

Information and Sample Test for the VYA013 (B2 Level) Exam

Background Information

The VYA013 exam (previously BY003, BY52) tests English at B2 level (Cambridge B2 First/FCE). It is a General English exam intended mainly for:

- Faculty of Civil Engineering students who have registered for the Erasmus+ programme.
- Faculty of Architecture students in a pre-2020-accredited study programme who have chosen to do this exam instead of BYA002, or who have registered for the Erasmus+ programme at their faculty.

If you are from the Faculty of Civil Engineering but you are not enrolled in the Erasmus+ programme, or you only need a B1 level exam to go to the university of your choice via the Erasmus+ programme, you should take the BYA002 exam, not this one.

The exam combines “Cambridge B2 First-style” speaking tasks with a test of grammar and vocabulary from the coursebooks New English File Upper Intermediate Third Edition and New English File Advanced Third Edition. This material is covered over four semesters in the courses VYA010, VYA011, VYA004 and VYA005. Please see the course information on the Faculty of Civil Engineering website for details on the current syllabus and coursebook editions.

It is possible to take the exam without taking any of the courses, but students who do this are strongly advised to at least study the grammar and vocabulary covered in the syllabi for the four courses. You can find grammar summaries and exercises along with vocabulary lists “vocabulary banks” at the back of the coursebooks. The answers to these can be found on the Moodle pages for VYA010, VYA011, VYA004 and VYA005. **If you can speak English fluently and well, but do not study the vocabulary and grammar tested in the exam**, you may find that you get a lower grade than you feel you deserve.

Signing up for the exam

If you are a Faculty of Civil Engineering student who is enrolled in the Erasmus+ programme, you should sign up for the VYA013 exam online after registering for the exam at the study department.

If you are a Faculty of Architecture student then just before or during the exam period you should look on our website:

<https://spv.webnode.cz/>

and find the exam timetable on the front page. You need to write an email to the main examiner asking to join his/her exam. If you have already taken the BYA002 exam at our department you will have to pay to do VYA013. The payment information is here:

<https://spv.webnode.cz/kabinet-jazyku/erasmus/pokyny-k-platbe/>

Organisation of the exam

The main examiner will contact all students the day before the exam to let them know exactly when they should attend. This is so you don't have to wait in the corridor for a long time

while other students are being tested. The exam will take a maximum of 30 minutes, during which you will (if possible) be tested with another student, and will contain:

1. General questions based on material covered in the coursebooks mentioned above.
2. A pair task in the style of the Cambridge B2 First/FCE exam
3. A picture comparison exercise in the style of the Cambridge B2 First/FCE exam
4. Vocabulary and phrases covered in English File Upper Intermediate and English File Advanced.
5. Grammar: sentence gap-fill and B2 First-style rephrasing based on material covered in English File Upper Intermediate and English File Advanced.

Students will answer the Vocabulary and Grammar part orally. They will not need to write the answers. For exact details of the material covered, please find the timetable (“harmonogram”) for each of the subjects VYA010, VYA011, VYA004 and VYA005 here: <http://www.fce.vutbr.cz/studium/predmety/predmet.asp>

1. General Questions

Examples of questions - you will need to give detailed answers, with reasons for your opinions:

Being an only child has its advantages. Do you agree?

Do you think the media should be prevented from publishing stories about people’s private lives?

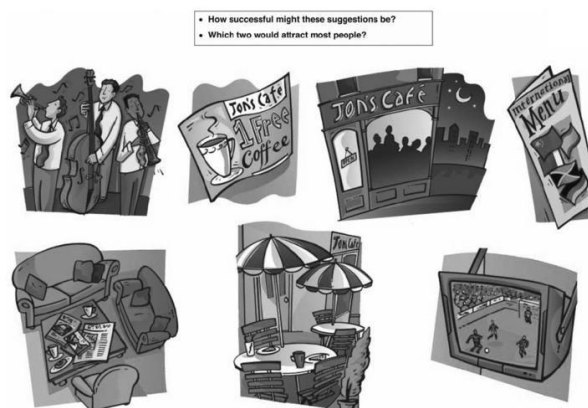
Zoos sometimes have an area where you can touch animals. What kinds of animals would you definitely NOT want to touch?

Some people say you can get addicted to almost anything. Is that true?

2. FCE-style pair task: example

The examiner will say something like: “In this part of the test you are going to work together to solve a task. Please look at this set of pictures. I want you to imagine that your friend Jon runs a café. He has asked you for some ideas about how to make it more popular with customers. Discuss the suggestions you can see on the paper, saying how successful they might be, and then choose the two best ones. You have about two minutes for this.”

Example obtained from here: <http://discover-fce.wikispaces.com/>



3. FCE-style picture description: example

Examiner: “Now I'd like you to talk on your own for about a minute. I'm going to give you two different photographs and I'd like you to talk about them. Please compare the two photographs and identify the connection between them.”



4. Vocabulary

The examiner will say: “Now it's time to test vocabulary and grammar. Student B, here are your grammar questions. Please read the instructions quickly and then look at the 5 grammar questions while I test Student A on vocabulary. Student A, I'm going to give you 5 definitions and you need to tell me the answer for each one.”

Examples (answers below):

What do you call a family where there is only one adult bringing up the children?

Do you know a phrase with “get” which you can use when someone often makes you angry?

You say “He really gets on...”

Can you think of an adjective which means the same as ‘rich’?

Imagine this situation – in your kitchen one of the taps won't close completely so small amounts of water keep falling out. What verb is used to describe what the tap is doing?

If someone says a film is ‘overrated’, what does this mean?

5. Grammar (answers below):

Examiner: “Now, let's test your grammar. What are the answers to the five questions?”

Examples:

1. Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first using the underlined word.

You must do exactly what the manager tells you.

You must _____ instructions exactly. (**carry – 4 words**)

2. *Complete the sentence.*

Be careful _____ to make any mistakes. (**order – 3 words**)

3. *Complete the sentence.*

Mike has had a lot of free time since he _____ sack last month. (**2 words**)

4. *Choose the correct option to complete this sentence.*

I _____ go to Corfu for our holiday. It sounds like a much nicer place than where we normally go.

- a. prefer b. had rather c. would rather d. always

5. *Complete the sentence.*

Opening her presents took Joy several hours as she had _____ a lot of them.

Answers

Vocabulary

1. a single-parent family; 2. my nerves; 3. wealthy; 4. drip; 5. that it's not as good as people think it is

Grammar

1. You must carry out the manager's instructions exactly.
2. Be careful in order not to make any mistakes.
3. Mike has had a lot of free time since he got the sack last month.
4. c. would rather
5. Opening her presents took Joy several hours as she had such a lot of them.

The end of the test

After vocabulary and grammar has been tested, the test ends. Results will not be given immediately at the end of the exam. Civil Engineering students will be able to see their results online sometime after the exam ends – the examiner will say when. Faculty of Architecture students will get their results by email. The results will also be sent to the appropriate faculty administrator. Students will be given a certificate stating their result.

How the exam is marked

In the first half of the test (parts 1-3) the examiner who sits to one side will award students a maximum of 20 marks for grammar and vocabulary, up to 20 marks for making logical, connected sentences (particularly in part 3), and as many as 10 marks for pronunciation and 10 marks for interaction with their colleague (particularly in part 2) and with the examiner. The criteria for marking are similar to those used in the Cambridge FCE.

In the second half of the test students will get up to 10 marks for vocabulary based specifically on English File Upper Intermediate and English File Advanced and 10 marks for grammar also based on those books.

The interviewer will also give students up to 20 marks based on his/her impression of their performance, so the exam is marked out of 100. Grades are awarded according to the university grade scale:

90%+ = A
80 – 89% = B
70 - 79% = C
60 - 69% = D
50 - 59% = E
Below 50% = Fail

How to prepare for the exam

Attending the VYA010, VYA011, VYA004 and VYA005 courses can help you pass the exam with a good grade, though it depends on your starting level as these courses cover a lot of material in a short period of time, and it is rare that a student finds time to take all of them anyway. If, for example, you have passed the BYA002 exam with a D/2.5, it is possible that you won't be able to pass the VYA013 exam even if you attend all four semesters unless you do plenty of extra work - you will need to study extensively in your own time as around 50 x 100 minutes in class is too little time to cover everything thoroughly.

Other things you can do:

If you haven't done and are not planning to do (all or any of the) courses VYA010, 11, 4 and 5 then – as stated earlier in this text – it is recommended that you at least study and practice the grammar and learn the vocabulary covered during those courses.

You can also obtain FCE past papers from the internet or a bookshop and practice with them: Look at speaking paper parts 1, 2 and 3 and think about what you would say. You may also find example FCE speaking tests on e.g. YouTube. The Use of English paper is good practice too.

In addition, you may want to practice your basic grammar via online exercises and improve your overall knowledge of English by reading and listening actively online, noting new vocabulary while you listen/read and being aware of or analyzing the grammar you see and hear. Use a dictionary, and take time to think about or study new language that you encounter. There is so much out there in English to read, watch and listen to that you are sure to find something you are interested in. Any engagement with English of that kind will help to increase your passive and active knowledge and improve your chances of passing the exam with a good grade.

Please email me if you have any other questions.

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