Do you have a visual disability?

If you are blind, partially sighted or have problems seeing, we may be able to help you take your Cambridge English exam.

What do I need to do?

It may take several months for some special arrangements to be made for you, so you should make your application as soon as possible. What will the Cambridge English Exam Centre do?

Your Centre will:

- tell you the application deadline (this may be several months before your exam, depending on the arrangements you need)
- ask for full details of your visual difficulty
- make the arrangements you need to take the exam

If your Centre does not have the equipment or space you need (e.g. a separate room), they will do their best to help you to find another Centre that does. Your Centre may also ask you to provide a medical certificate.

What special arrangements can I ask for?

There are lots of different options – choose what you need from the list below. You or your teacher can then ask your Centre to make all the arrangements you need.

1. Extra time

If you have visual difficulties, you will almost certainly need extra time to complete a paper. You can ask for an extra 25% of the normal time for the paper. You can ask for more than this (e.g. if it takes you a long time to read the questions or write your answers). Remember, however, that too much extra time could make you very tired. You can also ask for breaks while taking a paper, in addition to any extra time you need. Your Centre will tell you what you can have.

2. Help with reading the question papers

If you are blind or partially sighted, you can ask to use the following types of equipment:

- hand-held magnifiers
- screen magnification software
- screen reader software
- video magnifiers or closed-circuit television (CCTV)
- reading machines
- refreshable Braille displays

You can also ask for a ‘reader’. This is a person who will read and reread the questions to you. In Reading

papers, the reader cannot read out texts to you and you are not allowed to use screenreading software to do this. Please also see section 8: Having someone read to you or write down your answers.

3. Help with writing your answers

If you are blind or partially sighted, you can ask to write your answers in the following ways:
a. Use any of the following machines:

- mechanical Braille keyboard
- electronic Braille keyboard, linked to a printer
- computer or word processor (though you will not be allowed to use the spellcheck, grammar check, thesaurus or similar functions)
- Braille notetaker

b. Speak your answers to a person who writes them down for you. Please also see section 8: Having someone read to you or write down your answers.
c. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper instead of using the computer-read answer sheet.

4. Braille question papers

Some exams are available as Braille question papers. Braille exam papers are available as:

- contracted (Grade 2) Braille
- uncontracted (Grade 1) Braille

Refer to the modified materials section below to see if your exam is available in Braille.

5. Enlarged question papers

- There are enlarged question papers available for some exams. We change the question papers, taking out any 'visual' material which is not needed for answering the question. We then make large-print versions of the papers in A4 size. The print size is usually 18 point bold.
- We can also help if you want even larger size print; please make this clear when you make your request for a special arrangement to be made.

6. Special versions of the Listening Tests

Many of the questions in the Listening tests ask you to make notes while you listen to a recording on CD. If you are blind or partially sighted, you may not be able to do this.
To help you take the Listening test, we produce a special version. The supervisor (the person who will give you your Listening test) will:

- stop the CD before each part of the test to give you enough time to read the questions
- stop the CD at certain points during each part to give you enough time to write one or more answers
- stop the CD after each part to give you enough time to check your answers.
- have enlarged print versions of written descriptions of pictures (if they are used in the Speaking test and you find it difficult to use enlarged pictures)

7. Special versions of speaking tests

For most exams except Young Learners you normally take the Speaking test with a partner.
If you have visual difficulties, you can ask to:

- have extra time if it takes you longer than usual to read any exam material or decide what you want to say
- take the test with a partner who is not a candidate (not taking the exam)
- take the test without a partner, so where both candidates would normally talk to each other, you talk to the examiner instead
- use 'written' description or descriptions in Braille rather than visual material
- have enlarged copies of pictures (e.g. pictures from newspapers or magazines or drawings) if they are used in the Speaking test
- have enlarged print versions of written descriptions of pictures (if they are used in the Speaking test and you find it difficult to use enlarged pictures)

8. Having someone read to you or write down your answers

A reader is a person who will read the questions out to you. Note that the reader will not explain the questions to you and cannot give you any advice. They can also read back your answers to you. In Reading papers, a reader is not normally allowed to read out texts to you and you are not normally allowed to use screen-reading software to do this. If you want someone to write down your answers, you should note that:

- you will be asked to spell certain words
- you must also give the punctuation

If you want to have someone help you with reading or writing down your answers, you should practise before your exam. For example, make sure you can spell out the letters of the alphabet.
You can also use screen-reading software to read back your answers to you. However, you must not use the spellcheck, grammar check or thesaurus functions.

If you are colour-blind, and the test contains coloured pictures or illustrations, this material can be adapted.

If you would like to know more about having a reader or someone to write down your answers, contact your Centre.