Intro and declarations

Foundation Year Admissions Assessment - 2024 Entry - Sample Paper

Overview

The purpose of the Cambridge Foundation Year Admissions Assessment is to determine a candidate's potential to thrive on the course. It assesses key academic competencies (as outlined in each section) and is important to help us assess candidates against each other. Candidates should expect to encounter potentially unfamiliar concepts and that the tasks are challenging and require concentration.

Applicants can use whatever resources they wish (for example dictionaries or online sources). However, they must complete it independently (i.e. without the help of other people). If applicants are found to have plagiarised (copied the work of others) or drawn on external support (not completed it independently), they will be instantly removed from the selection process for the Foundation Year.

Structure and Time Required to Complete

The Foundation Year Admissions Assessment is comprised of two sections. Applicants should complete both. We expect it should take approximately 2 hours to complete the entire assessment (with extra time offered as a reasonable adjustment for Special Educational Needs). Ideally, it would be completed in one go, but if you can't find the time to do this, you should complete Section 1 in one sitting and Section 2 in a second sitting.

You should read all instructions carefully as some sections are time-limited and you will need to ensure you only begin them when ready.
Section 1: Reading Comprehension
In this section, you will be asked questions based on the reading material provided for you. This section is time-limited and should spend no more than 60 minutes on it.

Section 2: Listening Comprehension
In this section, you will be asked questions based on a short video that has been provided for you. This section is time-limited and should spend no more than 60 minutes on it.

Instructions for Completion
You can only make one attempt at this assessment. If you move forward before completing each section fully you will not be able to return and complete it later. Before proceeding, you should consult the guidance available to ensure you are fully prepared:

foundationyear.cam.ac.uk/admissions-assessment

Before continuing, we strongly advise:

- That you have to hand key personal information such as your UCAS ID which you will need to input to proceed;
- That you have made arrangements to be able to complete the timed sections fully in a single sitting or two subsequent sittings, ideally in a quiet environment where you can concentrate fully;
- That you are using suitable IT equipment, for example, a screen large enough to read a body of text easily and with a stable internet connection.

If you encounter IT difficulties during the test, email foundation.year@admin.cam.ac.uk as soon as possible after you complete it to make us aware. You should provide as much information about the difficulties you faced, including screenshots if you are able.
Declaration

I confirm I have read and understood the instructions for completion and am ready to complete the Foundation Year admissions assessment now.

☐ Yes

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

The purpose of this assessment is for the University of Cambridge to determine your potential to thrive on the course that you have applied for. As such, it is very important that all the work submitted must be your own and have been completed in a way that meets our requirements (i.e. within the time allocated if applicable, without the input of other people or plagiarism).

You can, however, use whatever resources you wish (for example, dictionaries or online sources) to help you.

The timed sections of this assessment can be 'reset' by refreshing the page. However, to do so would be classed as academic misconduct. We will check how long you have spent on each section and if the evidence shows you have attempted to abuse the assessment in this way you will be automatically deselected from the admissions process.

Before proceeding, you must confirm the following statements to indicate that you have understood the behaviour expected of a candidate for this assessment.
I have read, understood and confirm the following:

☐ The following assessment was completed by myself, the intended recipient of the assessment, without the help, input or assistance of others (teachers, family members, friends etc);

☐ I have read the University's Definition of Academic Misconduct and understand the academic rules of behaviour required of me when completing this assessment including the rules related to plagiarism;

☐ I will complete the timed portions of this assessment as intended;

☐ I accept that any attempt to tamper with the timed portions, seek outside assistance, use technologies such as AI (ChatGPT or similar), or plagiarism will result in my automatic deselection from the admissions process;

If you have any questions regarding the above statements, please do let us know ahead of starting the assessment.

The University of Cambridge and the Cambridge Colleges will use the personal information you have provided for the purpose of determining your suitability for the Foundation Year, processing your application and deciding whether to offer you a place for the course you have applied for. We will handle that information solely to assess your suitability for the Foundation Year, and to compile any relevant internal statistics, and it will not be retained for longer than necessary for these purposes. This form uses the Qualtrics platform and appropriate measures are in place to ensure the security of the data and any documentation you submit. For further information on the use of your personal information during the application process, please see the University's Information Compliance website.

☐ I accept these terms and conditions.
Section One: Personal Information

Personal Information
This section is used to help us link this form to your UCAS application. Please provide the same information that you submitted in your UCAS application.

First/given name*

Please enter your first name and middle name(s) exactly as they are stated on official documents, such as your passport, birth certificate or driving licence.

Surname/family name*

Please enter your last name(s) in the box exactly as they are stated on official documents, such as your passport, birth certificate or driving licence.

UCAS Personal ID*

This is the ten-digit number you get when you register for UCAS. It is displayed in 123-456-7890 format on every email UCAS send you and you use it to log in on UCAS. Input it here without the dashes (i.e. 1234567890).

Section 1: Comprehension

Section 1: Reading Comprehension

In this section, we are assessing:

- Your potential for critical analysis, for example, grasping complex new ideas and showing flexibility and creativity;
- Your academic communication skills, for example, understanding an argument and engaging with it;
- Your potential to assimilate knowledge, for example, your ability to recognise and understand new information and apply it;
Your conscientiousness, for example, your diligence in carefully completing the tasks as requested;

Below are 3 different texts of around 1,000 words. Each addresses a different topic but be assured that no prior knowledge of any of the topics is required to successfully complete this task.

Applicants will only be able to answer one set of questions on one extract included in this section. Applicants may select the one they wish to focus on. Once selected, you will proceed onto the next page where you will see some multiple choice and open form questions related to the extract you have selected.

You will have one hour to complete this section (with extra time offered as a reasonable adjustment for Special Educational Needs). You should start your own timer (for example using a watch or phone) as you confirm your extract selection.

**Tips for completion**

- You are welcome to use a dictionary or other online source to help you understand any words you are not familiar with for this task.
- To approach this task, you should first read the extract titles to choose one to focus on in detail.
- Once you have chosen, take the time to go through the extract carefully.
- You could identify any words you don’t understand. Write them down and look up the definitions.
- In answering the multiple choice questions, look out for keywords and read each of the options carefully to understand if it applies.
Many of us live not just in diverse societies, but what anthropologist(1) Steven Vertovec terms “super-diverse” societies. More and more people are moving around and bringing their languages and cultures with them.

In the UK, 20% of school children are multilingual. They speak at least one other language in addition to English.

Parents, of course, have a lot on their plate simply keeping their children fed, safe and educated. But if you do have more than one language in your family, then decisions have to be made on how to navigate that terrain too.
If linguists have long paid attention to the idea of bilingual(2) parenting, a new appreciation of linguistic and cultural complexity in super-diverse societies has seen the advent of a new approach. What experts call plurilingualism(3) views language use as fluid and dynamic.

Previous theories about language-learning in homes, where several languages are present, have often advocated strict rules. The one-language-one-parent policy sees each parent only speak their first language to the child to avoid confusion. Other immigrant parents, meanwhile, decide to speak only their heritage language at home, while the local language is learned at school.

Adopting a plurilingual approach, by contrast, brings a measure of relief. It suggests you can simply go with the flow. You can mix things up, using different languages in different situations.

**Celebrating linguistic diversity**

We already know how important plurilingualism in teaching is, in terms of both the academic achievement and the wellbeing of multilingual students.

In order to understand how this translates to the home domain, in 2018 I conducted a study with 20 parents who have immigrated to Canada from nine countries in Central and Eastern Europe. I found that the type of parenting they instinctively adopted is truly plurilingual.

The parents I spoke to believe in the fluid and dynamic use of languages in their family. Many send their children to French immersion programmes, where instruction takes place both in English and French. But parents accept that their children’s French proficiency may be unlikely to match their English language skills.

On a daily basis, parents and children switch between languages. They might start one sentence in one language and finish in another. When grandparents visit from Europe, the children have to switch to the language they speak. But if a friend comes over for a playdate, they then opt for English.

Plurilingual parenting involves a liberal language policy. Many parents do not believe in punishing children for speaking in the “wrong” language at home. Even those who were strict when children were born soon realised that their children switch between languages back and forth. And parents are okay with that.

Finally, an important principle for plurilingual parenting is the interconnectedness between language and culture. Immigrant parents move across borders and also carry their culture with them. Language is crucial for identity and belonging and immigrant parents negotiate this issue in their homes on a regular basis.

Speaking Bulgarian in Canada connects children to the country of their parents even if they consider themselves Canadian. It is especially important for parents to keep up their heritage language and they communicate this importance to their children too. As one Ukrainian parent said: “This is our history, this is our heritage”.

https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_6YgZmObdkxRyT7E&ContextLibr
Being open to learning languages
You might have heard that having two languages in the family confuses children, delays their language development and is bad for school achievement. These are in fact myths that researchers have spent decades debunking.

By contrast, research has also shown that there are cognitive advantages to bilingualism. However, many bilingual parenting approaches have variously cautioned against introducing new languages too early in the child’s life or mixing languages. Another common piece of advice is to ensure the child learns only from so-called native speakers to get a perfect accent, impeccable grammar and a rich vocabulary.

These kinds of self-imposed rules bring discord to family life when parents are trying to “police” the language use of their children, but are usually met with resistance.

Plurilingualism, by contrast, stems from a new understanding of how languages are used. Particularly, in the area of English language education, it emphasises a more fluid approach to how students can be taught.

This school of thought values all the languages any given student is able to use, even if to varying degrees. It seeks to build on their linguistic awareness, their cultural knowledge, and their openness to learning languages all the while improving their target language.

And in line with previous studies of multilingual learners, in my study all students did well academically, whether they were in English schools, bilingual French immersion schools or in the international baccalaureate. There is clearly no harm in keeping one’s heritage language and culture. And this flexible family language policy saves parents and children from so many battles.

(1) Anthropologist: An anthropologist studies human societies.

(2) Bilingual: Being bilingual means being able to speak two languages fluently.

(3) Plurilingualism: Plurilingualism is a term used to define being able to speak fluently in several languages (usually three or more)

1. What type of society does the article describe that we live in that explains the spread of different languages?

- a. Bilingual
- b. Diverse
- c. Super-diverse
- d. Plurilingual

2. What does the article suggest are the benefits of speaking a “heritage” language?

- a. You are connected to your culture and identity
- b. You can understand your school friends more easily
- c. Your parents will be pleased with your behaviour
- d. You will be able to change languages you use easily

3. According to the author, which of the following is true?

- a. Encouraging a child to speak two or more languages slows their development
- b. Encouraging a child to speak two or more languages can be confusing for them
- c. Speaking two or make languages requires rigid rules to help children
- d. Speaking two or more languages does not impact on development or academic performance

4. Which of the following best describes the meaning of ‘plurilingualism’?

- a. Plurilingualism means learning more than two languages in school
- b. Plurilingualism means speaking several languages fluently for use in different contexts
- c. Plurilingualism means being able to speak with the right accent
- d. Plurilingualism means not caring if you make mistakes in a language as long as you are understood
5. How would you summarise what this article says? (max 200 words)

6. What does the author base their conclusions on in this article? What are the benefits of this? (max 150 words)

7. What questions would you ask the author? (150 words)
Union membership among young workers today is incredibly low. Industrial action scholars speak of a worldwide trend towards the so-called de-unionisation of the young.

In 1980 80% of the British workforce was covered by collective bargaining between employers and unions. By the 2000s, that figure had fallen to around 30%. And the numbers have kept falling, in particular for young people. UK government statistics show that in 2021, only 4.3% of 16 to 24-year-old workers were members of a union. This figure rose to 19.8% for the 25 to 34 category.

In their introduction to the 2015 compendium, *Young Workers and Trade Unions: A Global View*, scholars Andy Hodder and Lefteris Kretsos explain that it’s not so much that young professionals view unions more negatively than their older counterparts. Rather, they tend to work in jobs and industries where union representation doesn’t exist. Crucially, for the most part, they do not know what unions are, what they do – and what they have.

What unions do

Unions give employees a voice – both as individuals and as a collective – that is independent of their employer. Employers are more likely to engage through consultation and negotiations with the views of their workers where workers can speak as one. This is simply because it is more efficient and provides legitimacy to the result of these negotiations.

For the workers, there is strength in numbers. They can club together to provide the resources to allow their union to negotiate on their behalf. The vast majority of collective disputes are settled without any industrial action. But having the ability to engage in such collective action, if necessary, can be vital, as many groups of workers this summer are finding out.

Quite what is negotiated has resulted in a number of procedural and substantive benefits to workers. First, unionised workplaces have been shown to be fairer than non-union workplaces. There is less wage disparity between different employees.

Unionised workplaces are also healthier places to work. Workers are subjected to less stress and more attention is paid to keeping working hours within healthy limits.

Similarly, unions have also been shown to make workplaces safer. There are fewer accidents and fatalities because workers in unionised workplaces are more likely to be given the equipment they need to work safely, whether ergonomically assessed workstations, or clothing to protect themselves from noxious substances.

And then there’s the question of pay. Union members still earn more than non-union members. Some recent pay deals negotiated by unions, such as those led by the Unite union on behalf of airport staff, dockers and carmakers have outstripped the current rate of inflation.
Lastly, unions are able to lobby governments to push for greater employment rights for workers. They also work to stop any existing rights being withdrawn.

Research indicates that these benefits lead to happier, more satisfying and more productive workplaces as well as more democratic and fairer societal outcomes. This in turn is a benefit for employers.

**How unions assert employees’ rights**

Some experts, including US economist Diana Furchtgott-Roth have argued that unions are no longer needed. “Workers don’t need unions because the economy is booming, and workers face a sellers’ market for their skills. They also don’t want to pay substantial union dues,” Furchtgott-Roth wrote in March 2022. While it is true that workers now have more individual rights in law covering minimum wages, discrimination, holidays and working hours, many of these things we now take for granted were achieved by union members acting collectively.

And still today, most workers do not know what their rights are or how to enforce them, with some afraid to for fear of retribution. This is particularly true of people just starting out in their careers, who, research shows, increasingly find themselves in the most precarious and insecure jobs.

In 2009, industrial relations scholar Linda Dickens pointed out that trade unions remained “effective positive mediators” for ensuring that the rights of workers that are enshrined in our laws can be translated into changes in the workplace. In other words, collective action is still the best way by which to ensure that individual employees’ rights are respected and upheld.

Non-union bodies like the UK’s Citizens’ Advice Bureaux – which many people go to for help at work – are so under-resourced that they recommend union membership as the most effective way to resolve workplace grievances.

While union membership has fallen significantly over the last 20 to 30 years, this does not mean that non-union workers do not want to be in unions. It is often the case that they have no access to unions. Some employers have also made it known that they are anti-union.

The average union member is no longer a male, blue-collar manual worker but a female white-collar worker. Indeed, the highest levels of union membership are among teachers, health workers, social workers and civil servants.

People from across the contemporary employment spectrum – including journalists, actors (like Benedict Cumberbatch), writers, lawyers, doctors and musicians (like folk singer Iona Fyfe) are union members. They see no conflict between unions representing their rights and their ability to be successful in their careers.

1. The author identified a ‘worldwide trend’ of ‘deunionisation’ of the young. What does this mean?

   a. Young people are joining unions in high numbers  
   b. Young people aren’t allowed to join unions  
   c. Young people don’t join unions  
   d. Young people don’t know what unions are for

2. Who is now most likely to be in a union?

   a. People who work on railways  
   b. People who work in education or health  
   c. Actors  
   d. Blue collar manual workers

3. Which of the following does the author not cite as a benefit of being in a union?

   a. You get to protest on a picket line  
   b. Your union may secure pay rises  
   c. Your union can help to settle workplace grievances  
   d. Your union can advocate for safety measures

4. Which of the following is a negative of being in a union?

   a. Some jobs and industries don’t have unions  
   b. You have to pay to be in a union  
   c. Unions are not well resourced so may recommend getting help elsewhere  
   d. All of the above are negatives to being in a union
5. How would you summarise what the article says? (200 words)

6. How would you describe the attitude of the author towards unions? (150 words)

7. What questions would you ask the author? (150 words)
Extract C

It was once illegal in Britain for a woman to marry the husband of her dead sister. Legally, they were seen as brother and sister, making such marriages incestuous. While it might seem odd now, this was a hot issue for Victorians and many argued that it should be legal.

William Gladstone, prime minister and leader of the Liberal party, was among many Victorians who argued for the law’s repeal on the grounds that the ecclesiastical law it was based upon was open to interpretation. He argued that on this basis these marriages were already legal in the colonies and that the law which made the union illegal confirmed that in-law marriages made before 1835 were sanctioned, placing a disparity within the law. It also highlighted the way that the rich could circumvent the law by marrying on the continent, while the poor had no such recourse, making an intrinsic inequality within society.

Nevertheless, the law wasn’t finally repealed until 1907 – 72 years after the 1835 Marriage Act first brought it into effect. Part of the scandal inherent in this law was the suggestion that female desire could exist before marriage – that a woman could sexually desire her sister’s husband. This, combined with the implication of incest, meant that the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Marriage Act became far more controversial and divisive than anybody anticipated when it was first passed.

Dinah Craik was one of many authors intrigued by this controversy and who wrote on the subject. Craik was a popular author of domestic fiction, which were books focused upon the home life of women, written by and for women. Craik had cultivated a reputation as a respectable, middle class and even matronly author. Although her writing was sometimes seen as old fashioned, this reputation allowed her to write about controversial issues without appearing to be too controversial herself.

One of the ways Craik did this was through her novel, *Hannah*. The book was first published as a serial in *Saint Pauls* magazine in 1871 in order to “[catch] the session” in parliament when this issue was being debated. The novel was then collected into a whole book by Harper and Brothers in 1872, making 2022 its 150th anniversary.

Not a typical heroine

In *Hannah*, Craik focused on the person-based narrative of this issue rather than facts and statistics bandied about in parliament. She drew attention to the effect that the act had upon women of all classes. One such woman is the eponymous Hannah, a 30-year-old governess. She isn’t particularly young or attractive and crucially, is not a typical romantic heroine.

Her beautiful younger sister has just died in childbirth and her brother-in-law, Bernard, whom Hannah has only met once, invites her to his house as a “dear sister” to help raise the baby.
Yet, two unmarried people of the opposite sex living together was seen as scandalous in society, despite their apparent sibling status – a fact referenced by several characters.

By the end of the novel, Hannah and Bernard have fallen in love, partly because of their shared love of the baby, positioning this as a nurturing love rather than a sexual one. They leave England forever to go to France, where such marriages were legal.

Two unlucky women of different classes
The novel also has two separate subplots. The first follows Hannah’s maid who was tricked into marriage by her brother-in-law, James Dixon, after her sister died.

Grace, the maid, is a virtuous but badly educated woman unaware of the intricacies of the law. When her brother-in-law persuades her to marry him to raise her sister’s children, Grace agrees for the children’s sake not knowing that it makes her own subsequent son illegitimate. Her argument, that such marriages are common amongst the working class who can’t afford to pay anyone to raise their children except a wife, blinds her to the fact that, though common, these marriages are technically illegal. When Dixon grows tired of her, he abandons Grace and her child, and Grace has no legal recourse to protest this. She is left as a disgraced woman.

The other subplot features Adeline, a lady, who watches her sister flirt with her husband. Due to the constraints of the law, such flirtations cannot go further and therefore are seen as “harmless”. She worries that if she were to call this behaviour out she would be “laughed at” as a “sickly jealous minded fool”.

Although Adeline acknowledges that neither her husband nor her sister would actively break the law, “there’s a great deal short of doing wrong that breaks a wife’s heart”. Watching this unfold before her and knowing that she can have no recourse to protest it, Adeline is consumed by jealousy and dies. As she piteously cries “nobody will blame them for anything; and yet they have killed me”.

This law was about more than just the deceased, then. It was primarily about the impact on those left behind, specifically the women of all classes, at the mercy of men and the laws they make.

In using the moving stories of these three women, Craik was able to remove some of the controversial stigmas around the issue and also bring women into the political debate in a way that they had otherwise been excluded from.

The contemporary reaction to Hannah was not overwhelmingly positive. It is always hard to quantify precisely the effect individual works have on shaping public opinion, but literature academic Elisabeth Rose Gruner argues that Hannah influenced all pro-reform pamphlets that came after its publication. Craik’s work is certainly the most famous pro-repeal story and sets the template for the sexless middle-aged couple, which would effectively become the central figures used by champions of the repeal movement to eventually win the day.

Source: Elizabeth Duffield-Fuller, “The controversial Victorian novel that argued for the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Marriage Act”: The Conversation. 19 April 2022.
1. Why was it illegal for a woman to marry the husband of her dead sister?
   - a. Legally such a marriage would have been incestuous
   - b. It would bring too many tax benefits
   - c. A man could not pay dowry to the same family twice
   - d. It would be presumed to go against the dead sister’s wishes

2. What is 'domestic fiction', as described in the article?
   - a. Books written by men who didn't work
   - b. Books designed to be read only at home
   - c. Books written by women about life at home
   - d. Books written in the UK and not overseas

3. Why does the author suggest the form of a novel, in particular, could have a positive impact on political reform?
   - a. It would be read by more people than laws or campaign leaflets
   - b. Characters in a book can’t actually break the law
   - c. It would make the author famous
   - d. Fiction made it seem less controversial than real life

4. What does the author argue the novel Hannah brings to the debate on marriage?
   - a. It shows how men are the ones mistreating women
   - b. It helps to show how the law impacts on women from different classes
   - c. It points out that a man is not blood related to the sister of his wife
5. How would you summarise what this article says? (200 words)

6. What does the novel tell us about women lives at the time? (150 words)

7. What questions would you ask the author? (150 words)
Section 2: Listening Comprehension

In this section, we are assessing:

- The applicant's potential for critical analysis, for example grasping complex new ideas and showing flexibility and creativity;
- The applicant's academic communication skills, for example their ability to share their own ideas in an appropriate format;
- The applicant's potential to assimilate knowledge, for example their ability to recognise and understand new information and apply it;
- The applicant's conscientiousness, for example their diligence in carefully completing the tasks as requested;

You will be shown the title of three videos and you should choose one you would like to answer on. This simulates learning through a lecture. The videos cover different topics which you will likely not be familiar with. Prior knowledge is not required and research is discouraged as applicants are asked to write answers to questions based on what they have heard in the video. When you are ready to proceed, you should move onwards and you will then see the video and questions.

You will have one hour to complete this section (with extra time offered as a reasonable adjustment for Special Educational Needs). You should start your own timer (for example using a watch or phone) as you confirm your extract selection.

Tips for completion

- Spend as much time as you like doing the recommended reading. Feel free to look up unfamiliar terms.
- Do not move forward until you are ready to complete this section.
Once you have chosen, take the time to listen carefully.
You could make notes as you listen that you can refer back to.
You can listen several times, perhaps pausing and rewinding.
If you have trouble hearing the audio, enable the closed captions for the video by clicking ‘CC’ on the player.
You might like to note down all your ideas and then just pick out the best ones to include

Test Video for Audio & Vision

Section 2 of this assessment will involve you watching a video hosted on YouTube. Please use this test video to confirm that you can access the platform and that you have adequate audio and visual capabilities on your laptop/PC to proceed with the assessment.

Which exercise do you wish to see and complete?
I confirm that I am ready to proceed with my essay and understand I cannot change my question option and that this is a timed activity.

☐ I confirm

Video 1

Video 1: Democracy

If you would like to copy and paste your response into the below text boxes from another document, you may need to use a keyboard shortcut (e.g. cntl + c and cntl + v) on a PC.
How would you summarise the key points from this video in your notes?

What examples or evidence did the speaker use in their comments?

How would you explain concept of populism?
What key terms would you use to research this topic?

What follow-up questions would you ask the speaker in class after this lecture?

Video 2

Video 2: Colonisation
If you would like to copy and paste your response into the below text boxes from another document, you may need to use a keyboard shortcut (e.g. cntl + c and cntl + v) on a PC.

How would you summarise the key points from this video in your notes?

What examples or evidence did the speaker use in their comments?
Can you explain the concept of hybridity in this context?

What key terms would you use to research this topic?

What follow-up questions would you ask the speaker in class after this lecture?
Video 3

Video 3: Modernism

If you would like to copy and paste your response into the below text boxes from another document, you may need to use a keyboard shortcut (e.g. ctrl + c and ctrl + v) on a PC.

How would you summarise the key points from this video in your notes?
What examples or evidence did the speaker use in their comments?

Can you explain ways that the definition of modernism has shifted over time?

What key terms would you use to research this topic?
What follow-up questions would you ask the speaker in class after this lecture?