.

## Course Objectives:

The main objectives of the course are:

- to provide material for the students to learn and extend their command of English grammar and vocabulary;
- to develop students' reading skills to skim text for main ideas, scan text for specific information, interpret text for inferences, attitudes and styles, and deduce meaning from context clues; course readings will include text from newspaper and magazine articles.

- to develop students' writing skills to respond to a specific prompt and to select and summarize information for a range of writing activities, such as essays, reports and letters;
- to develop students' listening skills to enable them to follow and understand a range of spoken materials including announcements and discussions about everyday life, as well as more abstract topics.
- to develop students' speaking skills using social language. Students will take part in conversation by asking/answering questions and talking, for example, about their likes and dislikes. They will also collaborate with their speaking partner in order to exchange opinions and complete a task.

**Methods of Assessment:**

Students will be evaluated throughout the course based on their progress and performance in the following key areas:

- oral interactions;
- written tests and tasks (letters, reports, articles, reviews);
- essays;
- listening/viewing;
- understanding of age-appropriate reading passages;

Periodic evaluations will be administered in each of these areas to assess continuous student learning and results will be shared with parents.

**Course Materials:**

We will use the following textbooks and training materials published by Cambridge University Press. These resources will help students to obtain the necessary skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, develop their abilities in making presentations and participating in discussions and enable them to achieve an advanced level of social and academic language. Other complementary resources will be used in class, linked to the topic areas studied.:

Cambridge English Complete First for Schools for Spanish Speakers Student's book with answers with Audio CD
Cambridge English Complete First for Schools for Spanish Speakers Student's book without answers
Cambridge English Complete First for Schools for Spanish Speakers Workbook with answers with Audio CD
Cambridge English Complete First for Schools for Spanish Speakers, Audio CD set
Cambridge Vocabulary for FCE with answers: Self-study vocabulary practice
Cambridge Grammar for First Certificate with Answers: Self-study grammar reference and practice with Audio CD
Cambridge English First for Schools 2 Student's book with answers: Authentic exam papers

### **Teaching and Learning Methods:**

Teaching, learning and assessment are designed to enable students to achieve the course objectives described above. While part of any session will involve direct teaching, the emphasis is on student participation, and I will encourage students to take part actively in discussion and in tasks like small group and pair work.

### **Independent Learning:**

Students are expected to spend time studying outside the class, and weekly homework will be assigned to help them develop their expertise as independent language learners. For this course, students will spend approximately 2 hours/week reviewing their notes from class, reading, watching or listening to content in English, preparing exercises and activities for the class, writing assignments, and acquiring a repertoire of effective language learning strategies.

### **Practice and Official Examinations:**

In May 2020, we will spend the final four sessions of the course taking and reviewing the results of 2 full-length practice exams to ensure that students are ready to sit for the official Cambridge First exam in June 2020..

Depending on student enrollment numbers, we may be able to invite Cambridge examiners to come to the ASB campus to administer the official exam to our students. More information about exam fees, which normally run about 190€, and the exam date will be shared with families in late March 2020.

It is important to note that students learn at different rates, and some students may need extra support and more time before presenting for the Cambridge First exam. Alternative exam dates off-site in Barcelona are also available in December 2020 for those who require additional preparation.

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Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for enrolling your child in the ASB Test Prep Course for the Cambridge First Exam. I am fully aware that for some students this is a culmination of eight or more years of study in our English Language Center. I truly look forward to accompanying them on this exhilarating journey to deepening their language proficiency and celebrating together their progress towards communicating effortlessly in English.

Kind regards,

Steven Brown and Michelle Ndrika

ELC English Teachers

American School of Barcelona