

Language specifications

Candidates who are successful in B1 Preliminary should be able to communicate satisfactorily in most everyday situations with both native and non-native speakers of English.

The following is a list of the language specifications that the B1 Preliminary examination is based on.

Inventory of functions, notions and communicative tasks

Note that 'talking' is used below to refer to BOTH speaking and writing.

greeting people and responding to greetings (in person and on the phone)

introducing oneself and other people

asking for and giving personal details: (full) name, age, address, names of relatives and friends, etc.

understanding and completing forms giving personal details

understanding and writing letters, giving personal details

describing education, qualifications and skills

describing people (personal appearance, qualities)

asking and answering questions about personal possessions

asking for repetition and clarification

re-stating what has been said

checking on meaning and intention

helping others to express their ideas

interrupting a conversation

starting a new topic

changing the topic

resuming or continuing the topic

asking for and giving the spelling and meaning of words

counting and using numbers

asking and telling people the time, day and/or date

asking for and giving information about routines and habits

understanding and writing diaries and letters giving information about everyday activities

talking about what people are doing at the moment

talking about past events and states in the past, recent activities and completed actions

understanding and producing simple narratives

reporting what people say

talking about future or imaginary situations

talking about future plans or intentions

making predictions

identifying and describing accommodation (houses, flats, rooms, furniture, etc.)

buying and selling things (costs, measurements and amounts)

talking about food and meals

talking about the weather

talking about one's health

following and giving simple instructions

understanding simple signs and notices

asking the way and giving directions

asking for and giving travel information

asking for and giving simple information about places

identifying and describing simple objects (shape, size, weight, colour, purpose or use, etc.)

making comparisons and expressing degrees of difference

talking about how to operate things

describing simple processes

expressing purpose, cause and result, and giving reasons

drawing simple conclusions and making recommendations

making and granting/refusing simple requests

making and responding to offers and suggestions

expressing and responding to thanks

giving and responding to invitations

giving advice

giving warnings and prohibitions

persuading and asking/telling people to do something

expressing obligation and lack of obligation

asking and giving/refusing permission to do something

making and responding to apologies and excuses

expressing agreement and disagreement, and contradicting people

paying compliments

criticising and complaining

sympathising

expressing preferences, likes and dislikes (especially about hobbies and leisure activities)

talking about physical and emotional feelings

expressing opinions and making choices

expressing needs and wants

expressing (in)ability in the present and in the past

talking about (im)probability and (im)possibility

expressing degrees of certainty and doubt

Inventory of grammatical areas**Verbs**

Regular and irregular forms

Modals

can (ability; requests; permission)

could (ability; possibility; polite requests)

would (polite requests)

will (offer)

shall (suggestion; offer)

should (advice)

may (possibility)

might (possibility)

have (got) to (obligation)

ought to (obligation)

must (obligation)

mustn't (prohibition)

need (necessity)

needn't (lack of necessity)

used to + infinitive (past habits)

Tenses

Present simple: states, habits, systems and processes (and verbs not used in the continuous form)

Present continuous: future plans and activities, present actions

Present perfect simple: recent past with *just*, indefinite past with *yet*, *already*, *never*, *ever*; unfinished past with *for* and *since*

Past simple: past events

Past continuous: parallel past actions, continuous actions interrupted by the past simple tense

Past perfect simple: narrative, reported speech

Future with *going to*

Future with present continuous and present simple

Future with *will* and *shall*: offers, promises, predictions etc.

Was/were going to

Verb forms

Affirmative, interrogative, negative

Imperatives

Infinitives (with and without *to*) after verbs and adjectives

Gerunds (-ing form) after verbs and prepositions

Gerunds as subjects and objects

Passive forms: present and past simple

Modal passive

Verb + object + infinitive *give/take/send/bring/show* + direct/indirect object

Causative *have/get*

So/nor with auxiliaries

Compound verb patterns

Phrasal verbs/verbs with prepositions

Conditional sentences

Type 0: *An iron bar expands if/when you heat it.*

Type 1: *If you do that again, I'll leave.*

Type 2: *I would tell you the answer if I knew it.*

If I were you, I wouldn't do that again.

Simple reported speech

Statements, questions and commands: *say, ask, tell*

He said that he felt ill.

I asked her if I could leave.

No one told me what to do.

Indirect and embedded questions: *know, wonder*

Do you know what he said?

I wondered what he would do next.

Interrogatives

What; What + noun

Where; When

Who; Whose; Which

How; How much; How many; How often; How long; etc.

Why

(including the interrogative forms of all tenses and modals listed)

Nouns

Singular and plural (regular and irregular forms)

Countable and uncountable nouns with *some* and *any*

Abstract nouns

Compound nouns

Complex noun phrases

Genitive: 's and s'

Double genitive: *a friend of theirs*

Pronouns

Personal (subject, object, possessive)

Reflexive and emphatic: *myself*, etc.

Impersonal: *it, there*

Demonstrative: *this, that, these, those*

Quantitative: *one, something, everybody*, etc.

Indefinite: *some, any, something, one*, etc.

Relative: *who, which, that, whom, whose*

Determiners

a + countable nouns

the + countable/uncountable nouns

Adjectives

Colour, size, shape, quality, nationality

Predicative and attributive

Cardinal and ordinal numbers

Possessive: *my, your, his, her*, etc.

Demonstrative: *this, that, these, those*

Quantitative: *some, any, many, much, a few, a lot of, all, other, every*, etc.

Comparative and superlative forms (regular and irregular):

(*not*) *as ... as, not ... enough to, too ... to*

Order of adjectives

Participles as adjectives

Compound adjectives

Adverbs

Regular and irregular forms

Manner: *quickly, carefully*, etc.

Frequency: *often, never, twice a day*, etc.

Definite time: *now, last week*, etc.

Indefinite time: *already, just, yet*, etc.

Degree: *very, too, rather*, etc.

Place: *here, there*, etc.

Direction: *left, right, along*, etc.

Sequence: *first, next*, etc.

Sentence adverbs: *too, either*, etc.

Pre-verbal, post-verbal and end-position adverbs

Comparative and superlative forms (regular and irregular)

Prepositions

Location: *to, on, inside, next to, at (home)*, etc.

Time: *at, on, in, during*, etc.

Direction: *to, into, out of, from*, etc.

Instrument: *by, with*

Miscellaneous: *like, as, due to, owing to*, etc.

Prepositional phrases: *at the beginning of, by means of*, etc.

Prepositions preceding nouns and adjectives: *by car, for sale, at last*, etc.

Prepositions following (i) nouns and adjectives: *advice on, afraid of*, etc. (ii) verbs: *laugh at, ask for*, etc.

Connectives

and, but, or, either ... or

when, while, until, before, after, as soon as

where

because, since, as, for

so that, (in order) to

so, so ... that, such ... that

if, unless

although, while, whereas

Note that students will meet forms other than those listed above in B1 Preliminary, on which they will not be directly tested.

Topics

Clothes

Daily life

Education

Entertainment and media

Environment

Food and drink

Free time

Health, medicine and exercise

Hobbies and leisure

House and home

Language

People

Personal feelings, experiences and opinions

Personal identification

Places and buildings

Relations with other people

Services

Shopping

Social interaction

Sport

The natural world

Transport

Travel and holidays

Weather

Lexis

The B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools examinations include items which normally occur in the everyday vocabulary of native speakers using English today.

Candidates should know the lexis appropriate to their personal requirements, for example, nationalities, hobbies, likes and dislikes.

Note that the consistent use of American pronunciation, spelling and lexis is acceptable in B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools.

A list of vocabulary that could appear in the B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools examinations is available on our website:

[cambridgeenglish.org/exams/preliminary/preparation](https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/preliminary/preparation)

The list does not provide an exhaustive list of all the words which appear in B1 Preliminary and B1 Preliminary for Schools question papers, and candidates should not confine their study of vocabulary to the list alone.

International English

English is used in a wide range of international contexts. To reflect this, candidates' responses to tasks in Cambridge English Qualifications are acceptable in all varieties and accents of English, provided they do not interfere with communication. Materials used feature a range of accents and texts from English-speaking countries, including the UK, North America and Australia. US and other versions of spelling are accepted if used consistently.