

4-week Cambridge Exam Preparation Course

Course overview

The 4-week Cambridge Exam Preparation Course is an intensive summer programme designed to help students succeed in their chosen Cambridge exam. We offer courses for either Cambridge First (FCE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE). These exam preparation programmes are delivered in closed groups, so students study with the same classmates for the duration of their course, all working towards the same goal. The course is full-time, intensive and students should expect a lot of homework, both in the evenings and weekends.

The final exam is included in the course fees, so we will reserve a place on the exam at the booking stage. Exam 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 four 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: B2 (Cambridge First) or C1 (Cambridge Advanced)
- Minimum age: 16
- Daily course timetable: 08.45-15.45 Monday-Friday

Course content

The day of study begins with an informal morning discussion. This 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!

The day then continues with a carefully-designed exam preparation programme. Classes focus on developing students' exam skills and strategies, raising their awareness of what examiners are looking for and developing students' confidence in all parts of the exam. Teachers will guide students through the exam format, requirements, assessment criteria and give plenty of feedback and opportunities for timed exam practice.

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.

Acceptance onto the 4-week Cambridge Exam Preparation Course assumes candidates already have the required language level of B2 (FCE) or C1 (CAE), so any focus on grammar and vocabulary is intended to be revision, brushing up and consolidating what students already know and ensuring they're using language accurately and appropriately. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate a range of language structures and vocabulary in their speaking and writing tasks.

Students should expect at least two hours of homework per night, including written tasks, language revision exercises, practice papers and speaking tasks. We recommend that students stay in the college until 17.30 during the week so they have dedicated time to complete homework, organise their notes and review anything covered during the day.

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to buy a coursebook?

No. Teachers will lend you a coursebook for the duration of the course, which you can take home and use for self-study. You must not write on the coursebook and should return it at the end of your stay. Teachers will also distribute handouts as needed for the class. If you would like to buy your own copy of the coursebook, our bookseller offers Basil Paterson students a 20% discount and we can order you a copy, or any other materials you would like. The Student Study Centre has lots of books and resources for self-study, which you can borrow for the duration of your course.

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 four-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 four-weeks 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 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?

At least two hours per night and more at weekends. Students preparing for a Cambridge English exam are expected to work hard, revise what they've studied in class, complete timed practice tests and writing tasks.

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

The course is designed to be a 4-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/>