

## Structure and Tips for Final Course Completion English Test

Since the Final Course Completion English Test is a universal and comprehensive test it was developed to incorporate basic grammar and vocabulary students acquire through their General English courses at the Ukrainian Catholic University. The Test assesses all 4 Skills: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. To get ready to take the Final Course Completion English Test, you should:

1. Find out what the test will be like, and what EFL skills it will cover.
2. Review the grammar and vocabulary items you have learned at UCU.

### Structure of the Test and Useful Tips:

The paper-based test consists of 4 sections plus Speaking:

- I. Listening Skills Test (25 min.)
  - o Gap-fill
  - o Multiple choice
- II. Reading Skills Test (40 min.)
  - o Multiple choice to choose the best answer
  - o Gap-fill (add most appropriate sentences into the text)
- III. Use of English Test (40-60 min.)
  - o Read the text and fill the gaps with the best form of the word provided.
  - o Read the text and choose the best suitable preposition (phrasal verbs)
  - o Choose the correct option (grammar structure)
  - o Choose the most suitable adjective.
  - o Sentence transformation.
  - o Fill the idioms with a missing word (options are given).
  - o Read the text and fill in the blanks with one word (options are given).
- IV. Essay (30 minutes long)
- V. Speaking (5-10 min.) (to be taken on the same day)

General duration of the Final Course Completion English Test is approximately **2 – 2 hours 15 minutes**. Knowing the structure of the Test will help you distribute your time accordingly.

You will not be allowed to have any electronic devices (e.g., cell phone, iPod, etc.) with you during the test.

Once you know how the Final Course Completion test works, and what the questions will be like, you should review the grammar and vocabulary you learned during your English course at UCU to prepare for the test. You should also practice talking and listening in English.

### General overview of the Test sections

#### I. Listening. Gap-Fill Listening Test.

In this task you will be asked to choose the best answer, based on a dialogue or a part of a lecture.

#### Tips:

1. Read through the questions and/or text/ before the exercise begins. This point is very important! Reading through the questions will help you to prepare for listening.
2. Most listening examples will be played twice. On the first listening, fill in only the blanks that you immediately understand.

3. Make sure to concentrate on the entire listening the first time. Do not write an answer in the blank if it is going to keep you from paying attention to the listening.
4. Complete the answers on the second listening. If you have understood the general meaning on the first time through, you will have enough time to fill in the blanks on the second time through.
5. If any time is given to you afterwards, check your answers for accuracy.

## **II. Reading**

1. In this task you will be asked to read a text and answer the questions (multiple choice).
2. In the second Reading task you will be asked to read an article and fill the gaps with given options. There will be one extra sentence which you will not need.

### **Here's How to Answer Multiple Choice Reading Questions:**

1. Keep in mind the exact amount of time you have to complete the exercise (10-20 minutes per section).
2. Read the text through quickly without stopping to check your understanding of individual words. The first reading is to get a general understanding of the text.
3. Read the text a second time more carefully. This time pause at sections you may find more difficult.
4. Scan the multiple choice questions without looking at the answers. See if you can answer the questions easily by yourself. Skip any questions that you cannot answer immediately, but later try to answer them again after the second reading.
5. Re-read the multiple choice questions and answer. Skip any question that you find too difficult.
6. If you cannot find something close to your original answer (step 4) to the question, take a look at the text again.
7. After you have answered each question, return to the text to find a justification for each of your answers.
8. Return to the questions that you were not able to answer immediately and see if you can answer them now.
9. If you still have time, check that the other possible answers are not specifically referred to in the text.

### **Tips:**

1. Never spend too much time on any one question.
2. Don't worry about understanding every single word. Reading comprehension focuses on general comprehension.

## **III. Use of English**

### **Word-formation task**

Many tests include a word formation section. In this exercise, you are required to change the form of the word given to the correct form of speech.

### **Useful recommendations:**

1. Read the text through trying to understanding the general meaning.
2. Look at each missing word gap and the key word that needs to be changed.
3. Decide which part of speech (adjective, noun, gerund, etc.) needs to be used to fill each gap.

4. Any words that come immediate to mind, should be penciled in.
5. Return to the more difficult words and think about the various parts of speech that can be formed using the key word (care - careless, careful, carelessly, uncarefully, etc.).
6. Fill in the final answer with the appropriate forms.

**Tips:**

1. Remember to think about prefixes and suffixes that can change the meaning and help complete the meaning.
2. Always think about the overall meaning of the text (i.e., whether the text is negative, positive, etc.) to make sure that your answer choice fits the context.

**Multiple choice tasks. Useful recommendations:**

1. If you choose an answer because you like the sound of it, you should stick to it. English loves alliteration so there are many examples where the first letters in an expression are the same:
  - the coast is clear*
  - it's a cheap and cheerful restaurant*
  - he's a strong, silent type*
2. There are also many poetic expressions in English. Which sounds better out of these:
  - time flies*
  - time goes*
  - time runs*
3. The rhyme in the first one creates a better, more poetic effect and if you are unsure of the answer in this section of the Use of English paper, think about either alliteration or poetry.

**IV. Essay**

**10 minutes** - You will have a specified time (approximately 30 minutes) to write an essay. Aim to spend roughly 10 minutes planning and thinking. You may think that this is a huge chunk out of the time available but it is time well spent. It will save you time overall and will mean you do most of the thinking at the start, allowing you to spend the rest of the time writing.

**Study the question** - The first thing is to study the question. You are not being asked to 'write everything you know about ...'. You are being asked a specific question that needs an answer that is directly related to it.

**Brainstorm** - Once you are sure what the question is asking of you, the next thing you should do is brainstorm. Simply write down everything you can think of in brief notes and in no particular order just to get it out of your mind and on to paper. You can organise it later but initially you will have a record of relevant points and information to include. They might remind you of other things too.

**Answer the question** - Now that you are aware of the demands of the question and have some ideas, you have to think about your answer. You need a main line of argument that will form the backbone of your essay. Once you have this, jot it down as it will form part of your introduction.

**Plan** - Now you have to organise the 'mess' that was your brainstorm into a well structured essay. Decide whether the question is asking for a thematic approach, or chronological. Is it asking for causes to be evaluated or for a discussion of two sides of an argument? Once you have a general approach, you need to decide what each paragraph is going to include. Look at your brainstorm and begin to group ideas, include any more relevant factors or points that may come to you as you are planning. Start to order the paragraphs and try to see natural links between points or paragraphs to help the flow of the essay.

**A rough guide to your plan should be:**

Introduction - Introducing your understanding of the question, how you plan to tackle it, what you

are going to include and what your main line of argument is

(optional) 1 paragraph - Providing context (linking intro to rest of essay)

4 paragraphs - Each of a reasonable length discussing a single issue/factor (or combination of)

Conclusion - Summarising the main arguments made in your essay and ending with your main argument.

- Have a really good introduction. Have a snappy first sentence, show you have a firm grasp of the question and that you have a main line of argument. This tells the examiner where you are headed and also what to look out for.
- Have a good plan. If each paragraph deals with the factors, points or issues raised in your introduction, the examiner sees that you are fully in control.
- Sign-posting' - Make every paragraph catch the eye by beginning with a strong argumentative point that is linked to the main argument (backbone) of your essay. Then you can go on to explain and prove it.
- Try to make your essay fluid and easy to read. Ideally the points you make within a paragraph should flow from one to the other and each paragraph should link well with the next.
- Have a snappy ending. Summarise your main points and end with a clear and well thought out main argument. A strong ending will remind the examiner of what you have proven and show that you have been in control of the essay all the way through.

**Know your topic!** - Writing a good essay requires the writer to know what to write. When you brainstorm there should be lots of things jotted on the page. When you write the essay itself, you need to have clear arguments, to be aware of the issues and be able to back up analytical points with appropriately selected information and evidence and some historians' views. So you will need to have worked hard in your studies, and done some effective revision.

But - A good essay style will help you make the most of what you know. If you know a bit about the essay topic, a good essay style can hide some of your inadequacies. If you really know your stuff, you should end up writing an excellent essay rather than just a good essay.

### **Speaking Test**

For the Speaking test you will first be asked to describe, compare and contrast two pictures and then to speculate on the topic presented by the picture, hypothesizing and giving examples.

### **How to pass the Speaking Test successfully**

1. Notice there are TWO instructions here: first to 'describe, compare and contrast' the photographs and also to speculate on how the students 'may be feeling'. In Part 2 students are required to show they can do more than simply describe and will need to show the ability to speculate or hypothesize on a particular topic or scene.

### **Tips!**

1. The picture set (usually 2 pictures) will have a common theme. This will give you a basis on which to compare and/or contrast the two pictures.

2. In terms of hypothesizing, pictures offer a good opportunity to speculate on how students in each contrasting situation might be feeling. Think about opportunities for hypothesizing when looking at the pictures. To prepare, review and practice language for hypothesizing (or speculating).

3. Signpost the end of your talk by adding a personal reaction to the pictures. For example:  
*The two people in picture three look like they're enjoying themselves but personally, I think*

*I'd prefer to spend my study time in a lecture theatre where I'd be more able to concentrate on learning'.*

4. Many people preparing for a Speaking Test worry about not having enough to say in the time available or not having enough time to express their ideas. The best way to get the timing right is to practise making short talks on various topics on your own. (Or in front of a friend.)