



Cambridge English: Advanced Speaking

Sample test with examiner's comments

This document will help you familiarise yourself with the Speaking test for *Cambridge English: Advanced*, also known as *Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)*. It accompanies [this video](#), where you can see Dario, from Switzerland, and Jackie, from Italy, take a Speaking test. Both these candidates cope well overall with the tasks in the test.

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About the Cambridge English: Advanced Speaking test

The Speaking test is 15 minutes long and consists of four parts. The standard test format is two candidates and two examiners. One examiner (the interlocutor) conducts the test, providing you with the necessary materials and explaining what you have to do. The other examiner (the assessor) is introduced to you, but then takes no further part in the interaction.

Part 1 (3 minutes)

The interlocutor first asks you and your partner a few questions. The interlocutor asks candidates for some information about themselves, then widens the scope of the questions by asking about, for example, candidates' leisure activities, studies, travel and daily life. Candidates are expected to respond to the interlocutor's questions and listen to what their partner has to say.

Part 2 (a one-minute 'long turn' for each candidate, plus a 30-second response from the second candidate)

You are each given the opportunity to talk for about a minute, and to comment briefly after your partner has spoken.

The interlocutor gives you a set of pictures and asks you to talk about them for about one minute. It is important to listen carefully to the interlocutor's instructions. The interlocutor then asks your partner a question about your pictures and your partner responds briefly.

You are then given another set of pictures to look at. Your partner talks about these pictures for about one minute. This time the interlocutor asks you a question about your partner's pictures and you respond briefly.

Part 3 (approximately 4 minutes)

In this part of the test, you and your partner are asked to talk together. The interlocutor places a new set of pictures on the table between you. This stimulus provides the basis for a discussion. The interlocutor explains what you have to do.

Part 4 (approximately 4 minutes)

The interlocutor asks some further questions, which leads to a more general discussion of what you have talked about in Part 3. You may comment on your partner's answers if you wish.



How the Cambridge English: Advanced Speaking test is assessed

As you do the test, the **assessor** focuses on these areas of your English:

Grammatical Resource

Are you using a good range of grammatical structures? Are you using these structures correctly?

Lexical Resource

Are you using a good range of vocabulary? Are you using vocabulary which is appropriate for the topics you are talking about? Are you using it correctly? Are you showing that you can use suitable vocabulary to talk about topics which are unfamiliar to you, as well as topics which you are more used to talking about?

Discourse Management

Are you using both long and short answers, depending on the task? Is everything you say relevant to the topic of discussion? Are your ideas expressed in clear and well-organised language? Are you using a range of language to link and organise your ideas? Are you able to speak fluently, without too much hesitation?

Pronunciation

You don't need to have an English accent, but it is important to be clear. Are you pronouncing individual sounds correctly? Are you placing stress on the right parts of words and on the right words in sentences? Does your voice go up and down at the right times? Does your pronunciation help you to communicate what you mean?

Interactive Communication

Are you able to interact with the other candidate easily and effectively? Are you listening to the other candidate and answering in a way that makes sense? Are you able to start a discussion and help manage the discussion so that you and your partner keep it going? Can you think of new ideas to add to the discussion?

The **interlocutor** focuses on your **Global Achievement**. This is about your general performance. How well are you speaking about the topics you are given? Are your answers clear and fluent? Are you using language which is right for the *Cambridge English: Advanced* level?

When your test is complete, the examiners give you marks for each of these things: Grammar, Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation, Interactive Communication and Global Achievement. The marks are for what you do over the whole Speaking test, not for each part of the test. The examiners give you marks for your own performance – they don't compare you with the other candidate.



Comments on the sample test

Part 1	
Dario	Jackie
<p>Dario answers the question about where he is from clearly, adding a brief comment about his home town; he also answers the second question appropriately.</p> <p>In his response to the question about the importance of taking regular breaks while studying, Dario supports what he says with reasons: ‘because I think if you study a long time it gets harder and harder ...’, so his answer is an appropriate length.</p> <p>Dario begins his answer to the final question with ‘Actually ...’ to indicate that he can’t answer the question in the simple way the question asks, and it is fine to do this.</p> <p>Dario occasionally corrects himself, e.g. ‘in the internet – on the internet’, and it is fine to do this if you realise you have made a mistake.</p>	<p>Jackie adds a brief comment about the village where she comes from, as well as the relevant additional information that she has been living in Cambridge for some time.</p> <p>She begins her answer to the second question with ‘Well ...’, which gives her a moment to think about how she is going to answer. This is a good strategy to use if you need time to think.</p> <p>Similarly, she begins her answer to the third question (about working better if she follows a routine) by saying ‘I think so’, which sounds very natural and again allows her to organise what she is going to say next; she then explains further and expands on what would happen if she didn’t have a routine.</p> <p>She gives a clear and extended answer to keeping up to date with the news; this answer is a good length for this part of the test.</p>
<p>Part 1 General comments</p> <p>Both Dario and Jackie answer the examiner’s questions without too much hesitation and they give answers which are about the right length, extending them with some detail which is appropriate to the questions.</p>	
<p>Part 1 tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise giving information about yourself. • Add a few details as well as general information. 	

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- If your answer is very short, add a reason/some more detail.
- Don't give answers that you have memorised as they don't sound natural.

Part 2	
Dario	Jackie
<p>Dario demonstrates some control of Grammar and uses some complex sentences, e.g. <u>'he has to concentrate, but he can forget his problems about work because it's not his work obviously, it's more his leisure time ...'</u>; 'he seems to be hiking in a forest all alone ... he tries to maybe forget or just relax, which is a little bit strange if you first look at it ...'.</p> <p>There are, however, some errors, particularly with prepositions, e.g. 'for his own', and subject-verb agreement, e.g. 'The advantages of this activities is ...'.</p> <p>His Vocabulary is adequate to talk about the pictures in a simple way, e.g. 'concentrate', 'leisure', 'everyday', but it would be good if he could show a wider range.</p> <p>In terms of Discourse Management, although he talks about each of the pictures in turn, <u>his talk is a little repetitive</u>, e.g. '... with sport he tries to maybe forget or just relax ... but with sport you can relax ... and he can now relax ...'.</p> <p>Also, he doesn't fully answer the questions (why these people might have chosen to spend time on their own and what the advantages might be of doing these activities with other people); he simply refers to some general points</p>	<p>Jackie generally maintains control of her Grammar and uses a range of forms, e.g. <u>'There's no competition in the second one, it's just for the pleasure of being ... people are just trying to reach ... get the first place in the race ...'</u>.</p> <p>However, there are also occasional errors in singular/plural nouns: 'in the mountain ... both situation are', so improvement in accuracy would be a useful focus for her.</p> <p>Her Vocabulary is mostly appropriate for the task, e.g. 'competition', 'involved', 'rough'; she has difficulty finding more specific words, e.g. 'ground', and so <u>uses the nearest word she can think of</u>: 'floor'. She also has difficulty finding a suitable adjective to use to describe 'competition' and uses 'strong'. A wider range of vocabulary would have helped her express more detail in this task.</p> <p>Although Jackie hesitates a little at times, she does reasonably well in Discourse Management, comparing the pictures and organising her ideas clearly to express how challenging it might be to cycle in these situations and how the people might be feeling: <u>'In the first picture it looks like ... while in the second picture ...'</u>.</p> <p>Jackie's Pronunciation is generally</p>

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<p>about the pictures and the advantages of these activities.</p>	<p>intelligible; there are a few errors with individual sounds, e.g. 'hard', 'mountain', 'leisure', but she is never unclear.</p>
<p>Dario's Pronunciation is generally clear and intelligible.</p>	<p>Response to question after Dario's talk: Jackie gives a response of appropriate length, selecting one of the situations and saying why very clearly.</p>
<p>Response to question after Jackie's talk: Dario gives a clear response, choosing one of the situations and saying why.</p>	

Part 2 tips

- Remember not to simply describe the pictures.
- Don't forget that the questions you are asked to discuss are printed above the pictures.
- Practise comparing two pictures to get a feel for how much you can say in 1 minute and how you can organise what you say.
- Approach the task in an organised way, e.g. focus first on one question and then the second while comparing the two pictures.
- If you don't know or can't remember a word you need, think of another way to express your idea.
- In response to your question after your partner's talk, give a reason for your choice.

Part 3	
Dario	Jackie
<p>Dario responds to Jackie's initial comment about the doctors by talking about the picture of two pilots: 'a difficulty is you have to do a long training before you can start driving an airplane ...'. Interaction is an important focus in this task, so it would have been better for Dario to respond to Jackie's comment first before changing the focus.</p> <p>At first, Dario only responds to Jackie's ideas with 'Yes' and then moves onto a different picture, so there is little linking of his ideas to hers. Later, after Jackie's</p>	<p>Jackie starts the discussion saying, 'I was obviously thinking about this picture here because they are doctors so they have to ...'. The language structure she uses to begin speaking is slightly strange, but despite this, she effectively starts the interaction by focusing on one picture (of the doctors) and the discussion question of what difficulties the people might have doing the job.</p> <p>Jackie often responds to what Dario says before adding her own view; when he talks about the footballers, she says, 'I do</p>

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disagreement about professional football, [he makes some attempt to link his next point to what she says](#): 'so maybe it's a little bit similar because this looks like researchers ...'. He also responds to Jackie's direct question with '[Oh yes, I would say or maybe as well ...](#)', and '[Yes, so we agree on this one](#)'. So, he improves in terms of Interactive Communication.

General comments on Part 3

Although Dario does have a lot to say, and explains his points quite well at times, he uses a fairly narrow range of Grammar and Vocabulary and makes a few errors with both, e.g. 'do a long training', 'driving an airplane', and 'reach' instead of 'achieve'.

In terms of Discourse Management, Dario makes some good, relevant points and sometimes develops them in a clear and organised way.

Dario's Pronunciation is generally clear.

In terms of Interactive Communication, he gets better, but overall he could take a more active part in the discussion by linking his ideas much more to Jackie's and asking her more questions, rather than simply responding with his views without commenting on hers.

[agree, but at the same time it's not one of the most difficult jobs ...](#)' and '[I do totally agree with you and also I still would say about this one ...](#)'.

She also [helps move the discussion towards an outcome](#) when she asks Dario, 'so you think this one might be one of the most satisfying jobs?'. (This is the decision part of the task.)

Jackie interacts effectively, starting the discussion, responding to Dario's ideas before adding her own views and moving the discussion forward to a decision.

General comments on Part 3

Jackie uses a good range of both Grammar and Vocabulary appropriate for this task.

In terms of Discourse Management, she organises her contributions clearly, [making comparisons between the different pictures](#), e.g. '... it's just about sport, while here ...' and moves the discussion forward effectively.

Her Pronunciation is generally very clear.

As mentioned above, her Interactive Communication is good as she starts the discussion, responds to her partner, adds her own views and prompts a decision.

Part 3 tips

- Remember that the questions you are discussing are printed above the pictures.
- Discuss each picture together before you try to make any decisions.

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- Remember it is not essential to make a decision if you are still involved in the discussion.
- Listen to your partner and respond to what they say before adding your own ideas.
- You can ask your partner questions too if they are having difficulty adding to the discussion.

Part 4	
Dario	Jackie
<p>Dario shows some ability to use simple grammar structures and a few complex structures, but he is less consistent in this part of the test than before, and there are some errors e.g. <u>'now it's crisis in Europe so it's not the best thing ...'</u>; <u>'... not too much things ...'</u>.</p> <p>His Vocabulary is good enough to be able to deal with the questions asked, but it isn't always accurate and lacks range, e.g. <u>'a little bit free working time'</u>; <u>'prepare with ...'</u>.</p> <p>In terms of Discourse Management, Dario's answer to the first question is quite long, but at times it is not very clear. His other answers are less extended, e.g. <u>'They can create a good atmosphere at the working place so that it looks nice, maybe good offices'</u>.</p> <p>His Pronunciation is generally clear.</p> <p>Dario answers all the examiner's questions and therefore demonstrates adequate Interactive Communication, but he could have developed some of his points further and tried to link them to Jackie's.</p>	<p>Jackie shows control of simple Grammar forms and attempts some complex forms, e.g. <u>'If you're a very good doctor and you're 60 years old, but still you can do this job very efficiently, you should just carry on as long as you feel like ...'</u>.</p> <p>Her Vocabulary is adequate for this discussion but at times it is limited in range, e.g. <u>'... put the atmosphere quite informal'</u>.</p> <p>In terms of her Discourse Management, she produces <u>some extended language with clear ideas</u>, e.g. 'I think I do agree with him apart from the last bit ... it's OK to see the availability of jobs, but at the same time if you're not good say at languages then it's very hard to find a job in ...'.</p> <p>Her Pronunciation is always intelligible.</p> <p>She also demonstrates good Interactive Communication skills in this part, picking up on some of Dario's points as in the example above and <u>'So you mean like practical lessons?'</u>; <u>'I was thinking about a little bit of practice like in the real kind of jobs that they do ...'</u>.</p>

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Part 4 tips

- Make sure you extend your answers with reasons and examples.
- Remember you can respond to what your partner says in their answers.
- Sometimes the examiner will ask you to discuss a question together.

Overall	
Dario	Jackie
<p>Grammar Dario often uses simple grammatical forms accurately, but there are a number of errors both in some simple forms and in more complex structures. This would be a good area for him to concentrate on improving.</p> <p>Vocabulary Dario uses appropriate vocabulary for topics he is familiar with. However, he relies on repetition of words because he lacks a range of vocabulary to deal well with less familiar topics.</p> <p>Discourse Management Dario does produce stretches of language without much hesitation, but at times the language is repetitive; it also lacks clear progression and is therefore not always clear.</p> <p>Pronunciation His pronunciation is generally clear, despite the influence of his first language.</p> <p>Interactive Communication Dario interacts with ease with the examiner, but he should link his contributions to his partner's more and also take the lead more in developing the</p>	<p>Grammar Jackie uses an adequate range of grammatical forms and uses many of them with some accuracy; when she uses more complex forms, there are some errors.</p> <p>Vocabulary She demonstrates a range of vocabulary which is adequate for familiar topics, but she lacks more specific vocabulary for topics less familiar to her, and it would be good for her to extend this range.</p> <p>Discourse Management Jackie expresses her ideas clearly and with ease, using a range of cohesive devices.</p> <p>Pronunciation Her pronunciation is intelligible, with only occasional errors in some individual sounds.</p> <p>Interactive Communication Jackie does well in Interactive Communication, showing an ability to initiate and develop a discussion. She responds to her partner's ideas and moves the discussion forward effectively to a conclusion.</p>

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discussion and working towards a decision.

Global Achievement

Dario handles communication on familiar topics with little hesitation; he is not so confident with less familiar topics and the accuracy and appropriacy of his language affect how clearly he can communicate his views.

Global Achievement

Jackie generally answers the questions well; she uses a good deal of accurate language to produce extended discourse which is usually very clear.