

**C1 PREPARATION MATERIALS**

**C1 Reading & Use of English — Practice Exam 3**

An eight-part practice exam covering Reading and Use of English.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Original practice material. This document is not an official Cambridge English assessment.

## Part 1: The Revival of Independent Bookshops

Choose the word that best completes each gap. Focus on collocations, prepositions, and linkers.

Not long ago, independent bookshops were widely expected to disappear under pressure from online retailers and large chains. Yet in many cities they are staging a quiet \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_, drawing customers who value browsing shelves and talking to knowledgeable staff. Owners say that success depends less on competing on price and more on creating a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ that no algorithm can replicate.

Events have become central to this strategy. Author readings, book clubs and writing workshops turn a shop into a meeting place, encouraging people to return even when they are not ready to buy. Some stores also \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ with local schools and libraries, hosting sessions that introduce young readers to titles they might otherwise never encounter.

Of course, running a small bookshop remains financially \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_. Rent, staffing and the cost of holding stock all weigh heavily, and a single quiet month can threaten survival. \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ these difficulties, many owners report that customer loyalty has strengthened since the pandemic, when communities rediscovered the value of neighbourhood businesses.

Whether this revival will last is still uncertain. What is clear is that physical bookshops offer something screens cannot easily \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_: the pleasure of unexpected discovery and the feeling of belonging to a shared literary culture.

**1**

- A. comeback
- B. return
- C. recovery
- D. revival

**2**

- A. community
- B. society
- C. public
- D. crowd

**3**

- A. partner
- B. join
- C. unite
- D. attach

**4**

- A. precarious
- B. fragile
- C. delicate
- D. unstable

**5**

- A. Despite
- B. Although
- C. Whereas
- D. Unlike

**6**

- A. provide
- B. supply
- C. deliver
- D. offer

## Part 2: The Origins of Public Libraries

Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

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Public libraries are so familiar that it is easy to forget how radical they once seemed. For much of history, books belonged to religious institutions, universities or wealthy private collectors, and ordinary people had little or \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_ access to written knowledge. The idea that a community should fund a collection open to everyone free of charge was, in its time, genuinely revolutionary.

Early experiments appeared in several countries, but the model that spread most widely took \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ in the nineteenth century, supported by philanthropists and reforming local governments. Advocates argued that literacy and self-education would strengthen democracy and improve working lives. Critics feared that free books would discourage people \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ buying their own, or expose readers to dangerous political ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_ these objections, library networks expanded rapidly. Catalogues grew, lending rules were refined, and trained librarians emerged as a distinct profession. In many towns the library building itself became a civic landmark, a place \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ people could read newspapers, attend lectures and escape overcrowded homes.

Today the mission has broadened further. Libraries lend not only books but also digital resources, and they often serve as informal community hubs. \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_ the formats change, the underlying principle remains the same: knowledge should not be rationed according to income. That principle continues to make public libraries \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of the most democratic institutions a society can maintain.

## Part 3: Designing Cities for Walking

Complete each gap using a word derived from the base word in capitals. Write the correct form only, using one word for each gap.

Urban planners increasingly argue that cities should be designed around people on foot rather than around cars. Wider pavements, safer crossings and attractive public squares make walking not only possible but <sup>(1)</sup> GENUINE enjoyable, and they reduce the sense of isolation that multi-lane roads can create.

Research suggests that walkable neighbourhoods bring measurable health benefits. Residents tend to be more physically active and report lower levels of stress, partly because daily errands no longer require sitting in traffic. There is also an economic <sup>(2)</sup> ARGUE : streets that invite pedestrians often support a greater variety of small shops and cafes.

Critics of car-centred planning point to the <sup>(3)</sup> CONSEQUENCE of long commuting times and polluted air on quality of life. They call for a <sup>(4)</sup> FUNDAMENT reassessment of how road space is allocated, with priority given to walkers, cyclists and public transport. Such changes are rarely simple. Drivers may resist losing parking spaces, and businesses sometimes fear that reduced car access will harm trade, even when evidence suggests the opposite.

Successful projects usually combine infrastructure with careful <sup>(5)</sup> COMMUNICATE . When residents understand the aims and see early improvements, opposition tends to soften. The long-term goal is not to ban cars entirely but to create a fairer <sup>(6)</sup> ALLOCATE of road space, so that choosing to walk feels natural rather than <sup>(7)</sup> EXCEPTION .

## Part 4: Key Word Transformation

For questions 1-6, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

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1. I only understood the instructions after the teacher had explained them twice.

**DID**

Only after the teacher had explained the instructions twice \_\_\_\_\_ them.

2. They say the new bridge will be completed by next spring.

**SAID**

The new bridge \_\_\_\_\_ by next spring.

3. She didn't remember to lock the door when she left.

**FORGOT**

She \_\_\_\_\_ when she left.

4. The company will almost certainly expand into Asia next year.

**BOUND**

The company is \_\_\_\_\_ into Asia next year.

5. I couldn't concentrate because of the noise from the street.

**PREVENTED**

The noise from the street \_\_\_\_\_ concentrating.

6. It was wrong of you not to warn us about the delay.

**OUGHT**

You \_\_\_\_\_ us about the delay.

## Part 5: Multiple Choice Reading

Read the following article about the psychology of decision fatigue and choose the best option (A, B, C, or D) for each question.

### When Choices Wear Us Down

Modern life is saturated with decisions. From the moment we wake, we choose what to wear, what to eat, which messages deserve an immediate reply, and which tasks can wait. Individually, many of these choices seem trivial. Collectively, they draw on a limited reservoir of mental energy that researchers call decision fatigue. As that reservoir empties, people become more impulsive, more avoidant, or more inclined to stick with the default option simply because it requires less effort.

Laboratory and field studies have documented the pattern in settings as varied as courtroom sentencing, medical diagnosis and consumer shopping. Judges, for example, have been shown to grant parole more readily earlier in the day than after a long sequence of cases, all else being equal. Shoppers who have already compared dozens of products are more likely to abandon a purchase or accept a salesperson's recommendation without scrutiny. The implication is not that people become foolish after lunch, but that sustained choice-making depletes the cognitive resources needed for careful evaluation.

Organisations have begun to respond. Some hospitals now schedule the most complex diagnostic decisions for periods when clinicians are freshest. Software designers reduce unnecessary options in interfaces, recognising that endless customisation can paralyse rather than empower. Individuals, too, can protect their decision-making capacity by automating small routines — wearing similar clothes, eating predictable breakfasts — so that attention is reserved for choices that genuinely matter.

Sceptics caution against overstating the effect. Not every study replicates the classic findings, and motivation, sleep and blood sugar all interact with fatigue in ways that are still being mapped. Even so, the broader lesson has proved durable: willpower and judgement are not infinite stocks that we can draw on without consequence. Designing days, workplaces and products with that constraint in mind may be one of the quieter forms of wisdom available to a choice-saturated culture.

1. What does the writer emphasise in the first paragraph?
  - A** Most everyday decisions have serious long-term consequences.
  - B** The combined burden of many small choices can exhaust mental resources.
  - C** People deliberately avoid making decisions whenever possible.
  - D** Modern technology has eliminated the need for routine choices.
2. The examples of judges and shoppers are used to show that...
  - A** professional training protects people from decision fatigue.
  - B** fatigue leads people to make poorer or less effortful choices over time.
  - C** afternoon decisions are always less fair than morning ones.
  - D** consumers and judges face identical pressures in their work.
3. According to the third paragraph, one practical response to decision fatigue is to...
  - A** increase the number of options available so people feel more control.
  - B** postpone all important decisions until the end of the working day.
  - C** reduce trivial choices so mental energy is saved for significant ones.
  - D** require organisations to ban default settings in software and hospitals.

4. In the final paragraph, the writer's position is best described as...
- A** dismissive of decision fatigue as an unproven idea.
  - B** cautiously supportive of the concept despite incomplete evidence.
  - C** convinced that willpower is an unlimited personal resource.
  - D** focused solely on the role of sleep in mental performance.

## Part 6: Is University Still Worth the Cost?

Read the four experts' opinions below. For each question, choose the text (A, B, C, or D) whose writer expresses the stated opinion.

### Text A

*Clara Nguyen — careers adviser*

I still encourage most students who have a clear academic interest to apply. A degree remains a powerful signal to employers in many fields, and the intellectual habits formed at university — reading critically, arguing from evidence, managing long projects — transfer far beyond any single subject.

That does not mean every course at every institution is a wise investment. Students should examine graduate employment data, talk to recent alumni and be honest about debt. Blind faith in the university brand is outdated; informed choice is not.

### Text B

*Marcus Adeyemi — tech entrepreneur*

For the industries I hire in, a portfolio of real projects often outranks a transcript. I have employed self-taught developers who never set foot on a campus and outperformed graduates with impressive grades but little practical experience.

University can still be valuable for networking and for disciplines that require formal accreditation. But treating it as the default path for every eighteen-year-old is lazy advice. Apprenticeships, bootcamps and disciplined self-study deserve equal respect when the work itself is the best proof of competence.

### Text C

*Ingrid Falk — higher education researcher*

The debate is often framed as a simple yes-or-no question, which obscures more than it reveals. Returns on a degree vary enormously by subject, institution, family background and the state of the labour market at graduation. Averaging all of that into a single slogan helps no one.

What public policy should focus on is transparency and alternative routes. When young people can compare costs, likely outcomes and non-university pathways side by side, fewer will stumble into debt for the wrong reasons — and those who do choose university will do so with clearer eyes.

### Text D

*Pablo Ruiz — sociology lecturer*

Reducing university to a financial transaction misses half its purpose. For many students, especially those who are first in their family to attend, campus life expands cultural horizons, builds confidence and creates friendships that shape adult identity.

I worry that an exclusively economic framing pushes institutions to strip away the slower, less marketable elements of education — wide reading, debate, time to change one's mind. If we value only immediate salary uplift, we will get narrower universities and narrower citizens.



1. Which writer warns that judging university only by salary outcomes could impoverish education itself?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which writer says practical evidence of skill can matter more than formal qualifications in some sectors?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which writer stresses that the value of a degree differs greatly depending on multiple factors?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which writer still recommends university for many students while urging careful research beforehand?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 7: How Community Kitchens Feed More Than Hunger

Read the article and choose the paragraph (A-G) that fits each gap. One paragraph is extra.

In a converted warehouse on the edge of the city, volunteers begin chopping vegetables before sunrise. By midday, hundreds of meals will leave the building for shelters, schools and homes where cooking has become difficult. Community kitchens of this kind have multiplied in recent years, driven by rising living costs and by a simple conviction that no one should face hunger alone.

1

The practical mission is obvious: turn surplus food and donated ingredients into nutritious meals at scale. What visitors notice just as quickly, however, is the atmosphere. People who arrive as strangers often stay to chop, stir and pack side by side, exchanging stories as easily as recipes.

2

For some participants, the kitchen is also a bridge back into working life. Regular shifts rebuild punctuality, teamwork and confidence after illness, unemployment or time away from the labour market. A few move on to paid catering jobs; many simply regain a sense of usefulness that isolation had eroded.

3

Funding remains a constant concern. Grants cover equipment and rent for a while, then expire. Donations fluctuate with the news cycle. Kitchens that survive tend to diversify income — a small café counter, cookery classes, contracts to supply local organisations — without losing sight of their core purpose.

4

There are tensions, too. Professional chefs and enthusiastic amateurs do not always share the same standards. Health regulations can feel burdensome to volunteers who simply want to help. Coordinators spend as much time mediating personalities as they do planning menus.

5

Despite the friction, the model continues to spread. New kitchens open in church halls, empty restaurants and community centres, each adapting the idea to local needs. What unites them is the belief that feeding people can

also rebuild the social fabric that hardship frays.

6

In that sense, the meals are only the most visible product. The quieter outputs — skills, friendships, a place to be needed — may prove just as nourishing in the long run.

## Missing paragraphs

Choose from the paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

**A** Supermarkets have become important partners, redirecting food that is still safe to eat but no longer shelf-perfect, and thereby cutting waste as well as costs.

**B** That social dimension is not accidental. Organisers deliberately design shifts to mix ages and backgrounds, so that the work itself becomes a form of community-building.

**C** Some local authorities now include community kitchens in their emergency food strategies, recognising that they reach people who never approach formal welfare offices.

**D** Training helps. Short courses in food hygiene and basic kitchen management give volunteers credentials they can show future employers.

**E** Clear role descriptions and a calm leadership style reduce these clashes, though no busy kitchen is entirely free of them.

**F** Critics sometimes argue that charity food lets governments avoid tackling the root causes of poverty, a charge organisers themselves often accept while insisting hungry people cannot wait for structural reform.

**G** Whether policymakers treat that dual role seriously will shape how far the movement can grow beyond its current patchwork of goodwill and temporary grants.

Gap 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Gap 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Gap 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Gap 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Gap 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Gap 6: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 8: Moving Abroad for Work

You are going to read four people talking about moving abroad for work. For each question, choose from the people (A-D). The people may be chosen more than once.

### Section A

*Yara Mansour — biomedical researcher*

I relocated for a three-year research post and treated the move as temporary from day one. That mindset helped: I invested in friendships and language classes without the pressure of deciding whether this country would be home forever.

The laboratory culture was more hierarchical than I expected, and I spent the first months unsure when to speak up in meetings. A colleague who had made a similar move years earlier coached me through the unwritten rules, which made an enormous difference. Professionally the gamble paid off; personally I still miss the ease of humour in my own language.

### Section B

*Felix Hofmann — software engineer*

Salary and career progression were my main motives, and both improved quickly. What I underestimated was how long administrative tasks would consume: residence permits, tax numbers, opening a bank account without a local credit history. For weeks I felt competent at work and helpless everywhere else.

Joining a climbing gym solved more than fitness. It gave me a weekly structure and people to see who were not colleagues. I would advise anyone moving alone to build one non-work routine early, before loneliness becomes the default evening plan.

### Section C

*Amelia Costa — secondary school teacher*

I moved with my partner, which softened the landing, but it also meant two careers had to align. I accepted a post below my previous seniority because the location suited us both, and I have mixed feelings about that compromise even now.

Teaching in another language exhausted me at first. Lesson preparation took twice as long, and I worried constantly about making mistakes in front of teenagers. After the first term, something clicked: the students were patient, and my classroom authority returned. The harder adjustment was distance from ageing parents, which no amount of video calls quite repairs.

### Section D

*Kenji Sato — product designer*

I had romantic expectations — new city, creative studio, endless inspiration — and reality was more ordinary. Deadlines followed me across the ocean, and my apartment was smaller than the one I left. The gain was subtler: working with people from half a dozen countries forced me to explain my ideas more clearly and listen harder.

Homesickness hit in the second year rather than the first, which surprised me. I dealt with it by cooking familiar food properly, not as a sad approximation, and by planning one substantial trip home each year instead of fragmented long weekends. Those anchors made staying feel sustainable rather than permanent exile.

1. Which person found that settling practical bureaucracy was harder than the job itself?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which person accepted a less senior role so that a move would work for two people?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which person benefited from informal guidance about workplace culture?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which person says clearer communication was an unexpected professional benefit?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which person recommends establishing a leisure habit outside work soon after arriving?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which person treats the overseas stay as limited in time rather than permanent?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which person found language demands at work especially draining at the beginning?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which person was surprised by when feelings of missing home became strongest?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Which person still struggles with being far from older family members?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which person still misses the natural humour of their first language?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

# Answer key and explanations

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## Part 1: The Revival of Independent Bookshops

1. A. comeback
2. A. community
3. A. partner
4. A. precarious
5. A. Despite
6. A. provide

## Part 2: The Origins of Public Libraries

1. no
2. shape / root / hold
3. from
4. Despite
5. where
6. Although / While / Whilst
7. one

## Part 3: Designing Cities for Walking

1. **GENUINE**: genuinely
2. **ARGUE**: argument
3. **CONSEQUENCE**: consequences
4. **FUNDAMENT**: fundamental
5. **COMMUNICATE**: communication
6. **ALLOCATE**: allocation
7. **EXCEPTION**: exceptional

## Part 4: Key Word Transformation

1. Only after the teacher had explained the instructions twice **did I understand / did I manage to understand** them.
2. The new bridge **is said to be completed / is said to be finished / is said to have been completed** by next spring.
3. She **forgot to lock the door / forgot about locking the door** when she left.
4. The company is **bound to expand / bound to be expanding** into Asia next year.
5. The noise from the street **prevented me from / prevented me concentrating** concentrating.
6. You **ought to have warned / ought to have told** us about the delay.

## Part 5: Multiple Choice Reading

1. **B.** The combined burden of many small choices can exhaust mental resources.  
Correct. The paragraph explains that collectively trivial choices draw on limited mental energy known as decision fatigue.
2. **B.** fatigue leads people to make poorer or less effortful choices over time.  
Correct. Both examples illustrate depleted cognitive resources leading to less careful evaluation.
3. **C.** reduce trivial choices so mental energy is saved for significant ones.  
Correct. Automating small routines and simplifying interfaces reserves attention for choices that matter.
4. **B.** cautiously supportive of the concept despite incomplete evidence.  
Correct. The writer notes mixed replication and interacting factors, yet affirms the lasting lesson about limited judgement.

## Part 6: Is University Still Worth the Cost?

1. **Text D**  
Text D argues that an exclusively economic framing risks stripping away slower, less marketable elements of education.
2. **Text B**  
Text B states that portfolios of real projects often outrank transcripts in the industries the writer hires in.
3. **Text C**  
Text C emphasises that returns vary by subject, institution, background and labour-market conditions.
4. **Text A**  
Text A encourages most students with clear academic interest to apply, but insists on examining data and debt.

## Part 7: How Community Kitchens Feed More Than Hunger

1. **Paragraph A**

After introducing the kitchens' purpose, A explains the practical food-supply partnership that enables meals at scale.

2. **Paragraph B**

B develops the social atmosphere just described and explains that mixing people is deliberate.

3. **Paragraph D**

D follows the bridge-back-to-work theme by describing training that yields credentials for employment.

4. **Paragraph C**

C extends the funding/sustainability discussion with institutional recognition by local authorities.

5. **Paragraph E**

E responds directly to the tensions among volunteers and chefs by describing how coordination reduces clashes.

6. **Paragraph G**

G looks ahead from the idea of dual social and nutritional roles and asks how policy will support growth, leading into the conclusion.



## Part 8: Moving Abroad for Work

1. **Section B**

Felix describes feeling competent at work but helpless with permits, tax and banking.

2. **Section C**

Amelia took a post below her previous seniority because the location suited both partners.

3. **Section A**

Yara was coached through unwritten rules by a colleague who had moved earlier.

4. **Section D**

Kenji explains that working with international colleagues forced him to explain ideas more clearly and listen harder.

5. **Section B**

Felix advises building one non-work routine early after joining a climbing gym.

6. **Section A**

Yara treated the three-year post as temporary from day one.

7. **Section C**

Amelia says teaching in another language exhausted her and doubled preparation time.

8. **Section D**

Kenji says homesickness hit in the second year rather than the first.

9. **Section C**

Amelia says distance from ageing parents is the harder adjustment that video calls cannot fully repair.

10. **Section A**

Yara says she still misses the ease of humour in her own language.