

THE BRITISH ENGLISH INSIDER

Advanced English Placement Test

A 75-question diagnostic for strong B2, C1 and C2 learners

75 questions

Grammar • lexical chunks • phrasal verbs • nuance • reading

British English • Approximately 40-45 minutes

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Welcome

This test is designed for learners who already have a solid command of English and want a clearer picture of their ability at the upper levels. It goes beyond routine grammar and vocabulary by testing the combinations, choices and shades of meaning that often separate B2 from C1 - and secure C1 from genuinely exceptional performance.

You will meet natural British English, collocations, lexical chunks, phrasal verbs, formal and informal register, grammatical patterns in context, and short reading tasks. Some questions are deliberately subtle. At the highest levels, knowing what is merely possible is not enough: you need to recognise what is natural, precise and appropriate.

This is a diagnostic guide, not an official CEFR examination or certificate. Because it does not assess speaking, listening or extended writing, it cannot provide a complete language-level judgement.

How to use the test

1	Set aside approximately 40-45 minutes and complete the test in one sitting.
2	Choose one answer - A, B, C or D - for every question.
3	Do not use a dictionary, grammar reference, translation tool or AI assistant.
4	If you are unsure, choose the answer that sounds most natural in the context and move on.
5	Give yourself one mark for each correct answer, then use the score guide after the answer section.

What the five sections assess

Grammar in context

Control of advanced structures when meaning and context matter.

Collocations and chunks

Natural word partnerships, dependent prepositions and semi-fixed frames.

Phrasal and idiomatic language

Meaning, form, transitivity and appropriate use.

Nuance and register

Precision, politeness, hedging and the implications carried by particular choices.

Reading and discourse

Main ideas, inference, cohesion, stance and argument.

Grammar in context

19
questions

1. If the train had arrived on time, we ___ the opening speech.

- A wouldn't miss
- B wouldn't have missed
- C hadn't missed
- D didn't miss

2. Maya said she ___ the report by the following Friday.

- A will have finished
- B would have finished
- C had finished
- D would finish

3. There's no reply. They ___ already.

- A must leave
- B should leave
- C must have left
- D would leave

4. The colleague ___ desk is next to mine is leaving.

- A who
- B whom
- C whose
- D which

5. The new system ___ across all departments next month.

- A will introduce
- B will be introduced
- C is introducing
- D has introduced

6. I regret ___ you that your application has been unsuccessful.

- A informing
- B to inform
- C having informed
- D to have informed

7. Only after the meeting ___ how serious the problem was.

- A we realised
- B did we realise
- C we had realised
- D had we realised

8. If I ___ your advice then, I wouldn't be in this situation now.

- A took
- B had taken
- C would take
- D have taken

9. ___ in full, the evidence revealed several inconsistencies that had previously been overlooked.

- A Examined
- B Examining
- C Having examined
- D To have examined

10. What concerns me most ___ the lack of any contingency plan.

- A it is
- B is
- C that is
- D being

11. The committee recommended that the proposal ___ reconsidered.

- A is
- B was
- C be
- D would be

12. The company ___ the product when the fault was discovered.

- A was about to launch
- B would launch
- C has launched
- D was launching already

13. Looking back, I ___ accepted their first offer; it was much better than the one I eventually took.

- A might have
- B must have
- C should have
- D would have

14. The final cost was considerably higher than ___ in the original estimate.

- A anticipated
- B anticipating
- C it had anticipated
- D was anticipating

15. Had the figures been checked more carefully, the error ___.

- A might have been caught
- B might be caught
- C had been caught
- D would be catching

16. ___ as the argument may sound, the evidence does not support it.

- A Convincing
- B Convinced
- C To convince
- D Having convinced

17. Suppose the negotiations ___ break down at this stage: what options would remain open to us?

- A were to
- B are to
- C would
- D should have

18. Scarcely ___ when reports of a possible agreement began to circulate.

- A had the negotiations begun
- B the negotiations had begun
- C the negotiations were beginning
- D the negotiations began

19. The figures are believed ___ after the initial analysis but before publication.

- A to have been altered
- B to be altered
- C to have altered
- D having been altered

Collocations and chunks

19
questions

20. The council plans to ___ measures to reduce traffic in the town centre.

- A do
- B make
- C take
- D put

21. There is a ___ possibility that the match will be cancelled.

- A heavy
- B strong
- C wide
- D hard

22. She's very good ___ putting nervous clients at ease.

- A in
- B at
- C on
- D for

23. The report ___ serious doubt on the reliability of the figures.

- A voices
- B casts
- C draws
- D levels

24. ___ it not for the last-minute donation, the project would have closed.

- A If were
- B Were
- C Had
- D Should

25. The rules have evolved over time through trial and ___.

- A mistake
- B error
- C failure
- D fault

26. All contractors are required to comply ___ the revised safety regulations.

- A to
- B with
- C on
- D by

27. We can't change the deadline now; it's a ___ deal.

- A finished
- B done
- C closed
- D made

28. The closure came as a ___ blow to a community that had fought for years to keep the hospital open.

- A bitter
- B forceful
- C weighty
- D cutting

29. ___ to say, the launch did not go according to plan.

- A Useless
- B Needless
- C Pointless
- D Worthless

30. The inquiry may shed ___ on why the safeguards failed.

- A light
- B clarity
- C insight
- D understanding

31. The two proposals are ___ opposed in both principle and detail.

- A diametrically
- B intensely
- C heavily
- D deeply

32. There's no ___ that the policy has divided opinion.

- A denial
- B denying
- C deny
- D denied

33. The judge concluded that the evidence fell ___ of what was required for a conviction.

- A short
- B brief
- C below
- D lacking

34. The two accounts proved mutually ___: accepting one meant rejecting the other.

- A exclusive
- B opposed
- C disputed
- D divided

35. Be that as it ___, we still need to decide what to do next.

- A is
- B will
- C may
- D might

36. The findings lend ___ to the theory that the fire started accidentally.

- A credence
- B evidence
- C proof
- D testimony

37. "The proposal is ambitious, but not beyond the realms of possibility." How does the speaker assess it?

- A It would be difficult to achieve, but it remains conceivable.
- B It is theoretically imaginable, although clearly impractical.
- C It is impossible under the present constraints, despite its appeal.
- D It is likely to be accepted because its scale is impressive.

38. Several residents have ___ concerns about the proposed development.

- A lifted
- B raised
- C grown
- D risen

Phrasal and idiomatic language

12
questions

39. We should ___ extra time for roadworks on the way to the airport.

- A allow for
- B make up
- C put by
- D take over

40. I ran ___ an old colleague while I was in Manchester.

- A over
- B into
- C through
- D up

41. The investigation is intended to ___ how the documents were leaked.

- A get down to the cause of
- B get through to the reason for
- C get across the source of
- D get to the bottom of

42. The chair asked us to ___ the grounds for our objection in writing.

- A set out
- B set up
- C lay down
- D put through

43. Which expression means “to go wrong, especially in an unexpected way”?

- A go pear-shaped
- B go bananas
- C go straight
- D go steady

44. The report ___ several weaknesses in the current system.

- A draws on
- B points out
- C takes up
- D makes out

45. We've been asked to ___ the proposal before Friday and suggest any final changes.

- A look over
- B see through
- C carry over
- D turn over

46. "I'll believe that when I see it." Which reply conveys amused disbelief?

- A That's beside the point.
- B Pigs might fly.
- C It's touch and go.
- D You can say that again.

47. She finds it hard to ___ the latest changes in data-protection law.

- A keep up with
- B come down with
- C get round to
- D look down on

48. His explanation doesn't quite ___. There are several contradictions.

- A add up
- B count up
- C sum over
- D put together

49. The criticism was water off a duck's back to her. What does this suggest?

- A She concealed how seriously the criticism affected her.
- B She was unaffected by the criticism.
- C She failed to realise that the criticism concerned her.
- D She thought the criticism was too indirect to answer.

50. The company tried to ___ the fall in demand by offering discounts.

- A make up to
- B make up for
- C make for up
- D make over for

Nuance and register

13
questions

51. Which is the most natural polite request to a colleague?

- A Send me the figures today.
- B Could you possibly send me the figures today?
- C You must send the figures today, please.
- D Would you send the figures, or not?

52. Which sentence presents the reform's likely value without claiming that it will solve the problem?

- A The reform should resolve the problem once and for all.
- B The reform may go some way towards addressing the problem.
- C The reform appears to have removed the underlying difficulty.
- D The reform is likely to eliminate the problem in due course.

53. A survey found that 18 of 120 employees had concerns about the decision. Which sentence reports this most accurately and neutrally?

- A Employees unanimously opposed the decision.
- B A minority of employees expressed reservations about the decision.
- C Most employees rejected the decision without qualification.
- D Employees as a group were dissatisfied with the decision.

54. A British colleague says, "That's quite an interesting idea." In a critical discussion, what might quite signal?

- A Genuine enthusiasm without reservation
- B A cautious or qualified reaction
- C Polite agreement followed by likely acceptance
- D Uncertainty about having understood the idea

55. Small firms are likely to be more severely ____ by the new rules than large ones.

- A affected
- B effected
- C impacted on
- D resulted in

56. A colleague claims that the evidence proves the policy was a complete failure. Which response most specifically challenges the strength of that claim without dismissing the evidence?

- A I'm not sure I'd go quite that far.
- B I'm afraid I don't see it that way.
- C That conclusion remains open to question.
- D I take your point, but I remain unconvinced.

57. In this context, describing the timetable as “ambitious” most likely suggests that it is ____.

- A carefully costed and already approved
- B demanding and perhaps difficult to achieve
- C innovative but deliberately limited in scope
- D detailed enough to prevent further delay

58. Everyone assumed Daniel had rejected the proposal. Which sentence corrects the person responsible while preserving the fact that it was rejected?

- A Daniel was the one who rejected the proposal.
- B It was Maya who rejected the proposal.
- C Maya was the one who approved the proposal.
- D The proposal was rejected, and Daniel agreed with the decision.

59. His apology was so ____ - a mumbled “sorry” before he walked away - that it made matters worse.

- A effusive
- B perfunctory
- C unequivocal
- D forgiving

60. In “You might want to reconsider that paragraph”, what does might want chiefly do in workplace British English?

- A It leaves the decision entirely open and signals no preference.
- B It softens advice that may in practice be quite firm.
- C It expresses uncertainty about whether the paragraph needs revision.
- D It frames revision as a personal wish rather than a recommendation.

61. Although some details were disputed, the witness’s account remained ____ throughout both interviews: she did not contradict herself.

- A continual
- B consistent
- C corroborated
- D consecutive

62. Which neutral version best preserves the meaning of “He bottled out at the last minute”?

- A He withdrew at the last moment because he lost his nerve.
- B He reconsidered the risks and decided not to continue.
- C Circumstances prevented him from proceeding as planned.
- D He postponed the decision because he remained uncertain.

63. Which sentence most clearly presents the conclusion as a tentative interpretation rather than an established fact?

- A The figures indicate that the policy has had limited success.
 - B The figures would appear to indicate that the policy has had limited success.
 - C On balance, the figures confirm that the policy has had limited success.
 - D The figures can be taken as establishing that the policy has had limited success.
-

Reading and discourse

12
questions

64. Passage A: “The library extended its opening hours last winter. Visitor numbers rose, but most of the increase occurred at weekends, when the hours had not changed. Staff therefore warned against attributing the rise solely to the new timetable.” What is the main point?

- A Visitor numbers rose mainly because the library extended its opening hours.
- B Weekend attendance increased even though weekend opening hours had not changed.
- C The figures do not justify treating the extended hours as the sole cause of the rise.
- D Staff believed the timetable had affected weekday and weekend visits differently.

65. In Passage A, “the rise” refers to the increase in ____.

- A opening hours
- B visitor numbers
- C staff warnings
- D weekend closures

66. What can be inferred from Passage A?

- A Another factor may have contributed to higher attendance.
- B The library closed during the week.
- C Staff collected no visitor data.
- D Weekend visitors objected to the change.

67. The phrase “warned against attributing” shows that staff were ____.

- A confident that the timetable explained the rise
- B cautious about drawing that conclusion
- C concerned that the weekend figures had been omitted
- D doubtful that visitor numbers had risen at all

68. Passage B: “Remote meetings can broaden participation, particularly for colleagues who work across several sites. ____, they may also make spontaneous discussion less likely.” Which linker fits best?

- A Similarly
- B Nevertheless
- C For instance
- D Consequently

69. Passage B implies that remote meetings ____.

- A are always less productive
- B have both advantages and limitations
- C should replace all in-person meetings
- D exclude colleagues at other sites

70. Which best paraphrases “broaden participation” in Passage B?

- A Increase the number invited, whether or not they contribute
- B Enable a more varied group of colleagues to take part
- C Extend the discussion so that each participant has more time
- D Distribute final decisions among a larger group of managers

71. Why does the writer mention colleagues across several sites in Passage B?

- A To give an example of those who may benefit
- B To criticise their working arrangements
- C To prove that remote meetings are cheaper
- D To change the subject

72. Passage C: “The scheme was presented as a modest trial, yet its success criteria were never made public. When the results were announced, ministers described them as encouraging, although the published figures were mixed.” What most concerns the writer?

- A Ministers treated mixed evidence as encouraging without stating in advance how success would be judged.
- B The scheme was described as modest even though its effects may have been wide-ranging.
- C Publishing mixed figures made it harder for the public to understand the scheme’s purpose.
- D The absence of public criteria suggests that ministers had collected too little numerical evidence.

73. What is the effect of “yet” in the first sentence of Passage C?

- A It introduces a limitation that undermines the apparently modest framing.
- B It introduces unexpected evidence in support of the ministers’ interpretation.
- C It marks the chronological point at which the trial’s purpose changed.
- D It indicates that the success criteria were explained at a later stage.

74. Which description best captures the tone of Passage C?

- A Cautiously approving of the ministers’ interpretation
- B Cautiously sceptical of the ministers’ interpretation
- C Openly dismissive of the scheme as a whole
- D Detached but broadly optimistic about the findings

75. Which additional fact would most strengthen the writer’s concern in Passage C?

- A Independent evaluators had endorsed the criteria before the trial began.
- B Officials revised the success criteria after seeing the preliminary results.
- C The published figures measured several outcomes rather than a single one.
- D Ministers continued to describe the scheme as a modest trial.

Answers and explanations

Award one mark for each correct answer. The explanations identify the language point being tested; they are deliberately concise so that you can review your mistakes efficiently.

Grammar in context

1. B - wouldn't have missed

A third conditional refers to an unreal past result.

2. B - would have finished

In reported speech, will have finished normally backshifts to would have finished; by marks the future deadline.

3. C - must have left

Must have + past participle expresses a strong deduction about the past.

4. C - whose

Whose marks possession before the noun desk.

5. B - will be introduced

The system receives the action, so a future passive is required.

6. B - to inform

Regret to inform is the conventional pattern for giving bad news now.

7. B - did we realise

A fronted restrictive adverbial triggers subject-auxiliary inversion.

8. B - had taken

The condition is past, but the result is present: a mixed conditional.

9. A - Examined

The past participle forms a reduced passive clause: when the evidence was examined in full.

10. B - is

A wh-cleft has the pattern What + clause + be + focus.

11. C - be

After recommend that, the formal mandative subjunctive uses the base form.

12. A - was about to launch

Was about to describes an imminent event interrupted by another past event.

13. C - should have

Should have expresses regret about a past action or decision.

14. A - anticipated

Than anticipated is a reduced passive clause meaning than had been anticipated.

15. A - might have been caught

The if-clause describes an unreal past condition, so the result takes a modal + have + past participle.

16. A - Convincing

Adjective + as + subject + may is a formal concessive pattern.

17. A - were to

Were to presents a possible but relatively remote future situation.

18. A - had the negotiations begun

Fronted scarcely triggers inversion, and the past perfect marks the earlier of the two past events: had the negotiations begun.

19. A - to have been altered

The alteration happened before the present reporting verb and the figures received the action, requiring the perfect passive infinitive: to have been altered.

Collocations and chunks

20. C - take

The standard collocation is take measures.

21. B - strong

Strong possibility is the natural collocation.

22. B - at

The pattern is good at + noun or -ing form.

23. B - casts

Cast doubt on is the established formal collocation.

24. B - Were

Were it not for is a formal conditional frame.

25. B - error

Trial and error is a fixed binomial.

26. B - with

The fixed pattern is comply with a rule, regulation or requirement.

27. B - done

A done deal is an arrangement or decision that is effectively final.

28. A - bitter

A bitter blow conventionally describes a deeply disappointing setback.

29. B - Needless

Needless to say introduces something regarded as unsurprising.

30. A - light

Shed light on is a fixed collocation meaning to help explain or clarify something.

31. A - diametrically

Diametrically opposed is the established collocation for complete opposition.

32. B - denying

There's no denying that is a semi-fixed stance frame.

33. A - short

Fall short of means fail to reach the required standard or amount.

34. A - exclusive

Mutually exclusive describes propositions or possibilities that cannot both be true.

35. C - may

Be that as it may is a fixed concessive expression.

36. A - credence

Lend credence to is a fixed formal collocation meaning to make a claim or theory seem more believable.

37. A - It would be difficult to achieve, but it remains conceivable.

Not beyond the realms of possibility means that something remains possible, although the surrounding wording suggests difficulty.

38. B - raised

Raise concerns is the standard transitive collocation.

Phrasal and idiomatic language

39. A - allow for

Allow for means take something into account when planning.

40. B - into

Run into someone means meet them unexpectedly.

41. D - get to the bottom of

Get to the bottom of means discover the real cause or truth.

42. A - set out

Set out means state or explain something clearly and systematically.

43. A - go pear-shaped

Go pear-shaped is informal British English for a situation or plan developing serious problems. The other options are genuine expressions with different meanings.

44. B - points out

Point out means draw attention to a fact or feature.

45. A - look over

Look over means examine something, usually fairly quickly.

46. B - Pigs might fly.

Pigs might fly is an informal response showing strong disbelief.

47. A - keep up with

Keep up with means remain informed about something changing.

48. A - add up

Not add up means seem inconsistent or unconvincing.

49. B - She was unaffected by the criticism.

Water off a duck's back describes criticism or insults that have no effect on someone; it does not explain why they have no effect.

50. B - make up for

Make up for means compensate for something negative.

Nuance and register

51. B - Could you possibly send me the figures today?

Could you possibly...? is a conventional polite request.

52. B - The reform may go some way towards addressing the problem.

May and go some way towards both limit the strength of the claim.

53. B - A minority of employees expressed reservations about the decision.

Eighteen out of 120 is a minority; expressed reservations reports concern neutrally without exaggerating its strength or extent.

54. B - A cautious or qualified reaction

In context, quite and interesting may soften a lukewarm or reserved response.

55. A - affected

Be affected by means experience the influence or consequences of something. Effected means brought about.

56. A - I'm not sure I'd go quite that far.

Go that far challenges the degree of the claim rather than rejecting the evidence altogether.

57. B - demanding and perhaps difficult to achieve

Ambitious can praise the scale of a plan while also implying that it may be difficult to achieve.

58. B - It was Maya who rejected the proposal.

The it-cleft places contrastive focus on Maya while retaining rejected as given information.

59. B - perfunctory

The dismissive, minimal apology is perfunctory: it is made with little care or sincerity. The context rules out an excessively enthusiastic or effusive apology.

60. B - It softens advice that may in practice be quite firm.

The modal wording mitigates advice whose intended force may nevertheless be quite direct.

61. B - consistent

Consistent means internally coherent and free from contradiction. Corroborated would require independent

supporting evidence, which the sentence does not supply.

62. A - He withdrew at the last moment because he lost his nerve.

Bottle out is informal British English and specifically implies failure to act through fear or loss of nerve.

63. B - The figures would appear to indicate that the policy has had limited success.

Would appear to indicate explicitly distances the writer from a firm conclusion.

Reading and discourse

64. C - The figures do not justify treating the extended hours as the sole cause of the rise.

The unchanged weekend timetable weakens the claim that extended hours alone caused the increase.

65. B - visitor numbers

The nearest logical antecedent is visitor numbers.

66. A - Another factor may have contributed to higher attendance.

If the increase was mostly when hours were unchanged, another cause is plausible.

67. B - cautious about drawing that conclusion

The wording resists treating the timetable as the established cause of the rise.

68. B - Nevertheless

The second sentence contrasts a benefit with a limitation.

69. B - have both advantages and limitations

The passage balances access against reduced spontaneity.

70. B - Enable a more varied group of colleagues to take part

Broaden participation concerns the range of people able to contribute, not the length of the meeting or who makes the final decision.

71. A - To give an example of those who may benefit

Particularly introduces a group illustrating the general benefit.

72. A - Ministers treated mixed evidence as encouraging without stating in advance how success would be judged.

The concern is that an upbeat judgement cannot be assessed fairly when the criteria were not transparent in advance.

73. A - It introduces a limitation that undermines the apparently modest framing.

Yet contrasts the reassuring description of a modest trial with the lack of transparent criteria.

74. B - Cautiously sceptical of the ministers' interpretation

The writer raises doubts through restrained contrasts rather than direct accusation.

75. B - Officials revised the success criteria after seeing the preliminary results.

Changing criteria after seeing results would provide direct evidence of post-hoc evaluation.

Interpreting your score

These bands are provisional and will be refined after the test has been completed by a sufficiently large group of learners. Treat the result as a profile of your current receptive control, not as a certificate.

Score	Result	What it suggests
0-28	Not yet secure B2	The test is not designed to distinguish levels below B2.
29-41	B2 developing	Many B2 features are present, but control remains uneven.
42-52	Secure B2 / approaching C1	A sound B2 base with some emerging C1 control.
53-61	C1 developing	Clear advanced ability, with gaps in precision, register or discourse.
62-68	Secure C1	Strong and flexible control across most of the areas tested.
69-75	High C1 / possible C2	Exceptional performance. A C2 indication also requires at least 15 of the 21 C2-targeted questions to be correct.

Your next step

Look beyond the total. Notice which section caused the most difficulty. A learner with strong grammar but weaker collocations needs a different programme from someone who understands individual words but misses stance, implication and register. Your weakest area is usually the most useful place to begin.

Helping advanced learners speak natural, fluent British English.