

Overview of the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test

Aims:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ to familiarise students with the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test▪ to provide practice of reading for specific information and formulating and answering questions
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Materials required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Student handouts 1 and 2 (enough copies of each for half the class)▪ Copies of the pictures for Parts 2 and 3 from the B1 Preliminary for Schools handbook (optional)
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Time required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 50 minutes
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Procedure

1. Tell students they are going to learn about the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test. Ask them to brainstorm in pairs what they think might be important to do, or not do (e.g. appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary, dealing with the topic, listening to/communicating with each other) during the Speaking test.
Feedback may raise a number of points which are likely to be covered later in the lesson, but it is a good time to highlight the fact that the ability to communicate and interact is a key element of what is being assessed.
Timing: 10 mins
2. Put your students into two groups. Give one group **Student handout 1** and the other group **Student handout 2**.
3. Tell your students that they should read through the information on their worksheets. Then they should work in pairs to decide what questions they will have to ask to get the missing information they need. Give them the question sheets, show them the example at the top and tell them to write the rest of their questions on the sheets. Monitor the pairs of students as they write the questions they need and help them as appropriate (see **Answer key**).
Timing: 10 mins
4. When the pairs have got all their questions, put the students into new pairs, so that one student in each pair has **Student handout 1** and the other has **Student handout 2**. Ask them not to show one another their information, and to ask and answer questions in order to fill in the missing information on their worksheets.
Timing: 15 mins
5. When they have finished, tell the pairs to check they have all the correct information by looking at each other's handouts.
Timing: 5 mins

6. Ask the whole class if they have any further questions and discuss with students:

Which part do you think is the easiest/most difficult for you? Why?

Which part will need a lot of practice?

Timing: 5 mins

7. There are no correct answers in this discussion, but focusing on each part of the test may offer the opportunity to explain further some points, or give additional information. You could also show them examples of visuals used in Part 2 and prompts for Part 3, to give students an idea of what they will be looking at in the test.

8. Use the additional information (below) to help answer their questions, and remember that there are activities available which look at each section in more depth.

Timing: 5 mins

Suggested follow-up activity

If possible, download the B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test sample video. You can find it [here](#).

Additional information

The standard format is two examiners and two candidates. In cases where there are an uneven number of candidates at a centre, the last Speaking test of the session will be taken by three candidates together instead of two. When three candidates are tested together, the test format, test material and procedure will remain the same, but the timing will be longer: 14–17 minutes instead of 10–12.

Candidates are not given their mark at the end of the Speaking test.

Part 1

This part tests the candidates' ability to use language of simple social interaction.

Each candidate interacts with the interlocutor, not with each other; they are asked questions in turn about their personal details, daily routines, likes, dislikes etc. Answers do not need to be very long, but neither should they be too short, so if some answers are very short, they can be extended with reasons or examples.

Part 2

This part tests the candidates' ability to use a range of vocabulary and to organise language in a long turn.

Each candidate describes a photograph in turn. Both (or all in a group of three) photographs show an everyday situation and are about different topics. Candidates should describe the people and activities in their photographs as fully as possible.

Part 3

This part tests the candidates' ability to take part in a discussion using appropriate language and interactive strategies.

Candidates interact with each other in a simulated situation (not a role-play). Candidates are given a visual stimulus and the interlocutor describes the situation and activity. Candidates discuss their ideas together to make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement.

Part 4

This part tests the candidates' ability to engage in discussion, giving and eliciting opinions from each other.

Candidates interact with each other, talking about their opinions, likes/dislikes, preferences, experiences, habits etc. in relation to the theme established in Part 3. The interlocutor sets up the activity, by asking questions which encourage the candidates to discuss the topic in Part 3 further. They are expected to use appropriate interactive strategies, eliciting the views of their partner(s), as well as talking about themselves.

Student handout – complete version

B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test takes 10–12 minutes for two students and 14–17 minutes for three students. There are two examiners: one examiner (the interlocutor) speaks to you and tells you what to do in the test; the interlocutor also gives you one general (global) mark.

The second examiner (the assessor) listens carefully to what you say and gives you four marks, one each for your Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. So remember that it is not just grammar which is important; the vocabulary you use is also important, as well as how well you organise what you say and your pronunciation. Don't worry if you make some mistakes with any of these things; you should try to carry on speaking.

In Part 1 you answer a few personal questions, for example, your name and age, where you live, your studies, your daily routines and things you like and dislike. This part takes 2–3 minutes. Your answers do not need to be very long, but if your answer is very short it is a good idea to add a little more information if you can such as a reason or an example.

In Part 2 you talk by yourself for about a minute about a photograph which shows an everyday situation. You can describe everything you see in the photograph: the people, the activities and the place. Your partner will then talk about a different photograph, which is about a different topic. Don't worry if you don't know some of the vocabulary – there is enough in the photograph for you to talk about.

In Part 3 you do a task with your partner. The assessor will describe a situation with some ideas to discuss and give you a picture which shows you all of this. The picture in the middle of the sheet shows the situation and the other pictures are ideas about it for you to discuss. You will have two to three minutes to talk together. It's not necessary to talk about all the pictures, or to make a decision. It's very important not to make a decision at the beginning; if you do this, there will be nothing for you to talk about together and the examiners need to hear you speak. Remember the marks you get are for your language, not your ideas, so make sure you say what you think and listen and respond to your partner's opinion too.

Part 4 is about 3 minutes long. The interlocutor will remind you what your pictures showed and ask you questions related to this topic. They will also ask you to discuss a question with your partner. You should talk about your likes, dislikes, your interests and experience and ask your partner for their opinions. Try and keep your conversation going by giving and asking for opinions. If you don't say enough, the interlocutor will give you another question.

At the end of the test the interlocutor will say, 'Thank you, that is the end of the test'. The examiners don't give you your marks, so it's best to just stand up, say goodbye and leave the room.

Answer key – possible questions

1. How long is the Speaking test for a pair of students? **Answer: 10–12 minutes**
2. What does the interlocutor say to you? **Answer: The interlocutor tells you what to do.**
3. How many aspects of your language does the assessor mark? **Answer: 4**
4. What kind of questions will you have in Part 1? **Answer: personal questions**
5. How long does Part 1 last? **Answer: 2–3 minutes**
6. If your answer to a question is very short, what can you add? **Answer: reasons or examples**
7. In Part 2, how long do you have to talk about your photograph? **Answer: about a minute**
8. What should you describe in your photograph? **Answer: everything**
9. Is your partner's photograph about a different topic? **Answer: yes**
10. Do you speak by yourself in Part 3? **Answer: no, with your partner**
11. What does the picture in the middle of the sheet show? **Answer: the situation**
12. How long do you talk for in Part 3? **Answer: 2–3 minutes**
13. What is it not necessary to do in Part 3? **Answer: to talk about all the pictures or make a decision**
14. Why is it important not to make a decision at the beginning of Part 3? **Answer: If you do, there may not be enough to say.**
15. Do you get marks just for your language or for your ideas as well? **Answer: for your language only**
16. How long is Part 4? **Answer: 3 minutes**
17. Do you talk to the interlocutor in Part 4? **Answer: yes**
18. How can you keep your conversation going with your partner in Part 4? **Answer: by giving and asking opinions**
19. What will the interlocutor give you if necessary in Part 4? **Answer: another question**
20. What won't the examiners give you at the end? **Answer: your marks**

Student handout 1

Please read the text and make questions to find information to put in the gaps.

B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test takes (1) _____ for two students and 14–17 minutes for three students. There are two examiners: one examiner (the interlocutor) speaks to you and tells you what to do in the test; the interlocutor also gives you one general (global) mark.

The second examiner (the assessor) listens carefully to what you say and gives you (3) _____ marks, one each for your Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. So remember that it is not just grammar which is important; the vocabulary you use is also important, as well as how well you organise what you say and your pronunciation. Don't worry if you make some mistakes with any of these things; you should try to carry on speaking.

In Part 1 you answer a few personal questions, for example, your name and age, where you live, your studies, your daily routines and things you like and dislike. This part takes (5) _____. Your answers do not need to be very long, but if your answer is very short it is a good idea to add a little more information if you can, such as a reason or an example.

In Part 2 you talk by yourself for (7) _____ about a photograph which shows an everyday situation. You can describe everything you see in the photograph: the people, the activities and the place. Your partner will then talk about a different photograph, which is about a (9) _____ topic. Don't worry if you don't know some of the vocabulary – there is enough in the photograph for you to talk about.

In Part 3 you do a task with (11) _____. The assessor will describe a situation with some ideas to discuss and give you a picture which shows you all of this. The picture in the middle of the sheet shows the situation and the other pictures are ideas about it for you to discuss. You will have (13) _____ to talk together. It's not necessary to talk about all the pictures, or to make a decision. It's very important not to make a decision at the beginning; if you do this, there will be (15) _____ for you to talk about together and the examiners need to hear you speak. Remember the marks you get are for your language, not your ideas, so make sure you say what you think and listen and respond to your partner's opinion too.

Part 4 is about 3 minutes long. The interlocutor will remind you what your picture showed and ask you questions related to this topic. They will also ask you to discuss with (17) _____. You should talk about your likes, dislikes, your interests and experience and ask your partner for their opinions. Try and keep your conversation going by giving and asking for opinions. If you don't say enough, the interlocutor will give you (19) _____.

At the end of the test the interlocutor will say, 'Thank you, that is the end of the test'. The examiners don't give you your marks, so it's best to just stand up, say goodbye and leave the room.

Student handout 1

1. Example: How long is the Speaking test for a pair of students?

3. _____ ?

5. _____ ?

7. _____ ?

9. _____ ?

11. _____ ?

13. _____ ?

15. _____ ?

17. _____ ?

19. _____ ?

Student handout 2

Please read the text and make questions to find information to put in the gaps.

B1 Preliminary for Schools Speaking test takes 10–12 minutes for two students and 14–17 minutes for three students. There are two examiners: one examiner (the interlocutor) speaks to you and tells you (2) _____ in the test; the interlocutor also gives you one general (global) mark.

The second examiner (the assessor) listens carefully to what you say and gives you four marks, one each for your Grammar and Vocabulary, Discourse Management, Pronunciation and Interactive Communication. So remember that it is not just grammar which is important; the vocabulary you use is also important, as well as how well you organise what you say and your pronunciation. Don't worry if you make some mistakes with any of these things; you should try to carry on speaking.

In Part 1 you answer a few (4) _____ questions, for example, your name and age, where you live, your studies, your daily routines and things you like and dislike. This part takes 2–3 minutes. Your answers do not need to be very long, but if your answer is very short it is a good idea to add (6) _____ if you can, such as a reason or an example.

In Part 2 you talk by yourself for about a minute about a photograph which shows an everyday situation. You can describe (8) _____ you see in the photograph: the people, the activities and the place. Your partner will then talk about a different photograph, which is about a different topic. Don't worry if you don't know some of the vocabulary – there is enough in the photograph for you to talk about.

In Part 3 you do a task with your partner. The assessor will describe a situation with some ideas to discuss and give you a picture which shows you all of this. The picture in the middle of the sheet shows (10) _____ and the other pictures are ideas about it for you to discuss. You will have two to three minutes to talk together. It's not necessary to talk about all the pictures, or to (12) _____. It's very important not to make a decision at the beginning; if you do this, there will be nothing for you to talk about together and the examiners need to hear you speak. Remember the marks you get are for your language, not your (14) _____, so make sure you say what you think and listen and respond to your partner's opinion too.

Part 4 is about (16) _____ long. The interlocutor will remind you what your pictures showed and ask you questions related to this topic. They will also ask you to discuss a question with your partner. You should talk about your likes, dislikes, your interests and experience and ask your partner for their opinions. Try and keep your conversation going by (18) _____. If you don't say enough, the interlocutor will give you another question.

At the end of the test the interlocutor will say, 'Thank you, that is the end of the test'. The examiners don't give you (20) _____, so it's best to just stand up, say goodbye and leave the room.

Student handout 2

2. Example: What does the interlocutor say to you?

4. _____ ?

6. _____ ?

8. _____ ?

10. _____ ?

12. _____ ?

14. _____ ?

16. _____ ?

18. _____ ?

20. _____ ?