



TIPS FOR TEST TAKERS

ENGLISH UNIVERSITY & ENGLISH BUSINESS

Examination Preparation

B2·C1



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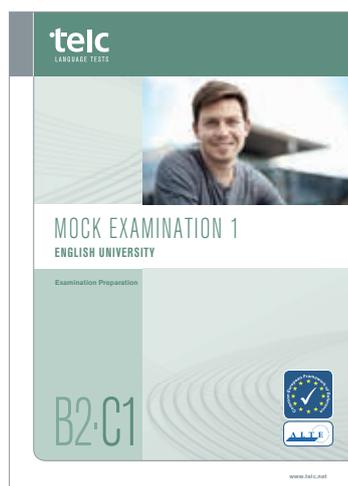
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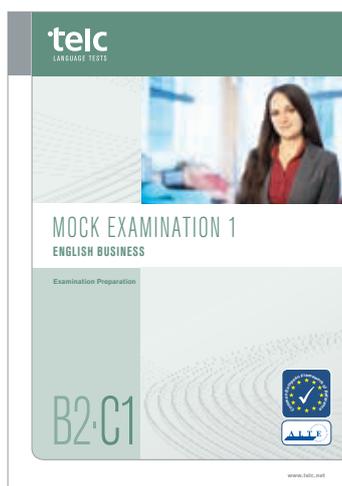
Introduction

Dear Reader,

This booklet is designed to help you prepare for the examination *telc English B2·C1 University* and *telc English B2·C1 Business*. The structure and the level of difficulty the examinations are the same, but the topics are tailored to the individual target groups.



telc English B2 · C1 University:
recommended for learners who are (interested in) studying or working at a university.



telc English B2 · C1 Business:
recommended for adults in the working world.

Before you get started, here are a few things to consider:

- First of all, you should become familiar with the **format of the examination**. This booklet describes the structure of the examination and the different task types.
- Secondly, you should make sure that the test **level B2·C1** corresponds to your English skills. This booklet includes the descriptions of the *Common European Framework of Reference* for levels B2 and C1 to help you with your decision.
- After you have determined that the B2·C1 examination is the right choice for you, you can start to **prepare for the test**. This booklet briefly describes a variety of practice material that will help you get ready for the examination.
- In addition, this booklet includes some useful **tips and tricks** for the examination itself, which will help you to feel more at ease on the day.
- Finally, this booklet explains **how the test is evaluated**. telc applies a transparent system which is easy to understand. With this information you know what to concentrate on and how to avoid typical mistakes.

Remember, you do not have to read this booklet from cover to cover. The chapters that describe the five subtests – **Listening, Reading, Language Elements, Writing and Speaking** – are probably the most important for you. In order to get the most out of those chapters, we recommend that you **work with the mock examination at the same time**. For example, study the chapter on Reading while you work through the Reading section of the mock examination.

We hope this booklet helps you to be successful in your examination ...

The telc English Team

The Format of the Examination

telc English B2:C1 University and *telc English B2:C1 Business* are **dual-level examinations**. They measure your language competence across two different levels.

The **advantage** of these dual-level examinations is that they measure your individual competencies in separate areas. Your reading skills, for example, may be at level B2 whereas your spoken English may already be at level C1. Your examination certificate will therefore not only document the overall level you have achieved (B2 or C1), but also break your results down into three separate sections: Listening/Reading/Language Elements, Writing and Speaking. Furthermore, for those of you who need the certificate for a job application, your employer might find it useful to see your individual competencies in spoken and in written English instead of just getting an overall impression.

telc English B2:C1 University and *telc English B2:C1 Business* are divided into five subtests: **Listening, Reading, Language Elements, Writing** and **Speaking**.

Each subtest consists of several tasks that test a variety of skills. On page 5 of the mock examination booklet you can find a detailed overview of the structure of the examination, the task types and the time you have to complete each task.

The Listening and Reading subtests consist of multiple-choice questions, True-False statements or matching items:

- **Multiple-choice items** give you a choice of three different answers: a, b or c. The possible answers are listed in alphabetical order, so don't be surprised if you tick one letter more often than another.
- **True-False items** are those in which you have to decide whether a statement is true or false. You only have two options for your answer, but true-false items can be tricky, so make sure that you read each statement carefully.
- **Matching items** have several short texts and a list of statements. In order to find out which text matches each statement, read carefully and pick out key words. Either you have to find the correct subject line for an email, or match the correct response to a forum enquiry.

Competence Levels B2 and C1

telc examinations are aligned to *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*.



The CEFR provides the basis for the development of teaching plans and examinations as well as teaching and learning materials across Europe. It is organised according to six levels of competence and specifies what learners at each stage are able to understand and express.

The CEFR defines six internationally comparable levels of progress:

- A1 and A2: basic language skills
- B1 and B2: independent use of language
- C1 and C2: proficient use of language

Global Scale

Proficient User	C1	<p>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning.</p> <p>Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.</p> <p>Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.</p>
Independent User	B2	<p>Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</p> <p>Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.</p> <p>Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p>

Test Preparation

telc offers a variety of material that helps you prepare for the test:

The mock examinations *telc English B2·C1 University* and *telc English B2·C1 Business* show you what to expect in the examination and allow you to simulate the precise conditions under which the examinations take place. PLEASE NOTE: If you don't have much time to prepare for your examination, you should at least work through the mock examination.

The *telc English B2·C1 Business Handbook* and the *telc English B2·C1 University Handbook* include a description of the learning objectives and the test specifications for the examinations. In these handbooks you will find detailed information about the skills required for both tests and the corresponding subtests.

This booklet, *Tips for Test Takers*, explains each task in the *telc English B2·C1 Business* and *English B2·C1 University* examinations and gives you ideas on how you can best prepare.

The telc preparation material, including mock examinations, can be downloaded or bought from the online shop at www.telc-english.net

Before and on the Day of Examination

No amount of test psychology can replace the tried-and-true method of good preparation, but feeling at ease during the test will positively influence your actual test results.

The day before the test

- Locate the things you need to take with you: identification card, pencils, eraser and watch.
- Double-check the time and location of your examination.
- Get a good night's sleep.

During the exam

- Before the exam starts, switch off and hand in your mobile phone.
- Listen carefully to the invigilator and follow the instructions. If you don't understand what you are expected to do, ask.
- Keep an eye on the time, but don't rush through the test.
- Answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. There are no penalties for incorrect answers.
- Allow time to double-check your answers. Correct any errors that you find.
- Do not cheat. If you do, you will be excluded from the examination.

Listening

In the Listening subtest you are required to **understand spoken English in everyday situations, in personal, work or student-related contexts, depending on the exam being taken.** These include conversations between two people, a presentation or lecture, opinions given during a talk show, a conference call or discussion.

telc English B2:C1 tests English in an authentic way. To reflect the globalised world we live and work in, telc exams offer English in different varieties of English, such as British, American, Australian and Indian English. This international perspective mirrors the experience today's learners face when communicating in English. However, regardless of which accents are heard in the recordings, the speakers will always be understandable for a learner at level B2 and C1.

Since the presentations and conversations take place in realistic scenarios, you may hear some minor background noise in some cases. Don't let that distract you; it's just like in everyday life. The Listening subtest is divided into four parts, each part requiring different listening skills. Depending on your personal experience, you may find some tasks easier than others. You may have no difficulty understanding presentations, but might find following discussions between a number of speakers to be more challenging. The better you know your strengths and weaknesses, the better you can prepare for each task.

If you have difficulty understanding spoken English, read the audio script found at the back of the mock exam book, while you are listening to the recording. Then listen to the recording again without the audio script. In this way, you will gradually improve your listening competence. Also, keep in mind that you don't need to understand every single word in order to answer the questions correctly.

The Listening section of the examination takes about 40 minutes. You will hear each text once. After the CD has started, it cannot be stopped. The task instructions are written in the test booklet and they are also recorded on the CD. This allows you to read them while you are listening. For some tasks, an example is given.

In the Listening subtests, there is always a short break before each audio text is played. In Parts 1, 2 and 3 there is a break of ten seconds, in Part 4 there is a break of one minute. Use this time to read the answer choices carefully so that you know what to listen for when you hear the recording. If you find the breaks between the audio texts too long, simply use the extra time for relaxation. Do not go back and forth in your test booklet because this might distract you from the task.

After each audio text is played, decide on the correct answer. Mark the answer on the answer sheet.

Listening, Part 1

Task

You will hear **two conversations in a personal, work-related or university context**. For each message, there are two True-False questions and one multiple-choice question with three options. The task is to decide whether the statements for each conversation are true or false according to what is said and also to choose the correct statement from three options. Only one option is correct.

Listening strategy

For each conversation you will listen to **identify the relationship between the speakers, to get a general impression of what the conversation is about or how a speaker feels, and additionally, listen for specific details such as the advice or information given**. Read the multiple-choice question carefully and identify the specific detail that you have to listen for; for example, how or why one speaker can help the other.

Be prepared to hear several pieces of information that may be quite similar to the information in the task. If you have to listen for the speaker's suggestion as to what the second speaker should do next, for example, several actions may be mentioned in the recording. Some may be mentioned in the past or the negative form. Pick out the one that is relevant to the question and don't let the other pieces of information distract you.

Even if you think you already know the answer, **listen to the end of the audio recording**. The information you are looking for may be mentioned at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the audio text.

Listening, Part 2

Task

You will hear a **podcast of a lecture or presentation**. For *telc English B2-C1 University* the lecture will be on an academic subject or topic of general interest relevant for students. For *telc English B2-C1 Business*, you will hear a presentation on a topic connected to the working world. In both exams, the topics will be comprehensible at B2-C1 level without expert knowledge in the field. There are **eight multiple-choice questions with three options. Only one option is correct**. The task is to listen for specific details and, in item 14, for implicit meaning. Here you will be asked which description matches the speaker's attitude or outlook.

Listening strategy

You have two minutes to go through the items before the recording starts. Read through the items to give yourself an idea of what the topic and the keywords will be. Then for each item, identify the specific information you will need to listen for in the recording.

Listening, Part 3

Task

You will hear **a radio programme with people stating their opinions on a particular topic, relating to work or university life**. After a short introduction by the presenter, five people will give their opinions. The task is to find the statements that correctly summarise the comments made by each of the five speakers. There are eleven statements in total, six of which will not be used. There is only one correct answer for each item.

Listening strategy

Before the recording begins, you will have **one minute to read the statements. Identify the key words in each**. It may be helpful to underline or highlight these words. When you listen to the recording, don't try to catch every word, but make sure you understand the general viewpoint of the speakers. Then, read the statements again and find the best match. Sometimes two statements seem to fit, but there is only one that fully reflects the speaker's comments.

Listening, Part 4

Task

You will hear a discussion between several speakers, which may take the form of a panel discussion or a conference call. In the case of *telc English B2·C1 University*, the discussion will involve four speakers sharing knowledge and discussing ideas on a topic which will be directly related to higher education. For *telc English B2·C1 Business*, the conference call will involve four participants discussing a work-related topic. All topics will be comprehensible at level B2·C1 without expert knowledge in any particular field. There are six items. The task is to decide whether the statements are true or false according to what is said in the discussion or conference call.

Listening strategy

You have one minute to **read the six statements** before the recording starts. Read each statement slowly and carefully. You may find it helpful to underline the key words. If you have enough time, read the statements again. The items follow the chronology of the discussion.

Reading

The Reading subtest requires overall **understanding of written texts in everyday situations** in a university or work-related context. You need to understand the **information in various types of texts**, such as Internet forums, informative texts, and texts on administrative, legal, financial and technical matters.



The Reading subtest is divided into **three parts**. Make sure that you don't spend too much time on one item. If you don't know the answer, go on to the next question. You might have time at the end of the Reading subtest to go back to any questions you were not sure about.

Some texts are more difficult than others. You may find **Part 3** of the Reading subtest rather challenging as it contains some difficult vocabulary and complex sentence structure. Keep in mind though that you are not required to understand every word or phrase in order to answer the questions.

Depending on the level of difficulty and the length of the text, you will probably be able to complete certain parts of the Reading subtest faster than others. Use the mock examination or the practice booklet to find out how much time you need for each part. If you know which part takes the least time and which part takes the most, you can **manage your time** during the examination accordingly.

You have 50 minutes to complete this subtest.

Reading, Part 1

Task

In this part, you will see an extract from an **Internet forum**. The topics are of general interest (e. g. student accommodation or customer service) in a university or work-related context. The language is informal and idiomatic, just as people would write in a forum. You will read six questions and eight possible answers. Your task is to identify the best answer for each question. In some cases, there may be no answer for the question.

Reading strategy

Before you do anything else, you should skim the two pages to find out what the topic of the forum is (e. g. student accommodation or customer service). This is a very important step, as it will save you time when reading the forum questions.

Once you have understood what the topic is, read the forum questions and **underline** up to 5 keywords per question. As the wording in the answers will be different from the wording in the questions, you should think of possible **paraphrases** for each word that you underlined. For example, if you have underlined "Valencia" and "live with friends" in the question, possible paraphrases might be "abroad", "foreign" and "room together" with "mates".

Then, read the first answer carefully and try to **identify the main message**. There will be keywords in each answer that match several questions, but you have to focus on the main message. When you have found the corresponding question to an answer, compare the words you have underlined to keywords in the answer and check if there are suitable paraphrases. The match doesn't depend on just one word; usually there are several clues in the text. Then read the next answer and try to match it to one of the remaining questions. Remember that some questions don't have answers and that there are more answers than questions.

Reading, Part 2

Task

In this part you will see a **long, informative text** on a subject of general or special interest that is relevant to work or university life. There are eleven multiple-choice items, ten of which refer to a specific detail in the text and one of which asks you to match the most appropriate title to the text. Only one option is correct.

Reading strategy

First have a quick look at the pictures and subheadings of the text and read the first sentence to get an idea of what the topic of the text is. Then read the first multiple-choice item and focus on the stem of the question. For example, if the stem of the question reads "Mario Encarnacion planned an unconventional home in order to", before you look at the multiple-choice answers try to **formulate a question using only the stem**: "Why did he plan an unconventional home?" In order to answer this question you need to **locate the relevant passage** in the text by scanning for words like "design" or "building". Re-read the relevant pieces of information until you fully understand them. Watch out for negations and tenses; e.g. a campaign has started or will start soon. Repeat the same procedure for the second question. Remember that the answers to the questions are always to be found in the right order and rarely in the same paragraph. That means if you found the answer to the first question in the second paragraph, you can now skip the first and second paragraph and start scanning in the third paragraph.

When you have answered the tenth detail question, you should have a good idea of what the text is about. Before you read the last question, it may help to **think of a title** for the text on your own. Then compare it to the three options given in the last question. The title always focuses on the main messages, not just one aspect of it.

Reading, Part 3

Task

In this part you will see a **fairly long text with formal or technical features** such as an information leaflet, regulations, a contract, a guarantee or instructions. The text is relevant to work or university life. For example, you need to read an information leaflet about town grant applications or the articles of a student club constitution. There are four true-false items and four multiple-choice items for this text. The task is to decide whether the four statements are true or false according to what is said in the text and which option in the multiple-choice question is correct.

Reading strategy

First have a quick look at the heading and the subheadings of the text to get an idea of what the topic of the text is. Then read the first true-false statement. Once you know what type of information you are looking for, scan the text and **locate the relevant passages**. Read these passages carefully and decide if the statements are true or false.



Repeat the same procedure for the next question. Remember that the answers to the questions are always to be found **in the right order** and rarely in the same paragraph. That means if you found the answer to the first question in the second paragraph, you can now skip the first and second paragraph and start scanning in the third paragraph.

Use the same strategy for the multiple-choice items, focusing on the stem again and formulating a question based on this.

Do not lose time trying to understand unnecessary pieces of information.

The text is divided into several sections separated by **subheadings**. The subheadings give you a clue as to what each section is about, so they can help you navigate around the text and find relevant passages quickly.

Since the text is relatively long and contains some complex sentence structures and language elements, it is mostly **geared towards the C1 level**. Be aware though that you do not need to understand every word or phrase in order to solve the items.

Language Elements

The two Language Elements tasks test candidates' grammatical and lexical accuracy as well as their mastery of sociolinguistic appropriateness. The objective of the Language Elements subtest is to bridge the gap between understanding a text and actively engaging with it. There are two parts. In the first, you are required to complete an informal dialogue by selecting appropriate conversational words or expressions (discourse markers). The candidates need to have a grasp of the communicative situation as a whole. The second part deals with a letter or email in a university or work-related context. In each case you should select the appropriate phrases to complete the texts.

You have 20 minutes to complete this subtest.

Language Elements, Part 1

To assess the candidate's understanding of informal conversational expressions and vocabulary in a dialogue.

The task is to choose the correct phrase for each gap. The items are based on **contextual understanding of the communicative situation as a whole** and do not primarily focus on grammar and vocabulary. There are ten correct options and five distractors. Each option is a single word or short phrase. (e.g. phrasal verbs, idioms, synonyms) Only one option is correct for each gap.

Strategy

Read the phrases that appear below the text. Then read the text itself entirely before completing the items, paying close attention to the structure and meaning of the sentences containing gaps. There are ten phrases, eight are needed and two are distractors. Some items may seem possible for more than one gap, but by reading the text through before attempting to complete the missing phrases, you are more likely to identify which phrases **best suit the message** being communicated in each sentence.

Language Elements, Part 2

As in the previous task, you are required to complete a reading passage by selecting the appropriate short phrases. The text is a formal or semi-formal letter or email. Again, the items are based on contextual understanding of the communicative situation as a whole, but this task concentrates more on choosing an grammatically accurate expression to complete the sentence. Additionally, you have to make sure that the expression is **sufficiently formal or informal**.

Strategy

Read the text carefully. The three items available for each gap may seem very similar, but only one suits the meaning of the sentence or situation as a whole. Keep the context of the letter in mind while deciding which item to choose.

Writing



In the Listening and the Reading subtests, you were required to understand a written or spoken text. In other words, your passive language skills were tested. Now, in the Writing and in the Speaking subtests, you have an opportunity to demonstrate your active language skills. However, this doesn't mean that these subtests are more difficult. As there are no obviously right or wrong answers, the evaluation scheme is different. The examiners will look at various aspects, which will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

Writing for business or academic purposes requires the ability to produce well-structured texts on a complex subject, express opinions convincingly, organise ideas logically and demonstrate clarity of expression.

Task

You are asked to **contribute an article to the company's newsletter or your university magazine and may choose one of two topics**. In either case an introduction to the topic is given followed by two contrasting statements which you can use for inspiration. The task is to discuss the pros and cons of the issue and give a personal opinion.

You have 60 minutes to complete this task.

Writing Strategy

Take a **few minutes to read the two tasks and decide which one you want to complete**. Once you have made your decision, stick to it. If you start working on one task, then change your mind and work on the other, you will lose too much time.

Before you start writing your article, take a few minutes to think about the points for and against the topic which you want to include in your article, and how you will structure your text. Brainstorm some important vocabulary relating to the topic which you may wish to use.

Take a few minutes to proofread your text twice. First make sure that your text is clearly understandable and that no words are missing. Then read the text again and check for grammar and spelling.

Evaluation

In order to do well on this subtest, you also need to know how the writing task is evaluated. There are **four marking criteria**:

Content and Coherence

Has the text covered all aspects of the task, producing a clear, well-structured, elaborate text?
Have supporting points been sufficiently developed, including reasons and relevant examples?

**Communicative Design**

Have a number of cohesive devices been used?

Is paragraphing consistent? Has the appropriate register (formal or informal) been used?

Accuracy

Does the text maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy, with few or no errors in spelling and punctuation?

Vocabulary

Does the writer use a broad range of language including idiomatic expressions, expressing him or herself clearly without having to restrict what he/she wants to say?

On the following pages you will see three example letters. They are there to help you understand what is expected of you in order to fulfil the four marking criteria.

Further details can be found on pages 37 and 38 of the Mock Exam.



Example 1, Task B

This is an example of a very good performance at C1-level so that you know what to aim for:

Nowadays, more and more universities outside the English-speaking world are using English as the language of instruction. In my opinion, this is a good chance to cope with today's globalisation, but I know that a lot of people are against this development. This is why I'd like to discuss the pros and cons of English as the language of instruction in the following. People who are against this development often don't see the use of studying, for instance, medicine in English if later on, none of your patients speak that language.

I agree in this point. Certainly, there are some areas where you don't need English at all. And I also think that a lot of people, who study their subject in English, afterwards don't speak English again in their lives.

Nevertheless, English has become the world language and with today's globalisation, who knows where your career will take you? Maybe you won't get a job in your country and you will have to go and try in an other country. This will most probably be a country where you need English.

Of course, there are also other important language, for example Spanish or Chinese, but they are not as important as English is today. Nowadays, you need English nearly every day, because it's used as main language for example at train stations or airports. Furthermore, a lot of important textes you will have to read while you study, will be in English, so it is helpful when the language of instruction is also English.

And it makes it more easy for students to study in another country or to spend a term abroad, because then, they can attend the courses with English as the language of instruction, so they don't have to learn a new language.

On the other hand, there are students with a lot of skills, but they simply can't speak English. Everyone's different, so it would not be fair that those students haven't got a chance to study their favourite subject, simply because they aren't good at English.

I have to agree, that this is really a point against English as the language of instruction, but in other cases there are subjects where it is useful to be confronted with as many English as possible, because it could be that you won't get a job afterwards if you can't show that you understand English. Many employers want to see that you are used to English, when you apply for a job. Moreover, there are lots of international organisations, which require English at high standards. Of course you can learn English afterwards at a special English course, if you see that you need this language for your job, but why paying this extra course if you can learn English with studying with English as the language of instruction?

All in all, I think that English as the language of instruction at universities outside the English-speaking world is a really good chance to become international and find a job easily but there should always be the possibility to choose.

Content and Coherence

*Has the text covered all aspects of the task, producing a clear, well-structured text?
Have supporting points been sufficiently developed, including reasons and relevant examples?*

The candidate has written a well-structured text and has covered all points. However, the negative aspects relating to the topic and the summary should be elaborated on slightly in order for the candidate to be given full marks. In this instance, 4 out of a possible 5 points were awarded.

Communicative Design

*Have a number of cohesive devices been used?
Is paragraphing consistent? Has the appropriate (formal or informal) register been used?*

A number of cohesive devices can be found in the text. The writer uses the appropriate register and has followed standard paragraphing conventions and therefore received full marks for this criterion.

Accuracy

Does the text maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy, with few or no errors in spelling and punctuation?

The candidate maintains a relatively high degree of grammatical accuracy. There are occasional slips but no significant errors. Spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. The candidate received 3 out of a possible 5 points for this criterion.

Vocabulary

Does the writer use a broad range of language including idiomatic expressions, expressing him or herself clearly without having to restrict what he/she wants to say?

The candidate has a fairly broad range of language and although some incorrect word choice occurs, this does not hinder communication. 4 out of a possible 5 points were awarded for this criterion.

Example 2, Task B

For your comparison, this letter is an example of an B2-performance:

Is it a positive change in the world that more and more universities are using English as the language of instruction? I'm going to discuss this question in the following text.

I would like to start with the argument, that even if you are studying your major subject in English, you might never need the language, because you will work in your homecountry, so you don't need the English language.

An example for that point is a German doctor, who studied medicine at a university in English and after he finished university he works in a small city where none of his regular patients speaks English.

But you can easily say that this argument doesn't say anything against studying in English. Because it just says that you might never need English again and that it was not worth it to study in English. But even if you never need it, it is a good thing to have learned English while you studied, because now you can communicate with almost anyone on this world due to the fact that English is the world language nowadays.

And because of this open world, which we live in, it's always important to know the most important language.



An argument against that is that even if you are studying in English, it doesn't mean that you can completely understand it or even speak it. And maybe because of that fact some students will get bad marks, just because they don't understand English. At one hand this statement is correct that probably some people don't understand the subject just because it's foreign language but on the other hand the student who doesn't understand English could just go to another university where the subject is taught in his mother-language, so there are plenty of options.

Another argument for teaching a subject in English is that you will have better chances to get a job after your studies because of the English, maybe you might even get better paid for doing the same work as your partner just because you can speak the world language.

This English at university will get you better chances for your career, you can work everywhere in this world and this will give you experience you won't have without the English at the university.

Last but not least you can say that English language lets you meet people from all over the world, you can meet new friends and you can even study one semester abroad.

In summary we have a lot of positive arguments which say that studying in English is a positive development of our time, because you can make experience, work all over the world and communicate with almost everybody. But there are also a few negative aspects which say that in some cases it's not necessary to study in English.

In my opinion I think it's great to study in English because I know that English is really important in our world. But you only should study in English if you really want it.

Example 3, Task A

This letter is another example of a C1-performance

Superstar versus wallflower – universities and how their rankings affect the students' decision.

Ever since people or groups and institutions have been competing with each other there were rankings that served the purpose of showing a spectator who is not involved who is the best and who failed.

Historically more common in sports, rankings today have become popular for basically everything. However, it is not always that easy to tell good from bad.

Recent polls show that many students like to check university rankings on the internet before they choose or even consider a particular university.

The question is whether it is a good idea for students to hold on to these statistics and more likely choose a popular university or not.

In the following article we will look at different arguments and aspects that are important to consider when trying to solve this issue.

First of all there is reputation. An employer will certainly be very interested in an applicant who went to Harvard university if the job applied to requires skills and knowledge of science. It simply looks good in one's CV. Still, it depends on the employers and the company whether it will have much of an impact. Being able to say that you made it into Harvard shows that you are intelligent, your grades are very good and you are willing to work hard because that is what you will have done at Harvard and of course every employer would like to hire people who are willing to work hard.

So much for your career afterwards.

We will now focus on the popular, high-ranked university itself.

Due to the popularity and the high expectations on students the professors will have to be more than good. To keep up this good reputation these universities cannot afford to have bad professors who do not know enough about their area of expertise. They also might have more experience.

Furthermore it is important not to view these rankings only as a bad thing. There might be good reasons for one university to rank higher than another one. They can help students who do not know what to look for and give them at least a starting point.

Most rankings look at different aspects, e.g. the campus, the living conditions, the financials and a lot more. Something might appear at some point that the unexperienced student has not even thought about before.

On the other hand, not every student checks the rankings that carefully. It is easier to just look for the university that ranked first and not go into detail and ask about the reasons for this first rank.

Moreover the popular universities probably specialize on some subject that you are not even interested in. Some students still choose this one simply because it ranked first in some Internet forum.

A reason to intentionally not pick a popular university are the costs. If it is well-known and a lot of people want to study there the apartment prices can be higher. So it might also be easier to find a place to live if the university is not that popular.

Regardless of any rankings, smaller universities can also be good. Most of the times the professors actually have more time and are able to work with every student individually whereas at big popular universities with big courses that is not possible.

As a conclusion it is important to note that a lot of arguments can be found for both sides. It is a question of the priorities of each individual. If you are more focused on a great career you might want to consider a high-ranked university but if you would rather like more personal contact with your professors you should think about choosing a smaller, less-known one. In any case it is essential to check all the important aspects before you decide.

Speaking



The Speaking subtest consists of **three parts**. In all parts, you will get your instructions from the examiner, but you will be speaking to the other candidate. The Speaking subtest takes approximately 20 minutes.

Before the exam starts, **the examiners** will welcome you and briefly introduce themselves. They will guide you through the examination and if you get stuck, they will try to help you keep going. At the end of the examination, the examiners are not allowed to comment on your performance. You can find additional information on how the oral examination is conducted on pages 45–47 of the mock examination.



Whether you find the Speaking subtest easy or difficult depends on your experience with the English language and your personal preferences. Some people say the Speaking subtest is easy because “all you have to do is talk”. Others are simply not used to oral examinations and get nervous because they do not know what to expect. If you are the nervous type, here are a few things for you to consider:

- **You are not alone!**

The Speaking subtest is generally carried out in pairs, however, in case of an uneven number of candidates in pairs and one group of three. This means that you do not have to go into the examination room by yourself and you can speak to somebody who is in the same situation as you are.

- **Two examiners are better than one!**

There are always two examiners because telc wants to make sure that your performance is being rated objectively. Normally, only one of the examiners will talk to you. The second examiner will listen quietly and keep an eye on the time.

- **They don't test your knowledge!**

You will not be expected to memorise facts or answer questions about abstract topics. Instead, you will be asked to talk about everyday topics. It's very much like having a normal conversation with people.

Speaking, Part 1

Task

In Part 1, you will be asked to talk spontaneously about a topic with the other candidate for four minutes. You will get a task sheet with a picture related to a particular aspect of working or university life and a statement encouraging you to comment on it. The task is to **talk informally** about the topic and to share your personal experiences and opinions.

Strategy

When the examiner hands you the task sheet, take a moment to look at the title, the picture and the sentence below. Do not describe the picture, but **identify the topic** (e.g. studying with others or commuting). Start by asking the other candidate a question. Show interest in what they say, comment on it and relate it to yourself. Make sure to take turns. The conversation should sound natural. Don't make it sound like a series of mini-monologues, each expressing your opinion in detail and waiting until the other person has finished with whatever they were saying to take your turn. Show that you can communicate socially with another person.

Speaking, Part 2

Task

In Part 2A, you will have to give a **formal three-minute presentation** connected to your professional or academic life. You can prepare the presentation at home using non-electronic visual aids (charts, objects etc.).

In Part 2B, the other candidate and the examiner will ask you **follow-up questions** about your presentation.

Strategy

This part of the Speaking subtest is always the same, so you can prepare for it very well.

You can choose any of the three options given for your presentation but you are not allowed to choose something else that is connected to your professional or academic life.

Practise what you want to say several times before the exam but do not memorise every single word. If you do, you run the risk of speaking monotonously or too fast. Remember, the idea is to give a formal but interesting presentation, so try to speak at your normal speed and maintain eye contact with the other candidate.

Be aware that you need to structure your presentation with a proper introduction and a conclusion. Don't just list things that relate to the topic but try to link your ideas together using connectors.

Although your grammar doesn't have to be perfect, watch out for typical mistakes. As you can prepare for this part of the test, it's easy to avoid the most common ones (e. g. "I give you some details" instead of "I'll give you some details").



Speaking, Part 3

Task

In the last part of the Speaking subtest, you will be asked to **discuss a controversial topic** together with the other candidate. The examiner will give you a task sheet with a question and three sample answers to this question.

You and your partner should **exchange your opinions on this topic**. There are some sample opinions on the sheet to give you some ideas but you don't have to comment on them.

The **examiner** will generally not get involved in your conversation. However, there are a few exceptions:

- The examiner might ask an additional question after the presentation.
- If your conversation is too short, the examiner will ask you some questions to help you keep going.
- If one person talks too much and the other too little, the examiner will encourage the quiet person to say more.
- If the communication breaks down because of a major misunderstanding or a lack of communication skills, the examiner will try to help you get back on track.

Strategy

In this Speaking subtest, you are supposed to show that you can initiate and maintain a discussion and express your ideas clearly and precisely. In order to do this, it is helpful to become familiar with some common expressions so that you can ask for opinions (e. g. "What do you think?"), agree with your partner's opinion (e. g. "You're right."), partially agree (e.g. "That might be true, but...") or disagree (e.g. "I don't know about that. Don't you think...?").

In Part 3 of the Speaking subtest, you and your partner have to discuss the topic for about four minutes. Remember, this part of the test is a dialogue, not a monologue, this means you should take turns to ask and answer questions. Comment briefly on what your partner says and in turn ask for your partner's opinion. When you share your opinion, remember to include reasons and personal experiences. Make sure that you pay attention to your partner. The two of you have to work together in order to handle this task well. For example, if you are a very talkative person and your partner is rather quiet, try not to dominate the conversation. Listen to your partner and give him/her time to express his/her ideas. You can also help each other if one of you gets stuck or can't think of a word. If you do not understand what your partner said, ask for clarification.

In order to do well on this subtest, you also need to know how it is evaluated.

There are **five marking criteria**:

Task Management

is evaluated individually for each section of the Speaking subtest:

- Part 1A: Can you socialise naturally with another person?
- Part 1B: Can you respond to the examiner's questions in detail?
- Part 2A: Can you give a clearly structured presentation?
- Part 2B: Can you respond to questions in detail?
- Part 3: Can you exchange opinions with your partner and keep a conversation going?

The other four criteria apply to your overall performance:

Pronunciation and Intonation

Do you have a natural pronunciation and intonation?

Fluency

Can you speak spontaneously and without unnatural pauses?

Accuracy

Can you use common and complex grammatical structures effectively?

Vocabulary

Can you use a broad range of vocabulary including idiomatic expressions?

You can find further information on the marking criteria for Speaking on pages 39–40 of the Mock examination.

Example

Here is an excerpt from an oral examination to give you an idea of what is expected of you in order to fulfill the marking criteria. The overall performance of Candidate A is at level B2 while the performance of Candidate B is mostly at level C1. The example is based on the tasks in the mock examination *telc English B2·C1 University*, pages 23–26.

- Examiner:** We'd like you to talk to each other about the topic. And the topic is studying together with others. So, have a brief look at the picture and the comment and when you're ready, start to talk with each other. Ok?
- Candidate A:** Ok. I think it's a good experience to study together with so many people because you can talk about the things you learned during the lessons and you can prepare for tests together and yeah, you can make some good relations with ... That's good.
- Candidate B:** Yes, I agree, I also think it's good to study with other people. You can also make friends, you can prepare together for...uhm for exams, but of course It always depends on the people. There are always people you like and people you don't like.
- Candidate A:** Oh, Yes, that's right. I have... I have one in my ... in my study lessons, he's very difficult and often it's, yeah, difficult to work him because we often need to get together in pairs and work together and one time I had to work together with him and it was very, very difficult, because he's... yeah, I don't know... very special part of... of human...
- Candidate B:** Yes, I know the situation as well. Uhm, Sometimes you have to ...uhm... prepare presentations together with some other student and some students, well, they don't ... some students work a bit different than you.
- Candidate A:** That's right. Sometimes it's difficult to bring it together so you can make a good work together. And one is maybe lazy and you will work more and that cannot depend together good.
- Candidate B:** But it can also be that... Other people can also help you when... when one does one part of the work you have to do and the other one does the other part of the work... less work for one person.
- Candidate A:** You're right. Don't forget you can spend your free time together and you can make

parties or, yeah enjoy the weekends together and you can get good friends and that's also very good, I think.

Candidate B: Yes... And you can also talk about the professors and about university with others. Share your experiences.

Candidate A: Yeah, that's right. And maybe when you have a problem with one of the professors you can talk with one another and maybe he can say, try it like this way or... So you can come together with him.

Examiner: Ok. Thank you very much.

You can find the full video on the telc website at

<https://moodle.telc.net/mod/lesson/view.php?id=491&pageid=4273>

Candidate A

Task Management, Part 1 Upper B2

Candidate A takes up Candidate B's introductory ideas. She interacts with her partner, commenting on Candidate B's statements, adding other ideas and going into detail. When they run out of things to say, Candidate A tries to keep the conversation going. However, Candidate A's performance in the rest of the examination seems to point to the fact that small talk is not her strength. Generally, Candidate A speaks confidently but does not show the emotional usage or spontaneity expected at C1 level.

Pronunciation / Intonation, Part 1–3 Lower / Middle C1

Candidate A's pronunciation is clear and natural and intonation is varied appropriately.

Fluency, Part 1–3 Lower / Middle C1

Candidate A speaks fluently at a speed that is natural for her and she can express herself smoothly.

Accuracy, Part 1–3 Lower / Middle C1

Candidate A shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control and her errors are rarely noticeable.

Vocabulary, Part 1–3 Lower / Middle C1

Candidate A has a good command of vocabulary and shows little obvious searching for words.

Candidate B

Task Management, Part 1 Upper B2

Candidate B starts the conversation saying why she thinks it is a good idea to study together with others. She actively listens to her partner and takes up her ideas, giving examples e.g. talking about her study group to support Candidate A's comment that "it depends on the people you study with." She is very active in the conversation but is sometimes hampered by grammatical errors and lexical gaps.

Pronunciation / Intonation, Parts 1–3 Upper B2

Candidate B's pronunciation and intonation are clear, but a foreign accent is sometimes evident and some words are mispronounced.

**Fluency, Parts 1–3 Upper B2**

Candidate B communicates with fluency and spontaneity, although there are a few noticeable pauses.

Accuracy, Parts 1–3 B1

Candidate B systematically makes basic mistakes, particularly in word order, tenses and plural/singular agreement, (e.g. “make a good work together”).

Vocabulary, Parts 1–3 Upper B2

Candidate B shows a good range of vocabulary but is clearly thinking in her native language. There are lexical gaps but communication is not hindered.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I get the mock examination?

You can either download the mock examination (including the audio files) for free from the telc website or you can order a professionally printed copy.

For the free download, please go to:

www.telc-english.net

If you prefer a professionally printed copy of the mock examination, please go to:

www.telc.net/shop.html

2. Where can I find information about the evaluation scheme that telc uses?

In the *telc English B2·C1* mock examinations on pages 37–43.

3. How long is the examination?

The written examination takes 170 minutes. It comprises the subtests Listening, Reading, Language Elements and Writing. The oral examination takes approximately 20 minutes.

4. May I use a dictionary during the examination?

No, dictionaries are not allowed during the examination.

5. Can I repeat the examination?

Yes, you can repeat the examination as often as you wish. You have to repeat the whole exam, both written and oral parts.

6. How long does it take for me to get my certificate?

Normally you will get your certificate six weeks after the documents have arrived at the telc Head Office in Frankfurt. However, we are often quicker with the rating.

Examination Preparation

TIPS FOR TEST TAKERS

ENGLISH UNIVERSITY & ENGLISH BUSINESS

This booklet is designed to help test takers prepare for the dual-level examinations *telc English B2·C1 University* and *telc English B2·C1 Business*. It contains useful tips and strategies for the subtests Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Language Elements. It also describes the examination structure and the different task types so participants know what to expect when taking the exam. Additionally, this booklet explains how the test is evaluated and helps participants to know what to concentrate on and how to avoid typical mistakes.

This booklet may also be used in conjunction with the mock examinations *telc English B2·C1 University* and *telc English B2·C1 Business*.