

Self-study for Cambridge B2 First discussion

How can you improve your Cambridge First score and your English level more generally outside class?

Look at one section below (that your teacher tells you to or your own choice). Discuss the usefulness of things in that section, then choose a top two. Then do the same with another section.

Pronunciation/ Speaking

1. Answering Cambridge B2 First Speaking exam questions on your own out loud
2. Free conversation, e.g. with an online conversation exchange partner
3. Learning vocabulary to talk about typical B2 First Speaking topics (e.g. accommodation and food)
4. Practising the Cambridge First speaking exam together (without a teacher)
5. Recording yourself, e.g. doing the Cambridge B2 First Speaking Part Two comparing photos task
6. Shadow reading
7. Watching YouTube videos of students taking B2 First speaking exams
8. Writing your answers to real Cambridge B2 First speaking questions

Reading

1. Doing a Cambridge B2 First reading exam again, e.g. one month later
2. Reading children's fiction
3. Reading for pleasure, e.g. fiction written for native English speakers
4. Reading graded readers
5. Reading magazines
6. Reading newspapers
7. Reading online
8. Reading with a dictionary
9. Timed reading exam practice

Writing

1. Analysing Cambridge B2 First writing model answers for strengths and weaknesses
2. Doing timed exam practice of Cambridge First Writing (even when you might not have a chance to have it marked)
3. Doing further work on your writing work (with a dictionary, model answer, etc) after finishing an B2 First Writing timed task
4. Keeping a list of your typical mistakes
5. Learning phrases from model answers
6. Learning spelling rules
7. Looking back on an old piece of writing and trying to remember what corrections and feedback your teacher gave
8. Memorising entire Cambridge First writing model answers
9. Studying typical mistakes by B2 First candidates
10. Studying typical spelling mistakes by native speakers

Listening

1. Doing a Cambridge B2 First listening test again, e.g. one month later
2. Doing pronunciation work on changes in fast natural speech, e.g. linking between words (elision)
3. Learning vocabulary from B2 First Listening texts
4. Listening again and again to Cambridge First exam listenings
5. Reading Cambridge First exam listening transcripts
6. Reading and listening to B2 First exam listening transcripts (reading and listening at the same time)
7. Shadow reading with Cambridge B2 First exam listening transcripts
8. Watching TV and movies with English subtitles
9. Watching TV and movies with no subtitles

Use of English (grammar and vocabulary)

1. Do a Cambridge B2 First Use of English paper again, e.g. two weeks later
2. General self-study grammar books, e.g. Murphy's English Grammar in Use
3. Learning vocabulary from B2 First Reading texts
4. Learning vocabulary from Cambridge First Listening texts
5. Lots of timed Cambridge B2 First Use of English practice
6. Reading for pleasure
7. Self-study Cambridge First grammar and vocabulary books
8. Self-study B2 First grammar books
9. Self-study Cambridge B2 First vocabulary books

Give your conclusions on one section and see if other groups agree.

Ask the whole class and your teacher about any skills and methods above which you aren't sure about, ideas above you don't understand, etc, discussing how useful or not they are as a class each time.

What should you do on the morning of the exam?

The morning of the exam

Do the same discussing and choosing task with these ideas:

1. Doing Cambridge B2 First exam practice
2. Getting together with someone (or using Skype or the phone) to just chat in English
3. Getting together with someone (or using Skype or the phone) to do Cambridge First Speaking exam practice
4. Going through a list of your typical mistakes
5. Listening to a radio station with an English-speaking DJ
6. Listening to a Cambridge B2 First Listening again
7. Listening to English language music
8. Looking back on some of your old corrected written work
9. Reading for pleasure
10. Revising some language, e.g. grammar, that typically comes up in the exam

Discuss your ideas as a class, then brainstorm useful phrases for discussing your ideas.