

B2 First Overview of the Speaking Paper

Aims of the lesson	To give students an overview of the format of the B2 First Speaking test (Paper 4)
Time needed	35 minutes
Materials required	Classroom Handout 1 (one per student) http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-qualifications/first/exam-update-for-2015/

1. Tell your class that you are going to look at Part 4 of the First exam, the Speaking test. Ask them what they think makes somebody a good English speaker (e.g. not making lots of mistakes, good pronunciation, being able to communicate...).
Timing: 5 mins
2. Put the students into pairs and give out **Classroom Handout 1**. Ask them to fill in the questionnaire quickly, and to guess any answers that they may not be sure of.
Timing: 5 mins
3. When students have finished, hand out a copy of **Classroom Handout 2** and get them to check their answers.
Timing: 5 mins
4. Go through the answers (see **Answer Key**) and answer any questions or queries they may have.
Timing: 5 mins
5. Elicit from the students how many parts there are in the Speaking Test. Hand out a copy of **Classroom Handout 3**. Ask students to look at the interaction chart and match the appropriate description to each diagram.
Timing: 3 mins
6. Check answers. You may want to refer to the First Handbook as well as the additional information on the next page to answer queries. There are activities available which look at each section in more depth.
Timing: 3 mins
7. Elicit what the second examiner (not the interlocutor) does during the test (*they are assessing the candidates' performance*). Remind students of the brief discussion at the beginning of the class about what makes someone a good English speaker. Point out that:
 - all parts of the exam are assessed, including the first part
 - all the way through the test they will be assessed on their own individual performance and not in relation to each other
 - both examiners assess them, but in different ways:
 - The assessor awards marks according to four criteria:
 - Grammar and Vocabulary

- Discourse Management (the ability to speak fluently and to connect relevant ideas coherently)
- Pronunciation
- Interactive Communication (the ability to take an active part in conversations, to respond appropriately to other speakers, to keep conversation going, etc)
- The interlocutor awards a mark for how each candidate managed in the test overall (Global Achievement).

Timing: 5 mins

8. Discuss with students

- Which parts do you think may be the easiest/most difficult?
- Which parts will need the least/most practice?

Timing: 3 mins

Variation

If you feel that your group should know the answers to the questionnaire, you could remove the options. Another alternative is to set a time limit for choosing answers, especially if you want to discuss each one at any length.

Classroom Handout 1

Activity 1

Look at these questions about the B2 First Speaking test (Paper 4). See if you can answer them by selecting the correct answer.

1. How long does the Speaking test usually last?
a) 12 minutes b) 14 minutes c) 15 minutes d) it varies
2. How many candidates usually take the test together?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
3. Can candidates choose how many partners they'll have?
a) Yes b) No
4. How many examiners are there?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
5. Do both examiners assess the students?
a) Yes b) No
6. Do both examiners speak during the test?
a) Yes b) No
7. How many parts are there?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
8. Do the candidates speak to each other as well as to the examiner?
a) Yes b) No
9. Are all the tasks on the same topic or theme?
a) Yes b) No
10. Are all the parts assessed?
a) Yes b) No

Classroom Handout 2

The standard format is two examiners (interlocutor and assessor) and two candidates. Both examiners assess the candidates, but only the interlocutor speaks. In cases where there is an uneven number of candidates at a centre, the last Speaking test of the session will be taken by three candidates together instead of two. When three candidates are tested together, the test format, test material and procedure will remain unchanged, but the timing will be longer: 20 minutes instead of 14. At the end of the Speaking test, candidates are not given their mark.

PART 1 – INTERVIEW

This part tests the candidates' ability to use social and interactional language.

The candidates are not actively invited to talk to each other in this part of the test, though they may if they wish. This short social exchange is a natural way to begin an interaction, and it gives candidates time to settle before dealing with the more specific tasks in Parts 2, 3 and 4.

PART 2 – LONG TURN

This part tests the candidates' ability to produce an extended piece of discourse.

Candidates are expected to point out the similarities and differences between the photographs and then move on to deal with the question. Candidates have the opportunity to show their ability to organise their thoughts and ideas, and express themselves coherently with appropriate language.

PART 3 – COLLABORATIVE TASK

This part tests the candidates' ability to engage in a discussion and to work towards a negotiated outcome of the task set.

The candidates are given written stimuli, with a question and some ideas for answering this question. Candidates are given 15 seconds to look at the stimuli. They are expected to discuss the ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, evaluating and speculating for two minutes. Then they are asked to reach a decision and are assessed on their ability to use the language of negotiation and collaboration while doing this. The task gives candidates the opportunity to show their range of language and their ability to invite the opinions and ideas of their partner. Candidates are expected to share the interaction in this way and to initiate and respond appropriately.

PART 4 – DISCUSSION

This part tests the candidates' ability to engage in a discussion based on the topic of the collaborative task in Part 3

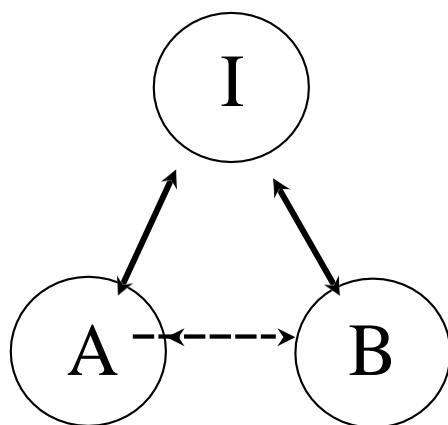
The questions differ from Part 1 in that they ask primarily for an evaluation rather than for information. This part of the test gives candidates an opportunity to show that they are capable of discussing issues in more depth than in the earlier parts of the test.

Classroom Handout 3

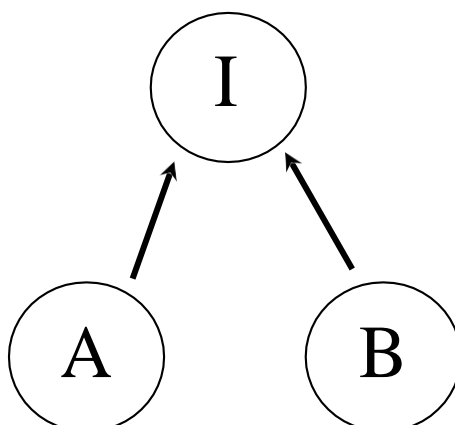
Match the descriptions of the each section of the Speaking test to the interaction diagrams below.

Key: I = Interlocutor A = Candidate A B = Candidate B = Interaction

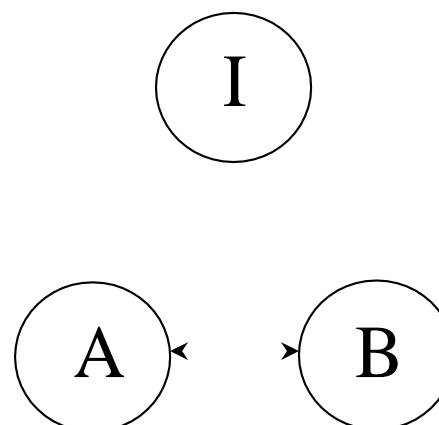
Part 1 **2 min** **Part 2** **4 min** **Part 3** **4 min** **Part 4** **4 min**



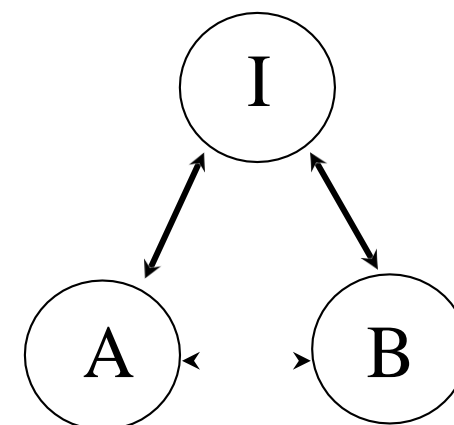
Interview ...



Long Turn ...



Collaborative Task ...



Discussion ...

a) The interlocutor directs the interaction by asking questions which encourage the candidates to broaden and discuss further the topics from the previous section. This part of the test gives candidates an opportunity to show they are capable of discussing issues in more depth.

b) The task gives candidates the opportunity to show their range of language and their ability to invite the opinions and ideas of their partner. Candidates are expected to collaborate and negotiate with each other, sharing the interaction.

c) The candidates are not actively invited to talk to each other in this part of the test, though they may if they wish. This short social exchange with the interlocutor is a natural way to begin an interaction.

d) Candidates have the opportunity to show their ability to organise their thoughts and ideas, and express themselves coherently with appropriate language. The listening candidate should not speak during their partner's long turn.

Answers to Classroom Handout 1 and 3

Answers to Activity 1

1. B 14 minutes except if there are three candidates, then it lasts 20 minutes.
2. B two candidates, except if there is an uneven number at the end of the session/day when a group of three candidates is allowed.
3. B no, a three is only allowed when there is an uneven number of candidates.
4. B two examiners – the interlocutor who manages the interaction and directs the test, and the assessor who sits to one side and grades the candidates' language. Sometimes there might be another person in the exam room – this person is a team leader who is present to monitor the performance of the examiners (not the candidates) and who does not take any part in the test.
5. A yes, although using different scales. The Interlocutor gives a mark for global achievement (referring to the candidate's overall effectiveness in dealing with the tasks in the four separate parts of the test), whereas the assessor awards marks according to the following four analytical criteria:

Grammar and vocabulary

Referring to accurate and appropriate use of a range of grammatical forms and vocabulary.

Discourse management

The candidate's ability to link utterances together to form coherent speech, without undue hesitation.

Pronunciation

The candidate's ability to produce intelligible utterances to fulfil the task requirements, including stress and intonation as well as individual sounds.

Interactive communication

The candidate's ability to take an active part in the development of the discourse, requiring the ability to participate in the range of interactive situations in the test and to develop discussions on a range of topics by initiating and responding appropriately.

6. B No, only the interlocutor speaks. The assessor remains silent except for greeting and saying goodbye to the candidates.
7. D four parts – interview, long turn, collaborative task and discussion
8. A Yes, the interaction patterns vary during the test. In Parts 1 and 2, the candidates speak to the examiner but in Part 3 they must discuss something together, so here it is essential that they speak to each other and NOT to the examiner. In Part 4 they may speak to both the examiner and their partner.
9. B No. Each part has a different focus and is on a different topic or theme, except Part 4 which is linked to the topic of the discussion activity in Part 3.
10. A Yes, the assessment starts immediately the candidates introduce themselves.

Answers to Activity 2

Interaction chart

Part 1: C Part 2: D Part 3: B Part 4: A