



CAMBRIDGE
English

Cambridge

English Qualifications

C1 Advanced

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 C1 Advanced 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 criter	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 C1 Advanced Speaking test consists of four parts and lasts about 15 minutes for a pair or 23 minutes for a group of three. The timing is adjusted for groups of three so that candidates have the same opportunities to speak.

Part	Timing	Interaction and task types	What do candidates have to do?
1	2 minutes for pairs 3 minutes for groups of three	A conversation on familiar topics. The interlocutor asks each candidate questions in turn.	Respond to questions using general interactional and social language.
2	4 minutes for pairs 6 minutes for groups of three	Each candidate gets three photos and talks about two of them for 1 minute. The other candidate gives a 30-second response to a question about the topic of the photos.	Organise a larger unit of discourse; compare, describe, express opinions and speculate.
3	3 minutes for pairs 6 minutes for groups of three	The candidates discuss a topic using spoken instructions and written prompts for 2 minutes. Following the discussion, there is a decision-making task (1 minute).	Sustain an interaction, exchange ideas, express and justify opinions, agree and/or disagree, suggest, speculate, evaluate, and reach a decision through negotiation, etc.
4	5 minutes for pairs 8 minutes for groups of three	A conversation related to the topic in Part 3 with spoken questions from the interlocutor.	Respond to the questions by 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 a 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.
- 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. You could use the evaluation tables in the Appendix for this.
- 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 practice 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 topics in the test. They can express themselves effectively with very little hesitation.	Interlocutor
	✗ The candidate finds it difficult to handle the topics and tasks in the test. They make more mistakes and hesitate.	
Grammatical Resource	✓ The candidate uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of accuracy.	Assessor
	✗ The candidate uses only simple grammatical forms accurately. They make mistakes with more difficult grammar.	
Lexical Resource	✓ The candidate uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics.	
	✗ The candidate uses vocabulary appropriately, but only when talking about familiar topics.	
Discourse Management	✓ The candidate can speak with little hesitation. Their ideas are well-organised and relevant.	
	✗ There is some hesitation and repetition. Only simple cohesive devices are used.	
Pronunciation	✓ The candidate is intelligible (you can understand what they say) and uses some stress and intonation.	
	✗ You can understand the candidate but not all the time.	
Interactive Communication	✓ The candidate can start conversations, reply appropriately and keep the conversation going with very little help.	
	✗ The candidate 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 C1 level. Start from the bottom – Band 1 – notice how the language in the descriptions varies as you progress up the bands.

C1	Global Achievement
	Handles communication on a wide range of topics, including unfamiliar and abstract ones , with very little hesitation .
5	Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express complex ideas and concepts and produce extended discourse that is coherent and easy to follow .
4	Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.
	Handles communication on a range of familiar and unfamiliar topics , with very little hesitation .
3	Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent .
2	Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.
	Handles communication on familiar topics , despite some hesitation .
1	Organises extended discourse but occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence , and some inaccuracies and inappropriate usage occur.
0	Performance below Band 1.

In this guide, you're going to look at each criteria in turn. You'll see a detailed breakdown of the criteria, examples of what candidates can do at different bands, learn top tips and get a lesson plan and activities to help your learners develop in each area.

Band 1

For example, at Band 1 the candidate organises extended discourse but **occasionally produces utterances that lack coherence**.

“

The first thing I want to say is that the most important aspect of being a parent is love. Children need love from their mum and dad, and **if they if they I mean** without love they cannot survive well in this world.

Band 3

At Band 3 the candidate produces extended discourse that is **generally coherent**.

“

The most important thing for parents to give their children is a good start in life. This means providing a home, food, education, safety, love. All these things are very important.

Band 5

At band 5, the candidate can produce extended discourse that is **coherent and easy to follow**.

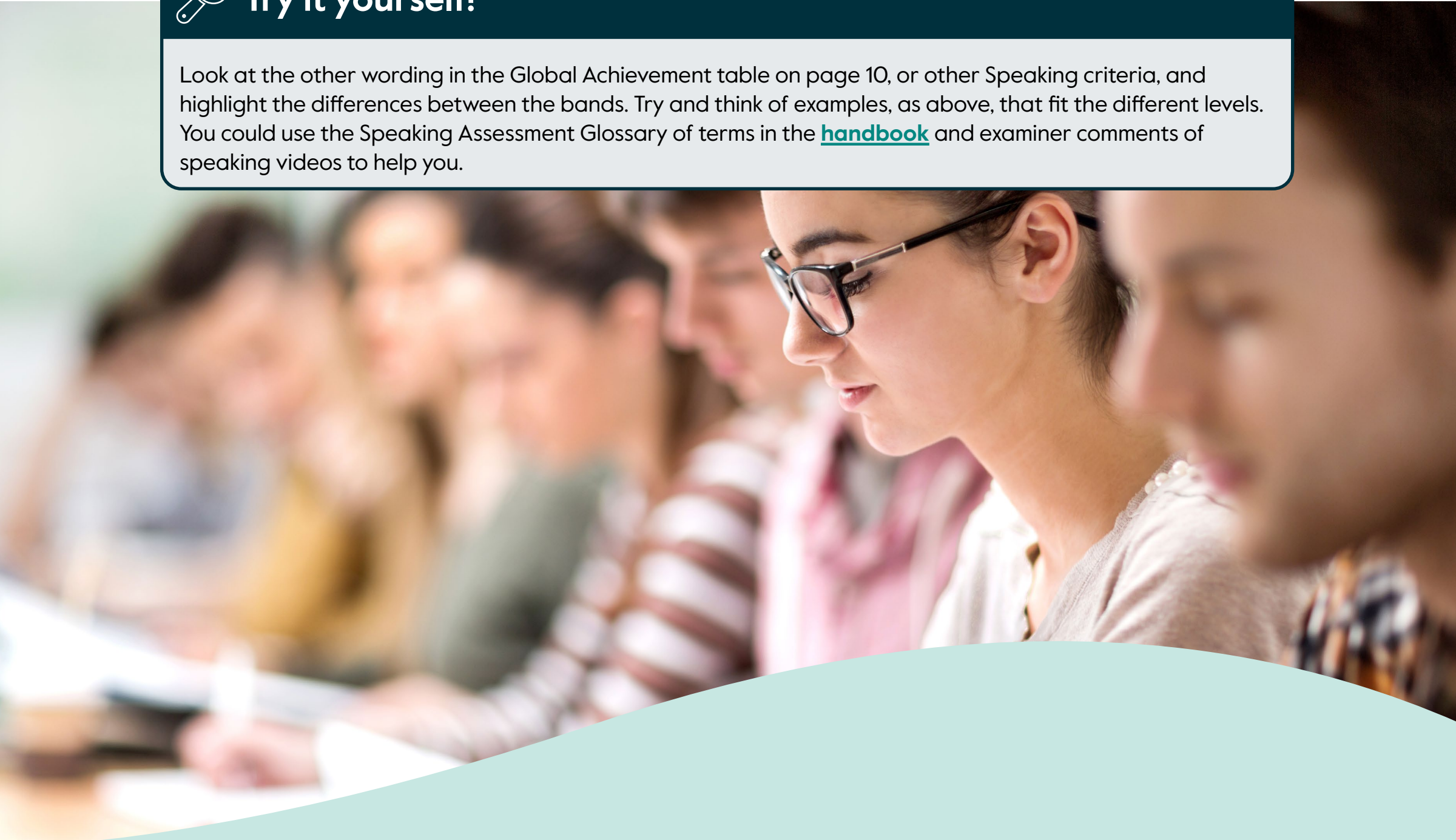
“

Let's start with rules. Children need to know what is expected of them, otherwise, how do they know what is right and wrong? Linked to this is consistency. Parents have to be consistent when applying rules because...



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 of speaking videos to help you.



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...

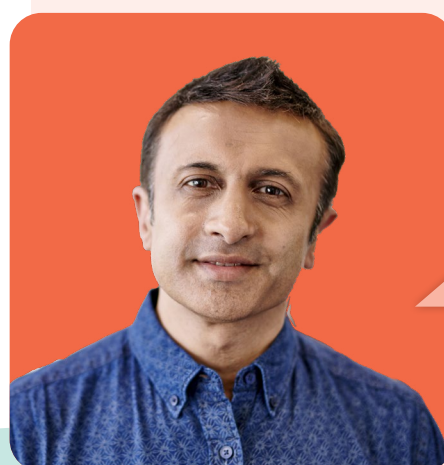
Things to work on

- ✓ 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.

Give actionable feedback. Feedback should be specific enough that learners can take action, either to continue to do something they are doing well, or to make changes to improve. [Find out more about actionable feedback in this guide.](#)

Tell learners what you'll be focusing on in your feedback before you do a task. This helps them to understand the feedback and gives them a better chance of success.



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 six assessment criteria – Global Achievement, Grammatical Resource, Lexical Resource, 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

Global Achievement is the overall impression of a candidate's speaking performance. In the exam, the Global Achievement mark is awarded by the interlocutor. The assessor gives detailed marks for the other five criteria (Grammatical Resource, Lexical Resource, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication).

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 wide range of topics, including unfamiliar and abstract ones, with very little hesitation.	Topics which candidates would not be expected to have much personal experience of.
	Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express complex ideas and concepts and produce extended discourse that is coherent and easy to follow .	Topics which include ideas rather than concrete situations or events. Can speak at length and organise what they say well.
3	Handles communication on a range of familiar and unfamiliar topics, with very little hesitation.	Can understand and speak about the topics and tasks in the test.
	Uses accurate and appropriate linguistic resources to express ideas and produce extended discourse that is generally coherent .	Uses the right kinds of language to express themselves and what they say is well organised.
1	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.

Developing Global Achievement

★ Top tips

- Watch a [C1 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.
- 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.



My higher level learners are already fluent, confident speakers. How can I help them to develop their speaking further?

“

At higher levels, it isn't as easy for learners to notice or measure the development in their speaking skills, especially if they are already fluent and confident. Ensure your learners are familiar with what is expected by using the lesson ideas and activities in this guide to understand and develop specific speaking subskills and give specific actionable feedback to help your learners identify what they're doing well and how they can further improve their speaking.

Understanding the speaking scales and improving learners' peer assessment skills

Activity 1

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the **Appendix** for your learners.

Steps:

1. Start by asking learners to discuss in pairs what makes a good English speaker.

Elicit some ideas and organise them into five columns on the board: Grammatical Resource, Lexical Resource, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. Don't reveal the names of the columns yet. Here is an example of the answers your learners might give and how you could organise them:

Grammatical Resource	Lexical Resource	Discourse Management	Interactive Communication	Pronunciation
Uses different tenses Uses difficult grammar	Phrasal verbs Idioms	Gives longer answers Linkers or connectors	Listens carefully Answers questions	Speaks clearly Pronounces words correctly
Doesn't make a lot of mistakes				
Global Achievement				

Don't worry about the way they phrase things at this stage.
Explain that in the exam, the examiner is looking for these things too.

2. Elicit or provide the names of the five criteria as shown above. Explain that learners don't need to remember the headings, but they need to understand what they mean.

Explain that Global Achievement is a general mark and today you're going to be examiners and assess some real candidates, focusing on Global Achievement.

Activity 1

3. Ask learners what they know about the types of questions they'll be asked in Part 1 of the speaking exam. Give them the **Appendix** and ask them to look at Exercise 1. They should read the paragraph, and tick the question topics they think they will hear in Part 1.

See **Appendix** for answers.

The other topics are too complex and knowledge-based, and they are not part of usual social interaction.

Point out that Part 1 of the exam begins with some general introduction questions to help candidates relax and start speaking in English.

4. Tell learners they are going to watch Part 1 of an example speaking test.

They should put a star next to the topics the examiner asks questions about.

Play the video of [Marta, Gio and Anna from 0:00-2:50](#).

See **Appendix** for answers.

5. Watch the video again. Learners say if the statements are true or false – activity B.

See **Appendix** for answers.

6. Ask learners to discuss in pairs what mark (out of 5) they would give the candidates. They can write their scores on mini whiteboards or paper and hold them up. Compare these to the candidates' Global Achievement scores and Examiner comments in the **Appendix**, reminding them that this relates to the candidates' performance throughout the whole Speaking test.

Remind candidates that achieving a Band 3 means that a candidate has met the criteria for C1 Advanced level.

7. Nominate one of the students to ask you one of the Part 1 questions. Reply only with one or two words. Elicit if this is a good answer (No, too short). Elicit a better answer from a couple of learners (for example, extending your short answer by giving a reason, consequence or example).

Focus on Exercise 2 in the **Appendix**. Divide learners into groups of 3. Ask them to take it in turns to be the examiner and use the questions to role play Part 1 of the speaking exam.

After the role play, ask learners what was easy/hard. Remind them that in Part 1 of the exam, they should give responses that are more than just one or two words, but they are not expected to give long, detailed answers in this part.

Developing Global Achievement activities

 Pyramid discussion	 Wheel of questions	 Debates
Learners ask and answer questions to find <i>interesting</i> things they have in common, for example, things they like, things they would like to try, experiences they have had. First, they work in pairs to find five interesting things. Join pairs to make groups of four. They ask and answer questions to find two things everyone in the group has in common. Make groups of 8 (or work as a whole class). Learners have to find one interesting thing they all have in common.	Brainstorm topics and questions that might be asked in Part 1 of the exam, for example travel, family, future plans, free time. Input these topics into an online random picker wheel like this . Learners take it in turns to spin the wheel and answer the question. Other group members have to ask a follow up question.	Brainstorm or ask AI to generate a list of statements for discussion. Make groups of 4. Two learners are 'for', the other two are 'against'. Give them a few minutes to think of points and evidence for their argument. Then they have five minutes to debate their topic. At the end they can vote 'for' or 'against' according to the quality of the arguments. Afterwards ask them to reflect - who gave good evidence? Who responded with a counterpoint? Was the tone respectful throughout?



Focus on feedback

- **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 C1 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 Lexical Resource in a practice collaborative task.
- **Vary feedback.** Make sure you give feedback on all the different criteria, not just on the grammar and vocabulary they use. 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](#).



What is Grammatical Resource?

This covers the grammatical structures that candidates use in the test. Grammatical Resource, along with Lexical Resource, 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	Grammatical Resource	What does this mean?
5	Maintains control of a wide range of grammatical forms.	Consistently uses a variety of grammar accurately and appropriately to convey intended meaning.
3	Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms.	Uses 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.
1	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms.	Uses accurate and appropriate grammatical forms some but not all of the time. May try to use some more difficult structures, like the examples in Band 3.

Grammatical Resource in practice

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Grammatical Resource.

Band 1 For example, at Band 1 the candidate has a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms and attempts some complex grammatical forms. “ 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.]	Band 3 At Band 3 the candidate shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms. “ I think eating regularly is important because if you didn't, you would feel tired and maybe feel unhealthy.	Band 5 At Band 5, the candidate can maintain control of a wide range of grammatical forms. “ You need to put yourself into the situation of the people who care about you, because keeping healthy is a responsibility to them.
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**Watch and assess a real example**

Watch [Teresa and Antonio](#). Before you watch, think about the examples of complex grammatical structures you would expect to see at C1 level. You can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or the [English Grammar Profile](#) for ideas. As you watch, complete the Grammatical Resource table in the [Appendix](#).

Was one candidate better than the other in terms of Grammatical Resource? Compare your ideas to [the Examiner Comments](#).

[Learn more about the English Grammar Profile.](#)





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

“
Reassure your learners that examiners are not looking for perfection, even at high levels. Some mistakes are expected. Give your learners plenty of praise when they use complex grammatical forms in their speaking, and encourage them by making sure they understand that they can gain marks in other areas (not just Grammatical Resource) to boost their speaking mark

Developing Grammatical Resource

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

★ Top tips

- Regularly review new grammar. 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.
- Don’t expect complete **accuracy** when speaking. Allow for minor errors which do not affect communication. Focusing too much on errors can affect learners’ confidence in speaking.
- 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.



My learners say they ‘know’ all the grammar, but they don’t often use more complex structures when they speak. How can I help them to widen their range of grammar structures?

“Tell your learners that they will get higher marks for using a range of complex structures, even with a few mistakes. Highlight complex grammar structures during reading and listening activities and praise learners for using them when they speak.”

😊🌟 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

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.

Assessing Grammatical Resource with your learners

Activity 2

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

Steps:

1. Write these anagrams on the board. Ask learners to unscramble the words and tell a partner how they relate to assessment of the C1 speaking exam.

emslip arteivy
lemoxpc rcayucca

Answers

simple, complex, variety, accuracy

At C1 level, learners are expected to use a variety (range) of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of accuracy (control)

2. Elicit a couple of examples of complex grammar structures e.g. relative clauses, present perfect continuous. Distribute the [Appendix](#). Learners work in pairs to brainstorm grammar they think examiners expect to hear at C1 level. They can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or [the English Grammar Profile](#) for ideas. They make notes in the first table, column 1.

3. Tell learners they're going to watch Part 1 of a speaking video. They should listen and note examples of complex grammar that they hear in column 2. Play the video of [Teresa and Antonio Part 1 \(0:00-2:25\)](#). Share examples in feedback.

4. Learners use table in the [Appendix](#) to evaluate the candidates on the video. Compare to the examiner comments. Note: the [examiner comments](#) relate to the whole speaking test (they have only watched Part 1), but they include some good examples of complex grammar.

5. Ask learners to think about how they can use the ideas from this lesson or other ideas they have to keep improving their own grammar in English. In feedback, build confidence by emphasising that mistakes are still okay at C1 level, and the examiner is not expecting perfection, but they can get a better mark if they use more complex grammar.

Suggestions

- Use speaking videos and English Grammar Profile to identify good examples of language at C1 level
- Reflect on their speaking, giving peer feedback
- Read, watch and listen to authentic English and notice complex grammar use
- Try to use new and complex grammar structures when speaking

Developing Grammatical Resource activities

 Say it another way	 Anonymous peer correction (delayed feedback)	 Expand the sentence
Give learners 4 or 5 simple sentences. For example, <i>He walked away.</i> <i>The news is bad.</i> Learners work in groups to think of as many ways as they can to say each sentence in another, more complex way - keeping the meaning almost the same. As a group, they decide on their favourite for each sentence. Each group shares their alternative sentences and as a class identify the most creative. For example, instead of saying <i>He walked away</i>. You could say <i>Feeling satisfied with what he had done, he walked away</i>. Or: <i>He walked away, crying softly.</i>	Listen to learners during a speaking activity and note examples of complex grammar plus some common and useful mistakes. Write them on the board (keep these anonymous!) Learners work in pairs to identify the good examples and correct the mistakes. They should record new and useful complex structures to try to use in their own speaking.	Write a word on the board. Ask learners, to add to it so that it still makes sense but is more complex. For example: <i>a table</i> <i>a wooden table</i> <i>a wooden table with five legs</i> <i>a wooden table with five legs, covered with a cloth</i> <i>a wooden table with five legs, covered with a delicate cloth</i> Divide learners into pairs. Each pair starts with their own word. They hand their paper for another pair to expand, before receiving it back to expand again. Continue, with pairs swapping the papers between them, expanding each time. The activity ends when groups can't add anything more to the sentence. Share and compare the sentences and highlight complex grammar.

What is Lexical Resource?

This covers the grammatical structures that candidates use in the test. Grammatical Resource, along with Lexical Resource, 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	Lexical Resource	What does this mean?
5	Uses a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar and unfamiliar topics .	Consistently uses a variety of words and phrases accurately and appropriately to convey intended meaning. Topics which candidates would not be expected to have much personal experience of.
3	Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar and unfamiliar topics.	Words and phrases suitable for the situation or task. For example, in <i>I'm very sensible to noise</i> , the word <i>sensible</i> is inappropriate as the word should be <i>sensitive</i> . Another example would be <i>Today's big snow makes getting around the city difficult</i> . The phrase <i>getting around</i> is well suited to this situation. However, <i>big snow</i> is inappropriate as <i>big</i> and <i>snow</i> are not used together. <i>Heavy snow</i> would be appropriate.
1	Uses appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views, but only when talking about familiar topics.	Topics that the candidates know about and have personal experience of.

Lexical Resource in practice

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Lexical Resource.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
The candidate can use appropriate vocabulary .	The candidate can use a range of appropriate vocabulary .	The candidate can use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary .
“ The situation is bad .	“ The situation we are facing at this moment in time is dreadful .	“ The current state of affairs is unprecedented . We are in unknown territory .

✓ Watch and assess a real example

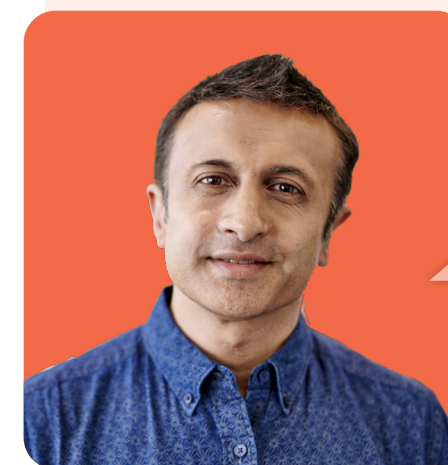
Pedro and Isabella. Before you watch, think about the examples of vocabulary you would expect to see at C1 level. You can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or the English Vocabulary Profile for ideas. As you watch, complete the Lexical Resource table in the Appendix.

Was one candidate better than the other in terms of Lexical Resource? Compare your ideas to the Examiner Comments.

Developing Lexical Resource

★ Top tips

- Encourage learners to read, listen and watch in English as much as they can so that they build up a wide vocabulary and become familiar with language usage. Encourage them to look up unfamiliar words.
- Present vocabulary in a context that helps learners to understand the meaning, for example through pictures, listening or reading a text or a video. Contexts that are relevant to learners' lives and interests provide the best hooks and are the most meaningful. Give and elicit examples to convey and check meaning.
- Make sure your learners have the information they need in order to be able to use the new vocabulary effectively - What does it mean? How is it used in a sentence? How do you say it? Are there social situations when it is or is not appropriate?
- Advanced learners have lots of metalanguage (language for talking about language), so encourage them to analyse new language in a text. For example, they can identify the part of speech, notice dependent prepositions, distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs, notice collocations, and idiomatic language.
- Give students practice in paraphrasing when they do not know, or cannot remember, a word. Teach phrases like, *It's the thing you use for ...*, *I'm not sure of the exact word but...*, *It's the person who ...*, etc.
- Create a word bag or box or shared online document, and encourage learners to put new words and phrases in it. Use these words and phrases to play vocabulary review games like:
 - Taboo - learners pick a word/phrase and take it in turn to describe or show the meaning of a word without saying it.
 - Stories - learners choose 5 words/phrases at random and make up the most creative story they can using these words.
 - Odd one out - learners choose 5 words/phrases from a topic set and, in pairs, decide which word is the odd one out. They justify their choice to another pair. There are LOTS of possibilities! Encourage them to be creative.



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. Ask them to look at these records regularly their language records and actively make an effort to use new phrases in their speaking. Listen carefully when learners are speaking and highlight good examples of C1-level language. Praise both range and accuracy.’



Assessing Lexical Resource with your learners

Activity 3

Steps:

- On the board write:
Money is the thing that influences people's lives most.
Teachers have a big influence on their students.
The weather influences how people feel.
Health and fitness campaigns on TV aren't very effective
Ask them to choose one statement and discuss in small groups if they agree or disagree and why. As they talk, note examples of good vocabulary for C1 and simpler vocabulary that could be better.
- Tell learners to watch the video of Part 4 of the speaking test and compare their opinions to those of the candidates. Play the video of [Marta, Gio and Anna from 13:59-17:55](#) (this is the majority of Part 4).
- Show the following phrases.
 - other kinds of things
 - money is important but it's definitely not everything
 - split families, half brothers, half sisters
 - the weather is not great
 - sad, not satisfiedAsk if they can remember who said what. If necessary, play the video section again.
Answers:
Marta - other kinds of things
Anna - the weather is not great, sad, not satisfied
Gio - money is important but it's definitely not everything, split families, half brothers, half sisters

Activity 3

- Remind learners that examiners are listening for a good **range** and at C1 level. Ask them what they understand by these terms (**range**=variety, including more complex lexis; **appropriacy**=vocabulary is used correctly, for example in terms of relevance to topic or situation, collocation, register, connotation etc.). Learners identify which of the six items could be improved, and think of a better alternative for them.

Suggested answers. You or your learners may have other ideas.

What could be improved	Suggestions
other kinds of things	all kinds of other things, many different types of things
the weather is not great	the weather leaves a lot to be desired, the weather is not ideal
sad, not satisfied	feeling down, depressed, down in the mouth, out of sorts

- Ask learners if they think the three candidates met the criteria for C1 level in terms of Lexical Resource or not Marta did with 3.5, Gio was very strong and got Band 5, but Anna did not meet the criteria and only got Band 2. You may wish to show the examiner comments.
- Lead a brief discussion of how they can improve the range and accuracy of their own vocabulary. In feedback, you can use some suggestions from the Top Tips section.
- Return to the notes you made about your learners' vocabulary in the first activity. Write examples on the board. Ask students to find the good ones and improve the others. Finish by praising the good examples and reminding them that examiners don't expect perfect English!

Developing Lexical Resource activities

 Level up	 Mindmap challenge	 Vocabulary mining
To help learners expand their range of vocabulary, introduce them to the English Vocabulary Profile. Show them how to practise searching particular words or phrases and finding higher level alternatives. Or, get them to search for C1 level words on a topic you're studying. Encourage them to record new, higher level words or phrases and use them when they're speaking.	Select a topic and ask learners to individually create a mindmap of related words and phrases. In groups, learners take it in turns to speak for a minute about the topic. The other group members have to listen carefully and tick words/phrases from their own mind map that they hear. Afterwards, learners can compare their mind maps and add to their own using ideas from others.	Learners 'mine' a video they've watched or text they've read recently for a few pieces of new and useful vocabulary. They can record it in their notebook, on a phone or make flashcards like the examples below, using an app like Quizlet. Encourage them to make each word or phrase more memorable by writing an example sentence to show how it can be used. Example: get over someone <i>She was devastated when her boyfriend ended the relationship, but eventually she got over him.</i> Encourage them to review and use their new words and phrases often.



What is Discourse Management?

Band	Discourse Management	What does this mean?
5	Produces extended stretches of language with ease and 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, coherent and varied.	
	Uses a wide range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.	Words and phrases which show the connections between ideas – therefore, as a result, on the other hand.
3	Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation.	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.
	Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organisation of 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> .
1	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation.	The candidate gives answers related to the task or question and doesn't go off topic.
	Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition .	Repeating the same idea instead of introducing new ideas to develop the topic.
	Uses a range of cohesive devices.	

Discourse Management in practice

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

Band 1

The candidate **uses a range of cohesive devices**.

“ I see the least important **one** is school rules **as** I don't see **them** helping with the students' happiness.

Band 3

The candidate can **use a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers**.

“ **The first one to discuss** is probably about school rules since **they** impact us the most.
Well, the second one...

Band 5

The candidate shows they can **use a wide range of cohesive devices and discourse markers**.

“ **Let's start with** school rules, as **these** restrictions are something I see as quite impactful. **Now, moving onto the second most relevant item...**



Watch and assess a real example

Watch [Marta, Gio and Anna](#) 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](#).



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 show closed captions in videos or read the **audioscripts** in the Listening sample tests. Use the table in the **Appendix** to help you to analyse speech in terms of discourse management.
- 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 25.
- 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 that their answers were relevant to the task and topic. It can be tempting to focus on language accuracy but they need to understand that there is more to speaking than grammar and vocabulary.



I've noticed during mock tests, that my learners, because they understand the 'examiner' well, give very short, natural answers throughout. How can I help them to give more extended responses?

“Learners need to know that while shorter answers are more acceptable in Part 1 of the speaking examination, they do need to give more developed responses in other parts of the exam in order to fully demonstrate their speaking ability, in particular their discourse management. Include targeted activities to help them expand their responses in Parts 2, 3 and 4

Assessing Discourse Management with your learners

📄 Activity 4

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the **Appendix** for your learners.

Steps:

1. Ask learners what they know about Part 2 of the Speaking exam. For example, what do they have to do, how long do they have to speak for, what do they have to speak about.

2. On the board, write:

To do well in Part 2, you should...

It's best to avoid...

Don't forget to...

In groups, learners complete the tips.

3. Elicit ideas from each group and accept all relevant ideas.

Highlight the suggestions that relate to discourse management. Write these on the board, and tell learners that you're going to focus on these speaking skills today. Elicit some examples of discourse markers and cohesive devices and emphasise they should use a range of these at C1 level.

Example tips:

You should stick to the topic, use discourse markers keep talking, organise what you say.

Try to avoid repeating yourself, hesitating too much.

Don't forget to speak for at least a minute, talk about two of the pictures.

4. Tell learners they're going to watch a speaking test video. Distribute this Appendix. Play **Pedro and Isabella** Part 2 (Isabella: 2:35-4:45, Pedro 4:45-6:34). Learners circle the best word in the table in the **Appendix** to describe candidate performance and note some discourse markers or cohesive devices they hear.

 Activity 4

- 5. Ask learners if they think Pedro and Isabella are at C1 level in terms of Discourse Management (they are both very strong for C1). Show some of the [examiner comments](#), if you like.
- 6. Learners write the useful language under the correct heading in the table, according to the function. Check answers. Drill any of the phrases you noticed learners having difficulty with.
- 7. Learners do a **Part 2 practice task** in pairs, taking it in turns to speak. Encourage them to give each other feedback on the criteria you've discussed in this lesson. Support this with your own feedback and observations, ensuring you balance suggestions with positive comments.

 Focus on feedback

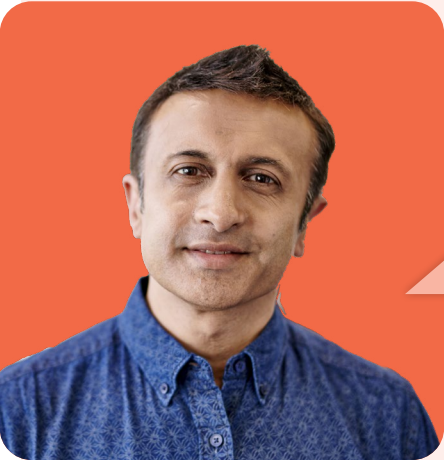
Encouraging reflection and self-assessment

- **Encourage reflection.** Learners can use recordings of themselves 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](#).

Developing Discourse Management activities

 Discourse markers	 Fillers	 No repetition
Prepare some higher level discourse markers you'd like your learners to practise. Set a discussion task by giving learners a choice of 3 topics. Tell them to keep an eye on the board. When they see a new discourse marker, they have to integrate it into what they're saying. Groups start discussing the first topic. Show the discourse markers one at a time. Afterwards, get them to reflect on how easy or difficult the activity was. Did it help them to keep talking?	Elicit or teach some useful fillers to give learners 'thinking time' and avoid hesitation. For example, <i>Now, let me see..., What else..., So, I've mentioned... already, And another thing...</i> In groups they practise talking for 1 minute on the topic of their choice, using fillers to avoid hesitation.	Learners write topics on slips of paper. In groups, they put their slips face down on the table. They take it in turns to turn over a paper and talk about the topic for 1 minute. The other group members have to time them and listen very carefully to see if they repeat themselves. If they hear repetition, they should say 'repetition!' The learner who spotted the repetition takes over the topic. They move to a new topic if they run out of things to say or if someone in the group manages to talk about a topic for 1 minute.



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.

What is Pronunciation?

Band	Pronunciation	What does this mean?
5	Is intelligible .	You can understand the meaning of what the candidate says.
	Phonological features are used effectively to convey and enhance meaning.	Includes the pronunciation of individual sounds, word and sentence stress and intonation - see Band 3.
3	Is intelligible.	The rise and fall of the voice sounds natural.
	Intonation is appropriate .	Putting the stress in the right place in a multi-syllable word: com fortable or pho to grapher.
	Sentence and word stress is accurately placed.	For example, saying ð in than / this or ei in eight accurately.
1	Individual sounds are articulated clearly.	
	Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate .	Natural and used properly most of the time.
1	Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed.	The candidate puts stress in the correct place in a sentence most of the time. See the words in bold in these examples: <i>What about music? There's the guy, too, talking to the people, but they're walking.</i>
	Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	

Pronunciation in practice

Here are some examples of differences between the bands in Pronunciation. Stressed words are in bold. Stressed syllables are underlined. Intonation is shown by arrows. Corrected utterances are shown in brackets.

Band 1	Band 3	Band 5
Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed .	Sentence and word stress is accurately placed .	Phonological features are used effectively to convey and enhance meaning .
“ It's definitely something new for me. [It's definitely something new for me.]	“ It's something I haven't considered before.	“ ↓ Well , I've certainly never encountered that ↑ before !



Watch and assess a real example

Watch the video of **Pedro and Isabella**. Use the table in the **Appendix** to evaluate and make notes on the candidates' pronunciation.

Compare your notes and scores with the **examiner comments**.



Developing Pronunciation

★ Top tips

- 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. For example, they can identify the word or sentence stress after listening to you say something, or when watching a video clip.
- 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 stressed syllable or 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 C1 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.

Assessing Pronunciation with your learners

Activity 5

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

Steps:

1. Write these sentences on the board. Check understanding and give examples of key vocabulary if necessary (in **bold**). Ask learners to discuss with a partner if they agree or disagree and why.
 - You have to have a perfect English **accent** at C1 level.
 - It's not possible to improve your English pronunciation if you've been studying for more than 2 years.
 - **Word stress** and **sentence stress** can change the meaning of a word or sentence.
 - **Intonation** doesn't change meaning.

Elicit ideas, and emphasise the following:

Intelligibility is key i.e. can the examiner understand what you say.

Examiners are **not** looking for a perfect English accent. It's normal and expected for learners to speak English with their own accent.

Learners can improve their pronunciation by listening and noticing features of pronunciation and trying to copy it.

Word stress and sentence stress can change the meaning of a word and sentence. For example, *I **love** you emphasises the feeling of love, not like or hate. I love **you** emphasises I love you and no one else.*

Intonation adds meaning too, for example we can show if we are unsure (rising), excited (emphatic), confident (falling) etc.
2. Play the video of [Teresa and Antonio](#) Part 3 7:06-9:19 (stop just before the part where they have to make a decision), asking learners to focus on the candidates' pronunciation. Overall, do they think it is okay for C1 level? (Yes, it is! Intelligible, sounds generally produced accurately, word, sentence stress and intonation all generally fine). Reveal their scores: Teresa (4) and Antonio (4.5) i.e. good for C1 level.

 Activity 5

- 3. Focus learners on the table in the **Appendix**. Ask them to listen again and evaluate the candidates. If they are worried about this, reassure them it's just to help them to notice different aspects of pronunciation. They can focus on just one candidate, if necessary. Play Part 3 of the video again (7:06–9:19). In feedback, and ask them to justify their choices. If they've been harsh, remind them that these candidates scored above the standard of 3 in the test. You could refer them to the Examiner Comments in the **Appendix** to compare their ideas.
- 4. Ask learners to work individually and think about how they plan to improve their own pronunciation. They can use ideas from the initial discussion, or other ideas. Lead a brief class discussion. Reassure them once again that having an accent is totally fine! Everyone has one, even native speakers. The main thing is intelligibility. You may wish to introduce a pronunciation tool (see *Noticing pronunciation* in the next section) to help them to work independently on their pronunciation.



Developing Pronunciation activities

 Schwa hunt	 Draw the links	 Noticing pronunciation
Write a sentence on the board. Ask learners to say the sentence and identify the unstressed syllables (/ə/ or schwa). For example: <i>It's a bit of a puzzle.</i> Do this with longer utterances, or short audio or video clips. Learners compare in pairs to see who spotted the most schwas. Model and drill any problem areas.	Dictate a sentence from your coursebook. Ask learners to draw the links between the end of one word and the beginning of the other. They have to listen and repeat the sentences several times to identify the links. For example: <i>He works_in_ a large_office.</i> Elicit that final consonant sounds link to initial vowel sounds. In pairs, learners practise saying and identifying connected speech from other audio or video clips.	Ask learners how they check pronunciation of new words and phrases. Introduce the Cambridge learners' dictionary. Learners type in words or phrases that they want to pronounce and listen to people saying the word/ phrase in UK or US English. They practise by repeating the word/phrase after the speaker. Ask them if they noticed any differences in pronunciation between different speakers. Highlight the key is intelligibility, not a perfect accent.

 **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.

What is Interactive Communication?

Band	Interactive Communication	What does this mean?
5	Interacts with ease, linking contributions to those of other speakers .	Refers to things people said earlier in the conversation using phrases like <i>As you said earlier...</i>
	Widens the scope of the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome.	Develops and broadens the discussion, and proactively involves the other candidate with a suggestion or question about further developing the topic.
3	Initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers.	Starts conversations and replies to questions or things their partner says.
		Keeps the conversation going.
	Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome .	Widens the conversation by adding new ideas.
		Works together to complete the task.
1	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support .	Occasionally needs help from the examiner or their partner.

Interactive Communication in practice

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

Band 1

The candidate **initiates and responds appropriately**.

“
What’s your opinion about smoking regulations? ... yes, **that’s a good point because** ...

Band 3

The candidate **initiates and responds appropriately, linking contributions to those of other speakers**.

“
Shall we talk **about** improving public transport?
... **I take your point**, it could be too expensive ...

Band 5

The candidate **interacts with ease, linking contributions to those of other speakers**.

“
As I see it, the main issue is affordability. **Would you agree with that?** ... **yes, I see what you mean, and** that also has an impact on... **Yes, and as you said**, it’s better to ...

Watch and assess a real example

Watch Teresa and Antonio. 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.

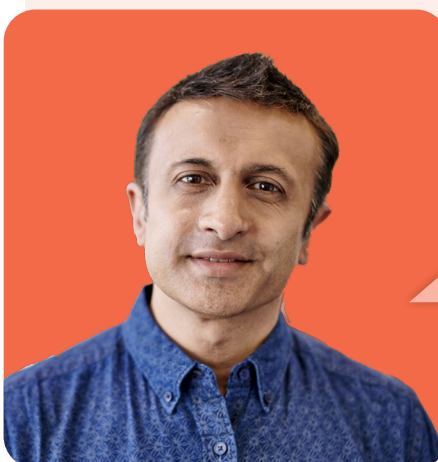
Compare your notes and scores with the examiner comments.



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.
- In Part 3 of the exam, advise your students not to try to rush through all the prompts in their discussion. It is better to deal with several of them in depth than to try to deal with all of them superficially.



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 listening back and noticing how many times each person spoke and for how long.

Assessing Interactive Communication with your learners

Activity 6

Preparation: Print out enough copies of the activities in the **Appendix** for your learners.

Steps:

1. Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4. Show the roles and tell learners they're going to role play a discussion where they behave in this way. Either assign the roles, or learners can choose for themselves. It's best if there is at least one of each role in each group:
A - you constantly interrupt, but don't be too rude
B - you are very quiet and don't say much
C - deal politely with any interruptions and encourage quiet students to say something
Give learners a discussion question that will interest them. Monitor the discussion.
2. Ask learners - How was the discussion? What was challenging? What would they do if this happened in the exam? Explain that it's not their responsibility to get a very quiet candidate talking (and extremely quiet candidates are very rare at high levels!), but asking questions is an interactional skill.
3. Introduce the concept of Interactive Communication and point out the key features:
 - starting a conversation and asking questions
 - adding a new idea to develop the discussion
 - linking what they say to what others have said (referring)Elicit why this makes discussions successful and the importance of listening carefully.
Learners brainstorm useful interactional language to complete the table in the **Appendix** under the three headings. They compare in small groups and add to their table. Elicit ideas and build a table on the board. Drill any problematic phrases and encourage learners to do the controlled practice task in the **Appendix**.
4. Show the Part 3 task and table in the **Appendix**. Tell learners to watch the video of Part 3 of the speaking exam and notice how the three candidates interact. Play the video of [Marta, Gio and Anna \(9:11-13:53\)](#). Learners use the table to evaluate the candidates' performance. Afterwards, discuss their impressions and if they think the candidates met Band 3 for Interactive Communication. You may wish to replay and highlight useful phrases they could add to their tables. Show the examiner comments section on Interactive Communication and wrap up by asking each group for one piece of advice for doing well in Part 3 of the exam.
Candidate scores for Interactive Communication
Marta 4
Gio 5
Anna 2.5

Developing Interactive Communication activities

 Discussion detective	 Yes, and... / Yes, but...	 Disagreeing politely
Participants work in groups, each group nominates a detective to monitor the discussion. Each group brainstorms things for the detective to look out for, for example, listening carefully, asking questions, equal participation, polite disagreement. During the discussion the detective makes notes. Afterwards, the group members self-assess using their agreed criteria. The detective gives their impressions from their notes.	In groups of 2 or 3, learners have to keep a conversation going for as long as possible by responding to what the last person said using 'Yes, and...' or 'Yes, but...'	Learners take it in turns to say things they think the others will disagree with. These should be light rather than rude or very sensitive! Brainstorm useful phrases for this, for example <i>I have a different perspective / I hear what you're saying, but... / I'm afraid I have a different opinion</i> . Ask learners to give each other feedback on how polite they were.



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 Grammatical Resource, 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](#).



Appendix

These activities can be photocopied or displayed for classroom use.

Global Achievement

Watch a [C1 Speaking test video](#). Use the table to evaluate and make notes on the candidates' Global Achievement.

Candidate's name:			
Can they understand and speak about the topics and tasks in the test?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
How much do they hesitate ?	• Very little • Some hesitation • A lot	• Very little • Some hesitation • A lot	• Very little • Some hesitation • A lot
Do they use the right kinds of grammar and vocabulary to express themselves?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Do they give more than simply short answers?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Is what they say well-organised?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Overall, what do they do well?			
Overall, what could they improve?			

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 1 - Handout: Global Achievement

1. In Part 1 of the Speaking test, the interlocutor asks the candidates questions. The questions are short, factual questions about the candidate, for example, *Where are you from?* and then there are some more questions on general topics which require candidates to talk about everyday topics such as sports.

Tick the topics that you think you could be asked to talk about in Part 1.

- a. leisure time
- b. the history of Britain
- c. your future plans
- d. the problem of endangered wildlife in the world
- e. travel and holidays
- f. the economy of your country
- g. daily life
- h. friends and family
- i. the latest scientific discoveries
- j. work or study
- k. the place where you live

2. Work in groups of three. Take it in turns to be the examiner.

Examiner: ask each candidate these questions:

- a) Where are you from?
- b) What do you do?
- c) How long have you been studying English?
- d) What do you enjoy most about learning English?

Examiner: Choose one of the topics. Ask a question to your first candidate. Then ask the next question to your second candidate. If your candidate gives a minimal response, (...) ask 'Why?'

Travel and holidays

- What kinds of holidays appeal to you most? ... (Why?)
- Which countries would you most like to visit? ... (Why?)
- Which part of your country would you recommend to tourists? ... (Why?)
- Do you think you would like to work in the travel industry? ... (Why?/Why not?)

Future plans

- What do you hope to be doing this time next year? (Why?)
- How might you use your English in the future? (Why?)
- Would you consider living abroad permanently? (Why?/Why not?)
- Are you someone who likes to plan for the future or do you prefer to let things happen? (Why?)

Entertainment

- What are the most popular sports in your country? (Why?)
- What do you do to keep fit and healthy? (Why?)
- What's your opinion of computer games? ... (Why?)
- What kinds of books do you enjoy reading? ... (Why?)

Activity 1 - Examiner's comments

These comments relate to the candidates' performance across the whole Speaking test (Parts 1-4).

Global Achievement

Marta

Marta is able to handle communication on a range of familiar and unfamiliar topics, with very little hesitation. She organises extended discourse and, when given the opportunity, responds and builds on her partners' ideas well. She is systematically coherent and uses accurate language to develop her ideas though may produce some repetition when concluding her turn.

Global Achievement score: **4**

Gio

Gio handles communication easily on a wide range of topics, including abstract topics, often with little or no hesitation. She uses a range of linguistic resources appropriately to express her ideas and concepts and she is consistently intelligible and coherent.

Global Achievement score: **5**

Anna

Globally, Anna handles communication on a limited range of familiar topics, with very little hesitation. She interacts with her partners appropriately but does not always develop ideas. There is some extended, generally cohesive, discourse. Inaccuracies, even when speaking about familiar topics, can compromise coherence.

Global Achievement score: **2**

Grammatical Resource

Watch and assess a real example

Before you watch, think about the examples of complex grammatical structures you would expect to hear at C1 level. You can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or [the English Grammar Profile](#) for ideas. Make notes in the first table, column 1.

As you watch, note examples of complex grammar that you hear in column 2.

	Simple grammatical forms	
	How is their range (variety?)	Do they use these forms accurately ?
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
	Complex grammatical forms	
	How is their range (variety?)	Do they use these forms accurately ?
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 2 - Handout: Grammatical Resource

Before you watch, think about the complex grammar structures you think examiners expect to hear at C1 level. You can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or [the English Grammar Profile](#) for ideas. Make notes in the first table, column 1.

As you watch, note examples of complex grammar that you hear in column 2.

Complex grammar at C1 level	
Examples - my ideas	Examples I heard in the video
e.g. relative clauses	

Watch again and complete the table.

	Grammatical forms	
	How is their range (variety?)	Do they use grammar accurately ?
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • Not many different forms	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes

Lexical Resource

Before you watch, think about the examples of vocabulary you would expect to see at C1 level. You can use your C1 coursebook syllabus or [the English Grammar Profile](#) for ideas. Make notes in the first table, column 1.

As you watch, note examples of C1 vocabulary that you hear in column 2.

Vocabulary at C1 level	
Examples - my ideas	Examples I heard in the video

Watch again and complete the table.

	Lexical Resource	
	How is their range (variety?)	Do they use the words and phrases accurately ?
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • A bit simple for C1	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • A bit simple for C1	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Candidate's name:	• Wide • Good • A bit simple for C1	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Pronunciation

Watch the video. Use this table to evaluate and make notes on the candidates' Pronunciation.

You could choose to focus on one candidate, if you prefer. Try and write down examples of what they say.

Candidate's name:			
Can you understand the candidate easily?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Is their intonation suitable?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:
Is word and sentence stress in the right place?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:
Do they pronounce individual sounds correctly?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 5 - Pronunciation

Watch the video. Use this table to evaluate and make notes on the candidates' Pronunciation.

You could choose to focus on one candidate, if you prefer. Try and write down examples of what they say.

Candidate's name:			
Can you understand the candidate easily?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes
Is their intonation suitable?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:
Is word and sentence stress in the right place?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:
Do they pronounce individual sounds correctly?	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Usually • Sometimes Examples:

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 5 - Examiner's comments

Pronunciation

Teresa

Teresa is intelligible throughout the test. Sentence and word stress is accurately placed, and she occasionally uses sentence stress to enhance meaning:

- *It can go into the negative effects of the money matters.* (Part 3)

Most individual sounds are articulated clearly. Some that are less so tend not to affect intelligibility.

Score: **4**

Antonio

Antonio is intelligible and shows good continuing and closing intonation, especially in longer turns.

Antonio's word and sentence stress are all appropriately and are effectively used to convey clear meaning. His speech can sometimes seem a little staccato, particularly in Part 2, however, all sounds are clearly articulated:

- *Really... sure... of... doing* (Part 3)

Score: **4.5**

Discourse Management

Watch the video. For each candidate, circle the word that reflects their performance in Discourse Management and note examples. You could choose to focus on one candidate, if you prefer.

Try and write down examples of what they say.

Candidate's name:	Candidate's name:	Candidate's name:
In Part 2 they spoke extensively / were prompted by the examiner.	In Part 2 they spoke extensively / were prompted by the examiner.	In Part 2 they spoke extensively / were prompted by the examiner.
Very little / some hesitation	Very little / some hesitation	Very little / some hesitation
A wide range / range of cohesive devices and discourse markers Examples:	A wide range / range of cohesive devices and discourse markers Examples:	A wide range / range of cohesive devices and discourse markers Examples:
No / very little / some repetition	No / very little / some repetition	No / very little / some repetition
Always / mostly relevant	Always / mostly relevant	Always / mostly relevant

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 4 - Handout: Discourse Management

Examiner comments about Discourse Management

Remember these comments are about the candidates' performance throughout all four parts of the test.

Pedro

Pedro produces extended stretches of language throughout the test with ease and with very little hesitation:

Yeah, I think they could also use some professional help, you know, because there are professionals in technology that can help them with this stuff (Part 2)

His responses are always relevant, coherent and often varied. He uses a wide range of cohesive devices and discourse markers:

So, yeah, I think the people that are camping here on the swamp are having the most fun out of it. (Part 2)

Score: **5**

Isabela

Isabela produces extended stretches of language with ease and no hesitation, although she does have difficulty completing the task in Part 2:

... these people right here are camping and I think they're there for to have fun, you know, a vacation of sorts (Part 2)

Her contributions are consistently relevant, although there is some repetition.

Her contributions are coherent although not always varied and she uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers, although it is sometimes disjointed due to her frequent use of

“you know”:

So... because... when... (Part 2)

Score: **4.5**

Useful language for Part 2

In Speaking Part 2 you will:

- compare and speculate about two photographs.
- talk on your own for a minute without interruption.
- listen to your partner's talk and answer a question about their photographs.

Below are some useful phrases to help you compare and speculate about the pictures you chose.

Write the useful phrases in the table under the correct heading.

What distinguishes the two pictures is ... They might be ... They're quite alike in that ... I'm going to compare the picture on the left with the one in the centre. I wouldn't be surprised if ... A common feature of both photos is ... The biggest difference between them is ... In certain respects the pictures are quite similar because ... They may well be... I've chosen the photograph that shows ... and the one with ... While / Whereas the people in one photo seem to be ..., in the other one people are ...			
Saying which pictures you're talking about	Describing similarities	Describing differences	Speculating

★ Top tips for success!

1. Don't just describe the two pictures. Start by comparing them briefly and move on to answering the questions (in the exam, these are also written above the pictures).
2. Use the useful language you noted down from the examples and your previous research tasks. BUT don't write anything down – you won't be able to make notes in the exam.
3. Time yourself to make sure you speak for at least a minute.
4. Listen carefully to your partner so you can respond naturally to your question.
5. Record yourself - this is exam practice, so if you are not satisfied with your first attempt you can and should repeat the task.
6. Reflect on your performance and ask your partner for feedback. This will help you focus on the areas you need to work on.

Part 2 Useful language answers

Saying which pictures you're talking about	Describing similarities	Describing differences	Speculating
I've chosen the photograph that shows ... and the one with ... I'm going to compare the picture on the left with the one in the centre.	A common feature of both photos is ... They're quite alike in that ... In certain respects, the pictures are quite similar because ...	What distinguishes the two pictures is ... The biggest difference between them is ... While / Whereas the people in one photo seem to be ..., in the other one people are ...	They may well be... They might be ... I wouldn't be surprised if ...

Part 2 Speaking practice

Exam task

Each of you will be given three pictures. You have to talk about two of them on your own for about a minute, and also to answer a question briefly about your partner's pictures.

Candidate A, it's your turn first. Here are your pictures. They show people with presents in different situations. Compare two of the pictures, and say what significance the presents might have for the people, and how they might be feeling.

Candidate B, who do you think has given the most thought to their choice of present?

What significance might the presents have for these people?
How might they be feeling?



Exam tip >

Remember that the questions the examiner asks you are also written above the photos.

Interactive Communication

Watch the video. Use this table to evaluate and make notes on the candidates' Interactive Communication.

Try and write down examples of what they say.

Candidate's name:			
Do they start conversations?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:
Do they reply to the questions and comments of others?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:
Do they open out the conversation by adding new ideas?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes Examples:
Do they need help from other candidates or the examiner?	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

Activity 6 - Handout: Interactive Communication handout

Useful language for managing discussions

Starting a conversation or involving another person	Adding a new idea to a discussion	Referring to what someone else said
Shall we start with...?	Yes, and another thing I just thought of is...	As you said before, ...

Controlled practice task

Practise with a partner, taking it in turns to do the tasks in the circles using phrases from the table above.

Start a conversation about something in the news. Listen and refer to what your partner says.

Discuss the best way to improve your speaking in English. Keep adding points.

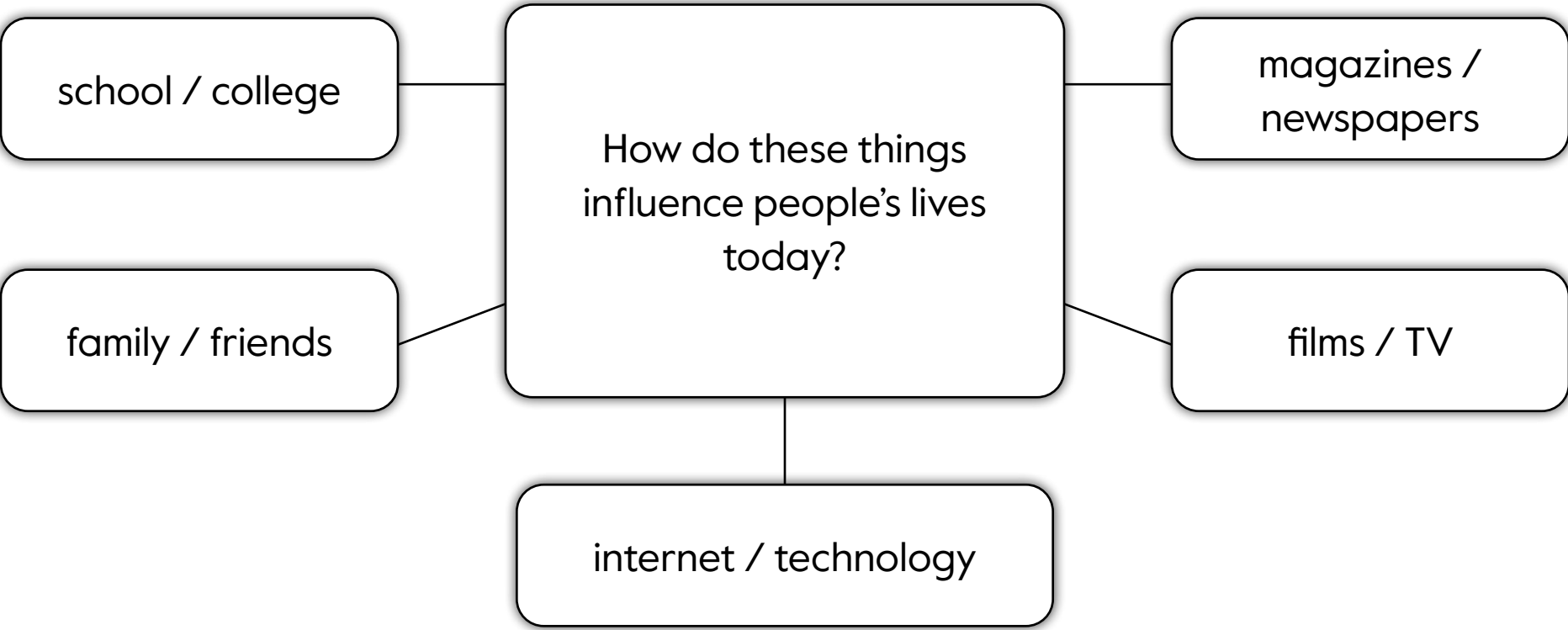
Ask your partner about an ambition they have and add ideas of your own.

Ask your partner a question about sport. Build on what they say.

Talk about your favourite food, about sport. Ask a question to involve your partner.

Discuss something you watched on TV recently. Try to keep widening the discussion to other TV shows.

Part 3 discussion task



Evaluating interaction

Watch the video. Use this table to evaluate the candidates' Interactive communication.

Candidate's name:			
Do they start conversations?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes
Do they reply to the questions and comments of others?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes
Do they open out the conversation by adding new ideas?	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes	• Almost always • Often • Sometimes
Do they need help from other candidates or the examiner?	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No	• Yes, several times • Yes, once or twice • No

Compare your ideas to the [examiner comments](#).

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

- [C1 Advanced 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 C1 Advanced Preparation page (see link 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 for the C1 Advanced Preparation page (see link above).

Teacher Handbooks

- [C1 Advanced](#)

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 C1 Advanced Preparation page (see link above).

Audioscripts are in the sample tests which are linked from the C1 Advanced Preparation page (see links above).

- [Mock test toolkit](#)



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