

6-week Cambridge Exam Preparation Course

Course overview

The 6-week Cambridge Exam Preparation Course is an intensive full-time programme designed to help students develop their knowledge and skills in English and succeed in their chosen exam. We offer courses for either Cambridge First (FCE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE). Morning classes focus on language development and speaking skills and afternoon classes focus on Cambridge exam skills and strategies.

The final exam is included in the course fees, so we will reserve a place on the exam at the booking stage. Students at Basil Paterson Edinburgh have the advantage of taking their final exam in a familiar environment with experienced administrative staff.

Before accepting students onto the Cambridge Exam Preparation Course we ask them to complete a placement test so we can assess their current English level and whether they are likely to succeed in their chosen exam after six weeks. If we feel they don't yet have the right level, we will suggest an alternative programme of study.

Essential information

- Class size: Maximum 12. Average 7/8
- Minimum English level: B1+ (Cambridge First) or B2+ (Cambridge Advanced)
- Course dates:

Cambridge First (FCE):

05 February–16 March, 30 April–08 June and 22 October–30 November

Cambridge Advanced (CAE):

05 February–16 March, 30 April–08 June and 22 October–30 November

- Minimum age: 16
- Daily course timetable: 08.45-15.45 Monday-Friday

Course content

Morning Discussion Session

This informal 15-minute session allows all students from the college to come together with the Academic Manager to discuss the events of the day. Interesting topics from the daily news are selected as a springboard for conversation and debate. Students are then wide awake for their first class at 09.00!

Spoken Performance Workshop

This skills class is designed to develop students' confidence in spoken English, with particular focus on pronunciation, public speaking and social interaction. Every day a different topic or real-life scenario is chosen to help students develop their speaking skills. This lesson is normally paper-free to encourage as much interaction between students and teachers as possible.

Language Focus

This class focuses on developing students' language awareness and accuracy. Teachers choose relevant and level-appropriate language structures and lexis, with reference to the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR). Students are introduced to the language in an authentic context and then have the opportunity for controlled practice. Class materials are a combination of reputable course books, authentic materials and teachers' original materials.

Language Practice

At Basil Paterson Edinburgh we believe it's not enough to know the language; students need to be able to use it. This class encourages students to use the language they've seen in the previous hour. Authentic speaking and writing tasks allow students to apply what they've studied in a real-world context. The teacher then gives feedback on how well students have used the target language and guides them towards further activities and resources for self-study. Homework will normally be set every night to encourage students to revise what they've studied, and a weekly progress test is set on Fridays.

Cambridge Exam Strategies

This class looks at the format, requirements and assessment criteria of the Cambridge First (FCE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE) exam. Each afternoon students focus on a different section of the exam (Reading and Use of English, Writing, Listening or Speaking). The teacher will make sure the students know what's required, what to expect on exam day and what the examiner is looking for. They will also recommend strategies to help students succeed in the different parts of the exam and set homework to allow students to consolidate what they've learned.

The second hour in the afternoon is dedicated to timed exam practice, which allows students to apply the strategies they've discussed in the previous class, develop skills for success under exam conditions, evaluate their own work and develop effective self-study techniques. Students will also be encouraged to self-assess and give constructive feedback on their classmates' written work with reference to the Cambridge assessment criteria (task achievement, accuracy, range, register and overall impression). We expect students on these courses to take ownership of the learning process, setting themselves goals for self-study and supporting each other to succeed in their chosen exam.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to buy a coursebook?

No. The teachers will select class materials from different publications depending on the needs of the students in the class, so you don't need to buy a single coursebook. The teachers will lend you coursebooks and provide photocopies as needed for each lesson. We have a range of materials for self-study available to borrow from our Student Study Centre, and our students get a 20% discount from our book supplier if they would like to buy a book.

Is the final exam included in the course fees?

Yes. When booking the course we will automatically register you for the exam. Please let us know at the time of booking if you don't plan to take the exam at the end of your course.

Where will I take the final exam?

At Basil Paterson Edinburgh on 66/67 Queen Street, in the same building where you take the course.

Will I definitely pass the exam at the end of the course?



We ask all students to complete a placement test before booking so we can assess whether they have a realistic chance of passing the exam after our six-week course. Success in the exam depends on many things, such as self-study habits, your current English language level and how well you assimilate and apply the course content. Our staff and teachers will do everything they can to guide and support you before and during the course, but we cannot guarantee you will pass the exam.

Why do I need to do a placement test before booking?

There are several reasons we ask students to complete a placement test before booking. We want to ensure you have the right language level to attempt your chosen exam and that you have a realistic chance of passing after our six-week course. We also have a responsibility to the other students in the class, all of whom have booked an intensive programme and need to work at the required level and pace.

If I start the course and would like to change from First to Advanced, or vice versa, is that possible?

If you have the required language level and the dates are convenient, you may be able to switch between courses. Please speak to your teacher or the Academic Manager as soon as possible if you are thinking of changing course level. If you make the decision too late it may not be possible to get a place on the exam.

How much homework will I get?

The teacher will set at least one hour of homework every night, and more at weekends. However, students preparing for a Cambridge English exam are expected to set themselves extra homework, revising what they've studied in class, completing timed practice tests and completing writing tasks.

Do I need to attend the course for the full six weeks?

The course is designed to be a 6-week programme, so we recommend you attend for the full course. If you're not available for the full course, please let us know and we will make sure the teacher keeps materials aside so you can catch up on arrival.

I don't plan to take the exam immediately after the course. Can I still join the course?

Yes. But please let us know at the time of booking so we don't book an exam place for you. The course fees will be slightly lower in this case.

Is there anything I can do to prepare before the course starts?

There are many resources you can use to prepare before the course starts. At the time of booking we will send you our 'Top Tips for Cambridge Exam Preparation.' You should also make use of the resources on the Cambridge English website, which has practice papers, exam advice and more.

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/first/>

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/advanced/>