

CAEL 202: Reading and Speaking

Reading Question Types

The table below describes the types of questions you will encounter in CAEL Reading (and Listening) tasks. Each question is one of these three types. Below the table are strategies for identifying and approaching each question type.

1. General meaning	General meaning questions focus on broad ideas , not a single detail. Choosing the correct answer requires putting together information from multiple sentences, multiple paragraphs, or the full text.
2. Specific information	Specific information questions require locating one key detail located in one specific place in the text.
3. Inference	Inference questions require you to draw a conclusion about something based on information provided in the passage. The answer is not provided directly in the text, but there is information that points toward which answer choice is best.

General Meaning Questions

These questions often (though not always) refer to the entire reading passage; for example, *What is the main topic of the passage?* Words and phrases such as *main idea*, *topic*, and *purpose* tend to signal general meaning questions, as they usually refer to the whole text or a large section of it. A suggested strategy for approaching these questions is:

- If applicable, identify the topic the question is about. (If the question is asking about the entire text, skip this step and the next one. Instead, skim the whole passage for main ideas and important details.)
- Skim to find the section(s) related to that topic in the passage.
- Determine which information will help you select the best answer.
- If necessary, scan the relevant section(s) to gather relevant details.
- Eliminate incorrect answers, then select the best answer choice.

Specific Information Questions

These questions may ask for a number, a name, a term, a fact, or any other detail that can be found in one specific place in the text. The answer can often be expressed in a single word or short phrase. A suggested strategy for approaching these questions is:

- Determine what kind of information you need to locate.
- Skim to find the section where your information should be.

- Scan to find the phrase with the specific detail you need.
- Use that information to select the best answer choice.

Inference Questions

These questions usually include a word or phrase that signals something probable or hypothetical; for example, *likely*, *probably*, or *would*. A suggested strategy for approaching these questions is:

- Look for clues in the question that tell you the answer isn't clearly stated in the text.
- Skim to the area with content related to the question topic and review the information.
- Consider what that content tells you and how it relates to the question.
- Draw a logical conclusion based on what you know and what you are being asked.
- Eliminate incorrect answers, then select the best answer.

Note that it is not always possible to determine a question's type from its wording, and choosing the right answer does not depend on identifying the question type. However, it is helpful to be aware that these are the three kinds of questions you will encounter on the test, and that it is sometimes possible to identify a question's type from its wording or content and find the answer using the strategy indicated above.



Long and Short Reading Strategies

- **Preview the text.** Take about 20 seconds to note the title, format, and length of the text, and the timing for the task. Then quickly skim the text to get a sense of its structure and main ideas. Main ideas typically appear in the first sentence of each paragraph.
- **Preview the questions and identify key words.** Read the questions and note the words and phrases that will help you to determine what kind of information to look for and where to find it in the text. It can also be helpful to try to identify question types (general meaning, specific information, or inference). Remember that the questions are as chronological as possible: the questions are listed in roughly the same order that the answers appear in the text.
- **Avoid attempting to read the whole text from start to finish.** Instead, focus on answering questions, using your skimming and scanning skills to locate the text sections that are likely to include the information you are looking for.
- **Skim for gist.** Skimming a text is looking through the entire passage quickly to get an overall idea of what it is about. This is a strategy for gaining general understanding of the structure and topic of the text, the main ideas of paragraphs, and other big-picture elements. Skimming can be a useful skill to use for general meaning questions.

- **Scan for details.** Scanning is searching through a particular section of text quickly to locate one or more relevant specific details. Scanning can be a useful skill to use for specific information questions.
- **Derive meaning from context.** You will almost certainly encounter unfamiliar words in Reading passages. The ability to extract clues about it, such as its part of speech (e.g., noun, verb, adjective), connotation (positive, negative, or neutral), and possible meaning is a useful skill to build before your test day and use during Reading tasks.
- **Answer every question!** Ensure that you are not leaving any questions blank. Guess if you have to! For Reading tasks with multiple question pages, check that each of the tabs at the top of the screen is green, which signals that all questions are answered.



Speaking on the Long Reading Strategies

Preparation Time

- **Carefully read the question** and determine exactly what you have to talk about.
- **Use point form to list any relevant points you remember from the reading.** Don't worry about spelling and grammar.
- **Skim the reading** to find sections that contain more relevant ideas.
- **Organize your notes.** For example, write numbers beside your main ideas and make it clear which details belong with which main ideas. It doesn't matter if it's messy, as long as you can read it and make sense of it for a short time.
- **Begin to consider how you might rephrase key ideas.** (Reading from the passage will not benefit your score.)
- **Consider how you will introduce your response.**

Speaking Time

- **Begin with a statement that clearly introduces the topic.** It's better that this be in your own words; avoid simply reading out the question.
- **Use transitions** to introduce main ideas.
- Use information from the Long Reading, but **express the ideas in your own words.**
- **Use vocabulary specific to the topic.**
- **Aim for about three main ideas.** It is not necessary to include exactly three, but this is a good number to aim for.
- **If necessary, refer to the text while speaking.** The reading will remain on screen while you speak, so you can consult it if you need to.
- **Do your best to fill the full two-minute speaking time.** Keep in mind that pausing for a short time to take a breath and gather your thoughts is a better strategy than giving up before the time is up.



Speaking Checklist: CAEL Part 2

Delivery Skills	
1. Does the speaker speak at a good volume (not too softly, not too loudly)?	Yes Sometimes No
2. Does the speaker speak clearly with minimal pausing and hesitations?	Yes Sometimes No
3. Does the speaker speak at a good speed (not too fast, not too slow)?	Yes Sometimes No
4. Does the speaker use appropriate rhythm, pronunciation, and intonation?	Yes Sometimes No
Accuracy of Language	
5. Does the speaker use a variety of words and phrases?	Yes Sometimes No
6. Does the speaker use vocabulary that is suitable and precise?	Yes Sometimes No
7. Does the speaker speak in complete sentences?	Yes Sometimes No
8. Does the speaker use a variety of sentence structures?	Yes No
9. Does the speaker use appropriate linking words and phrases?	Yes Sometimes No
Content of Response	
10. Does the speaker clearly state his or her main idea?	Yes No
11. Does the speaker provide specific details and examples to support their response?	Yes Sometimes No
12. Does the speaker remain on topic?	Yes Sometimes No
13. Is the speaker's tone appropriate for the social context of the task?	Yes Sometimes No
14. Is the response well organized and easy to follow?	Yes No
15. Does the speaker avoid repeating ideas?	Yes No
16. Does the speaker conclude with an appropriate closing remark?	Yes No
Task Fulfillment	
17. Does the speaker speak for the entire time?	Yes No
18. Does the speaker's response fully answer the question?	Yes No

Speaking on the Long Reading	
1. Does the speaker use information from the Reading passage to support and develop their ideas?	Yes No
2. Does the speaker use information from the Reading passage that is relevant to the Speaking question?	Yes Sometimes No
3. Is the speaker able to paraphrase information rather than repeat words or phrases from the Reading passage?	Yes Sometimes No



NOTE: The **sample response audio file** is posted as a separate download at the **same location on the CAEL website** where you accessed these Study Notes.



Sample Response: Speaking on the Long Reading

Question

Why do engineering disasters happen? What are the causes of errors?

Response Transcript (Speaking Band 80 overall)

So why do engineering disasters happen? Um, engineering disasters happen according to this reading passage because of human errors in general. And I notice that it goes over a lot of the different problems with many examples and it breaks down the statistics of engineering disasters into different...parts such as 58% is issued in the design stage and 38% in the construction stage and 4% in the operations stage. But I think if you really just look, take a look at the numbers and see where the source of those numbers are it really boils down to the fact that human error is the main cause of these engineering disasters. When it comes to the design stage or the construction stage or the operations stage all those decisions are okayed by human beings and...um, just the negligence and the ignorance that are...sometimes seen in these examples really highlight to me that no matter what we blame the cause of errors it really comes down to an oversight on humans somehow. I feel like there's a bit of hubris attached to it, in the sense that...we've, these are people, the people making the decisions, this is most likely the first mistake that has ever caused such a huge disaster. And it's easy once you really settled into a task to overlook...even things that you're very comfortable with doing. So I think carelessness is the number one cause of these errors or disasters....And um I notice that some of the facts they also bring up is that only a small amount accounts to technology and I just want to spin it around to the fact that technology, right the fact that we um humans developed the technology, we should know that it's not ready. That's another point.



Academic Speaking Study Tips

- Improve your level of academic English by **reading small sections or chapters of academic texts on a variety of academic topics.**
- **Keep a vocabulary journal** and note down the meaning, pronunciation, and usage of new words. Familiarize yourself with the most common words on the **Academic Word List**. Incorporate new words into your daily practice as much as possible.
- Develop your sentence structure by learning to use **compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.**
- Work with videos, audiobooks, or a native speaker tutor to reduce your accent by **improving your pronunciation, intonation, and word stress.**
- **Practice speaking for 1 minute, 1.5 minutes, and 2 minutes** to familiarize yourself with how long these times are and how much material you can cover during each.
- **Interact with native speakers** as much as possible. Try joining a study group or speaking club.
- **Listen to the news and podcasts.** Notice how speakers state facts, express opinions, describe experiences, and summarize trends.
- Become familiar with **different levels of formality** in spoken English.
- **Practice every day!**



Test Day Speaking Tips

- **Speak at your normal volume.** Don't yell or whisper, as this will negatively affect intonation and pronunciation. Do your best to speak with confidence and authority even if you're nervous. Imagine that you are speaking on the phone to a trusted classmate, instructor, or coworker.
- **If you're nervous, take a deep breath, hold it for a couple of seconds, and exhale slowly.** This can interrupt the physical effects of anxiety.
- **Avoid "up-speak"** (frequently using rising intonation at the end of a phrase or statement, as though you are asking a question). Use natural intonation.
- Start each response with a **statement that clearly introduces the topic, image, or situation.**
- **Use pauses and word stress** to draw attention to key points.
- If it is necessary to restate a key idea, do it in **different words.**
- **Use transitions and linking words** to signal new topics or ideas. Avoid overusing "and" and "so."
- **Fill as much of the time as you can.** Try to avoid lengthy silences—both in the middle and at the end.
- **Include a concluding statement** before your time is up.

CAEL Preparation Resources

CAEL Webinars

Webinar	Focus	Length
CAEL 101: Get the Facts	An overview of the features and format of the CAEL Test	90 minutes
CAEL 201: Speaking and Test Format	CAEL Part 1: Independent Speaking	90 minutes
CAEL 202: Reading and Speaking	CAEL Part 2: Integrated Reading	90 minutes
CAEL 203: Listening and Speaking	CAEL Part 3: Integrated Listening	90 minutes
CAEL 204: Writing, Reading, and Listening	CAEL Parts 4 + 5: Academic Units A + B	90 minutes
CAEL 301: Speaking	CAEL Speaking tasks	2 hours
CAEL 302: Writing	CAEL Writing tasks	90 minutes

- **Everyone is welcome to register for all CAEL webinars!** It is not necessary to attend them in sequence. Register [here](#).
- You can participate and ask questions to the instructor in all sessions.
- After each session, you will receive an email that includes a link to **free study materials**: a PDF containing the most important content from the webinar, including sample responses, analysis, checklists, and strategies.
- You can attend the same session more than once, but please be aware that **the content will be the same**. We repeat these webinars frequently to help new test takers learn about the test!
- One recording of each webinar is posted on our **YouTube channel**.

Additional Resources

Free CAEL Practice Tests: access them [here](#)

CAEL Preparation Program: cael.ca/cael-prep-program


Online Store: cael.ca/prepare-for-cael/paid-study-materials

CAEL Live on YouTube: find playlist [here](#)

CAEL Prep with Brandi on YouTube: find playlist [here](#)

Connect with Us!

 **YouTube** youtube.com/CAELOfficial

 instagram.com/CAELtest

 facebook.com/CAELtest

 twitter.com/CAELtest