

B2 First and B2 First for Schools

Assessing speaking for Cambridge English
Qualifications: A guide for teachers



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Who this guide is for

Teachers around the world spend many hours evaluating learners’ speaking. This guide is for you. With lots of practical tips and real examples, it will help you to assess and develop learners’ speaking skills in preparation for their Speaking test.



Watch and assess a real example

Throughout the guide you'll see these feature boxes for each assessment criteria. They give links to real examples of Speaking tests and to the printable handouts in the [Appendix](#), which you can use to help you assess speaking and which you can give to your learners for [self-assessment](#).

For each Speaking test video we suggest you and your learners:

- Watch [Speaking test videos](#) and make notes in the tables in the Handout.
- Try applying the official assessment criteria to the videos by yourself, before you look at the real marks and comments.
- Compare your marks and comments with the examiner comments.

Read the examiner comments to help you understand the marks given, but don't expect to become an expert in assessing speaking skills like an examiner overnight! It takes time to get used to the differences between the bands. Cambridge English examiners go through a lot of training and quality assurance before they qualify as examiners.



Integrating teaching, learning and assessment methods to plan, measure and improve

Throughout the guide there are suggestions on how to combine learning and assessment in the feedback, activities and tips sections.

- ✓ Try the practical ideas and activities and reflect on how these techniques affect learning and teaching in your classroom.
- ✓ Discuss different approaches with learners to understand their preferences and needs, and to find out what approaches are most helpful to them.

- ✓ Read about different assessment and feedback methods.

Key terminology

Language assessment is a specialist field and there is some common terminology which you might not be familiar with. Understanding these terms will help you to use this guide.

Term	Teachers might say ...	Definition
Speaking assessment scales and assessment subscales	assessment / marking scales assessment / marking criteria	Areas which an examiner thinks about when marking the speaking test. For the B2 First and B2 First for Schools exam, the scale is divided into the five subscales shown in the table on page 9.
Bands (0-5)	marks / scores / grades	Candidates get a mark for each of the subscales from 0 (lowest) to 5 (highest).
Descriptors	explanations / descriptions of the marking criteria	The bands are based on detailed descriptions of what the candidate can do.
Assessor	Examiner	The assessor listens and gives marks for Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, and Interactive Communication.
Interlocutor	Examiner	There are two speaking examiners in the test. The interlocutor speaks to the candidates and gives a mark for Global Achievement.
Formative assessment	assessment for learning / classroom assessment / ongoing assessment	Giving learners feedback on their progress during a course, so that both teachers and learners can learn from the feedback.
Summative assessment	end of term test / exam end of course test / exam final test / exam	This is an evaluation of learners' progress up to that point. It is often in the form of exams and tests and gives learners a mark or grade.

How is the Speaking test assessed?

The B2 First and B2 First for Schools Speaking test consists of four parts and lasts about 14 minutes for a pair or 20 minutes for a group of three.

Part	Task type and interaction	Focus
1	A conversation between the interlocutor and each candidate (2 minutes for pairs or 3 minutes for groups of three)	The focus is on general interactional and social language
2	In turn, the candidates are given a pair of photographs to talk about. Each candidate talks for 1 minute about their photos, then the other candidate gives a 30-second response to a question about the photos.	The focus is on organising a larger unit of discourse; comparing, describing and expressing opinions
3	A conversation between the candidates. The candidates are given spoken instructions with written phrases, which are used in a 2 minute discussion task and a 1 minute decision-making task.	The focus is on sustaining an interaction; exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing, suggesting, speculating, evaluating, reaching a decision through negotiation, etc.
4	A 4-minute discussion on topics related to the task in Part 3. Groups of 3 have a 6-minute discussion.	The focus is on expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and/or disagreeing and speculating

★ **Top tips**

You can find lesson plans to practise each part of the test on our [website](#).

Assessing speaking

The key to understanding how well your learners' speaking skills are developing is through regular, effective assessment. You could choose a mix of **formative assessment** and **summative assessment** as both contribute to learning. See more information about this in the **FAQ section**. It's a good idea to use a mix of teacher feedback, **peer assessment** and **self-assessment** to give feedback from a range of different sources and in different ways.

There are activities throughout this guide on assessment and feedback.

 **Key terminology**

Peer assessment is when learners give feedback on each other's language, work, learning strategies or performance. **Research shows** that people who are similar to the learner in age, gender, first language and learning goals are very motivating as role models.

Self-assessment is when learners decide for themselves if they think their progress or language use is good or not. Developing good self-awareness is important for becoming an effective learner.

 **What are the benefits of peer assessment and self-assessment?**

Peer assessment provides feedback from different perspectives and can help the learner in the role of the **'assessor'** as well as the one receiving the feedback. Self-assessment helps learners understand their own strengths and weaknesses and can make them more independent learners. It can also increase the opportunities for feedback in large classes when it's difficult to give individual feedback to all learners. These aren't a replacement for teacher assessment but should be used alongside it.

 **Top tips**

- Include speaking activities, even short ones, in every lesson – this gives you plenty of opportunities to monitor and assess your learners, especially if you have a large class.
- Do one or two complete **sample tests** near exam time when learners feel confident and fully prepared. There are ideas for how to use practice tests in the **Mock Test Toolkit**.
- Watch **Speaking test videos** with your learners so they can become familiar with what is expected in the exam. There are activities in this guide with ideas for how to do this.
- Use the **examiner comments** alongside the videos to help you understand why those marks were awarded. The more you do this, the easier it will be to assess your learners.
- Learners need training in doing peer and self-assessment so if it's new to them, don't expect learners to understand how to do it straightaway. It may also be useful to discuss with your learners some of the benefits of different types of assessment.
- Give learners a checklist before a task to make it clear what is being assessed and provide a guide for the person giving the feedback. Try this **lesson plan** (tasks 4 and 6), which shows you how you can use checklists for peer and self-reflection.
- Do not only practise speaking with exam tasks or practice tests. Learners need practice in the sub-skills of speaking to get better at the tests.
- Don't expect to cover everything in one lesson. Focus on one or two aspects of speaking for assessment. Make a note of other issues you notice to include in future lesson planning.
- If you have large classes, you could assess speaking using some of these ideas:
 - Group work e.g. projects
 - Group presentations: assess both rehearsals and presentations
 - Dialogues and role plays
 - Mini-speeches: practise in class and assess both rehearsal and presentation. Learners can also send recordings of their speeches.
 - You can find these teaching ideas in our **Cambridge English preparation materials**.
- You can see lots of ideas for using peer and self-assessment in this webinar: **How to use Integrated Learning and Assessment in your classroom**.



What does the Speaking test assess?

In the test, examiners assess candidates on their own individual performance and not in relation to each other. The **assessor** and the **interlocutor** give marks for the following criteria / subscales. Each of these will be explained in more detail on the following pages.

Global Achievement	✓ The candidate is generally able to communicate about the topics in the test.	Interlocutor
	✗ The candidate finds it difficult to handle the topics and tasks in the test.	
Grammar and Vocabulary	✓ The candidate uses a range of grammar and vocabulary accurately and appropriately.	Assessor
	✗ The candidate doesn't show enough variety or accuracy of grammar and vocabulary.	
Discourse Management	✓ The candidate extends and organises their answers appropriately. They are fluent and their answers are relevant.	
	✗ The candidate's answers are very short or there is a lot of repetition or hesitation.	
Pronunciation	✓ The candidate is easy to understand and uses pronunciation features such as intonation and stress appropriately.	
	✗ The candidate is difficult to understand and doesn't use pronunciation features well.	
Interactive Communication	✓ The candidate interacts appropriately with the examiner and their partner. They are able to keep the conversation going without help.	
	✗ The candidate doesn't respond appropriately and needs help to keep the conversation going.	

What's the difference between the bands?

In the Speaking test, examiners give a mark between 0 and 5 (**Bands**) for each of these areas based on detailed **descriptors**. Here is an example of the descriptors for Global Achievement at B2 level. Start from the bottom – Band 1 – notice how the language in the descriptions varies as you progress up the bands.

B2 Global Achievement	
	Handles communication on a range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation .
5	Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent .
4	Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.
	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation .
3	Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence , and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.
2	Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.
	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation .
1	Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in well-rehearsed utterances.
0	Performance below Band 1.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
For example, at Band 1 the candidate is able to communicate despite hesitation .	At Band 3 the candidate can communicate despite some hesitation .	At Band 5 the candidate can communicate with very little hesitation .
“ The first picture shows erm, ... shows a man in the garden. He is... I don't know... But the other is, erm,... maybe it is a ... park?	“ The first picture shows a man... gardening. I think... in the sunshine but the second picture is of families in the park.	“ Picture 1 shows a man working in his garden whereas in the other picture, we can see families enjoying picnics in a large park.

 Try it yourself!

Look at the other wording in the Global Achievement table on page 10, or other Speaking criteria, and highlight the differences between the bands. Try and think of examples, as above, that fit the different levels. You could use the Speaking Assessment Glossary of terms in the handbook, and examiner comments on speaking videos, to help you.



What's the difference between the bands?

Focus on feedback

Evidence of progress and actionable feedback

Many teachers are comfortable giving feedback on language but there are many other things involved in being a good speaker as, you have seen in this guide.

When it comes to speaking tasks in exams, learners are thinking about the format of the task – especially early on in their exam preparation journey – as well as ideas and the best language to use. It's motivating if you recognise and give credit for different things when they are practising speaking.

For example, if your learners are practising Speaking Part 2, monitor and collect some of the common issues and positives that you hear. For example:

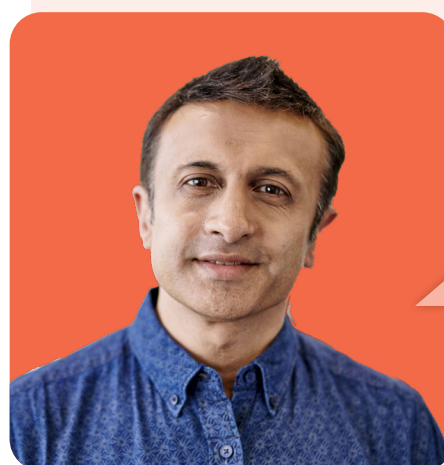
Things I liked

- ✓ Everyone spoke for about a minute.
- ✓ I didn't hear anyone describing the photos.
- ✓ I heard lots of nice language for comparing and contrasting: ...it looks much more exciting than...

Things to work on

- ✓ Try to use words and phrases like, on the other hand, ...while in the second picture... to organise your answer.
- ✓ Don't forget to answer the question as well as compare the photos.

Notice there are more positive comments than areas to work on. It's important that your learners know when they are doing things well.



My learners know they are already good at speaking, and want to focus more on writing. How can I persuade them to practise for the speaking exam?

“

Each paper in Cambridge English Qualifications is given equal weight. This means that a very strong performance in speaking may help to compensate for lower scores in other areas. Make sure your learners know this, and include regular, targeted speaking practice for different exam task types in your lessons. It's important to encourage learners to build on their strengths as well as improve areas where they are not as strong.

Understanding the assessment criteria

Developing learners' speaking skills involves a lot more than correcting grammar and pronunciation. This section looks at each of the assessment criteria – Global Achievement, Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication – in more detail, and shows you how you can:

- Further develop your understanding of how the Speaking test is assessed.
- Improve your skills of assessment.
- Raise learners' awareness of the speaking assessment criteria.
- Help learners develop their peer and self-assessment skills.



Understanding Global Achievement

What is Global Achievement?

Understanding the Global Achievement mark is good way to start developing your assessment skills as it gives you an overall idea of the candidate's level. Global Achievement is the overall impression score that the interlocutor gives to the candidate.

Band	Global Achievement	What does this mean?
5	Handles communication on a range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation. Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent.	Can understand and speak about the topics and tasks in the test.
		Uses the right kinds of language to express themselves and what they say is well organised
3	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence, and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.	Can speak at length but sometimes it might not be well organised or there may be some inaccurate language.
1	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation. Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in well-rehearsed utterances.	Says more than yes/no or a one-sentence answer.
		Limited and not spontaneous.

★ Top tips

- When you assess candidates for Global Achievement, try to think of the 'big picture' rather than counting the number of discourse markers or the number of mistakes they make.
- Remember that when you assess your learners, you are giving them an estimate of what they could achieve in the Speaking test. It might not be the same mark as the real test, as test conditions are always different to activities in the classroom.
- Watch a [B2 Speaking test video](#) and complete the **Global Achievement table** in the **Appendix**. Make notes about language as well as how well they talked about the tasks and topics more generally. Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.
- Give learners a variety of speaking tasks, don't just practise exam tasks. Speaking tasks with a clear purpose offer more support than a general 'talk about' task. This also gives learners a reason to listen and respond which are essential skills for the Speaking test.
- Use activities with different interaction patterns such as pairs, threes, small groups and speaking to the whole class.
- Encourage your learners to speak clearly so that they can be heard by both the interlocutor and assessor.
- Give learners preparation time before a speaking task. Give them time to think about what they want to say and what language they could use, as this allows them to upgrade and improve their speaking skills.
- Give your learners opportunities to listen to as much English as possible and a variety of accents. Accents from different varieties of English from around the world are acceptable

Classroom activities for Global Achievement

Activity 1

Understanding the speaking scales and improving learners' peer assessment skills

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the [Appendix](#) for your learners
Open the Speaking test video on YouTube of [Giulia, Tabatha and Elena](#)
Get ready to start the video from this point: 7'38"

Steps:

1. Start by asking learners what the examiner is marking them on in their Speaking test.

Accept all answers at this stage and start to organise them into four columns on the board, but don't reveal the titles of the columns yet: Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication.

Don't worry about the way they phrase things at this stage. For example, if they say 'accent' rather than 'pronunciation'.

Here is an example of the answers your learners might give and how you might organise them:

Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
Phrasal verbs Conditionals Correct grammar	Connectors Answering the question	A good accent Intonation	Eye contact
Global Achievement			

2. Reveal or write in the names of the five subscales as shown above. Explain that learners don't need to remember the headings, but they need to understand what they mean.

Ask learners how many examiners there are in the exam (two). Tell them that one person listens and gives marks for the four areas in the columns, and the person who is speaking to the candidate ('interlocutor') gives the mark for Global Achievement.

Explain that today you're going to focus on Global Achievement.

Activity 1

3. **Matching activity:** give pairs columns 1 and 3 cut up and ask them to match the correct bands (5, 3 and 1) to the simplified descriptions of Global Achievement.

Show the answers on the board.

Clarify any of the descriptions as necessary.
4. Watch Part 3 of the speaking test video of [Giulia, Tabatha and Elena](#) from 7'38" to 12'40".

Ask learners to listen and decide what score they would give each candidate.

Ask them at the end to hold up their fingers to show you the scores. At this point you just want a general impression.
5. Watch the first phase of the discussion again. Pause the video and allow learners in groups of three to discuss what band they would give and why. Remind them this is a general mark and show them the simplified Global achievement descriptors again.
6. Matching activity 2: Now give the learners column 2 and they match the actual descriptors to the bands and simplified descriptions.

Explain that this is what the examiners use but that they just need to understand the simplified version.
7. Now give each group a copy of the [examiner comments](#) for Global Achievement with the names blanked out. Can they match them to the candidates? Remind them that the examiner comments are based on the whole test not just this one part. Don't ask for feedback yet.

Play the second phase of Part 3. Ask learners to come to an agreement about the marks and the comments.

Reveal the answers and the marks. Point out how the examiners use language from the descriptors in their comments. For example, 'Tabatha handles the communication in all parts of the test, despite some hesitation.' '[Giulia] often organises her extended discourse well.'
8. Give learners a chance to ask any questions about the marking process.

Developing Global Achievement

Here are three activities which all have a clear purpose for speaking. You can find further examples in the [Warmers booklet](#).

 Two truths and a lie	 Taboo	 Ranking
Model the activity by saying three things about yourself, one of which is a lie. Give learners a few minutes to think of some questions to ask you, then they have to ask questions until they guess which is the lie. Then, learners do the same in pairs.	Model the activity by taking a word or phrase on a slip of paper from a set you have prepared (you could use recent vocabulary). Describe it without using any of the words on the piece of paper. Then learners do the same in pairs or small groups. This is a good way to review vocabulary but also to practise saying things in another way (useful when you forget a word).	Write a list of things on the board and ask learners in groups to put them in order. For example, write six foods and ask learners to rank them according to how healthy they are and justify why. Or write four reasons for learning English and learners have to rank them in order of which is most important. You could use this as a lead-in to a new topic or as a review or summary.

Key terminology

Activities which develop learners' skills in **fluency** focus on communication, rather than how many mistakes they make in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.



Focus on feedback

Using the criteria

- **Do it often!** You can use the speaking criteria to give your learners actionable feedback on their speaking at any time, provided they have been speaking long enough for you to hear enough of a sample.
- **Use the tables.** Get familiar with what is expected at B2 level by having the tables with criteria in this guide on hand when you're listening to students speaking.
- **Focus on a couple of criteria at a time.** You might choose to focus more on one or two criteria in a particular speaking activity. For example, you could focus on Interactive Communication and Grammar and Vocabulary in a practice collaborative task.
- **Vary feedback.** Make sure you give feedback on all the different criteria, not just Grammar and Vocabulary. Learners need to know how they are performing in all areas so that they can do their best in the speaking examination.
- **Give balanced feedback.** As well as giving specific suggestions on how to improve, highlight examples of good language for their level. You can also use the recordings to identify where more complex language could be used, and provide specific examples.

Read the section on actionable feedback in the [Cambridge Guide to integrating Learning and Assessment](#).



Understanding Grammar and Vocabulary

What is Grammar and Vocabulary?

This covers the grammatical structures and words and phrases that candidates use in the test. This is the area that learners are probably most familiar with and expect their speaking to be assessed on. However, it's still useful for them to understand exactly how they are assessed.

Band	Grammar And Vocabulary	What does this mean?
5	Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms . Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics .	Uses grammar and vocabulary accurately and with very few mistakes.
		Uses a variety of different grammar structures and longer, more complex sentence constructions: noun clauses, relative clauses, passives and verb patterns for example.
		Topics the candidate has knowledge or personal experience of, like what people do on holiday or what it's like to do different jobs.
3	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms , and attempts some complex grammatical forms . Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics.	Uses different forms of words, phrases, basic tenses and simple clauses.
		May try to use some examples from Band 5. A variety of words and phrases which are relevant to the topics.
1	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations .	Situations in everyday life such as having a meal, going to school or work or doing hobbies and other activities.

Grammar and Vocabulary in practice

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Grammar and Vocabulary.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
At Band 1 the candidate shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms .	At Band 3 the candidate shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms and attempts some complex grammatical forms .	At Band 5 the candidate shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms .
“ Going to the gym is important. You can stay fit and healthy.	“ And visiting the doctor is less important because you only go if you would need to. [You would only go if you need / needed to.]	“ I think eating regularly is important because if you didn't, you would feel tired and maybe feel unhealthy.



Watch and assess a real example

Watch [Malena and Julia](#). Before you watch it, think to yourself what sort of complex grammar B2 First and First for Schools learners could use and also the range of vocabulary they are learning at this level.

Complete the Grammar and Vocabulary table in the [Appendix](#). Write examples of the language they use.

Was one candidate better than the other in this area?

Compare your notes and scores with the examiner comments.





My learners are always worried about making mistakes. Is it okay if they make mistakes in the test?

“

Learners will always make mistakes and this is normal but, as you can see from the descriptors, examiners are looking for 'a good degree of control' – this does not mean 'perfect'. Developing learners' skills and highlighting how they can gain marks in other areas (not just Grammar and Vocabulary) can reassure them and boost confidence.

Developing Grammar and Vocabulary

This is likely to be the area you are most familiar with and have lots of ideas for developing your learners’ skills in these areas.

★ Top tips

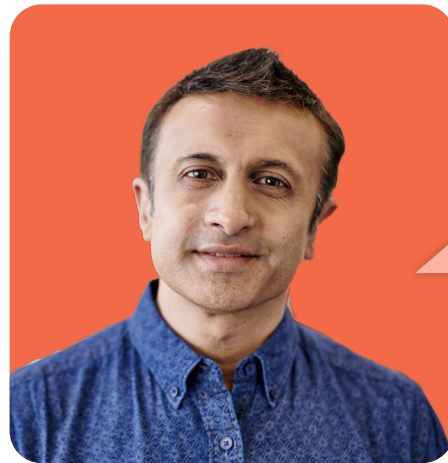
- Regularly review new Grammar and Vocabulary. Learners need frequent practice of new language to be able to incorporate it into their speaking naturally and comfortably.
- Challenge learners to widen their range of language when they’re speaking. Some learners might prefer to ‘play it safe’ and use simple language they know well. In the exam, however, they will be rewarded for trying to use more complex language.
- Praise learners for good language use. Feedback on correct responses or what learners have done well is just as important as telling them what they got wrong.
- Avoid interrupting learners when they are speaking unless there is a complete breakdown in communication. Interrupting to make corrections or offer suggestions can have a negative impact on learners’ confidence and affect the flow of what they are saying.
- Encourage learners to become aware of and correct their own errors. This will help them with accuracy and control. For example, collect common errors while monitoring a large group and write them on the board. After the speaking activity, ask learners to try and correct the mistakes in pairs. **Search our [teacher resources](#) for more ideas.**

📖 Key terminology

Accuracy refers to how correct a learner’s grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are when they are speaking. When developing learners’ accuracy, you focus on the type, amount and seriousness of the mistakes and errors they make.

Accuracy can be compared to fluency. **Fluency** refers to how well a learner communicates meaning and can say what they want to say. Activities which develop learners’ skills in fluency focus on communication, rather than how many mistakes they make in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. It’s important for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency in their speaking.

📄 Strangers on a train	📄 Sentence stems	📄 Circle drills
Help learners to practise more complex vocabulary and structures by giving each learner three slips of paper at random each with a word or phrase. For example: <i>even though</i> / <i>If only...</i> / <i>It's likely to...</i> In pairs, they have a conversation as if they were strangers sitting next to each other on a train. They have to try and use all three phrases within a time limit.	Practise complex grammar as if it was vocabulary. Give learners sentence stems with more complex grammar structures and challenge them to use them in a speaking task. Use them to start a lesson as a warmer, to round off a lesson or as part of a speaking activity. See how you can use sentence stems to build fluency in Task 2 of this lesson plan on Speaking Part 2.	Practise accuracy by repeating the same structure. Stand in a circle and write the question on the board ‘What would you do if you won the lottery?’ Start the drill: - <i>If I won the lottery I would go on holiday.</i> - <i>If she won the lottery, she'd go on holiday but I would buy a car.</i> - <i>If Juan won the lottery, he'd buy I car but I would...</i> You can use this to practise or review any structure.



What kind of activities can I use to develop my students' accuracy?

“

You can do activities where they have to find the mistakes in a text or in sentences. Highlight errors in speaking and writing activities and focus on your learners' common errors. Teach them to memorise short phrases or sentence stems (but not to memorise complete answers).

😊🌟 Focus on feedback

Research-based tips

It's really important to give your learners feedback on their speaking to build their confidence, highlight their strengths and point out areas where they can improve. Here are some research-based tips to guide you.

What does the research* say?	What should I do with my learners?
Numerous research findings have proven that feedback promotes language learning (Lyster et al., 2013; Ellis & Shintani, 2013; Mackey et al, 2016). The benefits to learners may not be immediate or predictable, but they will take place.	Give formative feedback regularly to your learners after speaking activities.
There is not enough evidence to claim that either delayed or immediate feedback is more effective than the other (Ellis, 2009).	Use a mixture of both depending on the speaking task in question, ensuring that you don't interrupt learners.
Feedback on correct responses is more effective than feedback on incorrect responses (Hattie, 2009).	It's really important to highlight and praise effective language use. Don't just look for mistakes!
It can be useful to highlight where learners have avoided common pitfalls or mistakes. This is likely to benefit both the individual student and others in the class, who will have their attention drawn to the language item in question (Ur, 2012).	Say things like "Well done! You used the third conditional correctly when you were speaking about unreal past situations. You said: <i>If I hadn't gone to that university, I wouldn't have met my girlfriend.</i> It's common for students to make the mistake of using 'would have' in both clauses, but you didn't!

*Cambridge papers in ELT, 2017. [Read the research here.](#)

📖 Key terminology

Sentence stems are parts of a sentence or chunks of language which learners can use and personalise. You can use them to practise a grammar structure: *If I had... I would... If I'd known... I wouldn't. I would never have... if...* Or to practise functional language: *Let's start with... Shall we move on to talk about...*

Delayed feedback – waiting until the end of a speaking activity to give feedback. This usually involves monitoring closely and making notes of good language use as well as errors to correct.

Immediate feedback – giving feedback immediately after the learner says something. This can be called 'on the spot' correction.



Classroom activities for Grammar and Vocabulary

Activity 2

Assessing Grammar and Vocabulary with your learners

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the printable handout in the [Appendix](#) for your learners
Open the Speaking test video on YouTube of [Malena and Julia](#)
Get ready to start the video from this point: 9'56"

Steps:

1. Start by showing learners the [descriptor for Band 3](#) of Grammar and Vocabulary. Highlight 'simple grammatical forms' and 'complex grammatical forms'. Elicit some examples of each, for example, present simple/3rd conditional.

In small groups, ask learners to brainstorm other examples of simple and complex grammar at their level. They could use their coursebook to help.
2. Do the same for 'a range of appropriate vocabulary'. Give them a topic that you have covered recently and ask them to think of some ideas for basic and advanced more vocabulary. Elicit phrases as well as single words.

The idea here is not to list or categorise all the vocabulary and grammar they have covered, but to start to get them thinking about the range of language they are learning, and to become more sensitive to the idea that some is more advanced or complex than others.
3. In the descriptors, highlight 'shows a good degree of control', 'attempts' and 'familiar topics' and ask learners in pairs to try to explain what these mean and give examples of familiar topics.

Suggested answers:
shows a good degree of control: uses accurately/with very few mistakes
attempts: tries to, maybe with some mistakes
familiar topics: what people do on holiday or what it's like to do different jobs
4. Watch Part 4 of the Speaking test video of [Malena and Julia](#) (from 9'56") and ask learners to give a score for their impression of each candidate for Grammar and Vocabulary.

Activity 2

5. Give pairs of learners cut-up examples of language from the Language sorting activity in the [Appendix](#) and ask learners to sort them into two groups: Julia and Malena.

Watch again and re-sort the cut ups.

Show the correctly grouped language on the board.
6. Ask learners to discuss and agree on their marks for each. Compare them to the examiner comments and marks.



Can my learners still pass the speaking exam even if their grammar and vocabulary is weak on exam day?

“

Each of the four [subscales](#) are worth the same amount in the speaking exam. So if they score well in these other areas, it's still possible to pass with a lower score in Grammar and Vocabulary.

★ Top tips

- Remember when assessing your learners on Grammar and Vocabulary you are not looking for perfect accuracy.

Focus on feedback

- Use a variety of techniques and methods when giving feedback. This will appeal to different learners and keep things interesting! Try out some of the ideas on these pages.

Correction slips

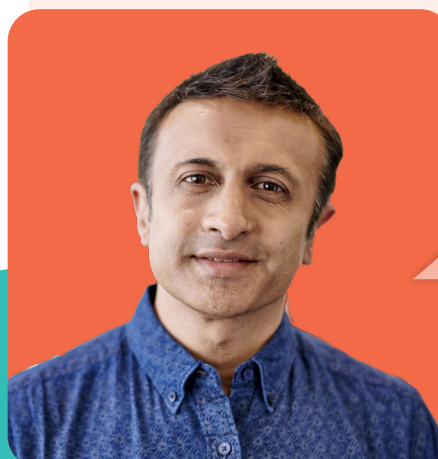
'Delayed correction' is very helpful when you're trying to develop fluency skills. When learners are doing speaking tasks write your feedback on sticky notes or slips of paper and give them to learners after the activity. You can explain the problem on the note or just write the error and ask them to correct the problem with their partner.

Use gesture

Sometimes a look or a hand gesture can help learners when they make a mistake or are struggling to find the right word. For example, gesturing back to show they need to use a past tense. Or a confused look when they have made a mistake. Be consistent with these signs so learners can understand them.

Reformulate and repeat

If a learner is struggling to produce a particular word, phrase or construction, you can say what they need directly. This can help with flow and keeping the conversation going. It's a good idea to get the learner to repeat the piece of language as this will help them remember it.



My learners sometimes say they don't feel they're improving their grammar or vocabulary. How can I help them to see their progress?

“

Encourage learners to keep records of new language, memorise and use it. Include classroom activities that require them to consult their language records and actively make an effort to use new phrases in their speaking. Make sure you actively listen for and point out examples of good examples of language for their level when giving feedback after speaking activities. Highlight and praise both range and accuracy when giving feedback.



Understanding Discourse Management

What is Discourse Management?

Discourse Management involves how clear, logical and organised the candidate's answers are. It includes things like fluency, relevance, no or little repetition and how long a candidate's answers are.

Band	Discourse Management	What does this mean?
5	Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation.	The amount of language the candidate should say depends on the task. For example, in Part 1 this means a couple of sentences giving details but in Part 2 this means talking for a full minute.
	Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of ideas .	The candidate can present their ideas in a suitable order. For instance, in Part 2 they talk about similarities between the pictures together rather than jumping back and forth between ideas.
	Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers .	Words or phrases which help with meaning in a conversation such as <i>you know, well, basically, actually</i> .
3	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation .	The examiners expect that at this level, candidates will still have to pause and think of the right word or idea.
	Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition.	The candidate gives answers related to the task or question and doesn't go off topic.
	Uses a range of cohesive devices .	Words and phrases which show the connections between ideas – <i>therefore, as a result, on the other hand</i> – along with basic devices as below.
1	Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases , despite hesitation.	The candidate says more than the minimum. Rather than answering 'twice a week', the candidate might say 'I only watch TV twice a week because I prefer reading'.
	Contributions are mostly relevant , despite some repetition.	They may go off topic sometimes.
	Uses basic cohesive devices .	E.g. <i>and, but, so, then, finally</i> .

Discourse Management in practice

To understand what Discourse Management is in practice, it's a good idea to listen to and analyse people speaking.

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Discourse Management.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
At Band 1 the candidate is able to use basic cohesive devices .	At Band 3 the candidate uses a range of cohesive devices .	At Band 5 the candidate can use a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers .
“ I don't like rules because they are boring .	“ I see the least important one is school rules as I don't see them helping with the students' happiness.	“ The first one to discuss is probably about school rules since they impact on us the most. Well, the second one...

✓

Watch and assess a real example

Watch a [Speaking test video](#) and make notes in the Discourse Management table in the [Appendix](#). Try and write down examples of language.

What band would you give each candidate for discourse management?

Compare your notes and scores with the examiner comments.





I understand that in the higher level exams, learners need to speak for as long as possible. Is that right?

“

Some higher level learners attempt to give very long answers in Part 1. The examiner may cut them off in order to keep to the time limit and this can dishearten some candidates, leading to them saying less in subsequent parts of the exam. Make sure they know when shorter answers are acceptable (Part 1 and 3) and when longer, more developed responses are required (Parts 2 and 4). Give plenty of practice for all types of exam tasks so that learners are familiar with the types of questions they'll be asked and the kind of response that is expected.

Developing Discourse Management

★ Top tips

- To understand what Discourse Management is in practice, it's a good idea to listen to and analyse people speaking. You could download the audioscripts from videos or [audioscripts](#) in the Listening sample tests or watch videos using closed captions..
- Or watch a [Speaking test video](#) and make notes in the **Discourse Management table** in the [Appendix](#). Try and write down examples of language. Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.
- Make sure you include speaking activities with a fluency focus as these often help with the **sub-skills** within Discourse Management. See the activities on page 33.
- Crossover with other skills: in a writing lesson where you might focus on language to help organise text, add in a short speaking task using the same topic and phrases. Analyse listening scripts and reading texts to raise learners' awareness of how these words help to organise text.
- Focus on meaning: use sorting activities to help learners categorise cohesive devices with similar meanings.
- When monitoring and assessing your learners in any speaking activity, remember to provide feedback on how well they extend and organise their answers or whether their answers were relevant to the task and topic. It can be tempting to focus on language accuracy, but by doing this, it helps learners understand that there is more to speaking than grammar and vocabulary.

📖 Key terminology

The four main skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening can be divided into **sub-skills**. Examples of sub-skills of speaking are things like intonation, turn-taking and initiating (starting a conversation) and responding. To improve speaking skills, you need to raise awareness of and develop the sub-skills of speaking.

📄 Just a minute

Give learners practice at speaking for an extended time. In pairs, learners take a topic card and take turns to speak for a minute on that subject without repeating themselves. Vary the time limit to increase or reduce the level of challenge. Start with familiar topics and over time make them more challenging.

📄 Topic phrases

Encourage learners to use more advanced cohesive devices and discourse markers by challenging them to use them in a conversation. Give pairs a topic to discuss and give each person two or three words or phrases on slips of paper. They have to use them naturally in the conversation.

📄 Part 1 or 4?

Learners need to recognise what is an appropriate length of answer depending on the situation, or question. Try giving pairs or groups Part 1 and Part 4 questions mixed up. They take turns to be candidates and examiners and have to listen carefully to the question and decide how extended their answer should be.

★ Top tips

- Remember when challenging learners with new language, as in the activities above, keep the topic or task familiar.



Classroom activities for Discourse Management

Activity 3

Raising learners’ awareness of the features of Discourse Management

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the [Appendix](#) for your learners.

Steps:

1. Review the format of the Part 2 task from a [sample test](#): learners discuss in pairs then give feedback to the class.

Elicit: compare and contrast two pictures, answer the given question, talk for 1 minute, answer a question about your partner’s picture.
2. Show the class the descriptor for [Band 3 for Discourse Management](#). (If you haven’t already, you may want to introduce the assessment scales using the first two stages of Activity 1 in the [Appendix](#).)

Give them an example of how the criteria relate to the Part 2 task, for example, ‘It’s relevant if they talk about what’s happening in the pictures.’ Discuss in pairs and give feedback.

Suggested answers: highlight the following terms on the band descriptors: relevant, cohesive devices, extended stretch.

It’s **relevant** if they answer the question and refer to the pictures.

Cohesive devices for comparing and contrasting: *but, however, whereas, on the other hand, similarly, also, in the same way.*

An **extended stretch** is 1 minute for the pictures and up to 30 seconds for the follow-up question.
3. Give a deliberately bad model answer. For example:

‘In the first picture ... erm ... there’s someone helping a football player. I think he’s hurt himself errr ... mmm ... The weather is nice. In the other picture, a policeman is talking to a woman and uh ... giving er ... directions, maybe ... yeah.’ etc.

Ask learners to give you feedback using the criteria. For example, ‘you hesitated a lot’, ‘You only spoke for 30 seconds so it wasn’t an extended stretch’, ‘it wasn’t relevant because you described the pictures and didn’t answer the question’.
4. Learners do the task in pairs. Monitor and make a note of how well they do the task in terms of Discourse Management. Give feedback noting general trends and any specific examples. Avoid commenting on general language errors. Instead, focus on organising language used appropriately or incorrectly.
5. Learners repeat the task.

★ Top tips

Discourse Management in Part 2

Encourage your learners to focus on useful language for Part 2 of the test. In particular, ways of expressing similarity and difference may help, e.g. *one similarity is that ...; in this picture there’s ... whereas in the other there’s ...* Remind your learners that using comparatives and linking words will produce a more extended and logical answer than simply stringing together a series of simple statements.

Learners sometimes find that a minute is quite a long time to talk for. Use the topics and visuals in your B2 First coursebooks for this. Give learners plenty of practice in organising an extended turn and in linking their ideas together. Time this practice so that your learners get a feel for how long a minute is.

Discourse Management in Part 4

Encourage your learners to give full answers to the questions asked. They can do this by keeping useful question words in their heads: *Why?, How?, When?, Where?*. If, when answering a question, learners also respond to related question words like these, they will give full answers. For example, to follow a Part 3 task on the subject of holidays, learners could be asked *Would you like to go on a holiday like this?* learners could answer *Yes*, and have the question ‘why’ in their heads, giving the reasons why they would like a particular holiday, when they would like to go, where they would go, and so on. The question *Why?* is useful for nearly all Part 4 questions and the interlocutor will often ask this question if learners give a minimal response.

😊🌟 Focus on feedback

Encouraging reflection and self-assessment

- **Encourage reflection.** Learners can use recordings of themselves speaking to reflect on their speaking subskills – what they did well, and how they think they can improve. Encourage them to share their reflections and questions about their speaking skills with you so that you can add your own observations..
- **Use checklists.** After a speaking activity, give learners a simple checklist, for example: *Everybody contributed equally. I listened and built on what other learners said. I gave examples and reasons for my opinions.* They complete it alone, then compare with their group.

Try Idea 16: Peer and self-assessment in the [Cambridge Guide to Integrating Learning and Assessment](#).

Understanding Pronunciation

What is Pronunciation?

Pronunciation includes things like intonation, word stress and sentence stress as well as the individual sounds within words.

Band	Pronunciation	What does this mean?
5	Is intelligible .	You can understand the meaning of what the candidate says.
	Intonation is appropriate .	The rise and fall of the voice sounds natural.
	Sentence and word stress is accurately placed.	Putting the stress in the right place in a multi-syllable word: com fortable or pho to grapher.
	Individual sounds are articulated clearly .	For example, saying ð in than / this or ei in eight accurately.
3	Is intelligible.	Natural and used properly most of the time.
	Intonation is generally appropriate .	
	Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed .	The candidate puts stress in the correct place in a sentence most of the time, such as (on) the words underlined in these examples: <i>What about <u>music</u>? There's the <u>guy</u>, too, talking to the <u>people</u>, but they're <u>walking</u>.</i>
	Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	
1	Is mostly intelligible , and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels .	Easy to understand most of the time.
		Sometimes uses the features mentioned above (intonation, individual sounds, word and sentence stress) accurately.

Pronunciation in practice

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Pronunciation.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
At Band 1 the candidate has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels .	At Band 3 sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed .	At Band 5 sentence and word stress is accurately placed .
“ It <i>wouldn't</i> be the best <i>idea</i> giving <i>them</i> money. [It <i>wouldn't</i> be the best idea giving them <i>money</i> .]	“ It depends on their <i>behaviour</i> and how <i>they treat</i> money, and stuff like that. [It depends on their <i>behaviour</i> and how they treat <i>money</i> , and stuff like <i>that</i> .]	“ As a <i>young</i> person, I would <i>love</i> to have a lot of money to buy <i>clothes</i> and things.



Watch and assess a real example

Watch [Giulia, Tabatha and Elena](#). Complete the Pronunciation table in the [Appendix](#). Think about word and sentence stress, intonation, and pronunciation of individual sounds. Try and write down examples of what they say.

Compare your notes and scores with the examiner comments.



Developing Pronunciation

★ Top tips

- Remember in English, pronunciation is often not clear from the spelling, so make sure you model the correct pronunciation of new words or phrases (say it yourself or use the audio or video) and get learners to repeat (drill).
- Include activities to help your learners notice pronunciation features as well as practise them. This could be in your own models, drawing attention to good examples from other learners or highlighting them in listening texts or video.
- Don't forget to use the pronunciation activities in your coursebook. It can be tempting to skip these when you're short of time but paying regular attention to different aspects of pronunciation will help your learners over time. See the activities on page 33.
- Include features of pronunciation (such as stress) when teaching new language - for example, by marking stress with CAPital LEtters...) or circles over the word.
- Make pronunciation visual to support learners. Highlight your mouth position when pronouncing a word, use your fingers to show the number of syllables, use gesture to highlight where to put stress.



Do I really need to do drills with learners at B2 and above? It seems a bit patronising.

“

Higher level learners still need support with pronunciation, particularly of new language items. However, you don't need to automatically drill every piece of new language. Instead, when learners encounter new language, encourage them to predict and attempt the pronunciation by themselves. Notice when they have difficulty and provide support through correction, modelling and drilling, just as you would with lower level learners.

 Drilling	 Sorting and categorising	 Board game maze
Use drills to model and practise words, phrases and sentences. Try to focus on just one feature such as stress or intonation. Model new language and ask learners to notice where you put the stress, for example. Show this on the board so it's clear. Then model and drill asking learners to repeat in groups, pairs and individually. Vary this by asking 'just people wearing red' to repeat or 'everyone at the back'. This helps to keep learners engaged.	Make sets of cards with words with similar stress patterns or the same sounds. In pairs, learners sort the cards into groups. Monitor and model the words as necessary.	Each square on a board has a different word. Learners have to find a route from the beginning to the end of the board by moving from word to word. You can only move if each word has the same stress pattern or sound. Use the words and sounds that you notice they are having problems with.



Is accent important during the speaking test?

“

The focus is on being easy to understand (intelligibility) so don't expect perfect pronunciation or an accent which is like someone whose first language is English. Notice the common problems your learners have which affect understanding or meaning, and work on those. For example, making sure the difference between 'can' and 'can't' is clear.

Classroom activities for Pronunciation

Activity 4

Assessing Pronunciation with your learners

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the **Appendix** for your learners
Open the Speaking test video on YouTube of [Lara, Agustina and Mateo](#)
Get ready to start the video from this point: 7'02"

Steps:

1. Elicit the different areas that candidates are assessed on in the Speaking test. If this is the first time you have talked about this with your learners, you can use the first two stages of Activity 1 in the **Appendix**.
Tell learners that today you'll focus on the Pronunciation subscale. Elicit some different features of pronunciation: intonation, sentence stress, word stress, individual sounds.
2. Show **Band 3 descriptors for Pronunciation** on the board. Highlight and number the five different areas: 1 - intelligible, 2 - intonation, 3 - sentence stress, 4 - word stress, 5 - individual sounds.
Explain what these are by giving good models of each and asking learners to shout the number.
For example: 'What is this an **example** of? Say the **number**.'
Learners say 3 - sentence stress
You could also give a good and a bad example of sentence stress - without saying which is bad - and ask learners which version of your two examples is better. For example, 'What **is** this **an** example **of**? Say **the** number.' (bad example)
3. Give each pair a copy of the **table with Pronunciation descriptors**. On the board, demonstrate one of the differences; for example, Intonation is appropriate/Intonation is **generally** appropriate.
Learners highlight the other differences in pairs.
Explain any difficult language. (It might helpful to show a simplified version of the second part of Band 1: Sometimes uses pronunciation features - intonation, individual sounds, word and sentence stress - accurately.)
4. Watch the first phase of Part 3 of [Lara, Agustina and Mateo's](#) speaking test video [7'02"- 10'53"].
Learners give a general impression score for their pronunciation. Elicit some ideas as to why they think that. They don't have to give a score at this point.

Activity 4

5. Give each learner the **examiner comments**. Watch the first half of the discussion again [7'02"- 9'20"]. As they watch, learners circle the best option to complete the examiner comments.
Pause the video and allow learners to discuss their choices with their partner. Watch again to the end of the first phase of Part 3 allowing learners to change their choices if they want.
6. Elicit some answers encouraging learners to justify why they chose that option. Show the complete examiner comments and answer any questions.
7. Ask learners to give a band score for each candidate. Compare to the examiner marks.
Note that the examiner scores are based on the whole test but your learners have watched only a part. Encourage them to watch the whole test after class.

Focus on feedback

Managing assessment and feedback

- **Focus on a few students.** When you monitor speaking, it can be useful to focus on assessing a few students at a time. Keep notes about each student to refer back to and ensure you are assessing all your learners.
- **Record students.** If it's difficult to listen carefully to students in class, you could ask them to record themselves doing a speaking task and send it to you. If you do this, ensure you comply with your local Data Protection and Child Protection laws.

Understanding Interactive Communication

What is Interactive Communication?

This assesses how well candidates interact with each other and the examiner. It includes things like starting conversations and keep them going, responding in the right way and developing and expanding your ideas.

Band	Interactive Communication	What does this mean?
5	Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.	Starts conversations.
		Replies to questions or things their partner says.
		Refers to things people said earlier in the conversation using phrases like <i>As you said earlier...</i>
3	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.	Keeps the conversation going.
		Opens out the conversation by adding new ideas.
		Works together to complete the task.
1	Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.	Keeps the conversation going.
		Without help from the examiner or their partner.

Interactive Communication in practice

To see what Interactive Communication looks like in a speaking exam, it's useful to watch and analyse speaking test videos.

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Interactive Communication.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
At Band 1 the candidate initiates and responds appropriately .	At Band 3 the candidate initiates and responds appropriately .	At Band 5 the candidate initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers.
“ I think the nightclub would attract a lot of people, and you? ... Yes, I agree ...	“ Let's start with building holiday flats ... what do you think? ... yes, that's a good point because ...	“ Shall we talk about the nightclub? ... I take your point, it could be too expensive ... from what you said before, I think we can rule out parks ...

✓

Watch and assess a real example

Watch [Lara, Agustino and Mateo](#). Complete the Interactive Communication table in the [Appendix](#). Try to write down examples of when the candidates start conversations, reply appropriately and develop the conversations with new ideas.

Compare your notes and scores with the examiner comments.



Developing Interactive Communication

★ Top tips

- Encourage your learners to start discussions and to respond to what other learners have to say. Teach them useful phrases to do this such as: *Let's start with... What do think about this one? Shall we move on to... I'm not sure I agree with you on that etc.*
- Use lots of pair and small group activities to encourage participation
- Use **speaking tasks with a clear purpose or goal** so learners have to work together to reach an outcome.
- Get to know your learners' interests and include these topics in speaking activities. These will be more likely to generate conversation and discussion.
- In classroom activities, make one learner in each group responsible for ensuring that everyone gets an equal opportunity to speak. This helps to understand the importance of turn-taking.



My learners want to do their best, but sometimes they dominate in group work. Will this affect their speaking mark? How can I encourage more equal participation?

“Examiners are trained to ensure all candidates get enough opportunities to speak and demonstrate their level, even if there is a stronger student. However, it's important your learners understand they need to demonstrate their ability in interactive communication, so make sure they practise listening and responding appropriately to others in a discussion situation. Raise awareness by asking learners to record themselves during a speaking task, then listen back and notice how many times each person spoke and for how long.

 I disagree	 Phrase bank	 Tennis
Put learners in pairs and decide who in each pair is going to disagree. Write a statement about a familiar topic on the board such as 'Everyone loves ice cream'. Pairs discuss this with one partner always disagreeing with what the other says. Provide some phrases for disagreeing politely such as: 'That's a good point but...' or 'I'm not sure about that' or 'I'm afraid I disagree with you there.'	Encourage learners to keep a bank of useful phrases organised into their functions such as starting a conversation, moving on to a new point etc. You could also display this on the wall. Before a speaking activity, remind learners to look at the phrase bank and choose a couple to use. Course books are full of this type of functional language so it's a good idea to raise learners' awareness and show how they can use them.	Give learners a familiar topic to discuss in pairs, such as, 'fun activities to do on holiday'. Learners discuss, adding a new idea each time they speak. For example: • One of the best things to do on holiday is swim in the sea. • Absolutely, I love that too! Another fun activity in the sea is snorkelling. • That's okay but I actually prefer...

 Focus on feedback

Supporting peer feedback
Be specific. Give learners specific things to listen for when doing peer feedback on speaking. For example, for Interactive Communication, ask them to note how often each person speaks; for Grammar and Vocabulary, ask them to note down examples of complex grammar. Different learners could focus on different criteria, and use their notes to give peer feedback. This encourages learners to listen for specific subskills rather than just spotting mistakes. Use the video viewing tasks in the **Appendix** for more ideas.

Try Idea 16: Peer and self-assessment in the [Cambridge Guide to Integrating Learning and Assessment](#).

Classroom activities for Interactive Communication

Activity 5

Using set phrases to encourage Interactive Communication

Steps:

1. To practise some of the skills of Interactive Communication with your learners, try this [lesson plan](#) which practises Speaking Parts 3 and 4.
The lesson starts with some useful vocabulary, a review of the strategies of Part 3 and practising the task and giving peer feedback.
2. In Task 5 of the lesson plan, learners analyse a model answer and functional language for 'agreeing and disagreeing', 'moving the conversation on' and 'asking for an opinion' – all key skills for improving Interactive Communication.
3. Learners then practise Part 3 using the phrases.
4. In Task 6 of the lesson plan they reflect on their own performance.
5. They then move on to review strategies for Part 4 and practise it and the lesson ends with further self-reflection.

★ Top tips

Interactive Communication in Part 3

Remind your learners to move the discussion forward. Encourage them to respond to what other speakers say by agreeing, disagreeing and questioning each other, rather than just giving information about the task.

It's a good idea to focus on accurately using functional language which is useful in this type of discussion. This may include ways of managing the discussion, e.g. Shall we start with this one? What do you think? Shall we move on to ...? Ways of expressing and justifying opinions, and agreeing and disagreeing (politely) are also likely to be useful.



Appendix

Global Achievement

Use this table to make notes on the candidates' Global Achievement.

Try and write down examples of what they say.

Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.

Global Achievement		
Candidate's name	What do they do well? How much do they hesitate? What can they improve?	Are they able to speak at length? How organised are their ideas? How varied is their language? Do they make a lot of mistakes?

Activity 1 - Step 3: Matching activity 1 and 2

Global Achievement

Cut up one set per pair.

For stage 3, give pairs columns 1 and 3. For stage 6, give them column 2 as well.

1	2	3
Band	Actual descriptor	Simplified explanation
5	Handles communication on a range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation. Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent.	Can understand and speak about the topics and the tasks in the test with very little hesitation. Uses the right kinds of language to express themselves and what they say is generally well organised.
3	Handles communication on familiar topics, despite some hesitation. Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence, and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.	Can talk about the topics and tasks in the test with some hesitation. Can speak at length but sometimes it might not be well organised or there may be some inaccurate language
1	Handles communication in everyday situations, despite hesitation. Constructs longer utterances but is not able to use complex language except in well-rehearsed utterances.	Can talk about the topics and tasks in the test with hesitation. Can say more than yes/no or a very short answer but can only use complex language that has been prepared in advance.

Activity 2 - Step 1: Grammar and Vocabulary

Use this table to make notes on the candidates' Grammar and Vocabulary.
Try and write down examples of what they say.
Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.

Grammar and Vocabulary: control, range, appropriacy		
Candidate's name	Do they use simple grammar accurately? Do they try to use more complex grammar? (although they may make mistakes) Do they use some complex grammar accurately?	Can they use appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar situations easily, mostly or not at all? Do they use a wide range of vocabulary?

Activity 2 - Step 5: Language sorting activity

Cut up one set per pair.

Julia	Malena
their future could be on the line	They don't decide to the children's do
I think it is important to help like, your parents, or whoever you live with, with the housework.	They don't have all the time their parents
And maybe cheer them up	If you don't are kind
While if you're motivated, you'll do it faster and better	You don't have time for friends.
If you feel obligated and if you do that, you can, make mistakes or do it incorrectly	Or they need to clean her room or ehm, some, some things, some things for the house.

Activity 3: Discourse Management

Use this table to make notes on the candidates' Discourse Management.
Try and write down examples of what they say.
Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.

Discourse Management: extent, relevance, coherence and cohesion			
Candidate's name	Do they speak for long enough (depending on the task)? How much do they hesitate?	Is what they say relevant? How often? Do they repeat themselves or repeat what their partner says?	What cohesive devices do they use? What discourse markers do they use?

Activity 4: Pronunciation

Use this table to make notes on the candidates' Pronunciation.
Try and write down examples of what they say.
Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.

Pronunciation: intonation, stress, individual sounds				
Candidate's name	Can you understand the candidate easily? Sometimes, mostly or all the time?	Is their intonation suitable? Sometimes, mostly or all the time?	Is word and sentence stress in the right place? Sometimes, mostly or all the time?	Do they pronounce individual sounds correctly? Sometimes, mostly or all the time?

Activity 4 - Step 5: Examiner comments

Give one copy per learner.

Examiner comments on Pronunciation: Lara, Agustina and Mateo
Circle the best option. The first one is done for you. Lara She is mostly/always intelligible. She uses accurate intonation and her word and sentence stress are generally/always accurate. Her individual sounds are accurate and articulated clearly.
Agustina She is mostly/always intelligible, but sometimes difficult to understand: if school rules don't like you, you don't get (at school) (Part 3) Intonation is generally appropriate/appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurate/accurate. Her individual sounds are usually accurate, but she pronounces initial 'th' as 'd' (than/dan; this/dis).
Mateo He is mostly/always intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate/appropriate and sometimes used effectively for lists and emphasis. His stress at word level is accurate. His individual sounds are generally/always accurate and well-articulated.

Interactive Communication

Use this table to make notes on the candidates' Interactive Communication.

Try and write down examples of what they say.

Compare your ideas to the examiner comments.

Interactive Communication: initiating, responding, developing		
Candidate's name	Do they start conversations in a suitable way? How often? Do they reply to their partner and examiner appropriately? Do they link what they say to what their partners say?	Do they keep the conversation going? Do they need any help to do this? Do they develop the conversation, adding new ideas, or just agree with their partner?

Frequently asked questions

What if a candidate asks for clarification or says they don't understand a question, how can examiners rephrase the questions?

Examiners can't explain or rephrase but they can repeat questions and instructions, so it's a good idea to teach your learners phrases like *Can you say that again?* or *Can you repeat that, please?* These are natural in spoken language and will help their interactions in the classroom as well as in the exam.

Is it better to show my students a higher level Speaking test video or a lower level one?

It's useful for learners to see a range of levels as they will all be aiming for different bands themselves. You could show Band 3 candidates as a confidence boost early on, then show higher levels later and ask them to say what the candidates did well.

My students feel intimidated being faced with an examiner. How can I prepare them?

Do role plays and regularly practise tasks with learners being the examiner. Show your learners the videos of Speaking tests so they can see the examiners are friendly.

How do formative assessment and summative assessment both contribute to learning?

Formative assessment encourages learners to become more involved in their learning. They think more actively about where they are now, where they are going and how to get there. Teachers also use the feedback to plan the next stages of teaching and learning in ways which will improve learners' performance. Summative assessment can be a very useful guide to progress but should not be the only type of assessment, as there is no focus on how to make further improvements. Both assessment types work together.

Useful links

Free teaching resources on our website

- [Cambridge Guide to Integrating Learning and Assessment.](#)

Preparation pages contain Speaking test videos, examiner comments, lesson plans and sample tests

- [B2 First Preparation page](#)
- [B2 First for Schools Preparation page](#)

Speaking test videos

The videos are linked from activities within this guide. You can also find each video in the 'Speaking test video' section on the B2 First / B2 First for Schools Preparation page (see links above).

The playlist for all levels of Speaking test videos is on this [YouTube playlist](#)

Examiner comments

You can also find examiner comments on each video in the 'Speaking test video' section on the B2 First / B2 First on Schools Preparation page (see links above).

Teacher Handbooks

- [B2 First](#)
- [B2 First for Schools](#)

Lesson Plans

Some lesson plans are linked from activities within this guide. There are many more lesson plans in the 'Lesson Plans' section on the B2 First / B2 First for Schools Preparation page (see links above).

Audioscripts are in the sample tests which are linked from the B2 First / B2 First for Schools Preparation page (see links above).

- [Mock test toolkit](#)



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