

Cambridge First Certificate tips speculating practice

Choose one of the statements about (taking or studying for) Cambridge B2 First and change it to reflect how likely or unlikely you think that thing is. Does your partner agree, or do they think your statement should be more certain, less certain, or completely different?

Useful language for speculating

almost certainly (not)	can't	could (possibly)
may (well)/ might (well)	must	probably (not)

Useful phrases for agreeing and disagreeing

I totally agree./ I think that's exactly right.

I'd go further and say that...

I wouldn't go that far. I'd say that...

Cambridge First Writing tips to speculate on

1. If you spend 10 minutes planning your writing, you'll run out time before you finish writing it.
2. If the last sentence of your introduction explains the paragraph structure of your essay etc, that will force you to plan carefully and stick to your plan.
3. If you use lots of complex, advanced language, that will make up for making some basic mistakes.
4. If you try to use some complex, advanced language but make a mistake with it, that will affect your mark.
5. You will lose marks if your writing isn't neat and tidy.
6. You lose marks if you cross things out instead of using an eraser.
7. If you use your eraser every time that you make a mistake, you will run out of time before you finish the task.
8. You will need three or four minutes for the final editing stage.
9. It is a good idea to also add more complex language during the final editing stage.

Cambridge First Use of English tips to speculate on

10. If you are not sure which of two things is correct but decide to change your answer anyway, the first answer will have been the correct one.
11. If you have to choose between an answer that sounds right and an answer that matches what you remember studying, the former is the right answer.

Cambridge First Listening tips to speculate on

12. Listening carefully to the instructions before you open the paper will be useful.
13. You'll have enough time to read through all the questions before the recording starts.
14. If you have enough time, it is useful to think about what kind of thing could go in each gap.
15. There are questions which you can correctly guess the answer to before you listen.
16. Trying to guess which multiple choice option is more likely is a waste of time.
17. If the speaker says something like "but in fact...", it means that the thing which was just said wasn't the right answer.
18. The wrong options will also be mentioned in the recording.
19. The correct option will have different wording in the recording and on the question sheet.

20. If you hear a word which is written in the question, it is the right answer.
21. The word that goes into the gap is something that you don't hear.
22. You will hear something after the answer which reinforces that it is the right answer.
23. The test includes a part which you can only hear once.
24. Spelling mistakes lead to half a point.
25. It is useful to check your grammar and spelling after you transfer your answers to the separate answer sheet.
26. You will get a point for a different word which has the same meaning as the word which you hear.
27. It is better to write a number as a figure rather than as a word.
28. You lose marks for not knowing if the first letter should be a capital letter or not.
29. You will get a point if you write any word which fits into the gap grammatically.

Cambridge First Reading tips to speculate on

30. You will have enough time to read through all the texts before looking at the questions.
31. If you can read through the texts in three or four minutes, just to get an idea of where the information is in the text, it is a good idea to read through the texts quickly before looking at the questions.
32. It is a good idea to underline words which you don't understand while you are reading.
33. It is a good idea to underline the answers in the text.
34. If you have extra time after you finish the test, it is a good idea to check that the other options really aren't the answer.
35. It is a good idea to leave transferring all your answers to the answer sheet until the last minute of the test.

Cambridge First self-study tips to speculate on

36. Lots of reading is the best way to get a good score in Use of English.
37. You will learn a lot of useful language for the exam by reading and listening to the news.
38. It's a good idea to read high level graded reading material such as graded readers (rather than things written for native speakers).
39. Fiction is the best kind of reading to prepare for the exam.
40. Lots and lots of timed exam practice papers is the best way of preparing for the exam.
41. It is useful to do timed exam writing even if no one will check your writing for you.
42. It is a good idea to listen again after reading the listening transcript.
43. It is a good idea to read and listen at the same time.
44. It is a good idea to do some shadow reading with part of the listening transcript.
45. It is useful to do some timed Speaking Part Two tasks out loud on your own.
46. It is useful to record yourself doing part of the speaking.
47. To prepare for Speaking Part One, it is useful to write descriptions of your family, hobbies, work etc, using a dictionary to look up the vocabulary that you need to do so.
48. It is useful to learn lists of phrasal verbs.

Ask about any tips above which you disagreed with your partner about, or anything else about exam and self-study tactics that you aren't sure about. Then compare your sentences with those on the next page.

Suggested answers

Note that many of the things below might be different for different candidates, so please check any which you think might be different with your teacher.

Writing

1. If you spend 10 minutes planning your writing, you'll probably run out time before you finish writing it.
2. If the last sentence of your introduction explains the paragraph structure of your essay etc, that will almost certainly force you to plan carefully and stick to your plan.
3. If you use lots of complex, advanced language, that will almost certainly make up for making some basic mistakes.
4. If you try to use some complex, advanced language but make a mistake with it, that almost certainly won't affect your mark.
5. You almost certainly won't lose marks if your writing isn't neat and tidy.
6. You can't lose marks if you cross things out instead of using an eraser.
7. If you use your eraser every time that you make a mistake, you will probably run out of time before you finish the task.
8. You will probably need three or four minutes for the final editing stage.
9. It must be a good idea to also add more complex language during the final editing stage.

Use of English

10. If you are not sure which of two things is correct but decide to change your answer anyway, the first answer will probably have been the correct one.
11. If you have to choose between an answer that sounds right and an answer that matches what you remember studying, the former is probably the right answer.

Listening

12. Listening carefully to the instructions before you open the paper will probably be useful.
13. You'll probably have enough time to read through all the questions before the recording starts.
14. If you have enough time, it must be useful to think about what kind of thing could go in each gap.
15. There can't be questions which you can correctly guess the answer to before you listen.
16. Trying to guess which multiple choice option is more likely is almost certainly a waste of time.
17. If the speaker says something like "but in fact...", it must mean that the thing which was just said wasn't the right answer.
18. The wrong options will also probably be mentioned in the recording.
19. The correct option will probably have different wording in the recording and on the question sheet.
20. If you hear a word which is written in the question, it is probably not the right answer.
21. The word that goes into the gap can't be something that you don't hear.
22. You might hear something after the answer which reinforces that it is the right answer.
23. The test can't include a part which you can only hear once.
24. Spelling mistakes can't lead to half a point.

25. It must be useful to check your grammar and spelling after you transfer your answers to the separate answer sheet.
26. You will probably get a point for a different word which has the same meaning as the word which you hear.
27. It is almost certainly better to write a number as a figure rather than as a word.
28. You can't lose marks for not knowing if the first letter should be a capital letter or not.
29. You could possibly get a point if you write any word which fits into the gap grammatically.

Reading

30. You probably won't have enough time to read through all the texts before looking at the questions.
31. If you can read through the texts in three or four minutes, just to get an idea of where the information is in the text, it might well be a good idea to read through the texts quickly before looking at the questions.
32. It can't be a good idea to underline words which you don't understand while you are reading.
33. It must be a good idea to underline the answers in the text.
34. If you have extra time after you finish the test, it must be a good idea to check that the other options really aren't the answer.
35. It can't be a good idea to leave transferring all your answers to the answer sheet until the last minute of the test.

Self-study

36. Lots of reading is almost certainly the best way to get a good score in Use of English.
37. You probably won't learn a lot of useful language for the exam by reading and listening to the news.
38. It's probably a good idea to read high level graded reading material such as graded readers (rather than things written for native speakers).
39. Fiction is probably the best kind of reading to prepare for the exam.
40. Lots and lots of timed exam practice papers must be the best way of preparing for the exam.
41. It must be useful to do timed exam writing even if no one will check your writing for you.
42. It must be a good idea to listen again after reading the listening transcript.
43. It must be a good idea to read and listen at the same time.
44. It might be a good idea to do some shadow reading with part of the listening transcript.
45. It is almost certainly useful to do some timed Speaking Part Two tasks out loud on your own.
46. It almost certainly isn't useful to record yourself doing part of the speaking.
47. To prepare for Speaking Part One, it must be useful to write descriptions of your family, hobbies, work etc, using a dictionary to look up the vocabulary that you need to do so.
48. It probably isn't useful to learn lists of phrasal verbs.

Put the useful language phrases on the first page into order by how certain or uncertain the speaker is.