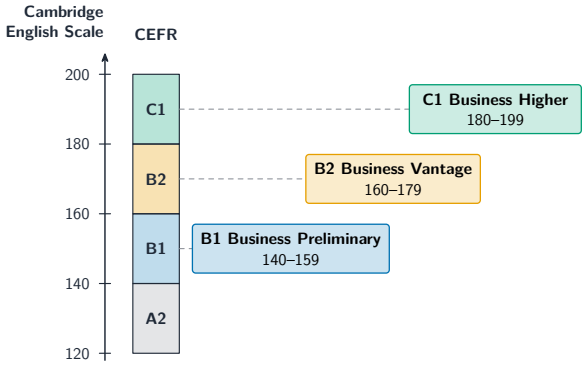
BEC · The exam: levels, results and a study plan

Original teaching notes; exam facts checked in the Cambridge Business Certificates Handbook for teachers and the NEEA BEC notice. Not a Cambridge product.

Three levels, three exams



Preliminary, Vantage, Higher = B1, B2, C1, one step at a time

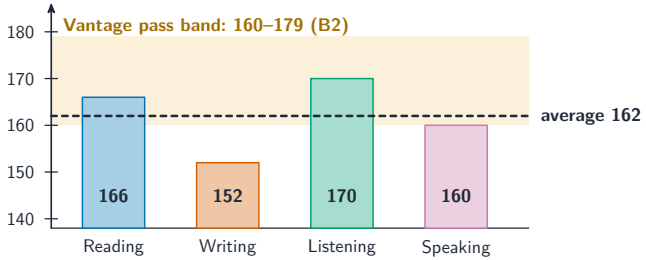
Four papers, each worth 25%

Paper	Preliminary	Vantage	Higher
Reading	with Writing: 1 h 30 min	1 h	1 h
Writing	(same paper)	45 min	1 h 10 min
Listening	about 40 min	about 40 min	about 40 min
Speaking	12 min	14 min	16 min

Use the evidence

Speaking is always taken in pairs, with two examiners.

The result is an average



$166 + 152 + 170 + 160 = 648$, and $648 \div 4 = 162$, a Vantage pass at B2

Your turn: one bad paper

Your turn

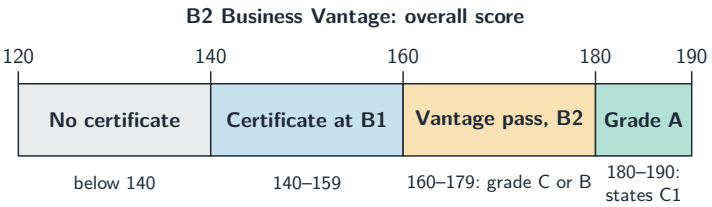
A Vantage candidate scores 170, 170, 170 and 120. What is the result?

A. A Vantage pass, because three papers are strong

B. 157.5, so no Vantage pass

C. 170, because the best score counts

One exam, three possible certificates



A **certificate** can show a level above or below the exam's own level

BEC in China

Since 2025, BEC runs only in mainland China, once a year.

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The NEEA opens **registration** on its BEC website for one week, in March.

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Written papers in May; Speaking on the next day.

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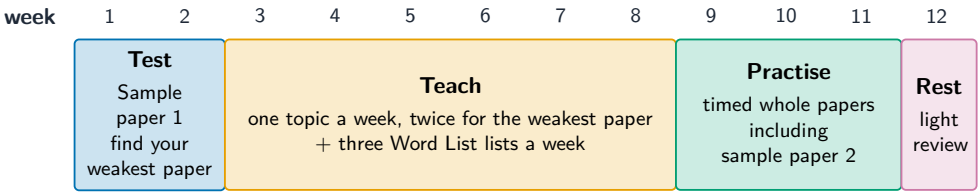
Check the NEEA site from January for next year's dates.

Twelve weeks to the exam



> Test, teach, practise, rest

The time rules

Reading

Answers go onto the **answer sheet** inside the time.

Copy after each part, not at the end.

Listening

Write on the question paper while you listen.

Copying time at the end: 5 minutes at Preliminary, 10 at Vantage and Higher.

Three habits that cost marks

The habit	The fix
Choosing Higher because it looks better.	Vantage grade A states C1 anyway.
Studying only Reading and grammar.	Practise all four skills every week.
Copying Reading answers at the very end.	Copy after each part.

Try it: work out a result

1. **The scores** Vantage: Reading 172, Writing 158, Listening 176, Speaking 166.
2. **The average** $172 + 158 + 176 + 166 = 672$, and $672 \div 4 = 168$.
3. **The band** 168 is inside 160 to 179.

Decision

A Vantage pass at B2. Writing is the paper to improve.

Check yourself

> The **overall score** is the average of four equal skills

- Each skill is 25%; the grade comes from the overall score.
- Vantage grade A, 180 to 190, states C1.
- BEC runs once a year in China; certificates do not expire.