

1.3

BEC Preliminary Exam

Format and Reading Test

Introduction

EXAM FORMAT

Exam Success

What are your strong and weak areas in English? Concentrate on the areas you have most difficulty with at first.

The BEC Preliminary Exam has three papers and tests your reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

Each skill is worth 30 marks (total = 120). The pass grade is around 65% (or around 80 marks). You pass or fail on your total marks. For example, if you fail one skill but your total is 90, you pass the exam.

The table below shows the length of each test and its structure. You will learn more about the structure of each test in this book.

Paper	Skill(s)	Marks	Length (minutes)	Structure
1	Reading & Writing	30 + 30	90 minutes (Reading: 60 minutes Writing: 30 minutes)	Reading: 7 parts Writing: 2 parts
2	Listening	30	40 minutes	4 parts
3	Speaking	30	12 minutes	3 parts

You will get your results approximately seven weeks after the exam. Your results show your overall grade (*Pass with Merit, Pass, Narrow Fail or Fail*) and your performance in each paper. If you pass, you will get your certificate about four weeks after your results.

Read about the format of the BEC Preliminary Exam above. Find the answers to these questions.

- 1 How many papers are there in the BEC Preliminary Exam? _____
- 2 What skills are tested? _____
- 3 What's the maximum number of marks you can get? _____
- 4 How many marks do you need to pass? _____
- 5 Do you have to pass all four skills to pass the exam? _____
- 6 Which is the longest paper: Reading & Writing, Listening or Speaking? _____
- 7 How many parts are there in the Reading Test? _____
- 8 How many parts are there in the Speaking Test? _____
- 9 When do you get your results? _____
- 10 What do the results tell you? _____
- 11 When do you get your certificate? _____
- 12 Does everyone get a certificate? _____

EXAM FORMAT

The Reading Test has seven parts, which are always in the same order:

- Parts One to Five test your general reading comprehension.
- Part Six tests your grammar.
- Part Seven tests your ability to complete a form with relevant information.
- Each part contains a reading text and a comprehension task.
- Many different types of text are used, such as notices, messages, adverts, timetables, leaflets, graphs, charts, business letters, product descriptions, reports, minutes, newspaper and magazine articles, memos. Column 4 in the table below shows which text types are used in each part of the exam.
- You have 60 minutes to answer 45 questions and to transfer your answers to the Answer Sheet in pencil. If you need to change an answer, use an eraser.
- You can make notes on the text but not on the Answer Sheet.
- The table below summarises all the features of the Reading Test.

Part	Questions	Task type	Text type	Example
1	5	Multiple choice	Notices, messages, timetables, adverts, leaflets, etc.	Unit 5, page 52
2	5	Matching	Notice, list, plan, contents page, etc.	Unit 5, page 52
3	5	Matching	Graphs, charts, tables, etc.	Unit 5, page 53
4	7	Right / Wrong / Doesn't say	Advert, business letter, product description, report, minutes, etc. (150–200 words)	Unit 9, page 92
5	6	Multiple choice	Newspaper or magazine article, advert, report, leaflet, etc. (300–400 words)	Unit 9, page 93
6	12	Multiple choice cloze	Newspaper or magazine article, advert, leaflet, etc. (125–150 words)	Unit 12, page 122
7	5	Form-filling, note completion	Short memos, letters, notices, adverts, etc.	Unit 12, page 123

2 Read about the format of the Reading Test above and decide whether the following statements are true or false. Tick ✓ as appropriate.

	True	False
1 There are five parts in the Reading Test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Grammar is not tested in the Reading Test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 A wide variety of text types are used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Graphs and charts containing figures are used as texts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 There are 45 questions in each part of the test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 You have 60 minutes to do the Reading Test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 You must write your answers in pencil.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 You can't make notes on the Reading text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 The longest text has 300–400 words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 All the tasks are multiple choice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>