

Skills Exercises

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Cambridge International AS & A Level Business 9609

For examination from 2023



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Introduction

Cambridge International AS & A Level Business attracts a variety of learners from many different backgrounds. For some learners Business is a new subject and an opportunity to explore an area of study that interests them, while developing a set of transferable skills. Other learners have previously studied Business and are looking to continue developing their knowledge of the subject. Either way, the study of Business allows learners to experience the diverse and dynamic world within which businesses exist and gain the knowledge needed to understand how businesses operate within real contexts, analyse alternative courses of action and develop the ability to make justified recommendations.

Skills and why they are important?

Skills are the key to success. The performance of candidates in Cambridge International AS & A Level Business exams have shown a range of areas where improvement would be helpful. These areas of improvement tend to centre around the assessment objectives (AOs) of the course and we have addressed these AOs in a series of exercises and activities.

- AO1 Knowledge and understanding
- AO2 Application
- AO3 Analysis and AO4 Evaluation

Skills Exercises make use of examination questions and data and include activities and worksheets to help skills development and incorporate suggested teaching approaches, such as group work, discussion, structured support and writing in sequence. They do not attempt to cover all possible aspects of the examinations, only those problem areas which have presented consistently over time.

How will these skills be developed?

Skills Exercises aim to help learners develop skills in:

- using knowledge and numerical data to answer examination questions
- using the context given in the examination to make answers relevant
- developing skills of analysis – including understanding analysis, spotting analysis and developing analysis skills
- building evaluation skills – including making judgements, what the judgement depends upon and early evaluation in a response.

Skills Exercises provide suggestions so you can have confidence that the materials you prepare and use in the classroom are building skills and resilience in your learners. This document should be used alongside the other teaching and learning resources provided on the [School Support Hub](#).

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Exercise 1: Key terms

Cambridge International AS & A Level Business has a language that learners need to know and understand so they can interpret what is going on in a business, select and analyse data, and apply this knowledge as required in the examinations.

Activity 1: Using business language

Give learners two similar statements using different business terms. Use the phrases in **Worksheet 1: Using business language** or examples from other areas of the syllabus. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 1: Using business language answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to ensure understanding of how each term changes the nature of the phrase. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Key term meanings

Many terms in business can mean the same thing. It is important that learners understand these terms and what they mean.

Give learners a list of terms, some of which have the same meaning. The list in **Worksheet 2: Key term meanings** can be used as a basis for some of these.

Learners find the odd one out which has a completely different meaning to the other terms and explain why. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 2: Key term meanings answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to ensure understanding of why the odd one out has a different meaning. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 3: Linking concepts

An examination question can have a simple topic at its core but require a variety of different concepts to allow a full answer to be given. Learners need to be able to link these concepts together so they can choose the most important or most relevant ones to use in an answer.

Give learners a topic area from the syllabus. The topics in **Worksheet 3: Linking concepts** can be used as a basis for these terms or any other topic from the syllabus could be used.

Learners create a mind-map using as many different concepts as possible linking to this topic. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually, in pairs or groups. The activity could also be completed as a class by copying the term onto the board and asking learners to take turns to write the business concept.

Use **Worksheet 3: Linking concepts answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to ensure understanding so that learners can see what has been added to each other's mind-map. Where a learner has added a concept that no-one else has, ask for an explanation as to why / how it links to the topic. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: discuss which concepts might be most useful when answering different examination questions.

Activity 4: Key term definitions

Learners should have access to a set of definitions for as many key terms as possible. Most of the key terms are found in the syllabus and can be gained from a good textbook or on the internet.

Give pairs of learners a different topic from the syllabus. For example, the AS Level subject content (Topics 1.1–5.5) can be split into the following topics depending on how many learners you have:

AS Level topics (5 learners)	Sub-topics (19 learners)
1. Business and its environment	1.1 Enterprise 1.2 Business structure 1.3 Size of business 1.4 Business objectives 1.5 Stakeholders in a business
2. Human resource management (HRM)	2.1 Human resource management 2.2 Motivation 2.3 Management
3. Marketing	3.1 The nature of marketing 3.2 Market research 3.3 The marketing mix
4. Operations management	4.1 The nature of operations 4.2 Inventory management 4.3 Capacity utilisation and outsourcing
5. Finance and accounting	5.1 Business finance 5.2 Sources of finance 5.3 Forecasting and managing cash flows 5.4 Costs 5.5 Budgets

Learners list every key term they can find in their topic from the syllabus.

Learners then find a definition for that key term and record it. When completed, discuss and fill in any gaps so learners have a complete definition list.

Alternatively, it is possible to build a vocabulary list while teaching the syllabus. As each topic of the syllabus is taught, give learners the correct definitions.

Exercise 2: Calculations

The ability to use numbers is an essential skill in Cambridge International AS & A Level Business and will be covered in AO2 Application. However, each calculation is based on a formula which must be known and understood.

Activity 1: Formulae

Give learners a list of the most common formulae for AS Level which are listed on **Worksheet 4: Formulae** or add to this to create a complete list for the course. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 4: Formulae answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion about what type of data each formula shows and how useful it may be to the business. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: create additional worksheets for learners using different formulae.

Exercise 3: Theories

The Cambridge International AS & A Level Business syllabus includes the theories that need to be known and understood. The basic elements of each theory can be summarised so they can be easily recalled by learners.

Activity 1: Matching theory to theorist

Give learners a list of theories and theorists. **Worksheet 5: Matching theory to theorist** can be used or adapted to include different theories and theorists. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually, in pairs or groups.

Use **Worksheet 5: Matching theory to theorist answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion about what topic of the syllabus the theory relates to. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Exercise 4: Business tools

Business tools and models are an important foundation for gaining knowledge and understanding of the subject. Learners need to understand how each business tool can be used to help with the higher-level skills of analysis and evaluation.

Activity 1: Complete the tools/models

Learners should develop a comprehensive knowledge of some of the business tools included in the syllabus.

Give learners a partially complete diagram representing one or more of the business tools or models from the syllabus. The tools / models in **Worksheet 6: Complete the tools / models** can be replaced with different ones as required. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 6: Complete the tools / models answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to embed learners' knowledge and understanding about when the specific tool / model might be used. Ensure any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Business tool presentations

Give each learner a business tool / model. Depending on the number of learners you may need to give each learner more than one tool.

Learners prepare a presentation and notes on their business tool. Learners give the presentation to the whole group and hand out the notes. For the presentation, learners may work individually, in pairs or in small groups. After each presentation, learners give two positive points of the presentation and one improvement. The most common tools are shown below.

- Maslow's hierarchy of Needs
- Herzberg's two-factor theory
- McClelland's three need theory
- Vrooms' expectancy theory
- Mintzberg's management roles
- McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y
- The marketing mix
- The stages of the transformational process
- Inventory control charts
- Cash flow forecast
- Break-even charts
- Blue ocean strategy
- Scenario planning
- SWOT analysis
- PEST analysis
- Porter's five forces
- Core competence framework
- Ansoff's matrix
- Force field analysis
- Decision trees
- Organisational hierarchy
- Goleman's four competencies of emotional intelligence
- Management by objectives (MBO)
- Elasticity
- Time series analysis
- Economies and diseconomies of scale
- Total Quality Management (TQM)
- Enterprise resource planning (ERP)
- Critical path analysis (CPA)
- Ratio analysis (can be split further)
- Investment appraisal (can be split further)

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