CELBAN™

CANADIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT FOR NURSES

Test-Taking Strategies
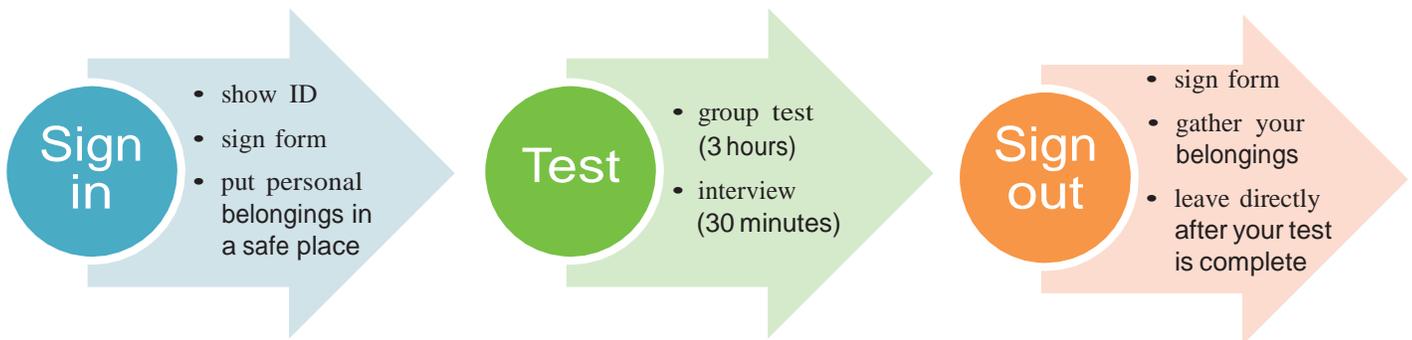
Introduction to CELBAN

The Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) assessment was designed and developed by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) in collaboration with nursing regulators and language testing specialists. The CELBAN test assesses four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Candidates are asked to complete language tasks similar to tasks a nurse might face in real life.

The CELBAN Group Test comprises three sections: listening, writing and reading. The CELBAN Speaking Assessment comprises two role-play scenarios, which are conducted with two speaking assessors.

What to Expect on Test Day

Knowing what happens on test day will help you prepare for taking the CELBAN test. This document outlines important test taking information about test day, test format, strategies and criteria for self-assessment so that you can prepare yourself in advance of the test. This may also help to minimize nervous feelings.

Test Day

Sign in
- show ID
- sign form
- put personal belongings in a safe place

Test
- group test (3 hours)
- interview (30 minutes)

Sign out
- sign form
- gather your belongings
- leave directly after your test is complete

On test day, you will be expected to:

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to your scheduled test.
- Present two pieces of identification.
- Sign in and out of the test location.
- Leave all personal belongings in a dedicated area.

CELBAN TEST

There are two parts to the CELBAN test: a group test (listening, reading and writing) and a speaking assessment.

Group Test (3 hours)	🔊	Listening
	📖	Reading
	✏️	Writing
Speaking Assessment (30 minutes)	💬	Speaking

For each part of the CELBAN Group Test (listening, reading, writing), you will have a test booklet and an answer booklet. Only write in the answer booklet.

You will be asked to complete tasks that require different types of answer formats. Read and listen to the instructions for each task carefully.

For the CELBAN speaking assessment, you will be taking part in role-play scenarios. There will also be some written instructions.

What are the Details of the CELBAN™ Test?

There are two parts to the CELBAN test. The group test is a paper-and-pencil test that evaluates your ability to read, write and listen. Several different test items are used in the group test: multiple choice questions where you must choose the best answer, fill-in-the-blanks with the correct word, short answer questions, and report writing. The speaking test is a face-to-face interview which includes a "role-play" with a patient. The chart on the following page shows the details of the test:

Details of the CELBAN™ Test

Language Skill	PART 1: Group Paper-and-Pencil Test			PART 2: In Person Interview
	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Task Types	There are five video scenarios (in various settings including hospital, home, clinic, and medical office) and four audio scenarios (phone calls and shift-to-shift reports). Scenarios include interactions between nurses and patients, family members, and other professionals.	The reading assessment includes a skimming and scanning section (10 minutes) and a reading comprehension (40 minutes) section. Text includes various formats such as charts, patient notes, manuals, and information texts related to health issues.	The writing assessment includes a form that must be completed and a short written report.	The speaking assessment is an interview with two role play scenarios. In the interview the candidate will be asked to answer questions to demonstrate ability to narrate, describe, summarize, synthesize, state and support opinion, and advise. In the role plays the candidate is asked to interact with a standardized patient (one of the assessors) by asking questions to obtain information, giving instructions and offering explanations.
Question Format	multiple choice questions (some in chart format)	short answer questions (skimming and scanning) multiple choice questions (reading comprehension), including a cloze exercise	form-filling (10 minutes) report writing (20 minutes)	oral interview and two role plays
Length	45 minutes	50 minutes	30 minutes	20 to 30 minutes
Administration Conditions	Part 1 is a written exam administered to a group. There are audio-visual segments for the listening, projected to the group, and reading passages in test booklet. Each candidate receives both a test booklet and an answer booklet, both of which are collected at the end of the exam.			The interview is conducted by two trained CELBAN speaking assessors.
Rating Process	Multiple choice questions are rated using a validated score key and automated conversion calculation.	Multiple choice and short answer questions are rated using a validated score key and automated conversion calculation.	The Writing test is marked by a single rater using a validated rubric. For quality assurance purposes, spot checks are regularly performed.	Speaking assessment is conducted and scored by two raters and recorded for future reference if needed by assessors to verify score. In the case of a discrepancy a third rater will review the results.

CELBAN LISTENING

CELBAN Listening Format

During the CELBAN listening section, you will answer multiple choice questions, also referred to as MCQs. MCQs appear in 2 formats:

- In the test booklet, with multiple options in the answer booklet.
- On a chart in answer booklet. Answer directly on the chart if directed to do so.

CELBAN Listening Strategies

Listening scenarios are played only one time.

Pre-read questions.	You will have time before viewing/listening to the scenarios to pre-read the questions. Use this time to pre-read questions.
Do not wait until the scenario ends to mark your answers.	Mark answers in the test booklet as soon as you hear the information you need.
	You will view the video, read the questions and select your answers at the same time.
	If you think it may be difficult to watch the video, concentrate on the questions and answers at the same time; then, listen to the video and occasionally look at the video, but focus more on reading and answering the questions.
	Practise before the test to find out what strategies work best for you.
At the end of each scenario you will have time to check your answers.	Use this dedicated time to check your answers. Finish checking your answers at the end of each scenario when the time is up.
	Do not use time from the next task's pre-reading time allowed at the beginning of the next scenario.

CELBAN WRITING

CELBAN Writing Format

During the CELBAN writing section, you will be asked to complete two writing tasks in two different ways.

- Task A: Fill out a form. Record information in point form in a chart format.
- Task B: Write a descriptive piece of writing. You will use complete sentences in paragraph form.

CELBAN Writing Strategies

✓ Be sure that your handwriting is easy to read (legible).

✓ Follow the instructions carefully regarding the format of your answers.

Remember, Task A and Task B require different formats.

✓ Practise for Task A by filling out forms, and for Task B, by writing descriptive paragraphs.

✓ Time yourself.

Criteria for Self-Assessment – Task A: Fill out a Form

Use the Criteria listed below to self-assess your writing.

Spelling	Do spelling problems make it difficult for others to understand your writing?
Legibility	Is your handwriting neat and easy to read? Or, does it make it difficult to understand your writing?
Point form	Do you use point form effectively? Do you omit unnecessary words and include necessary words to convey information clearly?
Main points	Do you include the important main points when you fill in forms?
Supporting details	Do you include important supporting details when you fill in forms?

Criteria for Self-Assessment – Task B: Descriptive Writing

Effectiveness	Is key information accurate and clear?
Grammar	Is the language you use generally correct grammatically? Are you able to use complex structures correctly?
Fluency	Are ideas organized well? Have you used language appropriately to connect ideas?
Vocabulary for purpose	Have you used vocabulary that is appropriate and relevant? Have you used word forms correctly?
Content	Have you included main ideas and supporting details?

CELBAN READING

Skimming and Scanning Format

What is **skimming**? Skimming is reading quickly to determine the main idea of a text.

What is **scanning**? Scanning is reading quickly to find specific details in a text.

- Skim and Scan: text and questions are provided in test booklet. Skim and scan for specific information. Provide short answers (word or phrase) to answer specific questions in the answer booklet.

Skimming and Scanning Strategies

- ✓ There is a short amount of time.
- ✓ Plan your time well.
- ✓ Look at the text quickly (skimming) and determine the purpose.
- ✓ Read each question and try to find the information required quickly (scanning).
- ✓ Difficulty answering a question? Go to the next question. You can always go back. to the unanswered question later if time allows.
- ✓ Be careful when copying information from the text. If information is copied incorrectly, it will be marked wrong.

Reading Comprehension Format

There are four reading comprehension tasks. You will need to demonstrate a range of comprehension skills. These may include finding main ideas, finding supporting details and making inferences. In order to answer the questions, you will need to read the texts thoroughly, not just skim and scan.

The last task is a cloze exercise (fill-in-the-blanks). Read the entire passage once through quickly, ignoring the blanks to get the gist (the general content of the text). Then read again for meaning, line by line to select the best option from the multiple choices provided to fill in the blanks.

- MCQ (three tasks) – choose the best multiple choice option for each item in the answer booklet.
- Fill-in-the-blanks (one task) – you will be provided with a text that has fill-in-the-blank options. Choose the best option out of four in the answer booklet and mark in the answer booklet.

General Reading Strategies

Answering Multiple-Choice Questions:

- ✓ Choose an answer, even if you have to guess. The item will be marked wrong if left unanswered.
- ✓ Do not choose two answers. If two answers are indicated, the item will be marked wrong.
- ✓ If you change your mind about an answer, make sure that you fully erase the first answer.
- ✓ If you think your original answer is incorrect, but you are not sure whether or not to change it – leave the original answer.

Answering Short Answer Questions:

- ✓ Make sure that you use correct spelling. Copy accurately from the text when appropriate.

- ✓ Make sure that you include the full name if the text gives the full name. (e.g., If the text refers to "John Doe," and the answer requests name, your answer should be "John Doe," not just "John" or "Doe.")

- ✓ Do not include extra information in your answer. (e.g., If the question only asks for the street address, do not include the city.) Extra information will be marked wrong.

- ✓ Make sure you include the full information in your answer. (e.g., If the question only asks for the birth date, make sure you include month, date and year; do not omit one of these.)

- ✓ Make sure that your handwriting is legible (easy to read).

CELBAN SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

CELBAN Speaking Format

During the CELBAN speaking assessment you will be interviewed in person by two trained CELBAN speaking assessors. It will take about 30 minutes. The assessment will be audio-taped so that assessors can review the interview in order to determine your score.

The CELBAN speaking assessment has three parts:

- Opening and introductory questions
- Two role plays
- Further questions and conclusion

CELBAN Speaking Strategies

- ✓ Speak in your normal voice, but be sure that your volume is loud enough to be easily heard by the assessors.
- ✓ Be sure to listen to directions and follow them closely.
- ✓ Do not worry about making mistakes in medical knowledge. In this interview, your language proficiency is being assessed, not your medical knowledge.
- ✓ If you normally use reading glasses, bring them to the CELBAN speaking assessment, since there will be some written instructions for you to read during the interview.

Speaking Tasks

The speaking tasks on the CELBAN speaking assessment were designed to represent authentic tasks based on an in-depth analysis of the language demands of the nursing profession across Canada.

During the CELBAN speaking assessment, you might be asked to carry out any of the following speaking tasks. The best way to prepare is to practise the speaking tasks listed below:

- Tell a story.
- Provide a description.
- Report an incident.
- Present a comparison.

- Ask for information (in role play); you are the nurse and one of the assessors is the client.
- Give instructions (in role play); you are the nurse and one of the assessors is the client.
- Explain a problem.
- Discuss an issue.
- State and support an opinion.
- Convince someone of something.

Criteria for Self-Assessment – Speaking Role-Plays

Use the criteria listed below to self-assess your speaking.

General Use of Language	Are you able to communicate effectively in carrying out the tasks required of you?
	Are you able to take initiative for an interaction with some confidence?
Intelligibility	Do other people usually understand your speech without much effort?
Organization	Do you present main ideas and supporting ideas clearly?
Fluency	How much do you hesitate and pause when you are speaking?
	Is the tempo of your speech fairly even?
Connecting Ideas	Do you introduce and conclude topics appropriately?
	Do you use sentences and phrases to connect ideas?
Use of Vocabulary	Do you use appropriate vocabulary to discuss both concrete and abstract topics?
Grammar	Do you use correct grammar?

General Speaking Strategies

Get in the habit of practising speaking strategies listed below.

- ✓ Ask for clarification.
- ✓ Correct yourself.
- ✓ Ask further questions to make sure you understand.
- ✓ Affirm the person you are speaking to.
- ✓ Use appropriate tone and level of formality for the context.
- ✓ Establish rapport.

How to Prepare for CELBAN

Online Self-Assessment

In Canada, the culture of learning relies on self-direction. This means adults, and even children, are expected to be engaged and take responsibility for their own learning. The CCLB has developed an Online Self-Assessment to gauge if you are ready to take CELBAN. Visit www.celban.org to access this resource.

Nursing Bridging Programs

Canadian nursing practice can be quite different from nursing practice in other countries. This might include the scope of practice (what a nurse is allowed to do and expected to do with and for patients) and standards for communication. Canada has a patient-centred approach to care. Language and communication skills are therefore a core competency.

A patient-centered care approach requires nurses to understand patients' needs and desires for their health care and wellbeing, as well as to communicate with patients and their families about shared health care goals and priorities. Good communication underlies effective teamwork that enables efficient delivery of health care services. But most importantly, sound communication skills help health practitioners meet legal and ethical requirements related to documenting patient interviews, assessments, care plans, and treatment outcomes.

Nurses need to be proficient at communicating effectively and flexibly, in a variety of media and contexts. Nurses must practice safely, with integrity and professionalism, communicating across language, cultural, generational, and situational barriers.

There are programs available across Canada that provide orientation and language & communication training to internationally educated nurses. If you have the opportunity to join one of these programs this is recommended. Participation in such a program is great practice for CELBAN, especially when the program offers the Institutional CELBAN.

Working in a Health-Related English-Speaking Environment

Being immersed in English will help your fluency and confidence. Listen and learn from professionals around you. Be active and ask questions.

English and a second Language (ESL) language Training Programs

The best way to gain accuracy in language use is to get some professional help. An ESL program, a private tutor, or online self-directed learning programs are all good options. Focus on your spelling accuracy (especially of medical terms), your sentence structure (your speaking and writing must be clear, one of the easiest way to be clear is to use correct grammar!), and organization (use an organizing principle to guide you when communicating, for example: introduce, support, conclude, or choose three main points and keep your communication focused on those, or use a technique like SBAR – situation, background, assessment and recommendation).

Test Preparation Program

There are some test preparation courses available at school boards, colleges, and through private providers. Please note that we do not endorse any test preparation programs, so make sure that the program is reputable and that you get good references if you decide to invest in such a program.

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