



Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking

Sample test with examiner's comments

This document is written to help you familiarise yourself with the *Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking* test, also known as *First Certificate in English (FCE) for Schools*. It accompanies [this video](#), where you can see Paolo, from Italy, and Nathalie, from Belgium, take a Speaking test. Both these candidates cope well overall with the tasks in the test.

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About the Cambridge English: First for Schools Speaking test

The Speaking test lasts about 14 minutes. You take the test with another candidate (possibly two candidates), referred to here as your partner. There are two examiners, an **assessor** and an **interlocutor**. The interlocutor speaks to you and your partner, and the assessor just listens. Both examiners will award marks.

Part 1 (3 minutes)

The examiner asks you and your partner questions about yourselves. You may be asked about things like your home town, your interests, your school, etc.

Part 2 (a 1-minute 'long turn' for each candidate, plus a 20-second response from the second candidate)

The examiner gives you two photographs and asks you to talk about them for 1 minute. The examiner then asks your partner a question about your photographs and your partner responds briefly.

Then the examiner gives your partner two different photographs. Your partner talks about these photographs for 1 minute. This time the examiner asks you a question about your partner's photographs and you respond briefly.

Part 3 (approximately 3 minutes)

The examiner asks you and your partner to talk together. You may be asked to solve a problem or try to come to a decision about something. For example, you might be asked to decide the best way to use some rooms at a school. The examiner gives you a picture to help you but does not join in the conversation.

Part 4 (approximately 4 minutes)

The examiner 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: First for Schools Speaking test is assessed

The marks given by both the assessor and the interlocutor 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.

What the examiners are interested in

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

Grammar and Vocabulary

Are you using a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary? Are you using these structures and vocabulary correctly? Are you using vocabulary which is appropriate for the familiar topics you are asked about?

Discourse Management

Are you giving both long and short answers, depending on what is appropriate for the task? Is everything you say relevant to the task? Are your ideas expressed clearly? Are you using some language to link and organise your ideas? You don't need to speak quickly, but are you able to speak fluently and with very little repetition?

Pronunciation

You don't need to have an English accent, but it is important to be clear. Are you pronouncing individual sounds clearly? 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?

Interactive Communication

Are you able to interact with the other candidate easily and effectively? Are you listening to the other candidate and responding to what they say in a way that makes sense? Can you start a discussion with the other candidate and help keep it going? Can you think of new ideas to add to the discussion?

As you do the test, 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, fluent and easy to understand? Are you using language which is right for the *Cambridge English: First for Schools* level?



Comments on the test video

Part 1	
Paolo	Nathalie
<p>Paolo extends his answer to the first question well, by adding a little information about his home town.</p> <p>His answer to the second question is a good example of how you can answer Part 1 questions creatively. It is of course fine to answer 'What do you like ...?' questions with 'I like ...', but it is also OK to answer in a different way, as Paolo does here.</p> <p>Paolo gives a full answer to the question about music, with personal examples which make it interesting.</p>	<p>Nathalie also gives an extended answer to the first question. She gives a good, clear and extended answer to the second question, with reasons why she likes living in her city.</p> <p>Nathalie expresses her feelings about television, and her reasons, very clearly in the next question. She also uses stress to emphasise her point – 'I like only watching <u>good</u> films on the television'.</p> <p>Nathalie begins her response to the question about sport with 'That's a difficult question for me ...'. This gives her a little time to think of how to answer.</p>
<p>Part 1 tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise giving information about yourself. • You can give short answers, but it is good to extend them a little if you can. • Don't give answers that you have learned, as they don't sound very natural. 	

Part 2	
Paolo	Nathalie
<p>Paolo mostly uses simple grammatical structures, usually accurately, e.g. 'they're trying to decide which sort of dress they should buy', 'he likes reading, I don't know which sort of book ...'; but he does make occasional errors, e.g. 'looking for buying it'. His language is good enough to express his ideas.</p> <p>He generally uses appropriate vocabulary to talk about these everyday situations, e.g. 'fond of', 'go shopping', 'fantasy', 'science fiction'.</p> <p>Paolo does quite well with his Discourse Management; although he hesitates a little, his</p>	<p>Nathalie mostly uses simple grammatical structures, often accurately, e.g. 'It may be a family or only friends, but they ...'; '... these people are visiting the town and enjoying a good time there, but maybe ... it's more visiting the place'. However, she makes some errors, e.g. 'they seems', 'like enjoy time'.</p> <p>Her language is good enough to communicate what she means.</p> <p>She generally uses appropriate vocabulary to talk about these everyday situations, e.g. 'sunshine', 'sea', 'winter', 'place'; with a few</p>

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talk is organised: 'In the first picture we can see ... and they're trying to decide ...'; 'this photograph ... because ...'; 'while in the second one we can see ...'.

He talks about each picture in turn and speaks for a full minute, but he does not answer the second part of the task (*how difficult it is to choose the right thing in these situations*).

His Pronunciation is usually easy to understand, though he makes occasional errors, e.g. his pronunciation of 'women'. The first few words of his talk are also unclear.

[Paolo's response to the question after](#)

[Nathalie's talk](#) could simply be 'Yes', but he adds more information so that his answer is not too short.

errors, e.g. 'funny' instead of 'fun'.

Nathalie does well with Discourse Management as she organises her talk clearly and doesn't hesitate very much: 'In the first picture we can see ... who are ...'; 'in the second photograph we can see ... but it is in the winter, so there's snow ... maybe ...'.

She deals with each picture separately. This means there is less opportunity for comparing the pictures and using more complex language.

Her Pronunciation is generally easy to understand.

[Nathalie's response to the question after](#)

[Paolo's talk](#) is clear and she supports it well with an example situation.

Part 2 tips

- Practise comparing (i.e. not simply describing) two pictures to get an idea of how much you can say in 1 minute and how you can organise what you say.
- Remember that the second part of the task is printed above the pictures, and you should always try to include this in your talk.
- Approach the task in an organised way.
- Use paraphrase if you don't know or can't remember a word you need.

Part 3

Paolo

Paolo uses a range of simple structures and attempts to use some complex forms, e.g. '[I think that they should not be allowed ...](#)' and '[if you have a mobile phone ..., you are not following what the other people are doing ...](#)'.

However, he also makes some errors, e.g. 'enjoy with ...', 'depends of ...'.

He uses a range of vocabulary appropriate for

Nathalie

Nathalie uses a range of simple structures mostly accurately. She makes some occasional errors, e.g. '... because you are too much thinking about your family than the people around you ...'.

She uses a wide range of vocabulary to communicate her ideas, e.g. 'purpose', 'landscapes', 'memorise', 'specific', 'waste of



the task, e.g. 'distract', 'socialise', with occasional errors, e.g. 'just annoying yourself', 'losing time'.

In terms of Discourse Management, Paolo is able to express his ideas and gives reasons. He produces some extended stretches of language and [uses language \(cohesive devices\) to link his ideas](#), e.g. '... while you are maybe not doing anything and ... so reading ...'. However, there is occasionally [some hesitation](#) when he is thinking of the language he needs.

Paolo's Pronunciation is generally easy to understand.

Paolo starts the discussion and then invites his partner's opinion. He sometimes responds to his partner's ideas, e.g. '[Yes, maybe it's true](#)'. He helps to move the discussion forward, e.g. '[Speaking about money, well it depends ...](#)'.

time'.

In terms of Discourse Management, Nathalie contributes well to the discussion with some [long stretches of language and use of language to link her ideas \(cohesive devices\)](#), e.g. '... when you have magazines ... you will spend ... and that's not the ...'.

Nathalie's Pronunciation is easy to understand, although occasionally some words are less clear, e.g. 'allowed', and a few words are not stressed in the right way, e.g. 'advantage'.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Nathalie communicates well; she shows that she listens to her partner's ideas and develops the discussion, e.g. '[Yes I do agree with you, but I think the problem is that ...](#)'.

She invites her partner's ideas, e.g. '[What do you think about mobile phone ...?](#)'. She also [helps her partner to move the discussion forward](#), e.g. 'animals, plants ...' and expresses her opinions clearly, e.g. [while talking about the PlayStation](#).

General comments on Part 3

It is important to discuss the two questions given by the examiner, which are also written at the top of the paper (in this test – 1: *the advantages and disadvantages of having the things at the camp* and 2: *which two things should not be allowed*), and not just say or describe what is in the pictures. Paolo and Nathalie discuss the pictures in a lot of detail and link them to the questions. The examiner stops them before they manage to talk about all of the pictures, or make a decision, but this is not something to worry about. What is important is that you have plenty to say during the discussion; it does not matter if you don't have time to talk about all the pictures or make a decision.

Part 3 tips

- Don't simply describe what you can see in the pictures; link them to the task.
- Remember the questions you are discussing are written above the pictures to help



you.

- Discuss each picture together in detail before moving on to the next.
- Don't try to make a decision too soon as you will not have anything to say for the rest of the time.
- Remember it is not essential to make a decision if you are still involved in the discussion at the end of the 3 minutes.
- Listen to your partner and respond to what they say before adding your own ideas.
- You can ask your partner questions if they are having difficulty adding to the discussion.

Part 4

Paolo

Paolo uses a good range of grammar and appropriate vocabulary, e.g. '... be ready for everything that could happen the whole year'.

His Discourse Management is also good in this part of the test, with some long stretches of language and good linking.

His Pronunciation is easy to understand, although he makes occasional errors in sounds, e.g. 'holiday', 'whole'.

Paolo's Interactive Communication is good in this part of the test; he responds to all the interlocutor's questions easily and appropriately, giving reasons for his answers; he also begins the discussion of the third question with his partner.

Nathalie

Nathalie's answers generally show good control of Grammar and a range of Vocabulary, e.g. 'if you have difficulties at school, it can be a good opportunity to improve ...' with occasional errors such as 'dangerous sports, who are not' and 'childrens'.

Nathalie does well in terms of Discourse Management, with some good use of extended language, e.g. '... and also they are sometimes not mentally ready to do it and the materials can be good and the people around them can be also good, but if the childrens are not ready ...'.

Nathalie's Pronunciation is mostly clear, although occasionally she has unclear sounds, e.g. 'scout', 'children'.

In terms of Interactive Communication, Nathalie responds easily and appropriately to the interlocutor's questions. Her answer to the second question is very short, but she gives a reason when the examiner asks her. When discussing Question 3, she responds to her partner's views: 'I couldn't agree more, but ...'.



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, and you can disagree with what they say.
- Sometimes the examiner will ask you a question to discuss together.

Overall

Paolo

Grammar and Vocabulary

Some of Paolo's language is accurate and shows a good range, but there are some inaccuracies both in grammar and vocabulary which he could improve.

Discourse Management

Paolo's contributions are generally clear and appropriate and although there is a little hesitation when he is speaking, his language is often extended and what he says is relevant to the task.

Pronunciation

Although he makes occasional errors in some sounds, Paolo's pronunciation is always easy to understand.

Interactive Communication

Paolo interacts well during the test, expressing his ideas effectively and adding ideas to develop the interaction. Although he sometimes responds directly to what Nathalie has said, he could do this more to show that he has listened.

Global Achievement

Paolo's language is generally appropriate for the tasks. He is able to produce extended language to communicate what he wants to say clearly and with very little hesitation.

Nathalie

Grammar and Vocabulary

Nathalie has a good range of vocabulary and her use of grammar is often accurate. However, she does make some mistakes, and she could still improve in these areas.

Discourse Management

Nathalie organises her contributions well, communicating her ideas clearly and using extended stretches of language.

Pronunciation

Nathalie's pronunciation is almost always clear and easy to understand, although she makes a few errors in some sounds.

Interactive Communication

Nathalie communicates well throughout the test; she shows she is listening to her partner's ideas and responds appropriately. She also helps to develop the interaction.

Global Achievement

Nathalie communicates well throughout the test with very little hesitation. She expresses her ideas clearly and appropriately using extended language.