

FCE use of English Part 4 – Key Word Transformations 'Top Tips'

Example question

The drive home was too long to complete that night.

short

The drive home _____ to complete that night.

Answer: was not short enough

Tip 1

Although this part is a test of vocabulary (e.g. phrasal verbs and parts of speech) as well as grammar, classroom time on grammar is more likely to have an impact on students' performance in the exam. Grammar students are likely to find in this part: unreal past (conditionals and wishes), passives, reported speech, present perfect/simple past, (past) modals, (*not*) *as.....as*, and *so/ such*.

Tip 2

Remember: the gap should be filled with five words or fewer. Contractions count as two words, not one.

Tip 3

Because of the scoring system, it's possible to get 50% in this section without getting any of the questions 100% correct. So it's worth answering every question! Even incomplete answers can get points.

Tip 4

Make absolutely sure that the two sentences mean the same thing. For example, if the sentence to transform has names in it, the answer will have to have them too.

Tip 5

A nice warmer for this section is to have students brainstorm as many ways of saying one thing as possible. Start off with something friendly like 'How are you?', and end up with an example from an exam paper. Then give them the paper!

Tip 6

To help develop self-correction and add a little competition, make doing exam part 4 into a race. Put students in pairs and let them pass their exam back and forth to you to be checked as many times as they like. The teacher, however, only marks the questions with 0,1 or 2 points according to the marking scheme. Students must work out their own mistakes, and the first team to get 100% right wins.

Tip 7

This part of the Use of English paper is worth 16 points, against between 10 and 12 points for the others. It is therefore worth spending a little more time on both in class and in the exam. It also teaches more useful language than, for example, part 2 (open cloze).

Tip 8

Remember that the word given (e.g. *short* in the example) must be included in the answer, and cannot be altered in any way (i.e. can not be changed to 'shorter' or 'shortness').