

FCE 8.2

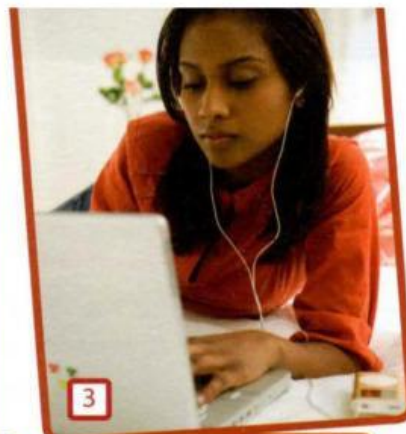
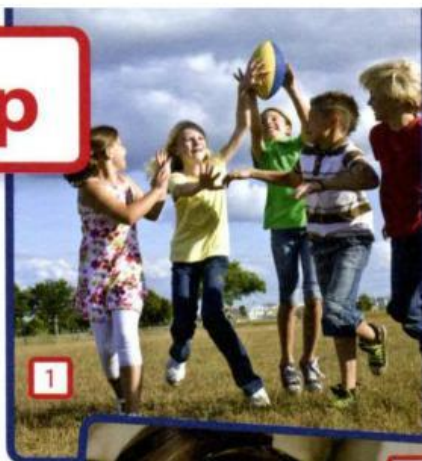
In the speaking portion of the FCE, you will be asked to speak for 1 minute without interruption to compare two photographs and answer a specific question printed above them. Here are some tips for this task:

- **Do not describe the photos separately.** Avoid listing what you see in Photo A, then listing what you see in Photo B. The examiner wants to hear you link them together immediately.
- **Follow the 60-second blueprint:**
 - **0–20 seconds:** Identifying the common theme and point out the main difference (e.g., location, atmosphere, or activity).
 - **20–50 seconds:** Answer the secondary question. (This is where you score the most points.)
 - **50–60 seconds:** Speculate on their feelings, motivations, or the consequences of the situations.
- **Keep talking until stopped:** The examiner will say "Thank you" when your minute is up. If you finish early, keep adding details or hypotheses so you don't lose fluency points.
- **Be careful that you don't ignore the printed question.** It is very common to spend the whole minute comparing the visual elements and forget to answer the actual question. Keep your eyes on the prompt.
- **Don't panic over unknown words.** If you don't know the exact word for an object, paraphrase it (e.g., instead of "unicycle", say "a type of bicycle with only one wheel").

Let's practice with the images below.

Growing up

Look at photos 1 and 2. They show children playing. Compare the photographs and say which of the activities the children would enjoy more.



Look at photos 3 and 4. They show teenagers at home. Compare the photographs and say what the photos tell you about modern teenagers.

Now, let's move on to a reading activity... In the reading section of the FCE you will be given a text with six multiple-choice questions, where you have to choose the answer to a question or finish a sentence from four given alternatives. You should read the text and the questions carefully, because this part of the exam tests detailed understanding.

There will often be a question which asks you what the writer is 'suggesting' or 'implying'. This is called an inference question and you have to decide from various clues in the text what the writer means to say. Sometimes a 'reference' question is included, which tests your understanding of words such as *it* and *this*. You must read the lines before and after the word carefully before deciding what it is referring to. There is often an item of vocabulary such as a word or phrase which is unusual or idiomatic, or one that is used by the writer in a special way. You should work out the meaning by looking at the context around the word or phrase itself.

Below is an extract from an autobiography. Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

GROWING UP

I lived in the same house in Westpark Grove for my whole childhood. There was no major landmark to help you find your way around in my neighbourhood. Every street looked almost identical, like a soap opera set. Our two-storey house was set a few metres back from the road and was a perfectly hideous pink colour, which my parents seemed to like. The only feature we had that no-one else had was a huge garage, over the door of which my dad had painted the words GARAGE ENTRANCE in large black letters. Anyone silly enough to park in front of the driveway should beware. You didn't want to get on the wrong side of my dad, believe me!

We had three bedrooms and I used to share mine with my sister Lucy, who is two years older than me. We had a bunk bed – I slept on top – a wardrobe and a desk. Our brother Tom, who is a year younger than I am, had a room the size of a broom cupboard at the very back of the house, overlooking the garden. The three of us used to have terrible fights with each other in those days. We always worried that my mum would find out about the fights. We used to slip handwritten notes under the bedroom doors, asking, 'Are you going to tell Mum?' There were boxes to tick for 'yes' or 'no'.

We all had chores to do before and after school. It seems hard now but we were used to doing them. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood kids would be playing in the street outside. Sometimes we would go out and play with them, but we kept an eye open for Mum, who disapproved of us playing outside. There was a big supermarket just on the edge of town, but my mum and I would struggle the six kilometres into town by bus every Saturday to the weekly

market in the centre of town. It was better and cheaper than a supermarket, she said. We would then come home laden down with what seemed like a mountain of plastic bags and sink gratefully onto the sofa in the living room when we got in. Dad thought that getting the car out for shopping was a waste of time.

line 30

line 32

My first best friend was Sarah. We got on really well and she was good at keeping secrets. I can't remember a single occasion when we fell out. I used to sleep over at her house and we'd have midnight feasts of chocolate. We spent all our spare time together – like sisters. I used to hang around the local shops with her, if there was nothing decent showing at the local cinema. I wanted to be a pop star or be in films when I grew up and poor long-suffering Sarah was very good about listening to me singing all the latest pop songs and showing off my dancing to practise my stage technique. I think it helped having a critical audience as when I finally started at drama school, I felt quite confident and this showed.

In the summer, Sarah and I and the rest of our class went to school camp. It was on an island off the coast. It seemed so adventurous to spend the night sleeping in a tent miles from anywhere. Sarah was more sensible than I was and often kept me from getting into trouble with the narrow-minded Mrs Dodd, our teacher. Once I thought it'd be a good idea to go swimming in the sea just before sunrise. I'd forgotten that Mrs Dodd would be coming round to wake us up and would see immediately if anyone wasn't in bed. Sarah covered for me, though, and put a pillow under the sheets so Mrs Dodd would think I was there. We actually got away with it, too! Great times.

1) What does the writer say about her father in the first paragraph?

- A) He was very proud of his garage.
- B) He could get angry if you annoyed him.
- C) He disliked his neighbours.
- D) He was quite a selfish person.

- 2) In the second paragraph, what does the writer suggest about her family?
 - A) There was a large age difference between the girls and Tom.
 - B) They were afraid their mother would tell their father about the fights.
 - C) Some members of the family got on with each other better than others.
 - D) They had only limited living space while they were growing up.
- 3) What does 'It' refer to in line 30?
 - A) the supermarket
 - B) the centre of town
 - C) the weekly market
 - D) the bus
- 4) What does 'laden down with' mean in line 32?
 - A) carrying
 - B) having bought
 - C) having chosen
 - D) borrowing
- 5) What does the writer say about her friend Sarah in the fourth paragraph?
 - A) She lived in a nicer house than the writer did.
 - B) She was a very easy-going person.
 - C) She and the writer sometimes had arguments.
 - D) She had the same ambitions as the writer.
- 6) What happened when the writer went swimming in the sea one morning?
 - A) Sarah told the teacher what had happened.
 - B) The writer's absence went unnoticed.
 - C) Mrs Dodd didn't come into the tent that morning.
 - D) The writer managed to get back to bed in time.

Let's finish this lesson with some listening practice... You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about the job they wanted to do when they were young. For questions 1-5, choose from the list (A-H) what each speaker says. There are three extra letters which you do not need to use.

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|-----------------|-----------|
| A) chef | |
| B) teacher | Speaker 1 |
| C) singer | Speaker 2 |
| D) detective | Speaker 3 |
| E) zoo keeper | Speaker 4 |
| F) novelist | Speaker 5 |
| G) astronaut | |
| H) psychologist | |