Cambridge English Skills Test General

Speaking

What do I need to know about my test?

- The Speaking test takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.
- The Speaking test is a multi-level test. This means students of all abilities can take it. Some of the questions are short and some are longer.
- Some of the test parts include preparation time, and some do not. There is a blue bar to show how much time you have to prepare. Use the preparation time to think about what you're going to say.
- You can use a pen and paper to make notes on what you are going to say.
- Listen to and read the instructions carefully before you start speaking. There will be a sound ('beep') at the start of the speaking time. Only speak after you hear this beep.
- Try your best to speak for all the time available. Speak in full sentences, give examples, expand on your ideas and try to use lots of different English grammar and vocabulary.
- The green bar on the screen shows you how long you have to speak, but don't worry if you get interrupted before the end of your answers.
- Keep the microphone the same distance from your mouth throughout the test.
- Do not touch the microphone part of your headset because this can create noise.
- Speak clearly and at the same volume throughout the test.
- Look at the sample test so that you are familiar with the types of questions in the Cambridge English Skills Test: General.

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Task type 1	**Talking about yourself** **Part 1** You will be asked 8 questions. Listen to each question and answer after the tone. For questions 1–4, you will have 10 seconds to speak. For questions 5–8, you will have 20 seconds to speak. **(What's your name?)** **(How do you spell your family name?)** **(Where are you from?)** **(Do you work or are you a student?)** **(What do you enjoy doing at weekends?)** **(Do you get many opportunities to speak English?)** **(What's the best thing that happened to you last week?)** **(Where would you like to live in the future?)**
No. of questions in task	6
Testing focus	Answering individual questions and giving personal information
Advice	• In Part One, you answer 6 questions about yourself. • For questions 1 to 4, you have 10 seconds speaking time. • For questions 5 and 6, you have 20 seconds speaking time. • The first two questions in the test are not marked. They are an opportunity to practise giving your answers to a computer. • Try and speak for all the time available. • Try to answer the questions as fully as possible. Try to give examples, expand on your points and where possible use a variety of language (e.g. structures, tenses, vocabulary etc.). • Don't worry if you get interrupted before the end of your answers – you won't be penalised for this.
Preparation	• Look through your English textbook or notebook and find questions that you have discussed in class. Find someone to practise the questions with. • Tip: Use a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary. In speaking tests, you need to show how much English you know.

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Task type 2	**Reading sentences** **Part 2** You will see 8 sentences on the screen. You will have 10 seconds to read each sentence aloud after the tone. 1. **The library is closed for staff training until 11am.** 2. **Mrs Hill would like to accept the invitation.** 3. **The bus timetable can sometimes change at short notice.** 4. **Thank you for coming to the film club's summer event.** 5. **How easy will it be for students to find accommodation near the university?** 6. **After you have finished making online payments, remember to log out of your account.** 7. **A 'UV Index' reading of 11 indicates an extreme risk of harm from the sun's rays.** 8. **On average there are twice as many applicants for undergraduate degree courses as places available.**
No. of questions in task	8
Testing focus	Demonstrating pronunciation and fluency ability at both word and sentence level
Advice	• For questions 1 to 8, you have 10 seconds speaking time. • Try to read the sentences out loud as naturally as possible. • You don't need to read each sentence more than once. • You won't be penalised if you don't use all the time available for this task to read the sentence out loud.
Preparation	• Listen to news reports, tutorials, podcasts, talks. Listen to the way stress and intonation patterns are used by English speakers and try to reproduce this when practising. • Listen to what happens with stress and intonation when speakers of English ask questions and try to reproduce this when practising. • Tip: Record yourself saying simple sentences in English. You can use AI or a dictation feature to hear an example of how the sentence is said. Compare it to how you said it. Listen to the way stress and intonation patterns are used by English speakers and try to reproduce this when practising.

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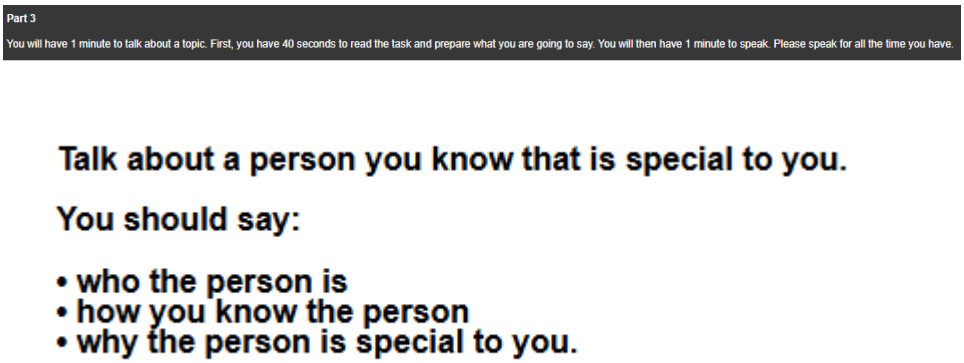
Task type 3	**Talking about a topic**  Part 3 You will have 1 minute to talk about a topic. First, you have 40 seconds to read the task and prepare what you are going to say. You will then have 1 minute to speak. Please speak for all the time you have. **Talk about a person you know that is special to you.** **You should say:** • **who the person is** • **how you know the person** • **why the person is special to you.**
No. of questions in task	1
Testing focus	Speaking about a topic and effectively organising and linking your ideas
Advice	• For this question you have 40 seconds to plan your answer followed by 60 seconds speaking time. • Make sure you use the thinking time to plan what you're going to say. Make notes based on the prompts you see on screen and use these notes to help structure your response. • Try and speak for all the time available. • It is important to keep to the topic you've been asked to talk about. • Don't worry if you get interrupted before the end of your answers – you won't be penalised for this.
Preparation	• Develop your ideas and opinions on a wide range of topics so you have something to say. In the test, you might have to talk about people you know, sports, technology, or celebrations. • Learn and practise using linking phrases so that you smoothly 'signal' that you are moving between ideas. For example: 'Let me tell you how I know this person', 'There's several reasons why this person is so special to me.' • Tip: Watch short videos of people talking about these topics. What do they say? Do they use any words or phrases which might help you communicate your ideas more effectively? How do they express themselves (pronunciation, intonation)?

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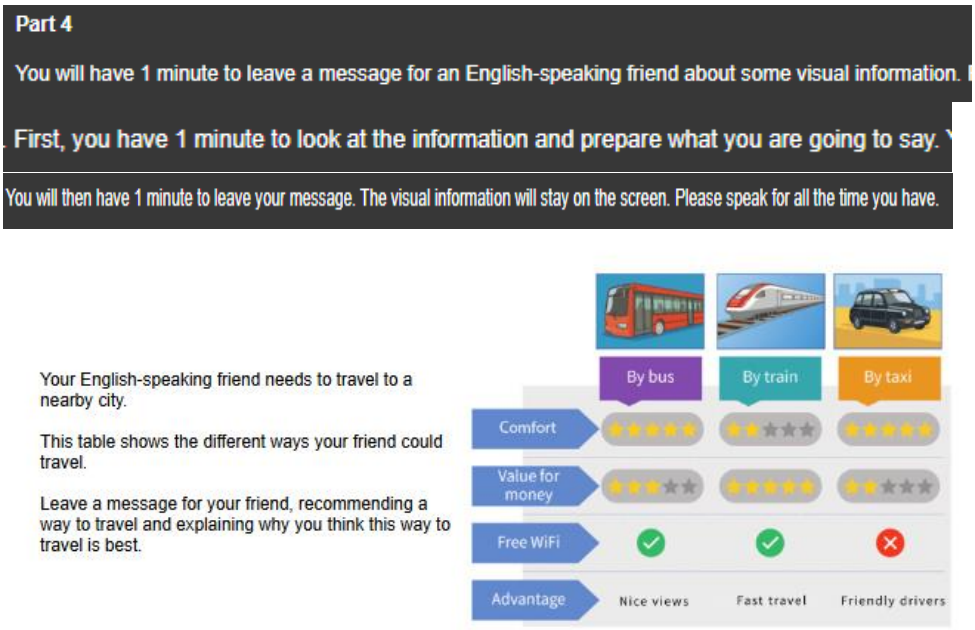
Task type 4	**Making a recommendation** 
No. of questions in task	1
Testing focus	Talking about information presented in a visual form and making a recommendation
Advice	• For this question you have 60 seconds to plan your answer followed by 60 seconds speaking time. • Don't worry about talking about everything you see – you can pick out what you think are the most important things to talk about. • Try to answer the question as fully as possible. Try to give examples, expand on your points and where possible use a variety of language (e.g. structures, tenses, vocabulary etc.). • Try and use your own language as much as possible. Don't just read out the words on the screen! • Make sure you use the preparation time to think about what you're going to say. • Don't worry if you get interrupted before the end of your answer – you won't be penalised for this.
Preparation	• Learn and practise the language of comparison so that you can compare the options given. Examples include, 'on the one hand... on the other hand', 'this one is X whereas that one is Y'. • Review phrases for making suggestions/recommendations and speculating. The task often involves making plans and giving recommendations. Knowing some of these phrases will give you a basic structure to help you to develop your ideas.

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	• Tip: If you have friends or family who understand English, make plans with them, or suggest things to do, in English.

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Task type 5	**Giving an opinion** Part 5 You will hear five questions about a topic. First, you have 40 seconds to read the task. After you hear each question, you will have 20 seconds to give your answer. Please speak for all the time you have. **A researcher is writing a report about young people's leisure time. He wants to find out your opinion about the importance of leisure time for young people.** **He will ask you questions about:** **• daily leisure time** **• playing sports** **• being alone** **• joining clubs** **• too much leisure time**
No. of questions in task	5
Testing focus	Expressing opinions and ideas on a given topic in response to a spoken question
Advice	• In part five, you answer 5 questions related to a topic and prompts that you see on your screen. • First of all, you have 40 seconds to read the topic and prompts. • You have 20 seconds speaking time for each of the five questions. • Use the preparation time to look at the bullet points and think about the topic, what questions you could be asked and the vocabulary you will need to use. • Try to answer the questions as fully as possible. Try to give examples, expand on your points and where possible use a variety of language (e.g. structures, vocabulary etc.). • Don't worry if you get interrupted before the end of your answer – you won't be penalised for this.
Preparation	• Review phrases for giving your opinion, comparing and contrasting, and expressing preferences. Knowing some of these phrases will give you a basic structure to help you to develop your ideas. • Tip: Make sure you develop opinions on a wide range of topics, so you have something to say.

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