

C2 PROFICIENCY (CPE)

Exam Strategy & High-Yield Vocabulary Cheat Sheet

CEFR LEVEL C2

1. PAPER ARCHITECTURE & TIME ALLOCATION STRATEGY

Paper	Timing & Parts	Core Challenge	Time Management Rule
1. Reading & Use of English	90 mins 7 Parts / 53 Qs	Grammatical precision, advanced collocation, paragraph cohesion.	Spend max 45m on UoE (Parts 1–4). Reserve 45m for heavy Reading (Parts 5–7).
2. Writing	90 mins 2 Tasks	Part 1: Dual-text summary & evaluation. Part 2: Choice (Report, Review, Letter, Article).	45 mins per task: 10m planning, 30m writing, 5m rigorous proofreading.
3. Listening	~40 mins 4 Parts / 30 Qs	Fast native speech, nuance, attitude, implicit meaning, distracted details.	Read prompts during intro. Underline key distractors before audio starts.
4. Speaking	16 mins 3 Parts	Sustained monologue, collaborative discussion, abstract debate.	Avoid basic fillers. Use sophisticated Discourse Markers to structure thoughts.

2. USE OF ENGLISH PART 4: HIGH-YIELD INVERSIONS & STRUCTURES

Key Word Transformations require exact alignment (3 to 6 words). Never alter the keyword.

Negative Inversions

No sooner / Hardly:

No sooner had [S] + [pp] than [S] + [past]

"No sooner had I stepped outside than it poured."

Not until / Only when:

Not until [clause] did [S] + [verb]

"Not until the audit ended did she feel relieved."

Conditionals & Advanced Structures

Inverted Conditionals (Had / Were / Should):

Had I known... / Were it not for...

"Were it not for your assistance, I would have failed."

Supposition / Bound to:

Under no circumstances is/are [S] to be...

"Under no circumstances should you disclose this."

3. ESSENTIAL TRANSFORMATION PATTERNS FOR PART 4

Standard Phrasal Form	C2 Target Transformation	Key C2 Phrase / Collocation
He didn't realize how bad it was.	Little did he realize the extent of the issue.	Little did [S] realise
It is certain to rain later.	It is bound to rain as the day goes on.	Be bound to / Inevitable
I only realized when he spoke.	It was only when he spoke that I realized.	It was only when... that
She limits how much she spends.	She keeps a tight rein on her budget.	Keep a tight rein on
They decided to cancel the match.	They opted to call off the match.	Opt to / Call off

4. WRITING PART 1: COMPULSORY ESSAY TOOLKIT

Part 1 requires you to **summarize and evaluate** two short texts (~100 words each). Do not copy chunks of text; paraphrase completely.

Phrases for Summarizing Key Points

- "The primary passage posits that..."
- "The author underscores the necessity of..."
- "The second text advances the argument that..."
- "Central to the writer's thesis is the idea that..."

Phrases for Synthesis & Evaluation

- "While Text A rightly highlights... it fails to account for..."
- "This assertion is compelling, yet it merits qualification."
- "There is an undeniable grain of truth in..."
- "Upon closer inspection, this argument proves flawed."

5. ADVANCED C2 CONNECTORS & DISCOURSE MARKERS

Rhetorical Function	High-Level C2 Connectors	Example Usage
Concession / Contrast	Be that as it may, Notwithstanding, Albeit, Mind you	"Notwithstanding the initial setbacks, the project succeeded."
Addition / Reinforcement	Moreover, Furthermore, Coupled with, By the same token	"The policy is unethical; by the same token, it is impractical."
Causation / Consequence	In consequence of, Inexorably leads to, Stemming from	"The delay stemmed from systemic communication breakdowns."
Exemplification	Case in point, To epitomize, Exemplified by	"Her rapid promotion is a case in point."

6. HIGH-SCORING C2 VOCABULARY & PRECISE COLLOCATIONS

C2 Precise Adjectives & Verbs

- **Unassailable** (adj): Impossible to doubt or attack.
"An unassailable argument."
- **Imperative** (adj/n): Crucial, vital.
"It is imperative that we act."
- **Elucidate** (v): To make clear / explain.
"To elucidate complex concepts."
- **Mitigate** (v): Make less severe.
"To mitigate adverse effects."

Idiomatic C2 Expressions

- **At loggerheads with:** In strong disagreement.
- **Pay lip service to:** Approve verbally without action.
- **Tip the scales:** Be the deciding factor.
- **Grasp at straws:** Try desperate measures.

7. SPEAKING TEST (PARTS 2 & 3) QUICK FORMULA

Structure for Part 3 Long Turn (2 minutes uninterrupted speech):

1. **Definition / Reframe (15s):** "This question touches upon a fundamental tension between..."
2. **Point 1 + Illustration (45s):** "On the one hand, one cannot overlook the role of... as demonstrated by..."
3. **Counter-perspective / Nuance (45s):** "Conversely, a counter-argument can be made regarding..."
4. **Synthesis / Conclusion (15s):** "Ultimately, it appears to be a question of striking a balance between..."

