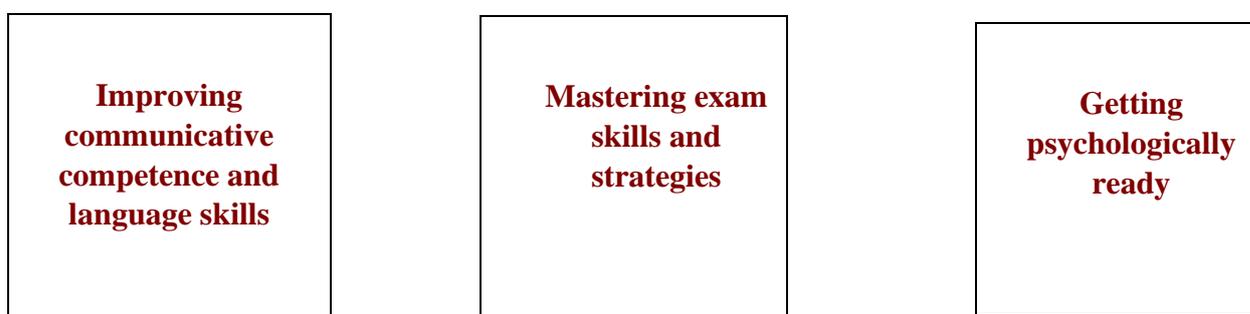


Preparation for the test

What is the best way to prepare for your English test?

First of all, you need to decide what level of the test you are going to take. Currently you can choose between **the Level 1 Test in English, the Level 2 Test in English and the Level 3 Test in English**, which are general proficiency examinations at Levels B1, B2 and C1 respectively in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) offered at the Language testing centre at St Petersburg University. You can find sample tests on our site and do them before making your decision as to which test is more suitable for you. Moreover, there are various online placement tests which can also help you find out which exam is right for you.

Preparation for the test can be divided into three parts:



Improving communicative competence and language skills

While preparing for the test you should study English on a regular basis:

- read educational and academic texts – this will help to increase the speed of reading, to remember the spelling of new words and how to use them in context, and refresh your knowledge and vocabulary on certain topics;
- listen to authentic texts on current issues in social and educational topics: lectures, interviews, radio programmes, talk-shows, discussions, and podcasts. This will broaden your horizons, help you acquire new vocabulary, understand the usage of various grammar structures in context, as well as get you used to listening to connected English speech and improve your pronunciation skills;
- speak English – develop your speaking skills, both in general conversation and discussions, in classes, while communicating with friends, course mates and other people who are also preparing to take a test. The best way to improve your speaking skills is to practise speaking with your teacher or anyone else who is capable of correcting your mistakes and giving you precious advice. Also, you can always practise individually: choose any topic, record yourself speaking for no less than a minute, and then listen to the recording, paying attention to successful parts and to the ones which need more practice;
- write in English – you should focus on the genres of written communication that are tested in the exam; study the requirements for the Writing Paper tasks, their format and the rules of writing. Write several tasks of this type, and ask someone to assess your work;
- expand your vocabulary – one of the most effective approaches to learning new vocabulary is the topic-based approach. There are various books for vocabulary practice at different levels, like English Vocabulary in Use, Cambridge University Press, Intermediate level

- (B1), Upper-Intermediate level (B2) and Advanced level (C1) in which new lexical units and exercises for their development are presented by topic;
- improve your grammar skills – pay attention to the grammar structures which are tested in the exam, and do exercises to practise grammar material.

Mastering exam strategies

Often, the ability to speak a language well is not enough to successfully pass the exam – a test, like any other type of activity, requires special skills.

How can you complete the test tasks more efficiently and successfully?

- **You should clearly understand** which types of tasks the test will include and what skills these tasks assess. Read the description of the exam format, structure and types of tasks, tested skills and abilities. Do the sample test.
- **You should learn strategies for completing different types of tasks.** Each type of task implies a specific method of completing it: what needs to be done at the first stage, what to pay special attention to, how to avoid mistakes, and so on. For example, when performing a "Multiple Choice" reading task, first skim the text in order to understand its general meaning. Then read the questions to the text and the text a second time more attentively, determining which part of it relates to which question. Based on the information in the text, think through the answers to the questions, first without reading the answer options, and then compare the intended answer with each of the four suggested answer options and choose the one that you think is correct.
- **You should practise skills of completing tasks.** Do at least 3-4 tasks of each type, following the suggested strategies and recommendations. To master task skills, you can use past papers for the Cambridge English Language Assessment exams – B1 Preliminary (PET), B2 First (FCE) и C1 Advanced (CAE).
- **You should do the tasks within the recommended time limit.** During the test, it is important to properly allocate the time allowed for the paper in order to have time to complete all the tasks and transfer the answers onto the answer sheet. When doing practice tasks, pay attention not only to the correctness of the answers, but also to the time spent. Try to complete tasks taking into account the recommended time.
- **You should learn how to fill in the answer sheets.** At the exam, each candidate receives test materials and answer sheets, onto which they must transfer the answers. Familiarize yourself with the answer sheets in advance and examine the requirements for filling in the answer sheets and the format of writing letters and numbers.

Getting psychologically ready

It's no secret that a test is always stressful. **How can you reduce stress during a test?**

- **Get familiar with the test procedure.** If you know in advance what, where, when and in what sequence you will have to do everything during the test, you will not have to worry. Find out how the test will be held, what you must have with you in the test, what you can and cannot use during the test, and so on.
- **Find out the test schedule** in advance in order to plan your activities accordingly, and **the place where the test will be held** in order to plan your route, taking into account any possible delays.

- **Wear comfortable clothes, suitable** for any room temperature.
- **Finish preparing for the test at approximately 5-6 pm the day before**, and spend the evening before doing something relaxing and soothing, so you can declutter your mind and unwind: go out for a short walk, watch a comedy or a funny programme.
- **Get a good night's sleep** on the eve of the exam.
- **Tune in to positive things and success.** Be positive and focus on success.

During the test

- **Plan your time efficiently.** There will be a clock in the exam room; this will allow you to keep track of the time. In addition, the examiner will notify you that there are 10 and 5 minutes left before the end of the test.
- **Focus carefully, on one question at a time.**
- **If you are unsure of the answer, tick the most likely answer.** A point is not deducted for an incorrect answer.
- **Focus on each new task** and don't think about the questions that have already been done.

Remember! The use of any electronic device, textbook, etc. during the test is not allowed.